

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

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

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Thesis abstract

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

Tampa and the Cronulla riots.

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

ABBREVIATIONS

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

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This thesis began as a response to the Tampa episode and Hansonism, to place them in the context of Australian history, particularly White Australia. I had believed, like many, that White Australia had died in 1973, but these events and the Cronulla riots showed otherwise. I had a great deal of encouragement and support initially from Emeritus Professor Frank Clarke, who offered good suggestions and advice, and gave some direction to the project. Dr. Alison Holland, however, has guided the project to completion, giving tireless support and advice, as well giving technical advice on the thesis structure. Dr. Tasman Parsons and Dr. Michelle Arrow also offered some assistance.

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Introduction

Australia will not continue to be a white man's country even if we win this war unless it has a population of approximately 40,000, 000.

Arthur Calwell, *House of Representatives*, 22 September, 1942 ¹

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....[quoting Arthur Calwell] "*Japan, India, Burma, Ceylon and every new African nation are fiercely anti-white and anti-one another. Do we want or need any of these people here? I am one red-blooded Australian who says no and who speaks for 90 % of Australians.*" I have no hesitation in echoing the words of Arthur Calwell.

Pauline Hanson, *Maiden Speech to House of Representatives*, 10 September, 1996²

Pauline Hanson's maiden speech above echoes the words of Arthur Calwell, the architect of Australia's post-war immigration scheme. During World War II Arthur Calwell feared that Australia could not continue to be a white man's country unless it drastically increased its population, intimating that it could be overrun in the future by an Asian or non-white nation. Pauline Hanson also feared the white nation would be overrun by Asians, but through

¹ A. Calwell, *CPD: HR*, 22 September, 1942

² P. Hanson, Maiden speech to Parliament, *CPD:HR*, 10 September, 1996, p.3862

immigration. Both feared that Australia would be swamped by races and cultures that they believed wouldn't assimilate into the Australian way of life. Both feared the demise of the Australian nation as a result. In the 50 years in between them, Australia witnessed a mass migration program, the ending of the White Australia policy, the evolution of multiculturalism, and a significant influx of Asian and non-white immigrants. However, in the closing decade of the twentieth century and into the new millennium, a resurgent nationalism developed with the rise of Hansonism itself, the Tampa incident and the Cronulla riots.

Each of these developments, while manifest in different ways and contexts, were ultimately about who belonged in the nation and, more importantly, who did not. Immigration and developments in immigration policy were underpinning the anxieties. While Pauline Hanson openly targeted all 'Asians', the Tampa affair saw the Australian government's refusal to offer asylum to some 400 Afghani refugees. But it was also about Australia's right to 'determine who will enter and reside in Australia', as the Prime Minister, John Howard suggested. Occurring almost simultaneously to 9/11, the Tampa incident saw the beginnings of a rash of border protection and national security legislation. About four years later, a series of racially motivated riots and mob violence occurred at Cronulla, a southern seaside suburb of Sydney, where 'Aussie Pride' and "Love the flag or Piss off" were the slogans and chants of the, mostly Anglo, antagonists.

Clearly, something had gone awry in the body politic. All was not well. Despite Al Grassby's desire to bury the White Australia Policy once and for all as far back as 1973, it had not quite died or what it represented had not died in the intervening years.³ Indeed, the desire to maintain an essentially white Australian nation, and to preserve Anglo-Australian culture at the centre of the nation, had resurfaced with some virulence in the dying years of the twentieth century and the dawning of the new century among some in the community. As the historian Gwenda Tavan has more recently argued, continued 'anxieties about race and immigration confirm the residual influence of White Australia'. She suggests that the changes to immigration policy from assimilationism in the 1950s to multiculturalism in the 1970s and 1980s 'did not substantially challenge the notion of Australia as a predominantly white, Anglo-Celtic society'.⁴

This thesis explores the nexus between the predominantly white Anglo-Celtic society and immigration from the 1950s to 2005. Calwell's demand to populate or perish in 1945 set in train a process that was understood as fundamental to our survival as a nation in terms of a viable population base.⁵

³ A.Grassby quoted in G.Whitlam, *The Whitlam Government 1972-1975* (Ringwood:Penguin, 1985) p.501

⁴ G.Tavan, *The Long, Slow Death of White Australia*, (Melbourne: Scribe, 2005) p.239

⁵ The phrase 'survival of a nation' needs some clarifying definition. In the context of this thesis, it means a few things, but they are integrally related. The nation is the sum of its parts. If the whole does not relate effectively to its parts then it will falter and be conflicted. In this sense of the meaning, governance was required to provide national cohesion. I'm referring here to way governments evolved migrant settlement policies to fit into or adjust to the existing Australian culture, or to provide cultural maintenance, where the survival of one part, the migrant, was seen as essential to the survival of the whole nation. The other main aspect refers to the survival of the Anglo-Australian culture, the way that various groups, individuals and organizations were concerned about Anglo-Australian identity.

But that process brought a structural tension to Australian society between maintaining an existing Australian culture, based on these Anglo-Celtic origins, and incorporating migrants into that culture in a way that would fulfil Calwell's plea.⁶

This thesis borrows from Calwell's notion that the nation might perish without a larger population, but looks at it from a different perspective. It examines the nation's ability to survive with a large scale immigrant population with its increasing diversity, and the impacts such diversity has had on Australian culture and the perceptions of national identity.

When Calwell introduced large-scale immigration in the post-World War II period he did so without understanding fully the structural tensions and dynamics in Australian society that would follow. A large immigrant population required measures to incorporate them into the nation with some level of cohesion. The settlement policies that were introduced were functions of this, the desire to absorb migrants into the general populace and the wider Australian culture. The evolution of these policies recognised that for Australia to be truly cohesive it had to consider the cultural identity and well-being of the migrant, to consider their ability to survive in this nation as well. This all happened alongside the unwritten caveat that the general character and culture of Australia would be preserved. Yet, as more immigrants arrived from a diversity of ethnic backgrounds, as a consequence of the ending of the

⁶ In 1945 Calwell said, "We may have only those next 25 years in which to make the best possible use of our chance to survive. Our first requirement is additional population", A. Calwell, *CPD*, *HR*, 2 August 1945, Vol. 184, pp.4811-12

White Australia policy, an anxiety developed about the general character and culture of Australia being compromised. Australia, from the 1980s onwards, reached somewhat of a dilemma and uncertainty on how best Australian society could survive with a diversity of cultural backgrounds yet maintain the existing general character and culture at its core.

This thesis presents the history of the period under study in the broad form of a dialectic centred on national survival. To remain viable as a nation Australia needed a much larger population. It needed a constant supply of migrants for the nation to survive, yet at the same time it had to maintain the stability of an Anglo-Australian culture. This was resolved by introducing settlement policies that tried to reconcile the position of the migrant and migrant culture within the broader Anglo-Australian culture. But as a result of this dialectic a reaction developed whereby some groups and individuals responded to the high levels of migration and multiculturalism, wanting a return to a more Anglo-Australian-centred culture.

To trace this dialectic and its response this thesis aims to consider both the context of the debates over the various settlement policies, as well as the reaction of some groups, individuals and sections of the community to them and to what they perceived to be changes in and to *their* nation as a result. While I believe many Australians accepted the greater numbers of migrants and the attempts to accommodate them through evolving settlement policies, significant sections of the community, what I refer to in this thesis as a ‘substantial minority’, saw a restoration of the dominance of Anglo-Australia

as the best direction for the nation into the future. This brought conflict in the discourse as to what sort of society Australia should be, essentially monocultural or multicultural.

Can we delineate who this substantial minority are? While this group is numerous, it is uncertain how many there are. However, for the purposes of this thesis the quantity is of less importance than the makeup of the groups that have nativist sentiments. Nativism, the belief centred on where one was born and grew up and the desire to protect those traditions, seems to be a significant determinate of this substantial minority. Charles Price has shown the Anglo-Celtic origin component of Australia's population has fallen from about 90 per cent in 1947 to just under 70 per cent in 1999, and estimates that this will drop to 62.2 by 2525. Within the population about 60 percent are ethnically intermixed, and 20 per cent have 'four distinct ancestries'.⁷ This leaves about 20 per cent ethnically pure Anglo-Celtic which, in the main, forms the demographic of the groups under discussion. A study done by Murray Goot and Ian Watson (2010) revealed that a significant number of people believed that to be 'truly Australian' you had to be born in Australia or to have Australian ancestry. In a survey they conducted they found 58 per cent of respondents believed it was 'fairly important' to be born in Australia; they also found that 37 per cent said it was 'fairly important' to have 'Australian ancestry' - this was despite the fact that nearly a quarter (24 per cent) had been

⁷ C.Price, 'Australian Population, Ethnic Origins', *People and Place*, vol.7, no.4, 2000, p.12

born overseas (ABS, 2005).⁸ It was also found that more than a third said it was 'very important' or 'fairly important' to be Christian. Goot and Watson believe that these are the essential components that make up a nativist disposition. This is significant in understanding the attachment of many Australians to Anglo-Australian culture, and the fears attached to that attachment created by a growing immigrant population. It is essentially the 'born here, grew here' argument that has become a part of the discourse on the Cronulla riots. It is interesting to note that in Cronulla (Sutherland Shire) the figures are very high for Australian born, at 78.1 per cent, and 73.1 per cent for Anglo-Celtic ancestry (ABS, 2006).⁹ This compares with Bankstown, for instance, with only 56.7 per cent Australian born, and 38.6 per cent of Anglo-Celtic ancestry. This strongly suggests that the relatively dominant Anglo-Australian community like Cronulla, and areas like it around Australia, are the most likely to have a nativist disposition.

I contend that those wedded to this entrenched view of Anglo-Australia, in the main 'older Anglo-Australians' and those fearful of greater immigration from non-traditional sources, were those who opposed multiculturalism. For them, the 'survival of the nation' meant going back to an earlier Australia, the nation they grew up with. Australian society, by virtue of its history, has been predicated on a shared culture and belief system linked to Great Britain. For over 150 years an Anglo-Australian culture and identity developed. For many

⁸ M.Goot and I.Watson, 'Nativism as Citizenship: Immigration, Economic Hardship and the Politics of the Right', in Martina Mollering and Christina Slade (eds), *From Migrant to Citizen: Testing Language, Testing Culture*, Palgrave, 2010, p.218

⁹ Profile of Sutherland Shire, *Australian Bureau of Statistics*, 2006.

Australians, this imagined community, this nation, can be traced back to our history, and the developing traditions coming from the nineteenth century. We know from studies, for instance, on Hansonism by Murray Goot, Henry Reynolds, and James Jupp, that many come from rural Australia, from regional Australia, retirees and the aged, and the unemployed. They held views on Australia that were characteristic of 'old' Australia, the 1950's, and largely monoculturalist in outlook¹⁰ But the media, particularly that which is concentrated in the metropolitan cities but nonetheless captures a wide reaching audience, is also filled with personalities who have entertained and pushed similar Anglo-centred views.¹¹ The likes of Alan Jones and John Laws in Sydney capture around 40 per cent of the listening audience and something like half a million accumulated listeners, and have the capacity to influence listeners viewpoints¹² It was, after all, Alan Jones, who claimed to lead the Anglo charge to reclaim Cronulla beach.

This substantial minority is generally born here and grew up here, of Anglo-Australian background, and are less likely to be of a younger generation. Yet, contrary to this, the defence of Cronulla was manned predominantly by younger Australians. This substantial minority have a

¹⁰ J.Jupp, *White Australia to Woomera*, p.135; M. Goot, 'Hanson's Heartland: Who's for One Nation and Why', in Davidoff, *Two Nations*, pp71-73

H.Reynolds, 'Hanson and Queensland's Political Culture', in Davidoff, *Two Nations*, p147

¹¹ Alan Jones, John Laws and Ron Casey have been prominent radio commentators in Sydney who have espoused strong sympathies for Anglo-Australian cultural values. In Melbourne, 3AW, it is Neil Mitchell, Steve Price and Darren Hinch. 'Talk-back' commentators have a daily influence on the opinions of significant numbers of people. John Laws has been on radio the longest of the talk-back hosts, and had the widest audience, his show attracting around 2 million listeners a day and syndicated to 78 stations across Australia.

¹² P. Adams and Lee Burton, *Talkback: Emperors of Air* (Sydney : Allen and Unwin, 1997), pp.235-242

common view in the sense they wished to preserve Anglo-Australian culture, and in varying degrees, are opposed to multiculturalism and higher levels of non-white immigration. There are also organizations such as the Returned Services League (RSL), who were concerned with the 'the proper development and enhancement of the Nation with the recognition of our Anglo-Saxon heritage and traditions'¹³, the Australian Natives Association (ANA), who had been prominent supporters of the White Australia policy from its inception, and the League of Rights, a secretive white nationalist group also believing in the preservation of Australia's white heritage. In addition to these, there were fringe nationalist groups such as the Freedom Scouts, National Action, Australians Against Further Immigration (AAFI) and others that have in varying degrees supported the hegemony of Anglo-Australia. These groups were instrumental in providing some organizational framework and voice for the survival anxieties that have been alluded to, and provide some sense of historical continuity. The League of Rights, AAFI, and Pauline Hanson's One Nation, Andrew Markus points out, not only shared similar points of view but, at times, similar personnel, and the same political stage.¹⁴ These groups are essentially nativist in sentiment, draw on the culture of yesteryear, desire a predominantly monoculturalist society and thus, by definition, are generally paranoid about immigration from non-White areas. It is the position of this thesis, that events like Tampa, Hansonism and

¹³ RSL Victorian Branch Annual Conference, Policy Statement, 1983; see A. Blair, *Ruxton* (Sydney : Allen and Unwin, 2004), p.95

¹⁴ See A.Markus, *Race*, (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 2001), Chapter 5, The Politics of Paranoia, pp.113-142

Cronulla became flashpoints, moments when these nativist fears and anxieties surfaced.

The notion of national survival has been touched on in a spate of books and articles related to White Australia, national identity and the impact of Australia's post-war immigration. All speak to a deep-seated underlying anxiety and a repressed racism as fuelling the fear of loss and decline of nation inherent in the substantial minority's concerns. In *On Not Speaking Chinese*, Ien Ang talks about psycho-geographic anxiety and spatial anxiety in relation to Asia, that the Australian identity was formed in relation to a hostile attitude to Asia. This was laid down by Australia's history but has been revitalized in what she calls as the 'return of the repressed', that is 'deep-seated and deeply ingrained anxieties...which have underlain the peculiar structure of feeling of "white Australia" '.¹⁵ She makes a point of this being particularly manifest in the Hanson phenomenon. Ien Ang with Jon Stratton, in 'Multiculturalism in Crisis' echo this, but point out that the problem Australia has had was that it predicated national identity on race in 1901 but attempted to destroy that reality and discourse with the introduction of multiculturalism. The multicultural project meant a disavowal of race as the basis of the survival of the nation through its unity in cultural diversity, an end to the 'idea of Australia as a "white nation" '. Multiculturalism, while bonding the nation, did not give an effective new national narrative, 'a livable

¹⁵ Ien Ang, *On Not Speaking Chinese* (Routledge: London, 2001), p.127

sense of national identity'.¹⁶ They argue that the repression of race in multicultural discourse led to an explosion of racial discourse in recent decades.¹⁷

Don McMaster picks up the notion of survival but from the perspective of the impact of the interloper. *Asylum Seekers* explores the historically embedded construction of the 'Other', the formation of national identity, and the exclusionary and discriminatory policies used to exclude the 'Other' throughout our history and into a post-modern global age of refugees.¹⁸ Peter Mares' *Borderline* focuses on Tampa and refugees, but relates the xenophobia exhibited in this context back to 'deep-seated fears of invasion and the historical anxiety about the empty and defenceless north of Australia'.¹⁹ More recently Anthony Burke's searching appraisal of Australia's invasion anxiety, *Fear of Security*, published in 2008, saw Australian immigration issues from a perspective of securing the nation in the Asia-Pacific region both politically and culturally. He says that Australia formed a new nation in 1901 'primarily because of anxieties about security from the strategic threat posed by Asia...In this way security has been much more than a policy issue; it has permeated the entire society as a powerful form of politics and set of fears'.²⁰

¹⁶ Ien Ang with J.Stratton, 'Multiculturalism in Crisis' in *On Not Speaking Chinese*, p.107

¹⁷ Ibid., pp.107-111.

¹⁸ D.McMaster, *Asylum Seekers, Australia's Response to Refugees*, (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2001), pp.6-7

¹⁹ P.Mares, *Borderline*, (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2001), p.28

²⁰ A.Burke, *Fear of Security. Australia's Invasion Anxiety*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p.2

However, it is the work of the historian David Walker which remains the most potent and instructive for this thesis. Through his book *Anxious Nation* and more recently in an article titled, 'Survivalist Anxieties', Walker has consistently alerted us to what he calls the recurring survivalist anxieties of the nation. He has shown how these have persisted at least from the middle of the nineteenth century, arguing that White Australia has, since that time, been confronted with the fear of cultural invasion and dominance brought about by our geographical nearness to Asia. He shows how this threat from Asia and the survivalist anxieties associated with it, have been significant in defining the nation. Moreover, in 2002, after the dust had settled on the Tampa incident, he wrote that:

In Australia's post-Tampa world we have seen a return of survivalist anxieties in which human rights and citizenship...are weighed against the rights of a supposedly embattled nation to secure its borders. Where the survival of the nation is said to be at risk, upholding the rights of refugees and minorities can be represented as a luxury the nation can longer afford. The logic of this survivalism is to reduce the world to a battle between them and us where 'their' role is to subvert, undermine and weaken 'our' will to survive as a nation.²¹

In this case the 'their' being referred to is not Asian, but Middle-Eastern. By the 2000s, the old fear of Asia had transmuted to a fear of the Middle Eastern world.

²¹ D.Walker, 'Survivalist Anxieties: Australia's Responses to Asia, 1890's to the Present'. *Australian Historical Studies*, no. 120, (October, 2002): p.329

The present thesis extends Walker's contribution to understanding the nature of survivalist anxiety and fear of invasion. It maintains that these anxieties and fears have become an entrenched part of Australian society, and that the reaction to the Other at various points in our recent history—Asian immigration discourse, the rise of Hanson, Tampa and the Cronulla riots—can be explained by these anxieties and fears. Pauline Hanson expressed this fairly clearly when she says that we must remember the 'Australians who fought to save our country from outsiders who would have taken it. We must not now allow our nation to be taken from within'.²²

But what was this 'nation' that Calwell and Hanson wanted to preserve, this Anglo-Australian culture? Some, like the academic Tom Nairn for instance, say that notions of nation and identity are the invention of intellectuals.²³ Similarly, the public intellectual, Donald Horne, maintained that there never had been 'and there never will be, something called the Australian national identity'.²⁴ But this offers little explanatory framework for interpreting the reaction to Asian immigration in the 1980s and 1990s and the concomitant policy of multiculturalism, or the rise of Hansonism and the subsequent hostility to Middle Eastern cultures or the flash-point of nationalism at Cronulla. These were motivated by anxieties of the 'subjective'

²² Pauline Hanson, Speech to One Nation Part launch, 11 April, 1997, in *Pauline Hanson's One Nation*, June 1998, pp.3-4

²³ T.Nairn, 'What Are Nations For', *London Review of Books*, 8 September, 1994, p.7

²⁴ D.Horne, *Australian*, 25 March, 1993.

nation under threat, anxieties about the survival of the 'Australian way of life'.

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While nation and nationalism have been heavily theorized and historicized²⁶ some of these studies are pertinent to this thesis. For example, Emile Durkheim's notion of solidarism is instructive. He argued that belonging to a community or nation meant sharing its values and culture.²⁷ Similarly, the structuralist, Talcott Parsons, believed that for a society to be cohesive there had to be a 'shared system of value-orientation standards'.²⁸ Moreover, Benedict Anderson's study of nationalism in *Imagined Communities*, showed that individuals in set areas share myths and symbols that lead to the expression of national unity, and this is transcendent over differences they might have.²⁹

What our national identity is, and has been, has been much discussed and debated. As the novelist David Malouf remarked, we (Australians) are 'endlessly fussing and fretting over identity'.³⁰ Historians have attempted to give some genesis to our national identity. Russell Ward in *The Australian*

²⁵ The expression, 'the Australian way of life', developed in the post-World War II period, in a period of high migration. Migrants had to accept the 'Australian way of life', that is to live like an Australian. The assimilation promotional pamphlet *An Everyday Australian* (1964) showed an idealised Australian family in a nice brick home with a car, modern appliances, enjoying their lifestyle and sport, an idealised culture that migrants would assimilate into. This imagined Australia, Anglo-Australian culture, was seen in the 1950's and 1960's as embracing the popular artefacts of everyday life, a home in the suburbs, a Holden car, support for a footy team, pub culture, beach culture, and the acceptance of a democratic society.

²⁶ The historiographical discussion on nation has shifted from Gellner's formation of nations to Anderson's imagined communities and beyond. E. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), T.Nairn, B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, (London: Verso, 1983), Paul James, 'Nationalism and Post-Nationalism', *Arena Journal*, no.11, 1998

²⁷ E. Durkheim, *The Division of Labour in Society* (New York, Free Press, 1964/1983)

²⁸ T.Parsons, *The Social System* (New York, Free Press, 1951), p.54

²⁹ B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London and New York: Verso, 1991)

³⁰ David Malouf, *A Spirit of Play: The Making of Australian Consciousness* (Boyer Lectures), (Sydney: ABC Books, Australian broadcasting Corporation, 1998), p.98

Legend defined our national identity as being cast in the mould of history, relating it to the ‘bushmen’ of the nineteenth century.³¹ Patrick O’Farrell in *Vanished Kingdoms* echoed the nation of history informing national identity, in showing how the Irish culture transplanted itself onto Australian soil and created a partial template for the Australian identity.³² But for historian, Richard White, all versions of what Australia is are constructs.³³ He has shown how, for much of its history, there have been a few core symbols of what this imagined community is. As well as ‘the Australian way of life’, it has resided in symbols around the bush, and more latterly the beach, the Anzacs, the wide brown land and the like. These symbols have been remarkably resilient despite the changed character of the Australian population.

It has been much harder to fashion an ‘imagined community’ for a multicultural society. Whose culture is privileged? What are the symbols of unity? While Miriam Dixon argues that the Anglo-Celtic core culture can continue to sustain social coherence over what she calls ‘transitional years’, historian, Ken Inglis, is not so sure.³⁴ In ‘Multiculturalism and National Identity’, Inglis relates Arthur Koestler’s comments on Australia in 1969 that ‘The search for identity...in Australia is a real problem, and a haunting one’.

³¹ R.Ward, *The Australian Legend*, 1958.

³² P. O’Farrell, *Vanished Kingdom: Irish in Australia and New Zealand*, (Sydney: NSW University Press, pp.276-279

³³ R.White, *Inventing Australia: Images and Identity 1688-1980*, (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1981), p.viii.

³⁴ M.Dixon, *The Imaginary Australian: Anglo-Celts and Identity-1788 to the present*, (Sydney: University of NSW Press, 1999) p.3, pp.1-7

Were immigrants to be thrown into a melting pot or were we to preserve ‘the cultural identity of the various groups in the ethnic mosaic’?³⁵

Like Koestler, Inglis argues that Australia does not have a defined national identity, ‘but that we aspire to one’.³⁶ This lack creates uncertainty and it is this very uncertainty, and the need for people to have a sense of aspiration and belonging, that led to the divisions that immigration brought. He points to the schizoid voice of Australia. He cites one older man who believed that immigrants ‘have brought a general loss of our Australian identity’ and a Vietnamese woman who said that ‘a multicultural Australia is a truly *Australian* Australia which, untrammelled by the ghost of a colonial relationship, can focus more clearly on Australian identity’.³⁷ This gives some credence to Graeme Turner’s view that ‘definitions of national identity are sites of struggle, the definitions are never static or “fixed”’.³⁸

This might be objectively so. But what is inside some people’s minds can sometimes be fixed or static. Jon Stratton points out that ex Prime Minister, John Howard’s, view of national identity, like Pauline Hanson’s, was fixed and singular. Based around ‘mainstream’ or core Anglo-Australian culture, it operated as an ‘essentialist’ notion and considered that pluralist versions resulted in a loss of social cohesion.³⁹ The attempt in the

³⁵ Arthur Koester cited in K.Inglis, ‘Multiculturalism and National Identity’, in C.A. Price (ed) *Australian National Identity*, (Canberra: Australian National University, 1991), p.17

³⁶ K.Inglis, ‘Multiculturalism and National Identity’, in C.A. Price (ed) *Australian National Identity*, p.13

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p.19

³⁸ G. Turner, *National Fictions: Literature, film and the construction of the Australian narrative*, (North Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1986), p.110

³⁹ J. Stratton, *Race Daze. Australia in an Identity Crisis*, (Sydney: Pluto Press, 1998), p.105-107

Hawke/Keating era to raise multiculturalism to the status of national identity, while providing a possible solution to the issue of national cohesion, ran aground with these essentialist notions of the nation. For Stratton, multiculturalism was always a conservative construct where 'ethnic cultures are peripheral to a core culture'. Accordingly, white culture was left in a privileged position at the centre of Australia and 'The political and legal spheres remain, in unalloyed fashion, dominated by the British'.⁴⁰

For many, it seemed, multicultural Australia was not or should not be at the centre of Australia's identity, for it undermined the 'Australian way of life'. As Ross Poole has argued, multiculturalism to some extent created 'a diminished sense of Australian historical identity and a strengthened sense of the affiliations which migrant Australians have to the countries of their origins'.⁴¹ Indeed, this view conforms to a new study, just published, which shows how the receding ties of empire and Britishness in the 1960s and 1970s posed an unprecedented dilemma as Australians' lost their traditional ways of defining themselves as a people.⁴²

However, I argue that this theme of survival cannot merely be viewed from the perspective of the overly anxious citizenry, the governed, although that is important too. It must also consider survival from the point of view of the governors and particularly from the policies and practices associated with immigration, migration and settlement. These were the exigencies of

⁴⁰ J. Stratton, *Race Daze*, pp.10-11

⁴¹ R.Poole, *Nation and Identity* (New York, Routledge, 1999), p.141

⁴² James Curran and Stuart Ward, *The Unknown Nation: Australia After Empire* (Melbourne:Melbourne University Press, 2010).

managing large-scale immigration to Australia and the cultural diversity it increasingly produced. From this perspective assimilation became problematic because migrants clung onto their own cultures and traditions and multiculturalism was a strategy to ensure migrant survival and long-term retention. But migrant settlement had to be managed within the social structures of White Australia, and balancing the two became an issue of social cohesion for the nation.

Of course, there is a substantial body of work dealing with what we might call histories of immigration. Because of the extensive use of government monitoring and reporting mechanisms, the history of post–World War II immigration began almost from the start, as government reports of migrant intake and settlement provided useful sources for academics and social commentators. Works such as James Jupp’s *Arrivals and Departures* (1966), Jean Martin’s *The Migrant Presence* (1978) and, later, Ann-Mari Jordens’ *Alien to Citizen: Settling Migrants in Australia* are examples that chart the path of immigration and the issues of settlement well.⁴³ As well, important documentary collections, such as that of Lack and Templeton, published in 1995, also provide evidence of the traumas and experiences of migrants, the ability of migrants to survive in a new country.⁴⁴ Anna Haebich’s work, *Spinning the Dream* (2008), on assimilation, reveals the

⁴³ J. Jupp, *Arrivals and Departures* (Melbourne: Cheshire/Landsdowne, 1966); J. Martin, *The Migrant Presence* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1978); Ann-Mari Jordens, *Alien to Citizen: Settling Migrants in Australia* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1997)

⁴⁴ J. Lack and J. Templeton, *Bold Experiment*. (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1995)

extent to which government agencies were prepared to go in slotting migrants into a ready-made homogenised Anglo-Australia.⁴⁵

Gwenda Tavan writes similarly in relation to the Good Neighbour Movement. For her the Good Neighbour movement was essentially an Anglo-Australian organisation dedicated to promoting an Anglo-Australian life style. It became a key instrument in the propaganda machine of assimilation.⁴⁶ Jean Martin was prominent in articulating the failure of assimilation to allow the nation to survive effectively. The flaw in the system was that it was not allowing the migrant to 'survive'. As an academic and activist she considered the best way for migrants to survive in this alien land of Australia was through slower absorption, 'with the attendant maintenance of immigrant group and family life and a lesser degree of personal disorganization.'⁴⁷ James Jupp noted in *Arrivals and Departures* that 'for all the apparent influence of Australia's 2,000,000 migrants they might as well not exist'.⁴⁸ Jupp's study was in part looking at why migrants were returning home. It became necessary for governments to reconstruct settlement policy and the social nation to allow migrants to take their place in the nation with some sense of equality. This led to the development of multiculturalism which Jupp reported as:

⁴⁵ A. Haebich, *Spinning the Dream. Assimilation in Australia 1950-1970* (Freemantle: Freemantle Press, 2008), p.128

⁴⁶ G.Tavan, ' "Good Neighbours". Community organizations, migrant assimilation and Australian Society and Culture' *Australian Historical Studies*, no.27, 109 (October, 1997) : pp.77-89

⁴⁷ J. Martin, paper to a summer school of the Australian Institute of Political Science, 'The Social Impact of New Australians', 1953; reproduced in H.E.Holt et al, *Australia and the Migrant* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1953), pp.65-74, 75-76.

⁴⁸ J. Jupp, *Arrivals and Departures* (Melbourne Chesire/Landsdowne, 1966), p.122

In essence, multiculturalism as public policy has had limited and pragmatic objectives: ensuring the easy transition of immigrants into Australian society; limiting and reducing prejudice; developing access and equity...encouraging non-English speaking Australians to maintain their languages and cultures... within the context of acceptance of Australian laws and traditions.⁴⁹

For Jupp, multiculturalism was a means for migrants to survive effectively with their own cultures but sharing and accepting the constraints the broader Australian culture. This echoes a number of government reports from Galbally to Fitzgerald. As Galbally summed it up clearly in 1978:

Migrants have the right to maintain their cultural and racial identity... Provided that ethnic identity is not stressed at the expense of society at large, but is interwoven into the fabric of our nationhood.⁵⁰

Recent writers have also pointed to aspects of how multiculturalism related to the survival of the wider nation. Andrew Jakubowicz has said that multiculturalism was 'essentially about sustaining the existing social order and the existing core values.'⁵¹ Ghassan Hage, in *White Nation: Fantasies of White Supremacy in a Multicultural Society*, asserts that multiculturalism was

⁴⁹ J. Jupp, 'Tacking into the wind: immigration and multicultural policy in the 1990's, *Journal of Australian Studies*, no.53 (1997): p.31.

⁵⁰ F.Galbally (chair), *Migrant Services and Programs: Report of the Review of Post-Arrival Programs and Services for Migrants* (Canberra :AGPS, 1978), p.104.

⁵¹ A. Jakubowicz, 'Ethnicity, Multiculturalism & Neo-conservatism' in G.Bottomley and M.de Lepervanche (ed), *Ethnicity, Class and Gender in Australia* (Sydney: George Allen and Unwin, 1984), p.43

a means to maintain the dominance of White power and culture. Multiculturalism for him was White multiculturalism, a structure that would tolerate migrants but wanted to maintain a fantasy of White hegemony.⁵² Jon Stratton and Ien Ang echo this, contending that the ultimate rationale of multiculturalism is national unity. It tolerates cultural diversity but is still premised on Australian culture being at the centre.⁵³

As this suggests, such studies show something of the evolution of settlement policy at work. But they largely do so without considering the flipside, that of the existing settlers. Yet, the notion of the nation ‘surviving’ from the point of view of the settlers has persisted through our history of immigration. Australia has always wanted migrants. That has been a long-term and persistent imperative, and population density, a persistent and nagging concern. For it to remain viable as a nation a reasonable population level was necessary. But this was never just about numbers. It was also about type or race or culture and the need to preserve an Anglo-Australian culture. This was an equal imperative.

Given this, the abolition of the White Australia Policy represented a fundamental rupture, a breach, at a time when ‘we’, as a nation, had little else by way of self-image. This view has largely been confirmed by the historiography around the policy’s decline. Indeed, despite the historiography of immigration being vast and diverse, much of it has focused on the White

⁵² G. Hage, *White Nation: Fantasies of White Supremacy in a Multicultural Society* (Sydney: Pluto Press, 1998) p.19

⁵³ J. Stratton and Ien Ang, ‘Multicultural Imagined Communities: Cultural Difference and national Identity in the USA and Australia’ in David Bennett, ed., *Multicultural States: Rethinking Difference and Identity*, London: Routledge, 1998, p.158

Australia policy, its ending, and its significance in our history. Myra Willard, *History of the White Australia Policy* (1923), A. Palfreeman, *The Administration of The White Australia Policy* (1967), H.I. London, *Non-white Immigration and the 'White Australia' policy* (1970) were significant works that showed the importance and impact of White Australia. Myra Willard, a pioneer in this area, contended that the formation of the White Australia policy came as a result of the contemporaneous development of the colonies, nation, and the rise of Asia. A.C. Palfreeman maintained that an Australian ethos developed in the nineteenth century, but 'there were imagined dangers to this ethos which could result from the existence of a large and permanent unassimilable minority'.⁵⁴ For her part, Nancy Viviani, in her study of the abolition of the White Australia Policy, has taken the view that the abolition of the White Australia policy changed Australia for the good, that 'the intertwining of whiteness and Australian-ness in our nationalism was rent asunder'.⁵⁵ Yet, our recent history may have shown otherwise, that there has been some persistence of White nationalist attitudes.

This thesis argues that despite the ending of the White Australia policy, significant aspects of White Australia remain, at times submerged and dormant and others open and aggressive. More recently Gwenda Tavan's *The Long, Slow Death of White Australia* (2005) suggests that the abolition of the White Australia policy has not really meant the death of White Australia, and

⁵⁴ A.C.Palfreeman, *The Administration of the White Australia Policy* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1967) p.1

⁵⁵ N. Viviani, 'Intellectuals and the Abolition of the White Australia policy' in N. Viviani(ed) *The Abolition of the White Australia Policy: the Immigration Reform Movement Revisited*, Centre for the Study of Australia-Asian Relations (Queensland: Griffith University, 1992), p.38

that it 'still holds a residual appeal for some people'.⁵⁶ She confirms that while the incremental dismantling of the policy largely found favour with the population at large, because the changes were framed around the notion of a 'core Anglo-Saxon culture, it was the more radical changes to immigration policy post 1970 which did cause unease precisely because they were thought to undermine the ethnic character of Australian society'.⁵⁷

To this end, I have shown that White Australian culture and attitudes persist, and are pervasive throughout Australian society and its institutions. P.Bell *Multicultural Australia in the Media (Report to the Office of Multicultural Affairs)*⁵⁸ is a significant source which reveals how sections of the media are really like a fifth column in supporting an Anglo-Australian culture. It gives a good insight into how advertising, radio and TV more often reflect the views of Anglo-Australia, and how migrant representations are minimal by comparison. This fits well into my view that the media is an agency that reflects and drives Anglo-Australian culture, and will report negatively on perceived threats to it and at times act as its moral guardian. In this regard popular talk-back radio shows have a significant following, and have become a vehicle of popular discourse.⁵⁹ As recent studies of Middle Eastern crime and media representations of it have demonstrated,

⁵⁶ G.Tavan, *The Long, Slow Death of White Australia* (Melbourne: Scribe, 2005),p.1

⁵⁷ Gwenda Tavan, 'The Dismantling of the White Australia Policy: Elite Conspiracy of Will of the Australian People', *Australian Journal of Political Science*, vol.39, no.1, March, 2004, pp.109-125.

⁵⁸ P.Bell, *Multicultural Australia in the Media. Report to the Office of Multicultural Affairs* (Canberra: AGPS, 1993)

⁵⁹ About 80 per cent of the population listen to radio daily, with Jones and Laws capturing close to 40 per cent of the listening audience. P. Adams and Lee Burton, *Talkback: Emperors of Air* (Sydney : Allen and Unwin, 1997), pp.235-242

demonization of the Arab as the 'Other' in the media is linked to the survival of a threatened Anglo-Australian culture.⁶⁰

The rise of Hanson is another significant example of the 'residual appeal of White Australia', and informs this thesis on the nature of reactionary nationalism. A number of academics and commentators have variously tried to explain the Hanson phenomenon, its success, and who she represents. Peter Cochrane contends that 'Hanson is the voice of old Anglo-Celtic Australia, resentful of its displacement from the centre of Australian cultural life by the new ethnic Australians'.⁶¹ Alistair Davidson points to the Anglo-Celtic middle classes threatened by the rise of ethnic working classes, a permutation of Menzies' 'forgotten people'.⁶² But Hanson's constituency went beyond the 'forgotten' middle class. They came from the working class, upper middle class, lower middle class, unemployed, retirees, country and urban folk. While it is difficult to pinpoint the sociology of Hanson's constituency, a consistent ideological constituency can be identified, that is, old Anglo-Celtic Australia that has been alienated from the centre of Australian life. James Jupp considers that support for One Nation really goes to the heart of what people saw as old Australia, 'a series of time-honoured populist beliefs, many of which had been almost consensual a century before'.⁶³

⁶⁰ J.Collins, G.Noble, S. Poynting and P. Tabar, *Kids, Kebabs, Cops and Crime: Youth, Ethnicity and Crime* (Sydney: Pluto Press, 2000); S. Poynting et.al., *Bin Laden in the Suburbs* (Sydney: Sydney Institute of Criminology, 2004)

⁶¹ P. Cochrane, 'Race Memory', *Australian: Review of Books*, November, 1996 quoted in J.Stratton, *Race Daze*, (Sydney: Pluto Press, 1998), p.29

⁶² A. Davidson, *From Subject to Citizen: Australian Citizenship in the Twentieth Century*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 99

⁶³ Jupp, *White Australia to Woomera*, pp.134-135

Laurie Oakes, the political journalist, saw it similarly, as ‘old Australia talking to the new Australia’ and telling new Australia what it didn’t like about it.⁶⁴ Paul Kelly has written illuminatingly on the force of history impacting on One Nation, on the desire of One Nation to return to the past, the nation of yesteryear. He says Hansonism:

is an echo of our Anglo-Celtic origins; the claims of the once mighty bush to define the Australian legend ...Hanson is a nightmare that survived the dawn by bringing to life the ghost Australia had consigned to the past – that our nationhood, our pride, our federation, lay in the fusion of racism and nationalism which is why we for so long treated the Aborigines with injustice and our Asian locale with such apprehension.⁶⁵

Andrew Markus, in *Race*, describes the Howard/Hanson era as ‘a resurgence of conservatism’, where elements of this became aligned ‘with the traditions of race-based nationalism’⁶⁶ It is a perceptive analysis that resonates well with aspects of this thesis.

The Tampa episode represented an extension of Hansonism, a defence of Australian culture at the borders. A number of other works deal with the Tampa crisis and boat people, among them Peter Mares *Borderline* (2001), Anthony Burke, *Fear of Security* (2008) , David Marr and Marian Wilkinson, *Dark Victory* and Don McMaster, *Asylum Seekers* (2001). In the main they focus on Tampa, asylum seekers, and its wake, although Anthony Burke and

⁶⁴ Laurie Oakes, *Bulletin*, 19 May, 1998

⁶⁵ P.Kelly, ‘Hanson-Symptom of a Deeper Problem’, in N. Davidoff (ed) *Two Nations. The Causes And Effects of the Rise Of the One Nation Party* (Melbourne: Bookman Press, 1998) pp.92-93

⁶⁶ A. Markus, *Race*, (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 2001),p.x

Don McMaster echo aspects of David Walker's thesis of invasion anxiety. Burke maintains that the government's response to Tampa 'continued and intensified an historic Australian security approach that was coercive, exclusivist, anti-democratic and beholden to great power allies'. The 'red scare' of the Menzies era was replaced with Islamic terror politics that was on-going throughout this period.⁶⁷

In summary what this thesis adds to the literature is a conceptualization of the history of Australian immigration since World War II to the present day as being centred on the survival of Australia. The history of this period is interpreted through the lens of national survival. Settlement programs, intake numbers, and the adaptation and modification of these were based on the premise of preserving the cultural integrity of Australia and maintaining social cohesion. But it argues that Anglo-Australian culture, being at the very core of the Australian nation, the continued migration program, to some individuals and groups, signaled a threat to what they perceived as the very survival of their nation.

This is presented in the form of a broad dialectic centred on national survival, alluded to before. The tension between needing migrants and maintaining Anglo-Australian culture brought a synthesis in the form of evolving settlement policies. But the continued high levels of migration from non-white sources together with multiculturalism created a counter-dialectic that brought on the reactionary nationalism associated with Hansonism,

⁶⁷ A. Burke, *Fear of Security. Australia's Invasion Anxiety*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) p.209 ff.

Tampa and Cronulla. Its synthesis, as yet incomplete, was to be found in desire to restore Anglo-Australian culture to its hegemonic role.

As mentioned earlier, it rejects the historiographical approach that White Australia ended in 1972, and builds on those historians who maintain that White Australia is alive and well. In this it draws on inspiration from the analyses of Ghassan Hage, Ien Ang, David Walker and others in relation to spatial and invasion anxieties and fantasies of White hegemony, which have been alluded to above. While it draws on the survival anxieties of the nation in relation to the Other, this thesis is more than that, building it into the discussion on the management of immigration. Andrew Markus, in *Race*, speaks to the race politics of the Howard era. There is a debt here to his analysis of Hansonism and the groups that opposed Asian immigration, and the new conservative alignment based on race-based nationalism. But while he looks through the lens of race, this thesis takes this further by examining this phenomenon through the lens of Anglo-Australian culture and survivalism. Ann-Mari Jordens, Jean Martin and James Jupp have produced a body of fine work dealing with the impact of immigration policies on migrants, and the preparedness of governments to adapt their administration of migration. This thesis, while not contesting their conclusions, re-conceptualises their work to show the survival relations between government policy, migrant culture and the existing broader culture.

As the above suggests, in this thesis I utilise a range of primary sources to track the twin imperatives of survival, focusing on sources of popular comment like the media on the one hand and official reports and political commentary for government responses on the other.

It is worth highlighting the importance of primary source material to this thesis. Significant use has been made of primary source material from magazines, newspapers, parliamentary debates and collections of documents to arrive at conclusions on the status of migrants during the assimilationist phase. Extensive use of government reports on immigration and multiculturalism (some not that often used) form the backbone of the arguments related to the construction of multiculturalism, and government support for it as a means for national survival and nationhood. Radio transcripts from 2UE and 2GB, letters to editors, newspaper reports, magazines from interest groups such as the RSL, the ANA, the League of Rights are textured source material that informed my judgement and analysis on the nature of Anglo-Australian thinking. *Strike Force Neil*, intercepted SMSs, radio transcripts, newspaper reports and eye witness accounts, and my own eye witness account form the body of evidence on Cronulla. Further discussion these and other material follows.

The preservation of Anglo-Australian culture has diverse sources, some coming from historic groups associated with White Australian values such as the Australian Natives' Association (ANA) and the Returned Serviceman's League (RSL) and their magazines, but also from academics such as Geoffrey

Blainey, journalists, letter writers and writers on the media and radio presenters. Geoffrey Blainey became prominent in 1984 for his statements about preserving Anglo-Australian culture and its erosion with greater levels of Asian immigration, and this is found through his speeches, letters and his book at the time, *All For Australia* (1984)⁶⁸. Ron Casey's *Confessions of a Larrikin* (1989), despite its partiality, gives a good insight into the thinking of a media personality of the 'shock-jock' mould.

Some useful secondary accounts are treated, for the purposes of this thesis, as primary sources. Examples are Paul Sheehan's, *Among the Barbarians* (1998)⁶⁹ which provides a window into some of the jingoistic journalism of the period of the late 1990s. J.E.Menadue's account of the ANA, *A Centenary History of the Australian Natives' Association 1871-1971*(1971) is also useful as a primary source. Despite its partiality (Menadue was a past president) it gives a good account of aims of the ANA. The League of Rights is an organization dedicated to preserving White Australia but its activities are quite secretive, yet its views can be found in the *On Target* magazine and with associated publications and organizations.

Aspects relating to questions of post-war immigration and governance are similarly drawn from a range of sources, including memoir and government reports, including the likes of Jupp and Martin already mentioned, as well as Hansard. The views of Arthur Calwell, the first Minister for Immigration, are

⁶⁸ G. Blainey, *All For Australia* (Sydney: Methuen Haynes, 1984)

⁶⁹ R. Casey, *Confessions of a Larrikin* (Paddington/ Sydney: Lester-Townsend Publishing, 1989); P. Sheehan, *Among the Barbarians* (Sydney: Random House, 1998)

a useful starting point. His booklet, *How Many Australians Tomorrow*, urges the need for greater immigration because of a falling birth rate, but argued at the same time that the 'best migrant is the native born child'.⁷⁰ Calwell's speeches to parliament from 1944-47 are rich with information on the need for immigration but the right sort of immigrant. In *Be Just and Fear Not*⁷¹, his memoirs written in 1978, Calwell gives a fairly good account of his period as immigration minister, echoing these themes and how the migrant could best settle in Australia, and the fears he had for a polyglot nation and the destruction of White Australia. Other useful documentary sources on an Anglo-Australian society can be found in speeches by prominent political figures to Citizenship Conventions, and documents relating to the Good Neighbour Council, and the Immigration Advisory Council. P.Black, *The Poms in the Sun* (1965)⁷² is representative of the number of journalists and writers who point to issues with migrant survival in Australia, and is particularly interesting as it reveals problems associated with the most assimilable group, the English. A selected number sources vividly revealed the problems of adjustment of migrants and the failure of governments to provide an environment migrants could effectively survive in: *Pix* magazine, 11 April 1957 exposed language problems experienced by migrants; A Port Kembla and Berkely Vale High Schools in the 1960's had only about half the number of classrooms; Vicki Dellas, a Greek student and later teacher, gave

⁷⁰ A.Calwell, *How many Australians Tomorrow?* (Melbourne: 1945)

⁷¹ A. Calwell, *Be Just and Fear Not* (Sydney: Rigby, 1978)

⁷² P.Black, *The Poms in the Sun* (London :Michael Joseph, 1965)

an account of terrible and lonely it was being different; Guiseppe A's story gives a street-based account of the hostility to migrants under assimilation.⁷³

On the shift to creating a multicultural society documents relating to the Whitlam years provide the foundation. Whitlam's speeches and writings are significant here as is Al Grassby's speeches and his policy paper *A Multicultural Society for the Future*, 1973. Other very significant documents in charting the changing thinking on multiculturalism came from the Immigration Advisory Council's (IAC) Committee on Community Relations, *Final Report*, (1975), The Australian Ethnic Affairs Council's (AEAC) *Australia as a Multicultural Society* (1977), chaired by Jerzy Zubrzycki and the Galbally Report, *Review of Post Arrival Programs and Services to Migrants*, (1978). The Jupp enquiry, *Review of Migrant and Multicultural Programs* (1986) saw multiculturalism as the appropriate settlement policy but also considered there was a need to fit migrants into society structurally.

Some important, landmark reports of the 1980s have also been key documents in understanding the changing nature of multiculturalism. A discussion paper by the Advisory Council on Multicultural Affairs (ACMA), *Towards a National Agenda for Multicultural Australia* (1988), sets out the earlier considerations of the Hawke government in regard to cultural diversity

⁷³ Pix Magazine, 11 April 1957; CPD:HR, vol.38, 26 March, 1963, p.48; CPD:HR, vol.51, 19 April, 1966, p.936; Vicki Dellas in J.McCalman, *A Hundred Years at Bank Street: Ascot Vale State School, 1885-1985* (Melbourne : Ascot Vale Primary School Council, 1985); Guiseppe A's story., 'Comparing social life in the 1950's and 1970's' recounted to Morag Loh in M. Loh, (collected and edited) *With Courage in their Cases* (Melbourne F.I.L.E.F, 1980), pp.90-93

and social justice. The Fitzgerald Report, produced by a special committee of the IAC, the Committee to Advise on Australia's Immigration Policy, was also highly significant in shifting the direction of multiculturalism back to how it could benefit the nation.⁷⁴

On the nationalist resurgence, G.J. Merritt, *Pauline Hanson: the Truth* (1997), provides keystone information on Hanson and the One Nation Party, as do One Nation policy documents themselves, charting the angst about the direction Australia was heading under multiculturalism. The flashpoint at Cronulla has been tracked by newspaper reports, the Alan Jones radio show on 2GB in Sydney and some internet sites, such as ABC *Mediawatch* on-line, and the You Tube video, *Truth About Cronulla*.⁷⁵ Strike Force Neil, *Cronulla Riots, Review of the Police Response Media Vol. 2*, was very good in establishing the hour by hour confrontation, including the intercepted SMSs. Peter Barclay and Peter West (*People and Place*, Vol.14, No.1, 2006) witnessed the goings on and as journalists, and recorded it. These sources have provided very good evidence for establishing the heat of nationalist angst and an accuracy of events. In addition, I spent some time in Cronulla after the riots observing the aftermath, and that has been included in the last chapter.

⁷⁴ Government reports in this period provide the substance of policy change and response to immigration, and are integral to understanding the shifts in thinking.

⁷⁵ ABC *Mediawatch* "Front page: Jones and Cronulla", available at <http://www.abc.net.au/mediawatch/transcripts/s1574155.htm>>.2005; '2005 Cronulla Riots', Wikipedia, available at [www:/en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2005_Cronulla_riots](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2005_Cronulla_riots); *Truth about Cronulla*, You Tube, available at <http://au.youtube.com/watch?v=TEonIHWE>)

In order to explore both sides of the survival coin I have divided the thesis into two parts. The first part, chapters 1 and 2, look at the governmental approach to managing large-scale migration and their attempts to manipulate settlement policy to create a cohesive society and still maintain the existing nation. It analyzes the policies of assimilation, integration, and multiculturalism as both a means to incorporate migrants cohesively but also as strategies to maintain the cultural status quo. Chapters 3 and 4 then examine more closely how immigration was being received ‘on the ground’. Chapter 3 shows how sections of society responded to immigration, and their support for a more traditional Australia. It moves from some of the traditional groups supporting Anglo-Australian culture to outspoken individuals such as Geoffrey Blainey, journalists, shock jocks and the media in general. Chapter 4 tries to show the reaction in the community to the presence of growing numbers of Asian and Middle Eastern migrants, a reactionary nationalism, from Pauline Hanson, to Tampa, 9/11 and Cronulla. A mixture of primary and secondary source material is used here, but some material on Cronulla was collected by myself, and some reference to internet sites and You Tube videos made on Cronulla.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ *(For the purposes of this thesis I have used ‘the Australian way of life’ and ‘Anglo-Australian culture’ and ‘White Australia’ to mean essentially the same thing, and used the terms interchangeably. Although this is an over simplification of nature of these categories, it is the linguistic currency of historians writing in this area. Similarly, I have equated the terms ‘White nation’ and White Australian culture. They represent the traditional aspects of the nation, the Australian way of life and the bearers of that culture.)

1.

Survival strategies: Assimilation and Integration

Australia from the time of British settlement had wanted migrants. As the colonies developed into a nation pressure for a larger population grew. However, to do this and to maintain the integrity of its culture, entry and settlement mechanisms had to be put in place. The White Australia policy served this function for seventy years as an entry policy, by managing immigration in the interests of Anglo-Australian culture. When Australia adopted a mass migration program after World War II it was conscious of the need to have migrants fit cohesively into Australian society. It was aware of the problems other societies had with racial conflict and the development of ethnic enclaves, and wanted to avoid that. Above all it wanted numbers of migrants but not to compromise the Australian way of life. Initially assimilation or absorption was seen as the best model. It was the internal version of the White Australia policy (at a time when that policy was being challenged by a new post-war migrant ethos). Assimilation, like the White Australia policy, was essentially a function of White Australia. It was a settlement mechanism calculated to preserve the White Australian nation in the face of a changing complexion of society driven by a large influx of migrants.

While assimilation attempted to Australianise migrants and hoped they would adjust to the Australian way of life, it failed to deal with the deleterious impacts it had on migrants. It failed to create real social cohesion. Migrants were quickly becoming an underclass: often having the poorest paid jobs, living in poorer suburbs, and discriminated against because of poor English skills. It became necessary to adapt policies to ensure migrant retention. Government settlement policy evolved to allow migrants their identity and culture and a valid position in society. Migrant survival was seen as important for greater social cohesion. Under integration, as it was called, migrants could maintain their culture and would be absorbed into the larger community in their own time over a longer period. Yet this would not compromise the nature of Anglo-Australian culture. It was seen as a way of allowing migrants to survive, it would maintain social cohesion, and it would leave the Anglo-Australian culture intact.

This chapter shows how Australia attempted to devise and adapt immigration strategies that would maintain a cohesive society, that is, to maintain social harmony, avoid racial conflict, and allow migrants to fit into society, and yet allow the prevailing Anglo-Australian culture to remain intact. Assimilation, the preferred government option, failed to create the expected social cohesion. This chapter charts that, showing the inability of migrants to fit into a rigid assimilation structure. It then shows how government, the Department of Immigration and migrant groups evolved ways of trying to fit migrants into society, but in a more flexible way, more

centred on migrant needs. Loosely called integration, concessions were made to the maintenance of migrant culture but it was still expected that the migrant would fit into the larger culture. It shows how society adapted to the migrant, and how the migrant was expected to fit into society. In essence it was about how the nation could survive this process.

The Origins of Assimilation

Post-war immigration policy was driven by a desire to survive as a nation, to populate the nation as a defense strategy and as a means of nation-building. Australia had experienced the possible threat of Japanese invasion in 1942, and had to resort to looking to a new and powerful friend, the USA, to assist in its defence. The prevailing view was that 'Australia would perish, presumably by foreign invasion, if it could not increase the population base and hence its ability to develop defense manufacturing.'¹ In pushing the argument for large-scale immigration in 1945 Arthur Calwell was naturally enough influenced by the recent experience of war and the need to make our island secure. He said:

If Australians have learned one lesson from the Pacific war now moving to a successful conclusion, it is surely that we cannot continue to hold our island continent for ourselves, and our descendants unless we greatly increase our numbers. We are but 7,000,000 people and we hold 3,000,000 square miles of the earth's surface...²

¹ J. Jupp, *From White Australia to Woomera* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p.163

² A. Calwell, *CPD, HR*, 2 August 1945, Vol. 184, pp.4811-12

He considered the possibility of a ‘further formidable challenge within the next quarter of a century to our right to hold this land’. Moreover, he said that:

We may have only those next 25 years in which to make the best possible use of our chance to survive. Our first requirement is additional population. We need it for reasons of defence and for the fullest expansion of our economy.³

Population growth was deemed a necessity for the Australian nation to survive certainly after World War II when the mass migration program began, but its origins come earlier during the war itself. As early as 1942 Arthur Calwell had touted a mass immigration program, indicating to parliament that ‘Australia will not continue to be a white man’s country even if we win this war unless it has a population of approximately 40,000,000’.⁴ Calwell’s fear was that we would be over-run by a country like Japan, and cease to exist as an Anglo-Australian nation. It therefore became apparent that Australia should quickly increase its white population.

In May 1942 he had said that ‘it would be better for us to have in Australia 20 to 30 million people of 100% white extraction than to continue the narrow policy of having a population of 7,000,000 who are 90% British.’⁵ He was maintaining essentially a White Australia policy even though it broke

³ *ibid.*, pp.4811-12

⁴ A. Calwell, *CPD: HR*, 22 September, 1942, Vol.172, p.624

⁵ A. Calwell, *CPD: HR*, 1 May 1942, Vol. 170, pp.845-846

the traditional British parameters. He was also concerned about the slump in birth rates, and feared that existing British immigration could not arrest the decline. The seeds of assimilation came in his booklet *How Many Australians Tomorrow?* in 1945. In it he said:

If we want thousands of migrants we will have to liberalise our whole outlook towards non-British people and help them become assimilated to our way of life. We cannot pick and choose as we have done in the past...⁶

The report of the National Health and Medical Research Committee (November, 1944) indicated that natural increase in population would fall rapidly after 1950 and by 1980 deaths would exceed births. It was estimated that around 1970 population would peak at around 8 million. The only remedy for this, the committee urged, was to drastically increase levels of migration.⁷

In August 1945 Calwell spoke more urgently about populating Australia. He said that:

we cannot continue to hold our island continent to ourselves and our descendents unless we greatly increase our numbers...We have only...25 years in which to make the best possible use of our second chance to survive. Our first requirement is additional population. We need it for reasons of defence and for the fullest expansion of our

⁶ A. Calwell, *How many Australians Tomorrow?* (Melbourne: Reed and Harris, 1945), pp51-52

⁷ The report of the National Health and Medical Research Committee, November, 1944; see J. Zubrzycki, 'The Evolution of Multiculturalism', in C.A. Price (ed), *Australian National Identity*, p.118

economy. We can increase our 7,000,000 by an increased birth-rate and by a policy of planned immigration.⁸

Calwell hoped 'that for every foreign migrant there will be ten people from the United Kingdom'.⁹ Of course, this didn't happen, and he was faced with the prospect of fitting large numbers of European people into essentially a British nation. An inter-departmental committee, headed by the Minister for the Interior, J.S. Collings, was charged to look into Australia's population problems. In January 1944, it reported that:

So great is Australia's need for population that it cannot afford to be too exclusive as to the categories to be regarded as eligible for admission...the Commonwealth should be prepared to accept any white aliens who are considered likely to assimilate and contribute to economic development..¹⁰.

Already, the committee had recognized there would be large numbers of Europeans, and the concern was how they would fit into society. There was a search for acceptable assimilable types, conducted by a group led by Leslie Haylen (Labor MHR), reporting to the Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Committee. They found, apart from the British, the next most acceptable types were from Switzerland, Belgium, Holland, Denmark, Sweden, and Norway. Moreover, the committee found that:

⁸ Calwell, Ministerial statement to Parliament, *CPD:HR*; 2 August 1945, Vol.184, p.4911

⁹ Calwell, Ministerial statement to Parliament, *CPD: HR*, 22 November, 1946, Vol.189, p.508

¹⁰ Report of the inter-departmental committee, 1944, quoted in S.J.Butlin and C.B.Schedvin, *War Economy 1942-45* (Canberra: Australian War Memorial, 1977), p.704

the greatest danger to successful settlement of migrants in Australia is a tendency for them to group together in national units. This can be overcome if the new arrivals are greeted as Australians. They should be made welcome, not driven upon themselves by such epithets as 'Pommy', 'Soowegian' and 'Reffo', and then blamed for creating little colonies of their own.¹¹

This was clearly the foundation stone for assimilation. The Advisory Committee wanted an Australianisation of migrants, migrants that would easily fit in. It was of concern how well they might be accepted by the Australian public. Features that resembled Anglo-Celtic features therefore became highly desirable.

Calwell said that:

There had been some doubt about the quality of these displaced persons who had the blood of a number of races in their veins. Many were red-headed and blue eyed. There was also a number of natural platinum blondes of both sexes. The men were handsome and the women beautiful. It was not hard to sell immigration to the Australian people once the press published photographs of that group.¹²

Migrants had to live like Australians, had to be readily absorbed and assimilable. So it was important that Calwell found racial types that looked like Australians. They would be accepted by Australians more readily.

¹¹ Report of the Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Committee, 27 February, 1946; quoted in Zubrzycki., 'The Evolution of Multiculturalism', in Price (ed), *Australian National Identity*, p.122

¹² A. Calwell, *Be Just and Fear Not* (Sydney: Rigby, 1978), p.103

Initially, assimilation meant racial assimilation, but it came to mean cultural assimilation. The first people were Baltic but later Dutch, German and Scandinavians were accepted, primarily because they were visibly like Australians but also because it was believed there was not a great cultural difference, and they would be absorbed quickly. There was a propaganda campaign developed by the immigration committee that toured Europe in 1945. It considered that a publicity campaign be launched to acclimatise Australians for the arrival of large numbers of migrants. It wanted migrants to be made welcome, to be 'greeted as Australians'. The committee believed the 'greatest danger to successful settlement of migrants in Australia is a tendency for them to group together in national units.'¹³ If they were shunned by Australians and referred to by racial nick-names, they would not assimilate. Calwell says that is why he introduced the term 'New Australian'¹⁴. From the outset then, authorities were concerned that migrants assimilated, otherwise racial ghettos would develop, and racial bigotry would abound. The last thing wanted was racial conflict, otherwise the mass migration plan would be in jeopardy. This was Calwell's plan for the survival of the nation, quick assimilation or absorption of the migrant into the culture of the Australian nation to ensure racial homogeneity and unity.

¹³ Calwell, *Be Just and Fear Not*, p.100

¹⁴ Calwell introduced the term 'New Australian' to replace the offensive terms 'Balt' and 'Displaced persons' in the Federal Parliament, 15 October 1947.

Assimilation as settlement policy

The post-war period represented a turning point in immigration policy. Because of the desire for a large population the 'absoluteness' of the White Australia policy became blurred. No longer did authorities see migrants in terms of racial categories alone, but on how likely they were to fit into Australian society. White Australia, for them, had shifted in its meaning from white Britons to include white Europeans who were assimilable. In this context, the principle of assimilation had become far more important than the principle of racial homogeneity, which had been the hallmark of Australian society up to that time. The notion that a greater range of people could become a part of Australian society and the 'Australian way of life' was a departure from the racially exclusive thinking of the pre-war era. But there was never any question about the nature of Australian society changing. White Australia was a given to authorities and the public alike, it was the migrant who had to change, to be absorbed into the Australian community. Australia would survive as long as the migrant became absorbed into the White culture. Gwenda Tavan has argued that essentially White Australia and assimilation were one, 'reinforcing the conception of a core, white British race and culture that had to be protected'.¹⁵ The latter was a function of the former.

Migrants were wanted as numbers and as workers but not for their culture. New migrants in the Calwell era accepted employment for two years,

¹⁵ G.Tavan, *The Long, Slow Death of White Australia* (Melbourne: Scribe, 2005), p.201

wherever they were offered it and under whatever conditions, and were guaranteed housing. It was hoped that they would 'learn the language and the customs of the country while they decided where they would settle down'. After this time Calwell maintained about 80 per cent remained with their employers, bought houses, established families and then brought their relatives out to Australia.¹⁶

At the first Conference on Immigration between Commonwealth and State ministers in 1947, assimilability was a crucial issue:

Hitherto the policy of the Commonwealth Government has been to prevent foreign group settlements or the formation of alien blocs in Australia as far as possible...Schemes of large scale settlement might be advanced in the near future for the introduction of certain nationals, eg. from Holland or 'Scandinavian countries'.¹⁷

Once, any migrant group from any non-British background was considered unthinkable to governments, but aliens from desirable northern European countries were now seen as acceptable. The Dutch and Scandanavians were seen as close to Australians in racial and cultural type and assimilable. However there was still a rigidity in the way migrants were chosen. It was evident still by the mid-fifties that migrants were being selected on the basis of race, and assimilability into White Australia. In 1956

¹⁶ Calwell, *Be Just and Fear Not*, p.104

¹⁷ Conference on Immigration of Commonwealth. and State Ministers, 19 August 1947; quoted in J. Zubrzycki, 'The Evolution of Multiculturalism', C. Price, *Australian National Identity*, (Canberra: Academy of Social Sciences, 1996 p.124

a migrant had to be at least 75% European in race, and fully European culturally.¹⁸

Arthur Calwell, in an address to the Australian Institute of Political Science in 1953, reflected on the notion of ‘absorption’ or assimilation, saying that:

The poignant memories of depression and tyranny at the hands of Nazi and Communist dictatorships, the haunting fears for the safety of loved ones whom they may never see again, the thoughts of happier yesteryears, the doubts as to the extent to which they will be permitted to play and fill a satisfying part of the professional, industrial and social life of the community, and the feeling that they may not be able to preserve their own cultural values, all play a part in retarding absorption.¹⁹

The overriding element in this is that migrants be absorbed into the Australian community, while any angst about their past should be forgotten because it would be a stumbling block to this. Firmly in Calwell’s mind was the importance of assimilation to maintaining an Anglo-Australian culture. Moreover, he said:

All races suffer from a deep feeling of xenophobia and all are determined to preserve the homogeneity of their own people. ..Those who talk about a multi-racial society are

¹⁸ See Tavan, *The Long Slow Death of White Australia*, p.82.

¹⁹ Calwell, ‘The How And Why of Post War Immigration’ (Address to Australian Institute Political Science, 1953)

really talking about a polyglot nation...No matter where the pressures come from, Australian people will continue to resist all attempts to destroy our white society.²⁰

In the fifties a hard-line assimilation was pushed in order to protect the social fabric. People were fearful that the 'Australian way of life' would be compromised. In the 1950's cultural difference was not recognized at an official level. Migrant clubs and organizations were excluded from participation in official events and functions sponsored by the government. Prime Minister Menzies made this transparently clear in a speech to an Australian Citizenship Convention in 1950, stating that a migrant who comes here to settle 'becomes an Australian - a member of this community, a member of our nationality, a member of our brotherhood'.²¹ Harold Holt, the Minister for Immigration in 1952, asserted that immigration should not change the basic character of Australia, saying that Australia should remain essentially 'British in its institutions and the composition of its people'.²² The Governor-General, Sir William McKell (1947 -53) echoed similar sentiments, declaring that those 'deemed worthy to share in our Australian heritage'

²⁰ Calwell, *Be Just and Fear not*, p.117

²¹ Robert Menzies, address to Australian Citizenship Council, cited in T.Vlahonasiou, *Annual Citizenship Conventions, 1950-1953* (Master of Education thesis, University of Melbourne, 1983), p.1; see also A. Haebich, *Spinning the Dream* (North Fremantle: Freemantle Press, 2008), p.136

²² Harold Holt, Minister of Immigration, *Digest. Report of the Proceedings of Australia's Third Citizenship Convention*, 1952, p.10

should adapt to our way of life.²³ Sir William Slim, the Governor-General succeeding him, in 1955, wanted vigilance in immigration, fearing that:

Newcomers might form separate communities within the nation-foreign bodies in the flesh of the nation. Second, by sheer weight of numbers they might change almost completely the Australian national character and outlook in the course of time.²⁴

Australia was still considered a monoculture in the post-war years, and the fear was that migrants would form separate communities or through their numbers and impact of their culture the nature of Australian society would be significantly altered.²⁵

Migrants were discouraged from forming their own national cultural organizations and settling into enclaves which might have the effect of creating small national communities. This was foremost in the mind of the Department of Immigration. It discouraged the formation of national groups from the start in migrant hostels and holding centres, concerned they would become isolated from the rest of society, and may bring the troubles and problems of their homeland with them.²⁶ The controller of Migrant Accommodation Centres said in 1952, 'every endeavour is made at all times to stamp this practice out'. One boy scout group at a migrant centre had to be disbanded because it had developed into an ethnic group. The department

²³ William McKell, Governor-General, quoted in A. Markus, *Race. John Howard and the remaking of Australia* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 2001), p.15

²⁴ Sir William Slim, Governor-General, *Digest. Report of the Proceedings of Australia's Third Citizenship Convention*, 1955, p.6

²⁵ Markus, *Race*, p.15

²⁶ See A-M, Jordens, *Alien To Citizen*, p.148-149

followed a policy of non-exclusion, which meant all groups could belong to any organisation formed, not just an exclusive national group. In the name of assimilation migrant organisations were discouraged officially, and migrant newspapers had to print a third of their publication in the English language.²⁷ Naturalisation ceremonies became a key instrument of the policy, with much media attention focused on them. It was, after all, the definitive product of assimilation.

Australia was to be a ‘melting pot’, where the migrant had to melt and adopt the ‘Australian way of life’. Peter Heydon, the Secretary of Immigration, in 1964, stated the need for a significant level of assimilation:

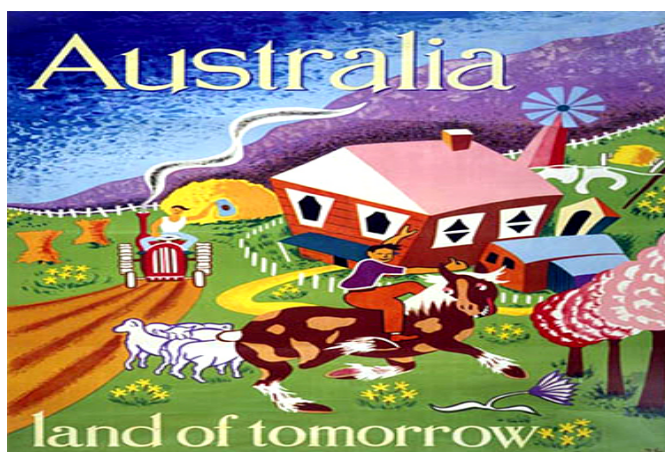
Australia’s immigration policy is based on the need to maintain a predominantly homogenous population. Many nations, as a matter of prudence, seek such homogeneity so as to avoid unnecessary social and economic problems. All permanent residents of Australia should be capable both economically and socially of ready integration into the community.²⁸

The Department of Immigration was very active in the practical aspects of assimilation. It had a public relations unit from 1955, which utilised the Australian National Information Bureau to promote migration, assimilation and Australia through promotional films and pamphlets. Australia was promoted overseas, stressing the positives of the Australian way of life

²⁷ See C. Panich, *Sanctuary? Remembering Post-war Immigration* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1988) p.177

²⁸ Heydon to JK Walker, 20 March 1964, NAA, series A446, item 1966/45348

alongside the happy faces of migrants. A number of posters appeared in several countries advertising the virtues of Australian life, often the wide open spaces, the freedom, and a good environment to bring children up in. The poster below is one that many migrants will remember as it had wide circulation.



Poster: 'Australia. Land of Tomorrow', Joe Greenberg 1948, Museum Victoria

Films such as *No Strangers Here* (1950), *Double Trouble* (1951) and *Mike and Stefani* (1952) were promotional films that attempted to show the benefits of Australia for migrants. *No Strangers Here*, in particular, portrays the life of a migrant family who have been assimilated into the Australian way of life, 'spreading the impression of immigrants as dull, carbon copies of Australians'.²⁹ By the late fifties the promotional film *The Way We Live* (1959) depicting the wonders of the Australian way of life was used to entice migrants here.

²⁹ A. Haebich, *Spinning the Dream. Assimilation in Australia 1950-1970* (Freemantle: Freemantle Press, 2008), p.128

The Good Neighbour movement gave Australians a chance to assist in the assimilation of migrants by being just that, good neighbours, and good citizens, by giving a helping hand to migrants. The formalisation of this into the Good Neighbour Council (1950-1978) provided a network across Australia dedicated to promoting assimilation and assistance to migrants. Photos and stories celebrating migrant life and the successful assimilation in Australia abounded, the Department of Immigration publication *Good Neighbour* and the national media being the main vehicles.³⁰ The Good Neighbour movement was very much an Anglo-Australian organisation dedicated to promoting an Anglo-Australian life style. It was a key instrument in the propaganda machine of assimilation.³¹ The real issues of migrant life were often left un-stated or swept aside. In many ways it defined migrants as assimilable in a far too romantic and naïve way, often overstating the success of migrants in Australia and their benefit to Australia.³²

Australian Citizenship Conventions (1950-1970) perpetuated the same rhetoric. Citizenship Conventions were an attempt to bring national attention to the way migrants were fitting into Australian society, their success stories and more generally was a propaganda vehicle for assimilation.³³ It was the keystone of assimilation, a convention of the nation's leaders in many fields coming together to celebrate Australia's progress in the absorption of migrants. It was notable that migrant organisations were not represented.

³⁰ A. Haebich, *Spinning the Dream*, pp.124-125

³¹ G.Tavan, ' "Good Neighbours". Community organizations, migrant assimilation and Australian Society and Culture' *Australian Historical Studies*, no.27, 109 (October, 1997) : pp.77-89

³² J. Martin, *The Migrant Presence* (Sydney :Allen and Unwin, 1978), p.28

³³ See A,Haebich, *Spinning the Dream*, pp.122-123

Obviously assimilation of migrants was the main issue addressed at conventions, but other issues discussed were: how migrants could save Australia money; how the work place was the ideal vehicle for socialisation; and how important it was for migrants to adopt the fundamentals of Australian life, including loyalty to the Queen, and our Christian and democratic culture.³⁴

Assimilation in many respects came down to propaganda directed at 'old' Australians as a means of getting them to accept 'new Australians'. In 1951 a pamphlet entitled *Why Migration is Vital to You* was distributed widely, showing how migrants were helping build the nation, through the Snowy Mountains scheme and their presence in the labour force. Assimilation effectively blinkered the recognition of differentiated cultures, creating a generalised perception of migrants as the 'other', as a mass that had to fit into Australian culture or be ostracized. Other aspects of social life flowed from this. Migrants reported abuse from Australians telling them to speak English or go home, and there were times when the way they spoke was ridiculed or parodied³⁵, and their food was denigrated. I remember, as a child in the sixties, hearing an older Australian refer to Italian cuisine as 'pigs' swill'. Another believed they ate grass, not understanding it was herbs they had picked. But some refused to even acknowledge that migrants had a cuisine at all, labelling it 'wog' food. Even the language describing migrants was

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p.136.

³⁵ S. Sheridan, 'The Australian Woman and her migrant others in the post-war Australian Women's Weekly', in *Continuum: Journal of Media and Cultural Studies*, Vol.14, no.2(2000): pp.129-130

couched in ethnocentric terms, designed to place the White Australian at the centre of the Australian nation and the migrant on the outer. The migrant was a 'Reffo', a 'New Australian', a 'wog' or a 'dago', until such time that he had divested himself of his culture. The lumping together of migrants as a class, and the failure to accept their different cultural identities, may have been protective of Australian culture, but it was something resented very much by migrants.³⁶ It was a socially brutal way of preserving the existing culture; but an acceptance of other cultures was perceived as an undermining of the dominance of the host culture.

The Reality of Migrant Assimilation

Assimilation assumed that the migrant would painlessly come to accept the Australian way of life. But life for some migrants was not as idealistic. Many Australians would not accept the newcomer unless they adopted the English language and Australian ways immediately. For some migrants this was a difficult process, and they were abused by Australians, told to speak English or go back to their homeland if they couldn't fit in. Moreover, they were seen as forming ethnic enclaves, a distinct threat to the Australian way of life. For migrants to assimilate in the fashion the propaganda desired there needed to be greater infrastructure, money and support. This didn't happen to the extent that it should have. Instead many migrants found themselves alienated from mainstream Australia. The greatest socializing or assimilating

³⁶ Martin, *Migrant Presence*, p.29

agent became the ethnic clubs, churches and organizations. Migrants saw this as better way to survive in an Australian social environment, and ultimately it provided a bridging mechanism for assimilation into the wider society. Eventually governments concurred, but it took time, seeing this evolution of assimilation as a means of creating a stronger nation, and something that wouldn't threaten the fundamentals of White Australian culture.

Assimilation during the fifties and sixties had not worked according to 'the best laid plans' of immigration ministers and governments. Migrants had not become dispersed throughout the community and seamlessly absorbed, but had congregated in national groupings in some suburbs of Sydney and Melbourne particularly, and maintained much of the culture of their homeland. The failure of assimilation to be an effective form of settlement policy became apparent in the thinking of various leaders and reports through the mid-fifties and sixties. Calwell knew from the beginning that there would be difficulties for migrants confronting the reality of assimilating. He said that among the many migrants who sought a 'new homeland here, there will be many who will never be fully assimilated'.³⁷ A 1956 Immigration department report, 'Cultural Integration of Immigrants', virtually conceded that that the form of assimilation envisaged at the beginning of the mass migration program was unworkable. Migrants had formed clubs and societies, and followed their own culture, but this did not negate the fundamental aim of

³⁷A. Calwell, 'The Why and How of Post-War Immigration', (Address to Australian Institute of Political Science, 1953)

an acceptance by migrants of Australian society and its political system.³⁸ Harold Holt in 1955 was concerned that more would have to be done to attract migrants to Australia, implying that assimilation was not an attractive settlement policy. Even the Prime Minister, Robert Menzies, an ardent Anglophile, had conceded by 1962 that in the future Australia would be different 'not detached from our old anchors, not detached from our old traditions, but enriched by new ones'³⁹. The absolutism of assimilation began to bend because it was necessary to have happy and well-adjusted migrants, not just have numbers for the workforce. The issue was finding another way to keep migrants here without compromising the culture of White Australia.

By the late fifties some of the rigidities of assimilation had started to thaw. There had been a small evolution. Migrant celebrations of their culture sat alongside those of British heritage and Australian culture. In 1957, at the Australian Citizenship Convention, migrants dressed in traditional costumes danced at a ceremony to represent Old and New Australians. And for the 1961 convention this had progressed to a history of the nation that included migrant contributions and achievements.⁴⁰ We were seeing signs of more inclusiveness in assimilation policy.

³⁸ W. Borrie, et.al., *The Cultural Integration of Immigrants* (Paris: UNESCO,1959), p.76; Australian Population and Immigration Council, *Multiculturalism and its Implications for Immigration Policy* (Canberra: AGPS, 1979), p.12

³⁹ Robert Menzies, Prime Minister, quoted in T. Palbas, 'Citizenship Conventions 1950-1963' in J.Jupp, *The Australian People: An Encyclopaedia of the Nation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p.110

⁴⁰ T. Vlahonasiou, *Annual Citizenship Conventions, 1950-1953* (Master of Education Thesis, University of Melbourne, 1983), p.350-352

Yet assimilation did pose social problems. While the media represented Australia as welcoming to migrants, some Australians did not accept migrants in the benign manner the media portrayed. William Dick's novel *A Bunch of Ratbags* portrays street gangs in working class Footscray on the look out for 'dagoes' and foreigners to beat up. Xenophobic attitudes permeated the youth as well as their parents. The 'bodgie' gangs often roamed the streets:

looking for some dagoes to do over. Frequently we staged bloodthirsty battles... doing over eight or so foreigners...my old man said[they] were trying to take over our bloody country. "We won't have a bloody country if they keep on bringing them out. We'll all be a mongrel bred race," he would say.⁴¹

This was a pugilistic nationalism that didn't really serve the interests of assimilation however much it asserted the right to dominance of Anglo-Australia.

John Murphy, in *Imagining the Fifties* (2000), described the attitudes to migrants in the fifties as far less benign than one imagined. He claims there was a 'heartless, blank indifference' to migrants.⁴² This contrasts with the open welcoming attitude that was portrayed by government in such promotional literature as the pamphlet *The Australian People*, which portrayed Australians as 'easy...to get along with' and 'will treat anyone as an equal, if his own friendliness and frankness are reciprocated'.⁴³ The hard-

⁴¹ W. Dick, *A Bunch of Ratbags* (London, Collins, 1965), pp.66-67

⁴² J.Murphy, *Imagining the Fifties* (Sydney: University of NSW Press, 2000), pp.162-163

⁴³ Australian News and Information Bureau, *About Australia* (Canberra: Department of the

line attitude came from a failure to accept anything different to White Australia, and anything that was different was perceived as a threat.

Jean Martin was one of the first academics to articulate the problems associated with assimilation policy. She maintained the rapid assimilation Australia had envisaged for the migrant was unworkable. It led to disruption of family life and isolation. She pointed to problems of juvenile delinquency, crime, suicide and mental health issues occurring in second-generation migrants in the USA by way of comparison, and as a salutary lesson. It was not as most Australians thought, that migrants would 'automatically and painlessly become 'good Australians'. A better way was through slower absorption, 'with the attendant maintenance of immigrant group and family life and a lesser degree of personal disorganization.'⁴⁴ In fact the reality of migrant settlement had been to form loose associations of nationals, sometimes in particular suburbs. Carlton in Melbourne became an area for new Italian settlers, where they might live for some years before moving to other suburbs. Carlton and other suburbs like it developed an Italian character, and didn't follow the assimilationist script. On the contrary, what was being demonstrated time and time again was the un-naturalness of assimilation and its failure to find traction among migrants. The journalist Keith Dunstan, writing in 1969, said of the Italians in Melbourne:

Interior, 1956), p.5

⁴⁴ J. Martin, paper to a summer school of the Australian Institute of Political Science, 'The Social Impact of New Australians', 1953; reproduced in H.E.Holt et al, *Australia and the Migrant* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1953), pp.65-74, 75-76.

A major reason why Melbourne is not dull and staid as it used to be is that it has become one of the major Italian cities of the world...It's not just Fitzroy, Carlton and Brunswick. The Italian flavour and feeling are seeping out everywhere.⁴⁵

Rather than the Italian assimilate to our way of life it appeared the other way around, that Australians were adapting to the gastronomic delights that Italian culture offered. He continued:

Our urban diet used to be the bottle of Fosters and the meat pie... Now, more and more, the urban diet is a bottle of red and a pizza...In Swanston Street, in Russell Street, in Lygon Street there is the Pizza Roma, Pizza Napoli, Pizza Venezia or whatever...Now one of the happiest sights of our town is to see the Italian cook tossing his pizza up high in a gentle arc towards the ceiling.⁴⁶

Nancy Phelan, the novelist and travel writer in 1970 described an Estonian community that had become Australianised or partly assimilated but still clung onto many of their traditional ways such as dress and folk dancing and language.⁴⁷ This probably was the archetypal structure for many national groupings in Australia. These communities were not assimilated, but naturally became integrated.

To many Australians in this time assimilation meant an enforced assimilation, involving education, work and the elimination of national clubs. Yet there was a proliferation of national clubs and associations, contrary to

⁴⁵ K. Dunstan, 'Italy in Suburbia', *Bulletin*, 3 May 1969

⁴⁶ Dunstan, 'Italy in Suburbia', *Bulletin*, 3 May, 1969

⁴⁷ N. Phelan, *Some Came Early, Some Came Late* (Melbourne: Macmillan, 1970), p.76ff

people's expectations. Every European country of emigration to Australia had at least one organisation representing it, some had several. These organisations became the centre of migrant social life, and the means of maintaining cultural traditions. Through these organisations individual, social and national identities could be maintained, and this was a far healthier way to adapt to Australian society. Martin, in a paper delivered to the Australian Institute of Political Science in 1953, maintained that the formation of group associations and organisations was not simply a replica of groups that existed in the country of origin. They have, she said:

An essentially adaptive character, they represent, not the transplanting to Australia of irrelevant European institutions, but an effort at co-operation among immigrants to cope with an unfamiliar situation.⁴⁸

Most of the various national associations and groups served the function of meeting the needs of the national group concerned, needs that occurred in the Australian context. Essentially they were adaptive, concerned with the life of the migrant within wider society.

Jean Martin also cites examples of where immigrants had become organized within the framework of Australian organizations. The Catholic Church by 1953 ministered to twenty-three nationalities through seventy-five priests of non-Australian background. The Returned Serviceman's League

⁴⁸ J. Martin, Speech to Australian Political Science Institute, 'The Social Impact of New Australians', 1953 in H.E. Holt, et.al., *Australia and the Migrant*, Angus And Robertson, Sydney, 1953, pp. 65-74, 75-76; see J.Lack and J.Templeton , *Bold Experiment*. (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp.95-96

and the Liberal-Country parties had immigrant branches. But even those that had not become sub-cultural organisations within mainstream Australian organizations, that is, national associations and organizations that stood alone, found themselves to be not only ‘centres of social life’ that would ‘provide a means of continuing the cultural tradition’ of the migrant but as welfare agencies that would assist with everyday problems such as employment, accommodation, legal issues and so on. There were some, of course, that did represent political agendas relating to their home country, particularly from communist bloc nations; others that promoted national cultures unashamedly, and others that promoted knowledge and appreciation of different cultures in Australia, international associations such as the New Settlers’ League and the All Nations Club.⁴⁹

Virtually all the migrant associations had the functions of promoting the life of the nationality they represented in an Australian context, or to provide links to the wider economy and society. Essentially they were survival bridges for the migrant between the cultures of the home country and that of Australia. This was a far more authentic means of adapting to an alien culture, one that took into account the migrants inner world as well as the external world. The official assimilation policy was quite unrealistic in wanting to sweep away all vestiges of the migrants past in a short space of time. Moreover, the migrant associations filled a necessary psychological gap. They provided a context in which self-esteem could be built up. Many migrants

⁴⁹ J. Martin, Speech to Australian Political Science Institute, ‘The Social Impact of New Australians’, 1953; Lack and Templeton, *Bold Experiment*, p.95

coming to Australia were presented with a difficult and sometimes hostile world, dealing with an unfamiliar people and culture. They were naturally building their own survival structures and strategies.

Much of the thinking at the time on assimilation was influenced by the Chicago School of sociologists who considered that migrant grouping in urban areas operated on the basis of zones of assimilation. Migrant settlement patterns could be schematized into a series of concentric circles. New migrants would settle in the inner circle, representing the crowded inner city suburbs, a transitional zone, and as they adapted to society or became more established they would move gradually in stages to the outer residential suburbs within a generation. In the outer circle you would find assimilated, ‘Americanised’ migrants. The Chicago School believed that this was an on-going succession, with newer migrants replenishing the inner city stocks that had shifted into the outer zones.⁵⁰

This social geometry seemed to describe what was happening in Australia too. Migrants were moving into inner city areas such as Leichhardt, Marrickville, Carlton and so on, and moving two or three times in a generation, which was far more rapid than the American experience. But while there was some similarity to the Chicago school schema, Australian patterns of settlement were not as simplistic. Clusters of migrant groups did not spread as systematically or as evenly as the concentric circle model

⁵⁰ The Chicago School, schematized by E. W. Burgess, R.E. Park, and R.D. McKenzie, *The City* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1967). They saw assimilation as occurring in a series of concentric circles or zones. The inner zone represented poorer inner city areas, and the zones extending outwards from it represented the movement of migrants towards the better residential areas and greater assimilation.

suggested. They moved instead along what has been termed ‘corridors of communication’⁵¹, drawn along social axes through ethnic ties, ‘work, land and better housing’. Some migrants of the same ethnic background shifted to new areas of settlement where there would be ethnic ties. Often it meant that ethnic communities re-established themselves in other suburbs, setting up community schools, churches, and clubs. Even where migrants dispersed into the suburbs there were still very strong community links, particularly among Jewish and Eastern European communities.

More often the Chicago succession was not observed, with many migrants by-passing the inner-suburbs and joining relatives and fellow villagers in the outer suburbs. Chain migration, which became a feature of Australian immigration, reinforced ethnic ties. Many migrants would often come from the same town or village, and old ties would be re-established in a new land. The point being that assimilation, rather than occurring in the way that people thought it would, was occurring in a more complex way, and not as a process of Australianisation as the Chicago School would have us believe.⁵² Rather, a process of adaptation was occurring whereby ethnic communities congregated together in smaller or larger clusters that may have had some geographical centre or location or a connection with a church or social club, or interspersed among the wider community but bonded by familial or club association. Often these groupings and bondings were maintained rather than being transitional in the Chicago model.

⁵¹ Lack and Templeton, *Bold Experiment*, p. 85

⁵² *ibid.*, p. 85

A study of the settlement patterns of Italians in the inner suburbs of Carlton and North Carlton in 1964 showed that they came from just a few regions, and often from a particular town or village in that region.⁵³ The social geographer I.H. Burnley confirmed that so-called ethnic suburbs that might be tagged as a 'little Italy' or 'little Greece' were more likely to be 'little Viggianos' or 'little Ithacas'.⁵⁴ This appeared to be occurring in later settlements, and in all capital cities, clearly demonstrating that the Chicago School notion of assimilation was a nonsense when applied to Australia. The opposite was occurring. Migrants were recreating not merely their homeland, but their hometown, friends and acquaintances. And this was also happening in second and third generation migrants.

Lack and Templeton speak of a different kind of 'assimilation' to the assimilation government authorities wanted. The reality of migrant life:

the resilience of ethnic ties, so graphically illustrated in migrants' settlement patterns, suggest a quite different and far more complex model of assimilation than that once assumed. Newcomers find their niche in their own way, in a society that is not homogenous, but complex, multifaceted and very dynamic.⁵⁵

Among even what one would consider the most pre-assimilated groups, such as the British, there were problems in adapting to the Australian social

⁵³ Frank Lancaster Jones, 'Italians in the Carlton area: the growth of an ethnic concentration', *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, Vol.X, No.1, April 1964; in Lack and Templeton, *Bold Experiment*, p.86

⁵⁴ cf. I.H. Burnley, 'The Ecology of Greek settlement in Melbourne, Australia', *International Migration*, Vol. 10, No.4, 1972; 'Greek Settlement in Sydney, 1947-71', *Australian Geographer*, Vol.13, No.3, March 1976; Lack and Templeton, *Bold Experiment*, p.85

⁵⁵ Lack and Templeton, *Bold Experiment*, p.86

environment. While many adapted happily there were difficulties in the first few years for some. Peter Black, a British journalist, had spent some time in Australia travelling around meeting with English people living in hostels in 1965, the result was *The Poms in the Sun*, written for the *Daily Mail*. The comments of the people he surveyed were quite varied. One woman, Mrs. Maggie Black, thought Australia was what you made of it, but thought she was better off here than in England. Another, a Mrs. Thorpe, was homesick, and she was only staying because of her husband. But she went on to describe the inadequacies in housing. She had been promised a housing commission home that had not eventuated, and found that rents were high. Often it was the culture of home they missed. The migrants at the Bunnerong hostel missed ‘coal fires, the nine o’clock news, English voices on the wireless, most of all their relations.’ Mrs. Thorpe missed the wind and the rain, the sun drove her ‘barmy’,⁵⁶

The purpose of the hostels was as a transition area that provided shelter to meet basic needs on a temporary basis. But many migrants stayed on much longer, including Mrs. Thorpe, who had been there for five years. They were reluctant to leave because it ‘cut the last link with companions who represented the old life.’ This is showing that at least for some British migrants the loss of old culture and life was traumatic, and people would try to recreate that anew in the hostel environment. Going out into the indifferent

⁵⁶ P.Black, *The Poms in the Sun* (London :Michael Joseph, 1965); extracts from P.Black, *The Poms in the Sun* (London :Michael Joseph, 1965) in Lack and Templeton, *Bold Experiment*, p.125

world of the Australian suburbs was to cast themselves adrift of the old life, unless they could maintain contacts.

The town of Elizabeth near Adelaide became an ethnic haven for Britons. About half the town's population of 35,000 was British. Black says that the town had a large number of clubs and associations, including the John Bull Society, the Caledonian Society, the Central Darts Club, the society of Yorkshiremen, to name a few. There were 52 clubs, many of which had temporary liquor licences. The town only had one hotel, the Elizabeth hotel, so these clubs provided that missing part of British culture in Australia, a drink at the local. The northern English migrants particularly, 'missed very much the pub as the social centre, and found small consolation in the meetings of whatever secret societies they had joined.'⁵⁷ Many whom Black interviewed spoke of a longing for things British, but the creation of the British enclave in Elizabeth had satisfied this to a certain extent, at least restoring their identity as a means of coping in a new society. This was a forerunner of integration.

For other nationalities, the every day experience of simply coping with the language, the new culture, and the isolation, could be traumatic. Philomena Lacorcia, an Italian migrant, faced the harsh reality of arriving in Australia and knowing no one. She came in 1953 expecting to live in a 'nice beautiful big house'. But instead the house was small and she 'cried and cried every day'. She said that:

⁵⁷ Black, *The Poms in the Sun*, extracts in Lack and Templeton, *Bold Experiment*, pp. 126-130

When I went to Lygon Street I couldn't find anybody who spoke Italian. Next door was an old woman who talked to me but I understood nothing... I went up and down Lygon Street, but I couldn't find a comb, and for three days we didn't have combed hair...It was very hard...And my husband didn't know anybody...I came from a nice little village in Italy, up on a hill with very nice fresh air. It was beautiful and sometimes I miss it...⁵⁸

Giuseppe A. said that Australians complained when Italians congregated together in bars and cafes talking in Italian. But he maintained this was really providing something that Australian institutions couldn't. He said that 'it was like an information service in the bars and cafes in Lygon St.'. They were places where Italians could go where they could be themselves. He said:

We like to talk our language and that was the only place you could speak. We were not speaking against anybody, only the soccer, politics, economy and families, how to go to the migration office, learning from people who'd been here longer than ourselves.⁵⁹

These Italian groups had created their own Italo-Australian cultural survival centres. They were creating natural settlement strategies, something later recognised by governments.

⁵⁸ Philomena Lacorcica, 'From Napoli to Carlton: I cried and cried every day' (1953) in Patricia Grimshaw et al., *Among the Terraces: Carlton people and Social Change* (Carlton: Carlton Forest Group, 1988), pp.23-24.

⁵⁹ Giuseppe A's story., 'Comparing social life in the 1950's and 1970's' recounted to Morag Loh in M. Loh, (collected and edited) *With Courage in their Cases* (Melbourne F.I.L.E.F, 1980), pp.90-93

But Giuseppe also spoke of the hostility to Italians and not fitting into the Australian way of life. The language and cultural barrier was a problem, and often they could be misunderstood. There were many fights between Australians and Italians as a result of the communication barrier. He said that in Italy you can say ‘hello’ to anyone in the street. But in Australia you could not just speak to a girl without it being taken the wrong way. ‘Maybe a girl is in the street, we say something and after they think we are bad’. Also he spoke about Italians getting into fights with Australians at dances when Italians asked Australian girls for a dance.⁶⁰ Clearly, there was a conflict between the desire for Anglo-Australian culture to prevail and the desire for the migrant to survive in a new land. This interplay could be quite brutal at times. Acceptance of the ‘other’ was the main stumbling block to social cohesion, and ultimately the survival of the nation.

The playground was not always a vehicle of assimilation but a place of alienation and prejudice, as Vicki Dellas testifies. She wanted to be just ‘one of the children’ but some of them were unkind to her because she was Greek. She said:

I remember sitting alone in the playground watching the children play and wishing I could be one of them. I felt so out of place and desperately lonely that there were many times I wished I wasn’t Greek.⁶¹

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.90-93

⁶¹ Vicki Dellas, a Greek student and later teacher, in J.McCalman, *A Hundred Years at Bank Street: Ascot Vale State School, 1885-1985* (Melbourne : Ascot Vale Primary School Council, , 1985), pp.58-61

But she developed her own survival strategies. Her abilities in Maths and sport made her very popular and she was often made captain of a team. After she had been at the school for some time she made friends, her closest friend was an Australian girl. But even then hostility was not far away. Her friend said her parents wouldn't let her play with foreigners.

Labor politician Leslie Haylen in 1960 saw that what Australia was providing for migrants was inadequate, and did little to facilitate the assimilation process. He said that the poor housing, insanitary conditions and manipulation by bosses and landlords were not the ways 'to encourage assimilation', and not the ways 'to encourage migrants to become part of the nation'.⁶² The popular media often wanted to show the success stories of migrants, but reluctantly admitted there were difficulties in migrants providing an adequate home for themselves. *Pix* magazine on 11 April, 1957 described some migrants as 'a lost race of despondent, neurotic misfits', casualties of the assimilation process, who had tried their lot in 'a new world and lost'. They were maladjusted, had language problems, and often carried psychological baggage.⁶³

The failure of assimilation policy to achieve its aims was most apparent in the schools. The increasing number of migrants put pressure on the school system, particularly the provision of resources. Funding for resources was not forthcoming from the federal government to the extent that was desired and

⁶² Leslie Haylen, Labor politician, cited in Ann-Mari Jordens, *Alien to Citizen: Settling Migrants in Australia* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1997), p.78

⁶³ *Pix* magazine, 11 April 1957, pp.11-12

brought some conflict between state and federal governments.⁶⁴ This created a crisis by the mid-sixties, where it was evident that more than just making migrants fit into the regular classroom was needed. Special migrant classes were needed to tackle the specific problems that migrant children had. But this went patently against assimilation policy. The expectations of some educationists were that children should speak English 'all day and every day, in every activity, in school and out of it'.⁶⁵ This was unrealistic given that natural fluency was in their mother tongue, and a lot of functional conversation at home would not be in English. A suggestion had been made that schools could benefit from migrant teachers was pooh-poohed at a regional conference of the Good Neighbour Council, unless they were fluent in English, had no trace of an accent and were educated.⁶⁶ This was a case of where the ideology of assimilation, I believe, railed against common sense. In education some migrant children were falling into the category of an underclass, and it was assimilation policy that was creating the situation.

This was apparent in two outer suburbs of Wollongong, which were known to be ethnic enclaves. At Port Kembla High School in the mid-sixties, for example, 40 per cent of children had migrant parents but there were not enough classrooms (only 18) to accommodate the 32 classes. Similarly at Berkley High, there were 14 classes without rooms.⁶⁷ And such statistics

⁶⁴ P. Jenkins, *Australian political elites and citizenship education for 'New Australians' 1945-1960* (PhD thesis, University of Sydney, 2001), p.118

⁶⁵ Primary School Headmaster, quoted in Martin, *The Migrant Presence*, pp.85-9

⁶⁶ Good Neighbour Council of New South Wales, Wollongong branch, 2 April, 1960. A parent had made the suggestion that migrant teachers could assist classroom teachers.

⁶⁷ *CPD:HR*, vol.38, 26 March, 1963, p.48; *CPD:HR*, vol.51, 19 April, 1966, p.936

prompted political intervention. In 1967 Gordon Sholes (ALP) pointed out the serious problems migrant children had because of their inadequate English. The pressing need for integrative services were again noted in 1968 by Gordon Bryant (ALP), pointing to numbers of schools that had high migrant intake, in some cases above 50 per cent of the school's population. In a Malvern school there were 500 Italian children and sixteen different language groups. He urged the Federal government to provide funding for up to 50 schools and 2000 extra teachers equipped to tackle migrant education issue.⁶⁸

But there were also problems of inadequate funding and resources for adult education too. The rising cost of English programs in the Adult Migrant Education Scheme (AMES) meant that they would be kept at a basic level standard of English, 'sufficient to meet daily requirements', yet numbers of migrants didn't complete the courses. In 1955 only about 40 per cent completed the first twenty lessons and about 18 per cent completed the full course, hardly figures that would have inspired the staunch assimilationist. The courses were only basic and did not provide in any sense a fluency in English. In one instance, a woman went on a hunger strike at Bonegilla over the failure to provide her husband with the level of English that would allow him to follow his career in teaching.⁶⁹ Some foreign language broadcasts were abandoned because of this belief, as it was expected migrants would speak English and not their native language.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ See Jordens, *Alien to Citizen*, pp.117-118

⁶⁹ Senator Henty, *CPD:S*, , vol. 22, 28 November, 1962, p.1531

⁷⁰ *CPD:HR*, vol.27, 2 June 1960, p.2242. Foreign language broadcasts by the ALP were stopped

Australia was not a socially cohesive nation at this point in time. Assimilation was not effective. WD Borrie, the demographer, writing in the 1950's, was aware of the inadequacies of assimilation policy as it stood officially. A rigid and quick assimilation into the Australian way of life he considered unworkable. He saw assimilation as meaning a process whereby the immigrant and the local population merged together, but not necessarily becoming one or alike. But he considered that there shouldn't be 'differences which will prevent immigrants from participating in the economic, social and cultural life of their country of adoption on a basis of equality.' Retaining a language was not an obstacle. He saw assimilation more as the 'narrowing down of the differences between migrant and native groups'. Moreover, he considered that this was a 'slow process which seldom reaches its final stage in one generation.' The influence of Borrie and others was important in allowing this more liberal definition of assimilation to take hold at a policy level in the form of integration.

As regards cultural maintenance, Borrie was forward thinking too. He said that:

With so many people of these separate nationalities now in Australia...observing their national customs, reviving their cultural arts and associating in other ways...It is necessary for Australians to appreciate that such activities can provide these migrants...with a sense of security...⁷¹

after protests to the Immigration minister

⁷¹ W.D. Borrie, 'New and Old Australians', in W.V. Aughterson (ed), *Taking Stock: Aspects of Mid-Century Life in Australia* (Melbourne: F.W.Cheshire, 1953), pp.173-186.

Borrie hit on a key phrase here, ‘a sense of security’. Migrants felt secure in bringing part of their culture with them, and without it they lacked a real sense of identity. Individual identity and cultural maintenance were linked; the migrant found it difficult to survive in an environment that asked him or her to assimilate quickly to the Australian way of life.

Assimilation had meant absorption into the Australian way of life, and underpinning this was the notion of equality with other Australians. But by the sixties many migrants had become marginalized socio-economically and were living in difficult circumstances. A survey done in Melbourne in 1966 found that ‘more than one in four Italian and more than one in five Greek households who arrived in Australia after 1960 were poor or marginally so after payment for housing’.⁷² The later Henderson report on poverty in 1975 considered that assimilation had failed migrants because it had not lifted a substantial amount of them above the poverty line.⁷³ Migrants were becoming an underclass, not just in their socio-economic status but in the lack of services provided for them in schools, health and welfare areas. A widening gap between migrants and the rest of Australia became apparent, which was an embarrassment for assimilation policy. James Jupp noted in

⁷² R.F. Henderson, A.Harcourt and R.J.A Harpur, *People in Poverty: A Melbourne Survey* (Melbourne: Cheshire, 1970), pp.126-127

⁷³ See R.F. Henderson, *Poverty in Australia: First main Report*, Australian Government Commission of Inquiry into Poverty, (Canberra: AGPS, 1975)

Arrivals and Departures that ‘for all the apparent influence of Australia’s 2,000,000 migrants they might as well not exist’. ⁷⁴

This issue was pronounced in the workforce, where a lack of understanding of the English language, despite one’s skills and qualifications led to an inequality of opportunity with English speaking workers. Whereas NESB workers took up lower paid less skilled jobs, British migrants took skilled jobs. Fairly quickly, NESB migrants became a serf class in some industries, while Australian workers became a ‘labour aristocracy’. For instance, a study by Helen Ware on the 1976 census revealed that job mobility was very low among migrants from Greece, Italy and Yugoslavia. ⁷⁵ Lack and Templeton maintain that:

NESB migrants, were not, even after a decade or so, distributed across the workforce in a manner proportionate to their numbers, and as might be expected if they were truly ‘assimilated’ as official propaganda claims...NESB migrants, skilled or unskilled, were greatly over-represented in certain sections of industry, especially the production areas of manufacturing and building construction, and were greatly under-represented in professional and administrative areas of the workforce. ⁷⁶

The disparity among migrants and the disparity between NESB migrants and the rest of the community became quite stark. NESB migrants, and in particular, women from these ethnic groups, were found to be in the

⁷⁴ J. Jupp, *Arrivals and Departures* (Melbourne Cheshire/Landsdowne, 1966), p.122

⁷⁵ H.Ware, *A Profile of the Italian Community in Australia* (Melbourne Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs,1981), p.57

⁷⁶ Lack and Templeton, *Bold Experiment*, p.82

lowest paid and least attractive jobs. In order to make ends meet in the household these women took on positions that in some cases could only be described as having ‘sweat-shop’ conditions. Maria Pozo, a Spanish migrant, described a cheese factory in Fitzroy in 1975 as being ‘the most inhuman factory you could imagine’. There were:

about 22 women in a little room. They have to change in there, they have to eat in there, they have to do everything in there...And I said, ‘Why don’t you say something, why don’t you do something? And they said, ‘It’s easy for you to say that from outside, but how can we say that? We don’t even know how to say it in English.’⁷⁷

The Jackson Committee (1976) found similar instances of exploitation and hardships in its inquiry into the manufacturing industry, clearly acknowledging that indifference to the migrant in the workplace was not acceptable in a democratic society. It stated:

Work which Australian males no longer consider acceptable is done by migrants and married women. Many tasks have been stripped of skill and made routine. ..Disoriented in a new culture they cannot pick and choose but invariably take what is offered them. Language barriers and different trade requirements will keep them classified as unskilled for years before seniority lifts them to a better job...Increasingly, the jobs all these workers are doing have been deskilled.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Maria Pozo, ‘Look I am a human being’, from *The Women and Politics Conference*, September, 1975, extracts from in Lack and Templeton, *Bold Experiment*, p.109

⁷⁸ Committee to Advise on Policies for the Manufacturing Industry (Jackson Committee), *Policies for Development of Manufacturing Industry, A Green Paper*, Vol. IV (Canberra: AGPS, 1976), pp.8-10

The divide between migrant and Australian worker sharpened as more unskilled migrant workers were marshalled into the manufacturing industry. Assimilation in an industrial sense, because of the structural imperatives of the time, became a nonsense. Effective survival strategies were needed that improved the migrants' position in society. The nation was floundering under a failed assimilation policy that had failed to extend valued notions of equality of opportunity to the migrant population in any significant way.

Decline of Traditional Source Migrants

One of the factors that heavily impacted on the evolution of settlement policy was the decline of traditional source migrants from Britain and Europe. This more than anything else led to a search for migrants outside of acceptable racial and cultural parameters. It created pressure to make changes to assimilation, to find a more amenable mode of 'fitting' migrants into society.

Migration policy underwent little change until after World War II where the composition of British migration shifted from 80 per cent pre-war to about 40 per cent in the period 1947-51 and about 30 per cent in the period 1951-61. In the latter period numbers from southern Europe exceeded that from Britain. Natural increase in population had declined from 1.47 per cent in the period between 1947 and 1960 to 1.23 per cent between 1960 and 1969. In the same period net immigration figures had declined from 1.04 per cent to 0.83 per

cent. Consequently the impact on Australian population growth meant a decline from 2.54 per cent to 1.99 per cent.⁷⁹ This was the first time the figures had fallen below the magical 2 per cent that Calwell had wanted. But the trend was downward and with some of the traditional sources drying up, other non-European sources had to be considered to maintain the desired level of population increase. In particular, the Italians and Greeks were not arriving in sufficient numbers. Still the largest number was coming from Britain, but it was not enough. Jupp says that:

one of the major factors in the shifting emphasis away from Britain and Europe has been the decline of differentials between Australian and European living standards. As a 'rule of thumb' it has been asserted that a gap of at least 25% in measurable incomes is necessary for mass migration from one country to another to be sustained.⁸⁰

Preferred European groups such as the Dutch, Germans and Scandinavians had dropped markedly. Of the Southern European migrants, there was a swing to unskilled and peasant background, particularly among Italian migrants.⁸¹ Clearly, economic circumstances in Europe were favouring the middle classes, and it was going to be those who were economically alienated who sought a better life in Australia.

Significant in the net drop in numbers was the returnee rate. A study done on the reasons for departure of migrants from Australia in 1967 found

⁷⁹ T. Skinner, *Australian Demographic Trends* (Canberra: AGPS, 1997), p.1.

⁸⁰ J. Jupp, *Immigration*, (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1998), p.88

⁸¹ S. Castles (et. al), *Mistaken Identity* (Sydney: Pluto Press, 1988), p.53

that while economic circumstances may have not figured prominently in their reasons for returning to their homeland, it did so indirectly, and that the main reason was related to general acceptance in the community. British returnees interviewed on the *Fairstar* in 1967 considered that they had felt dissatisfaction in Australia in relation to 'standard of living, and the degree of personal adjustment required in regard to climatic conditions, feelings of homesickness, and 'the stark and featureless appearance of the countryside'.⁸² The main reasons for returning were a 'dislike of the way of life in Australia, coupled with a degree of social isolation and a longing for family and friends'⁸³. Another group of returnee Britons interviewed in 1966 considered that inadequate social services were the key reason for their departure, and despite their level of assimilation in the community they felt economically insecure.⁸⁴ In another study, European returnees considered the 'difficulty of language, recognition of qualifications, and difficulty of making friends with intellectual equals, were predominating causes.'⁸⁵

The rate of returnees had been an issue for some time during the sixties, and it was hoped that by altering policy it would stem the flow of migrants back to Europe. Investigations by R.T.Appleyard in 1961 and the Vernon Committee in 1965 convinced the government that the rate of returnees was much higher than they had been prepared to admit, far in excess of the 6 per cent they had stated, and they urged immediate policy and administrative

⁸² Jupp, *Arrivals and Departures*, p.32

⁸³ *ibid.*,p.33

⁸⁴ *ibid.*,p.33

⁸⁵ Mrs.Cullen, in Jupp, *Arrivals and Departures*, p.19

changes.⁸⁶ Price (1962) contended that the returnee rate was about 6 per cent to 14 per cent for British migrants and approximately half that for other migrants.⁸⁷ By 1966 the issue of departure rates of immigrants became significant enough for the Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Council to begin an inquiry into the matter. Subsequent findings by Price⁸⁸ reveal that the departure rate for German, Dutch and Italian was far higher than first thought, at about 20 per cent for German, 18 per cent for Dutch, and 13 per cent for Italian. Martin says that:

Departure rates of this order could not readily be reconciled with an unalloyed faith in migrant assimilability. Though not excessive by international standards, they took on a serious aspect to a government now threatened with a shortage of migration sources.⁸⁹

Government reaction to settler loss was to increase the levels of migration sharply in the late sixties to cover the falls in net migration. In 1968 the target migration population was 160,000-the highest it had been for over a decade. In a report to the Immigration Minister, Billy Snedden, in 1968, the Immigration Planning Council revealed that the net gain from immigration had not reached the magical target of 1 per cent since 1957, and considered that it was important to continue with high rates of immigration to foster

⁸⁶ R.T. Appleyard, 'Determinants of return migration-a socio-economic study of United Kingdom migrants who returned from Australia', *Economic Record*, vol.38 (September); Vernon Committee, 1965; see Martin, *The Migrant Presence*, p.30

⁸⁷ C.A.Price, 'Overseas Migration to and from Australia 1947-61', *Australian Outlook*, vol.16, (August 1962): p.168.

⁸⁸ Price(ed), *Australian Immigration: A Bibliography and Digest*, No.2, 1970, 1971, A9-10

⁸⁹ Martin, *Migrant Presence*, p. 31

Australia's 'tremendous capacity for growth and development.' The losses had to be covered but, in addition, there was to be 'sustained and expanded effort in the field of recruitment...and special measures implemented of an economic and social character to attract migrants, and to hold them once they arrived in Australia'.⁹⁰ Concern for migrant welfare became a key issue, because it was believed that migrants would only stay in the country if it gave them a relative level of prosperity equal to the general population. The report continued:

...Australia had lost much of its former attractiveness in terms of the employment, wage levels, and the standard of living it could offer compared with those of the migrants' home countries, or of Australia's competitors.⁹¹

Consequently, Australia had to do more to attract migrants. The Immigration and Planning Council said that:

Action was necessary to improve Australia's attractiveness through the taking of measures that might appear, *prima facie*, as special privileges to new settlers, but in reality did nothing more than off-set the disadvantages at which re-settlement placed migrants vis-à-vis indigenous Australians. Continuation of these disadvantages placed severe limits on Australia's ability to attract and hold migrants.⁹²

⁹⁰ Immigration Planning Council, *Australia's Immigration Programme for the period 1968 to 1973* (Canberra: AGPS, 1968), p81

⁹¹ *ibid.*, pp. 83-84

⁹² *ibid.*, pp. 83-84

Herein lay the next evolution of immigration policy, an adaptive process that began to see the welfare of the migrant as important to the welfare of the nation, and I believe, the survival of the migrant as important to the survival of the nation.

The government, keen to turn the situation around, made concessions such as offering assisted passage to other national groups. Agreements for assisted passages for a number of European countries were concluded- Holland, Italy, Spain, Greece, Belgium, Germany and Yugoslavia. By 1967 the Department of Immigration began looking at migrants from the Middle East, and in 1968 the assisted passage scheme was extended to Turkey, under an agreement negotiated with them. A 'whitening' process began to emerge during the period of liberalisation of the White Australia policy from 1966 onwards. It allowed a review of what national groups would be suitable for immigration to Australia, and it was done with a confidence that the dominant Anglo-Australian culture would remain intact.

Yet at the same time Australia sought the agreement with Turkey, it was telling prospective British migrants that Australia remained, as Sneddon had it, 'essentially a British nation with British ways and traditions, and we want to keep it that way.'⁹³ This basic aim had been there earlier under Opperman who considered that whatever changes in immigration occurred it was fundamental that 'a homogenous population will be maintained'.⁹⁴ It was a case of wanting it both ways: to maintain the flow of migrants irrespective of

⁹³ B.Sneddon, quoted in Markus, *Race*, p.17

⁹⁴ H.Opperman, quoted in Castles, *Mistaken Identity*,p.52

their culture; and to, at the same time, maintain the Australian identity. We appeared to be somewhat schizoid in our attitude.

The evolution of integration

The pressure to alter immigration settlement policy grew steadily. Billy Snedden, the Minister for Immigration, made an announcement in 1968 indicating that immigration settlement policy had shifted from assimilation to integration, but it was more rhetoric than substance, recognising what was already occurring in the community. The impetus for the government announcement came from the Immigration Planning Council's report to Snedden in 1968 showing that immigration targets had been falling below the expected rate since 1957, and concluded that special measures were needed 'of an economic and social character to attract migrants and to hold them once they arrived in Australia'.⁹⁵ The Department of Immigration also played a fundamental role in the shift away from assimilation, according to Ann-Mari Jordens.⁹⁶ The volume of non-British migrants the department had to deal with in the post-war period up to the sixties had caused its 'institutional culture to change profoundly'. It no longer saw its function in settlement policy to assist migrants to become an 'indistinguishable part of an essentially British community'. By the 1970's the department was using migrants and

⁹⁵ Australian Immigration Planning Council, 'Australian Immigration Programme for the period 1968-1973, report to the Minister of Immigration (Canberra: AGPS, 1968), p.81

⁹⁶ Jordens, *Alien to Citizen*, pp168-170

migrant organizations in the ‘social integration of their communities’. The department believed that the so-called ‘absorption’ of migrants lay beyond the work of bureaucrats and do-gooder volunteers. Access to services became a key issue, such as translator services, interpreters, and a greater sensitivity to the needs of migrants came as the institutional culture changed. Migrant organizations were seen as the most appropriate vehicle for dealing with social and welfare problems of their ethnic groups, given they operated within a linguistic and cultural community. Increasingly, the work of the Good Neighbour Council was seen as ineffective because it was largely an Anglo-Australian dominated group attempting to deal with cultures they knew little about.⁹⁷ A consequence of this was to deal with migrant organizations directly, such as the funding of social workers and support for welfare through ethnic organisations. The Grants-in-aid scheme became more tailored to the needs of migrants through the mediating influence of ethnic organisations. The shift as Jordens sees it was essentially:

The task of managing the political acceptability of the migrant presence and of creating bridges between migrants and the mainstream community, which had for so long been left largely to the Good Neighbour Councils, was increasingly delegated to ethnic organizations and the bureaucracy.⁹⁸

The Department of Immigration set up a National Groups Liaison Unit

⁹⁷ *ibid.*,p.168-169

⁹⁸ *ibid.*,p.169

in 1968, which was indicative of this evolving policy. It enabled the department to deal with migrant organizations in a direct way. Migrant organizations were questionnaire-ed as to the role of the organization and the facilities and services it provided (including social welfare, counseling, English language classes and interpreting or translating services). Further dialogue between these organizations and the department began in 1970 to ascertain how the department could assist the needs of the different ethnic communities. Significantly, Jordens says, this was the ‘first formal signal to ethnic communities that government saw them as having a major role to play in fostering the integration of their members into Australian society’.⁹⁹ Certainly it was a radical departure from the stance that operated in the fifties and early sixties. In a letter that accompanied the surveys, the department recognized the work that these organisations were doing in the management of settling migrants and the preservation of cultural traditions, which the department now considered to be ‘a bridge rather than a barrier between the former homeland and the adopted land’.¹⁰⁰ But what is evident was the department had begun to recognise the failure of assimilation, at least in relation to services, and went about compiling lists of migrant organizations and services that may be useful to the migrant.

In 1964 the Department of Immigration removed the term ‘assimilation’ from documentation and replaced it with ‘integration’. There was a parallel change in terminology in aboriginal affairs. The South Australian Department

⁹⁹ Jordens, *Alien to Citizen*, p.163

¹⁰⁰ *ibid.*, pp.163-164

of Aboriginal Welfare considered that ‘integration’ meant that Aborigines could be accepted in their own right as a part of the wider community.¹⁰¹ Concepts of integration appeared to be gaining some traction in some departments and in the government at the time, but with variable acceptance. There was also a push towards greater acceptance of the rights of indigenous people in Australia and in the western world, which fostered a change in thinking in many parts of governance. It did take some time for such terminology to be accepted by the culture of the department. Jordens cites examples of where officers of the department appeared to take little interest in or were unaware of ‘international and academic debate’ on assimilation. But it was the introduction of the Grants-in-aid scheme, the Telephone Interpreter Service, the migrant data collection system, the translating and interpreter services, the creation of ethnic welfare officers and other aspects that created the governmental structures instrumental in fostering integration.¹⁰² It was a case of structure creating reality. This made it much easier for the department to deal with migrants directly on their own terms, and be less dependent on organizations such as the Good Neighbour Council and Citizenship Conventions. This enabled them to provide funding for ethnic communities and improvement in settlement services, paving the way for a fuller integration. The shift then to a fuller concept of integration, came in fits and starts, out of the practical structures created by the department to deal with the

¹⁰¹ P.M. Rice, working with the South Australian Department of Aboriginal Welfare, said the term had some currency in Aboriginal matters but it did take some time to flow on to other departments such as Immigration, in Jordens, *Alien to Citizen*, p.152

¹⁰² Jordens, *Alien to Citizen*, p.153

migrant presence. But it was department practice well before politicians articulated it to the general public as policy. Even into the early seventies the term integration lacked any universal definition. WG Kiddle, an officer working in the department, said that the term came to mean anything from a milder form of assimilation to multiculturalism.¹⁰³

But the overall political goal of integration was still assimilation. Billy Snedden, the Immigration Minister at the time of the announcement of the changes, said:

We ask particularly of migrants that they be substantially Australians in the first generation and completely Australians in the second generation¹⁰⁴

But he considered that this was not the beginning of a multi-cultural society, that the eventual goal was absorption into the mainstream of society, into the 'Australian way of life'. The 'Australian way of life' was sacrosanct. Moreover, he said in 1969 that:

Integration implies and requires a willingness on the part of the community to move towards the migrant, just as it requires the migrant to move towards the community...[but] we must have a single culture. Those of a different ethnic origin must integrate and unite into our own community so that it will become a single

¹⁰³ *ibid.*, p.153

¹⁰⁴ B. Snedden quoted in Castles, *Mistaken Identity*, p.52

Australian community...we are essentially a British nation with British ways and traditions, and we must keep it that way.’¹⁰⁵

He was very much concerned with the dangers of cultural pluralism getting out of hand. He said that we had had no history of it, and though it may develop to a limited extent in Australia, it was not something to be imposed on any nation or people. He said Australia:

had no history of social pluralism...it may develop gradually and to a limited extent but that is not something to be forced on any nation or any people, including Australians. That would not be social pluralism but social masochism...no nation in history has set out to develop a multi-racial society.¹⁰⁶

Snedden’s comments did reflect the abiding fear at the time that mass migration would bring about the demise of the Australian identity and that a hasten slowly approach should be taken in settlement policy. The incoming cultures must ‘must integrate and unite into our own community so that it will become a single Australian community’, and essentially be a British culture. Integration meant eventually swallowing up the alien cultures. In essence, the survival of our nation depended on a dominant single culture, where other cultures would eventually be subsumed or wither away.

¹⁰⁵ B.Sneddon, quoted in Markus, *Race*, p.17

¹⁰⁶ B.Sneddon, quoted in Castles, *Mistaken Identity*, p.52

This was echoed by the McMahon government in the early seventies, on the eve of multiculturalism. McMahon stated in a press release on the 4 May, 1972, that:

The aim of immigration policy remains the preservation in Australia of an essentially homogenous society. That means a society that does not have permanent minorities of people with extremely different backgrounds that will resist integration in the long term. We want one people, one nation. This is no racist policy based on bigotry or prejudice. On the contrary, it is a policy having the valid social objective of preventing the frictions and tensions which can come from permanent enclaves and a divided nation.¹⁰⁷

Settlement policies were used to find an effective means of incorporating migrants into society. This was not a cut and dried approach, and adjustments were made. They had to satisfy two goals, maintaining the supply of migrants and retaining them, and ensuring their social cohesion within White Australian society. This was a difficult task. Assimilation had failed to accommodate migrants effectively, evidenced by the number of returnees and their witness to an alienated existence in Australia. Integration attempted to resolve some of the issues of migrant identity, but it didn't go far enough. Identity was at the heart of migrant survival, and pointed the way to another approach, multiculturalism.

¹⁰⁷ William McMahon (PM), Press release on Immigration, 4 May 1972, NAA, series A1838, item 1531/1 part 10.

2.

Multiculturalism:

unifying strategy or threat to the nation's survival ?

During the 1960's Australia was struggling to incorporate migrants harmoniously into the nation. It was evident that assimilation had not worked that well even though it remained the final goal of immigration policy. Bridging assimilation and integration worked better, allowing migrants to retain their cultural identities for a period of time. Great concern centred around how migrants might survive in Australian society. There had been a growing returnee rate and migrants were steadily becoming an underclass. More had to be done to keep migrants and to create a cohesive social environment they could fit into. The Whitlam government came to power in 1972 with a brief to do this, making the first political steps to create a multicultural society. However, over time, multiculturalism developed with bi-partisan support. It was seen by many as a strategy to ensure the nation's continued survival by creating unity within diversity. It was a departure from the previous strategies that emphasised absorption of migrants into White Australia because it gave intrinsic recognition to other cultures. However, the diversity of cultures it proposed had to operate within the context of the wider Australian society and culture, Anglo-Australian culture. Some like Ghassan

Hage have argued that multiculturalism merely became a more complex form of White Australia, a White multiculturalism.

This chapter shows how multiculturalism as a policy was something that evolved over a period of time, generally seen as having its beginnings in the period of the Whitlam government as the ‘family of the nation’, flourishing under Fraser with emphasis on cultural expression, consolidated and conceptualised as part of our nationhood under Hawke, and seen in the context of engagement with Asia under Keating. It then shows how the Howard government retreated from multiculturalism, adopting the concept of ‘mainstream’ instead, and moving back to a quasi-assimilationism. It also shows that these developments in multiculturalism operated firmly within the context of White Australia, that cultural diversity and Anglo-Australian culture had to sit side by side cohesively. It also shows some of the strident reactions to it, by those who believed that multiculturalism was not a unifying agent but divided the nation and brought a rift to the social cohesion of our society.

Whitlam government 1972-75

The evolution of multiculturalism came in fits and starts, through political trial and error, and often subject to partisan political perspective. The Whitlam Labor government (1972-75) initiated the shift to multiculturalism, believing that it was not enough that migrants simply fit into society, as in the old assimilationist model. Whitlam attempted to incorporate migrants as an integral part of Australian society. This meant renegotiating the racial and cultural tenets of society, namely, White Australia, to create a more

inclusive settlement model. Underpinning the Whitlam philosophy was not simply the desire to create a racially equal society but to develop a socially just society. But while it provided for migrants to take their place as equals in society, this was to be within the context of the existing Anglo-Australian culture. That was the constraining caveat, the given. Migrant culture could be expressed and flourish but it could not exist in isolation from the dominant culture of White Australia.

Whitlam's concern to make migrants equals in society began with the ending of the White Australia policy in 1973, and later, with legislation to eliminate racism in 1974. Labor, as an opposition party, had retreated from its long-term support for a White Australia policy when, under the new leadership of Whitlam, it announced the dropping of a racially based immigration policy in 1971. Whitlam contended that it was not philosophically correct for a democratic socialist party to discriminate against people on the basis of race, and that Australia could not survive internationally if it had a racist immigration policy.¹ This ideology paved the way for a non-racial state and, consequently, the development of multiculturalism. In December 1973 Al Grassby, the new Minister for Immigration, announced the reforms to immigration policy ending discrimination on the basis of race, colour and nationality. At the same time he announced the basis for multiculturalism with his 'family of the nation' statement. It was underpinned by the United Nations Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ratified by the Whitlam government in 1973), which guaranteed freedom of social and cultural expression. Loosely based on the Canadian model of cultural

¹ Gough Whitlam, ALP Federal Conference 1971; Speech to Federal Youth Conference 1971; see A-M. Jordens, *Alien to Citizen* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1997), p.221

pluralism, Grassby set out the basic premises for multiculturalism in a speech in 1973. In it he said that there would be an ethnic pluralism where each ethnic group 'is permitted to create its own commercial life and preserve its own cultural heritage indefinitely while taking part in the general life of the nation'.² He explained it in the following way in an interview:

In a family you have the short and the fat, the tall and the thin, and the blonde and brunette, and everything you can think of. They are all one family...Everybody was embraced in the family of the nation.³

At this point Grassby's notion of how the 'family of the nation' would work was rather vague. It was something that would evolve over time. But the fundamental ideas were there. Grassby said that Australia was culturally cosmopolitan, yet it had a national identity that excluded migrants. He asked where was 'the Maltese process worker, the Finnish carpenter, the Italian concrete layer, the Yugoslav miner or...the Indian scientist?' Where did these people belong in the Australian nation? Were they to be 'non-people-despite their economic contribution to our well-being'? That needed to change. In a just and democratic society there should be an equal place for every one, he maintained. Migrants should not be denied an equal place in a future society. Moreover, he considered the 'social and cultural rights of migrant Australians' as 'compelling as other Australians'. The full realization of rights would, he thought, bring 'reduced conflicts and tensions' between migrants and

² Al Grassby, *A Multi-Cultural Society for the Future*, Immigration Reference Paper, (Canberra: AGPS, 1973), p.3

³ Grassby interview, 30 June 1994, in M.Lopez, *The Origins of Multiculturalism in Australian Politics 1945-75* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2000), p.202

Australians.⁴

While not worked out in practical detail, the ‘family of the nation’ concept became an effective metaphor for how the nation was to be reconstructed with its many cultures. In an address to the Fourth National Summer School on Religion (18 January 1973), he explained his vision of a new society. He stressed that the family of the nation should be ‘strong in its diversity’, but also indicated that the family would be strong in its unity. He also spoke of Australia in the 1970’s as developing a new nationalism ‘so that we can build quality of life at home and act as a catalyst for progress in the region of the world in which we live’.⁵ This new nationalism was the development of a tolerant, liberal democratic society that could show a non-racial society to the world, an overriding theme of the Whitlam government. Again, a few months later, to a convention of Greek students he reiterated the unity in diversity motif. He said that:

...we are all Australians...Those who look to the past will only see the differences between us. They will see only the inevitable differences of history, culture, language, tradition and customs of people drawn, in varying numbers, from more than 60 countries...we look to the future, rather than the past, and to a community of purpose in which we all must share. We look to the evolution of a distinctive new life style to which all sections of the Australian people will contribute fully.⁶

Grassby’s speeches were often attractive political rhetoric outlining the

⁴ Grassby, *A Multi-Cultural Society for the Future*, pp.3-6

⁵ A.Grassby, *The Political Practicalities of Environmental Action* (Address to the Fourth National Summer School on Religion, ANU, Press Release, Minister of Immigration, 5/73, 18 January 1973)

⁶ A.Grassby, ‘The Australian People’ (Address to Fourth National Convention of Australian-Greek Students, Melbourne, 15 May 1973); *Neos Kosmos*, 7 June 1973.

broad contours and direction of policy, but policy detail was left to the creation of government committees and reports. One of these, the Immigration Advisory Council (IAC) report in 1975, by the Committee on Community Relations, defined the approach to migrant settlement policy. It asserted that cultural pluralism was a part of the Australian nation and should be accepted as such. It rejected assimilationism as irrelevant. It recommended a 'multicultural approach to community relations', stating that:

community relations in Australia should be restructured in terms of a concept of pluralism which denotes the willingness of the dominant groups in Australian society to promote or even encourage some degree of cultural and social variations within an overall context of national unity' ⁷

This was certainly a very different conceptualisation of the nation from assimilation but not that far removed from integration. It meant ethnic groups could express their culture on a permanent basis, but within the context of the existing nation. Integration had expected that the cultural variations would disappear over a generation or so. Multiculturalism became the model for how the nation would survive and manage cultural diversity into the future.

In 1973 Al Grassby had set up migrant Task Forces with a purpose to ascertain what problems existed and the direction government should head. Migrant community participation on these Task Forces became crucial to their success and acceptance by migrant communities. Walter Lippmann, a prominent writer and advocate of migrant rights, and a part of the Victorian

⁷ Immigration Advisory Council (IAC), Committee on Community Relations, *The Final Report* (Canberra: AGPS, 1975), p.48

Task Force and the Immigration Advisory Council, was typical of the articulate migrant voice at this time that became instrumental in the push towards multiculturalism. In 1971, he said in an address to a Political Science Conference on Migration that:

In the last ten years we have gingerly shifted the accent from migrant assimilation to migrant integration, recognizing that there are differences in cultural background...which distinguish most migrants...from the majority of Australians... Coming to a strange land, they find security and a sense of belonging in their own national or ethnic group. We are doing ourselves a great disservice in not openly recognizing them and utilizing them for development of a multicultural society.⁸

Moreover, he urged Australians not to expect migrants to ‘renounce part of themselves’, their ethnicity, in the belief that migrants should be acculturated.⁹ Through the Task Forces government policy framework began to emerge, articulating Grassby’s ‘Family of the Nation’ and providing substance for an emerging multiculturalism.

Australia had rejected the policies of assimilation and integration because of the damaging effect they had had on the loss of migrants, and their impact on migrant identity and dignity. Migrants were perceived as an underclass. Ultimately it was bad for the nation as a whole. Al Grassby said in 1973 in *A Multicultural Society for the Future* that without a multicultural society, NES migrants would inevitably become a non-people. The ‘Family of the Nation’ concept was a means of promoting the survival of such groups in

⁸ W. Lippman, (Speech to Australian Institute of Political Science Conference on Migration, 1971) quoted in S.Castles et al., *Multiculturalism and the Demise of Nationalism in Australia*, (Sydney: Pluto Press, 1988), p.63

⁹ *ibid*

Australia, recognizing distinctive cultures rather than dismissing them.¹⁰

Jerzy Zubrzycki, a political scientist, claimed that there was a need for the nation to deal with migrants and non-migrants on an equal footing. He pushed equality of opportunity, claiming that this could only occur:

Within the framework of cultural pluralism but not structural pluralism and that ethnicity, ethnic ties, and primordial ties play a major and constructive role in this nexus.¹¹

Zubrzycki was a prominent member of various committees, particularly the influential Immigration Advisory Council¹² that formed the basis of government policy. Persistently he had pushed a settlement policy of cultural pluralism, and it was he along with a number of other multiculturalists, such as Jean Martin, another academic, who formed the intellectual backdrop of evolving multicultural policy. In the *Final Report* of the Immigration Advisory Council in 1973 the recommendation was for a post-war immigration program with some sociological underpinning. Research had shown that the returnee rate of Italian migrants between 1960 and 1969 was 33 per cent, and up to 70 percent from some regions.¹³ In interviews conducted with migrants, many saw home as their nation of origin and Australia only as a temporary stay in order to earn enough money to return

¹⁰ Al Grassby, *A Multicultural Society for the Future*, Department of Immigration (Canberra: AGPS, 1973), p.4

¹¹ J.Zubrzycki, 'Towards a Multicultural Society in Australia' in M.Bowden (ed.) *Australia 2000: The Ethnic Impact* (Armidale: University of New England, 1977), pp.130-131

¹² The Immigration Advisory Council consisted of prominent migrant stakeholders and academics writing in the field of immigration, and was influential in forming government policy.

¹³ S.L. Thompson, 'Italians Who Returned Home', Appendix G, in Australia: Immigration Advisory Council, Committee on Social Patterns, *Final Report: Inquiry into the Departure of Settlers from Australia* (1973) (Canberra:AGPS, 1974), pp.55-56

home at a later date. Also there was very little evidence of assimilation in many. In many cases, Italian migrants maintained an Italian identity and culture despite having lived in Australia for many years. This added to the argument for a change in settlement policy. The report concluded that migrants were needed:

not just to augment the consumer market and develop expanding industries, but to develop a more diverse and viable society and to sustain cultural and social minorities whose contribution is needed to enrich any community...¹⁴

Consequently cultural pluralism was seen as the basis for community and ethnic relations, not only as a means of stemming the returnee rate but in developing a social order that was viable, devoid of conflict and the alienation that migrants suffered.

But there was another aspect to developing multicultural policy apart from cultural diversity. Labor social policy was generally driven by a broad socialist agenda. Immigration in the 50's and 60's had created a labour market that structurally disadvantaged the migrant. A large proportion of migrant jobs were in less-skilled areas of manufacturing, often in heavy industries. Migrants were becoming proletarianised, whilst there had been an embourgeoisement of Anglo-Australia at their expense. A gross inequality pervaded the socio-economic landscape of the sixties and early seventies that the new guard of Labor wanted to redress. In a speech to the Citizenship Convention in 1970 Whitlam said that:

¹⁴ Immigration Advisory Council:Committee on Social Patterns, *Final Report*, p.15

...for too long most Australians have assumed that the benefit of migration is all on one side...We have thought it natural that migrants should be content to fill the lowest paid occupations, accept the costliest housing in the ugliest areas, send their children to the most crowded and least equipped schools, and accept worse health services, worse public transport facilities, fewer recreational amenities and poorer urban services than are available in many European cities and centres from which they have come.¹⁵

But not all agreed that multiculturalism was a way forward for the nation. Not all thought it would be our national salvation as Grassby did. With Grassby's departure as Minister for Immigration after the racist campaign against him in the 1974 elections, it appeared that the development of multiculturalism might be cut short. Groups such as the White Australia Policy League vowed to 'destroy any Minister who did not support the White Australia' and to 'campaign against any other Minister who supports policies like Grassby's'.¹⁶ It was clear that many did not share the multiculturalists' vision. This was evident even in the government, where very few had embraced multiculturalism. To many, multiculturalism cut across the basis of Australian society. Clyde Cameron, who replaced Grassby, was anti-racist but still clung to assimilationist values, stating in a parliamentary debate that 'people who seek to come to Australia must be able to be assimilated into the Australian culture'.¹⁷ Most were still integrationist or liberal assimilationist in their thinking. In fact, multiculturalism as Labor policy did not eventuate until 1979.¹⁸

¹⁵ Gough Whitlam, (Speech to Citizenship Convention, 1970).

¹⁶ A. Grassby, *The Morning After* (Canberra: Judicator, 1979), p.116

¹⁷ C. Cameron, *CPD:HR*, 20 March 1974, p.645

¹⁸ L.Oakes, *Labor's 1979 Conference, Adelaide: The Laurie Oakes Report* (Canberra: Objective Publications, 1979), pp.153-156

Instead, a pragmatic multiculturalism became the *modus operandi*. Governmental assistance became the chief vehicle for the Whitlam government to promote migrant interests. Migrant welfare and education were foremost among them, but by 1975 a number of services had been provided-translation and interpretation services, Telephone Interpreter Service, the Grant-in-Aid Scheme, among them. As well, the various committees and task forces provided a basis for the voice of migrants. Between May and June 1975 radio stations 3ZZ, 3EA and 2EA were set up specifically to cater for migrants, to establish the communication of migrant culture. The Racial Discrimination Act (1975) was crucial in promoting migrant rights and stemming racial conflict.

Labor, in its time in office, adopted a migrants' rights approach to settlement. It was keen to improve the position of the migrant in society, and was particularly concerned about the under-privilege of many. It had made inroads into reconstructing society to reduce racial prejudice. It removed discrimination on entry policy, but it had not developed a settlement policy that would serve migrant interests fully, despite the clamor by Grassby and ethnic activists. Multiculturalism had had its genesis in the Whitlam period but it flourished under the Fraser government.

Fraser government 1976-82

The Fraser government was the first government to embrace multiculturalism and develop it. It concurred that the survival and maintenance of migrant culture was important, and extended the work of the previous government. But it did so from a Liberal stance, funding organizations and providing state intervention until groups and organizations

could stand alone. It was not concerned with the class and social justice issues as much as Labor was. The Fraser government took the view that ethnic diversity was a good thing, and that our community could benefit from a diversity of cultures through the sharing of ideas and cultures. In an address to the Institute of Multicultural Affairs in 1981 Malcolm Fraser suggested that national cohesion could be best attained by accepting ethnic difference within the framework of shared values within a democracy, emphasizing tolerance and harmony.¹⁹ The government recognised the need to support ethnic organizations as this assisted in the integration of migrants into the broader society. The suppression of culture had not worked in the earlier assimilationist phase, and the Fraser government wanted to legitimize cultural diversity in terms of liberal philosophy. It believed that the maintenance of ethnic organizations and communal structures were essential to the survival of ethnic identities. These structures provided services to the ethnic communities that governmental structures could not necessarily provide. In this respect, as Rubinstein outlines in 'Immigration and the Liberal Party', immigration policy under Fraser took a classic Liberal stance, in so far as it saw multiculturalism as growing naturally from ethnic structures and organizations.²⁰

Much of the work done on multiculturalism devolved to ethnic committees and councils that provided the framework for government policy. The Australian Ethnic Affairs Council (AEAC) in 1977, chaired by Zubrzycki, had a considerable influence. In its publication *Australia as a*

¹⁹ Malcolm Fraser, *Multiculturalism: Australia's Unique Achievement* (Address on Multiculturalism to the Institute of Multicultural Affairs, Canberra), 1981

²⁰ C. Rubinstein, 'Immigration and the Liberal Party of Australia' in J.Jupp and M. Kabala, *The Politics of Australian Immigration* (Canberra: AGPS, 1993) pp.149-150

Multicultural Society the Council probably gave the clearest definition of multiculturalism to that point in time, and why that position should be adopted. It said that:

Our goal in Australia is to create a society in which people of non-Anglo-Australian origin are given the opportunity, as individuals or groups, to choose to preserve and develop their culture, their languages, traditions and arts-so that these can become living elements in the diverse culture of total society, while at the same time they enjoy effective and respected places within one Australian society, with equal access to the rights and opportunities that society provides and accepting responsibilities towards it.

21

Thus, the AEAC outlined a proposal for a social structure that focused on the maintenance of ethnic culture and traditions and emphasizing equality of opportunity. But it made it clear that multiculturalism would operate within the broader society. It was never envisaged that cultural diversity would operate separately from the rest of the nation. A cultural apartheid along the lines of South Africa or, to a lesser extent, Canada, was never entertained. Migrant cultures would become ‘living elements in the diverse culture of total society’ and would ‘enjoy effective and respected places within one Australian society’. This conceptualization appears little different to Grassby’s ‘family of the nation’. Each member of the family is different culturally, but they belong to one family and live within the context of that family.

The Australian Ethnic Affairs Council(AEAC) narrowed down three key elements of multiculturalism-social cohesion, cultural identity, and equality of opportunity and access. *Social cohesion* meant that ethnic communities should

²¹ Australian Ethnic Affairs Council, *Australia as a Multicultural Society* (Canberra: AGPS, August 1977), p.16

fit harmoniously into the wider community, and that neither the ethnic communities should suffer nor the nation itself as a result. This, according to the report, meant that social cohesion ‘embraces the concept of ‘social good’, the use of social resources towards the well-being of the society as a whole rather than sectional groups within it’.²² *Cultural identity* meant that each ethnic group should have its own identity, ‘a sense of belonging and attachment to a particular way of living associated with the historical experience of a particular group of people’. It meant more than ‘polka and pasta’, the expression of cultural identity that had been accepted in earlier times. For most migrants, personal identity was very much tied up with national, cultural, and religious background. *Equality of opportunity and access* was an acceptance that migrants should have equal rights with other Australian citizens and not become an underclass.

The report concluded that a basic need of the human condition is a sense of belonging. Maintaining cultural identity was a means of preventing the ‘insecurity, homogenization and loss of personal identity of mass society’.²³ Ethnic communities gave migrants a sense of belonging and continuity with their homeland, a safety net that allowed them to cope better in a new society. But belonging to a particular ethnic group did not detract from ‘wider loyalties to community and country’. Moreover, it believed that ‘in a cohesive multicultural society, national loyalties are built on ethnic loyalties’.²⁴ This is a clear delineation of the direction of multiculturalism in the 1970’s and beyond.

²² *ibid.*, p.4

²³ *ibid.*, p.16

²⁴ *ibid.*, p.16

By 1982 the AEAC had merged with the Australian Population and Immigration Council (APIC) to form the Australian Council on Population and Ethnic Affairs (ACPEA). In its publication, *Multiculturalism for All Australians*, it reasserted the three elements of multiculturalism and said that multiculturalism was the best model 'for relations between all ethnic groups in Australia and as the preferred basis for government ethnic affairs policies'.²⁵ It also argued that Australian institutions should reflect multicultural aspects of Australian society. As such, cultural heritage and languages should be preserved, equality of opportunity should be pushed in the work place, and that this become a part of mainstream services 'rather than the creation of a separate network of services'.²⁶ It said that:

A central issue in the public debate on multiculturalism is the extent to which all people in our plural society enjoy equality of opportunity in all aspects of life, including occupational advancement and access to power.²⁷

In addition it espoused the view that equal responsibility should be shared between migrants and Australians for participation in society- Australians should accept migrant minorities and migrants should accept a loyalty to Australia. This would work to preserve and develop cultural heritage, but a two-way responsibility meant that an equilibrium in the nation would be maintained. The nation could only work effectively if this balance were maintained.

This document became a bi-partisan blueprint for multiculturalism. It

²⁵ Australian Council on Population and Ethnic Affairs (ACPEA), *Multiculturalism for all Australians* (Canberra: AGPS, 1982), p.2

²⁶ *ibid*, p.24

²⁷ *ibid.*, p.21

adopted four principles of multiculturalism: social cohesion; cultural identity; equality of opportunity and access; and equal responsibility for, commitment to and participation in society. It claimed that ‘the four principles present a coherent framework in which we can build a viable multicultural Australia’.²⁸ It continued:

Despite the number and diversity of ethnic groups in this country, Australian society has been one of the most harmonious and stable societies in the world...the openness of our society allows Australians to hold many different and subsidiary identities and loyalties without detracting from our national unity.²⁹

The ACPEA’s *Multiculturalism for All Australians* is subtitled ‘Our developing nationhood’. It essentially is that, an attempt to reconstruct nationhood out of a society that had begrudgingly accepted migration, and to incorporate migrants into the nation. As a statement of nationhood it assumed a lot of things, some of which could be addressed by government initiatives, but a lot centred on the good will of mainstream society and the effort of migrants to embrace Australia. Underpinning the whole nationhood statement was the notion that Australia had to achieve these goals if it wanted to be a socially cohesive nation.

During the Fraser period multiculturalism flourished, ethnic cultures were not just tolerated but were publicly and ideologically celebrated, and the ‘the terminology of “multiculturalism” dominated discussion’ on the nature of

²⁸ *ibid.*, p.12

²⁹ *ibid.*, pp.14-15

society.³⁰ The Galbally Report (1978), *Review of Post-Arrival Programs and Services to Migrants*, was the seminal government commissioned report of this period, and reflected this changed ideology. It was to take into account a number of different reports, including the Bailey Report into Social Welfare for migrants (to look into the social problems of migrants) and provide the basis for government policy. It recognized that cultural diversity existed in society, and migrants should be supported but not at the expense of wider society. It incorporated the thinking of the Australian Ethnic Affairs Council (AEAC) and the Australian Council on Population and Ethnic Affairs (ACPEA), and alongside their contributions, provided the principal policy document of the Fraser era. It declared that:

Migrants have the right to maintain their cultural and racial identity and...it is clearly in the best interests of our nation that they should be encouraged and assisted to do as they wish. Provided that ethnic identity is not stressed at the expense of society at large, but is interwoven into the fabric of our nationhood by the process of multicultural interaction, then the community as a whole will benefit substantially and its democratic nature will be reinforced.³¹

Galbally framed the rights of migrants and the right to maintain cultural identity in terms of the nation. It is in the 'best interests of our nation' he says, that migrants have 'the right to maintain their racial and cultural identity'. But Galbally also saw that the expression of national identity had limits. If pushed too far then it could destroy the nation at large, it had to be an integral part of

³⁰ Markus, *Race*, p.26

³¹ F.Galbally (chairman), *Review of Post Arrival Programs and Services to Migrants* (Canberra: AGPS,1978), p.104

the nation. Galbally-ism was essentially a way of allowing cultural freedom at the same time as maintaining social control. There was always the constant fear that unbridled cultural diversity could lead to a diminution of national identity. Intellectually Galbally got around this problem by making cultural diversity, and thus multiculturalism, a part of the fabric of nationhood. Galbally also considered that 'the community as a whole will benefit substantially and its democratic nature will be reinforced'.³² By this he meant that multiculturalism would offer society some net gain, enriching mainstream culture, and strengthening democracy. Migrants would add to the nation through their skills and culture. Democracy was reinforced by the migrant presence because the real test of the strength of democracy was in being able to accept migrants as equals.

The report's guiding principles centred on the provision of services and programs for migrants in order to develop equity with other Australians, and to promote multiculturalism.³³ A raft of reforms appeared during the Fraser period and many extended into the Hawke period. English language facilities and programs were enhanced, monies for welfare services increased, migrant organisations received funding on the basis of needs and their ability to deliver services to their respective communities. Migrant Resource Centres were established to provide information and assistance. This saw the formation of the Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs (AIMA), the establishment of SBS radio and television, English language teaching, translator services, grant-in-aid programs to ethnic groups and a range of other agencies, such as migrant resource centres, and ethnic schools. The Australian

³² *Ibid.*, p.104

³³ Galbally (chair), *Review of Post-Arrival Programs*, pp.3-5

Institute of Multicultural Affairs was set up as a research and educative organization that would provide a better understanding of Australia's cultural diversity. The Australia Council encouraged multicultural programs in the media, primarily through SBS. However, whilst there was a significant change in the Fraser period through the implementation of the Galbally Report, it was not necessarily matched by spending. There was only \$52 million spent over three years, and whilst it was a start, the funding didn't match the rhetoric poured out at the time.

Whilst Liberal philosophy maintained a position of self-reliance generally, it did adopt a more interventionist strategy after the publication of the Galbally Report in 1978. The Fraser view after a time became the entrenched view of the nature and scope of multiculturalism, despite its critics on the left and right. Some critics of the left saw the Fraser/Galbally view of multiculturalism as being primarily a celebration of cultural pluralism but ignoring the structural socio-economic problems of Australian society.³⁴ On the right, academics such as Lachlan Chipman and Frank Knopfelmacher argued that Fraser's multiculturalism was expensive and socially divisive.³⁵ Their view was that the nation would best survive with greater social unity, and that multiculturalism should be dispensed with altogether.

Hawke government 1983-1991

When the Hawke Labor government was elected in 1983 it made a

³⁴ A. Jakubowicz, in Rubinstein, 'Immigration and the Liberal Party of Australia', in J.Jupp and M. Kabala, *The Politics of Australian Immigration*, p.150

³⁵ L.Chipman, 'The menace of multiculturalism', *Quadrant* 24(10): (October, 1980), pp3-6; F. Knopfelmacher, "The case against multi-culturalism" in R.Manne(ed), *The New Conservatism in Australia* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1982)

policy statement on immigration in its famous accord with the union movement. It said there was agreement that 'the future well-being of this country depends on the acceptance of the cultural, social and economic implications of a multi-cultural Australia'.³⁶ By this civil pact it indicated that that survival of the nation depended on the acceptance of a multicultural society and that the apparatus of the nation should be refashioned in accordance with its multicultural nature.

The Hawke government generally continued the multiculturalism of the previous government. That is, it accepted that migrant identity should be fostered rather than repressed, and that migrants be incorporated into the nation, but added dimensions of access and equity began to take on greater significance. Many migrants were in the lowest paid jobs, in labouring, and in manufacturing, and there were cultural and social barriers to improving their lot in society related to language, education, and socio-economic status. It believed that it was not enough to have cultural equity, more had to be done to achieve social equity for migrants. This entailed providing facilities, opportunities and welfare that raised the living standard of migrants.

One of the immediate changes the Hawke government implemented to create this greater social equity was in immigration intake. Greater significance was given to family reunion, and refugees were selected from a greater number of nations. Preference for English speaking migrants was also downplayed under the new Immigration Minister, Stewart West. It had been a sore point for a long time among migrant groups that they were denied entry because of a lack of basic English. West made a ministerial statement in

³⁶ Accord between the ALP and the ACTU, 1983

parliament on 18 May 1983 arguing that there was a need to 'remove to some extent an inbuilt bias in favour of highly skilled English speaking' migrants. From West's perspective he wanted to create an unbiased multicultural society. There had long been discrimination in favour of English speaking migrants, and it was a matter of rectifying it.

The Liberal opposition, however, saw family reunion and the dropping of the preference for English speaking migrants as a threat to the historic Anglo-Australian nation. They saw it as undermining the British character of Australian society. The reaction in parliament from the opposition to the changes was hostile, claiming that there was an anti-British bias to the Labor government. While the Fraser government had been quite liberal in its approach to multiculturalism, the re-formed Coalition in opposition was far more conservative. The opposition shadow Immigration Minister, Michael Hodgman, caused some rupture to a bipartisan stance, claiming that the new policy was too inflexible, 'more discriminatory and certainly an anti-English speaking migration policy'.³⁷ On 1 November 1983 Hodgman said in the federal parliament that West as Immigration Minister had taken 'stock-whip to people of British origin...He hates Britain, he hates the Queen, he hates traditions. He is going to destroy them...'.³⁸ Other opposition members mouthed similar sentiments. Alan Cadman, on 14 September, 1983, asserted that West was searching the world for refugees to fit in with his 'ideological outlook'.³⁹ Many conservatives still believed, that despite having a multicultural society, Australia was predominantly British in culture and race,

³⁷ Michael Hodgman, *CPD:HR*, 18 May 1983, pp.665-666

³⁸ Michael Hodgman, *CPD:HR*, 1 November, 1983, p.2109

³⁹ Alan Cadman, *CPD:HR*, 14 September 1983, p.765

and that these traditions should be preserved.

One consequence of Labor's family reunion policy was that the Asian content of immigration was increased. About 38 per cent of arrivals in 1983 came from Asian countries compared with 25 per cent in 1982 and the previous year, the last years of the coalition government.⁴⁰ There was a reduction at the same time in the British and Europeans. There was also a lower returnee rate of Asians compared to other groups (their net intake for 1983, for instance). This began to draw some criticism over the first couple of years or so of the Hawke government. The shift in the nature of the intake, however, was not a deliberate policy, but occurred because of the higher demand for emigration from Asian countries than from traditional source countries, and a greater number of Asians residing in Australia who were willing to sponsor relatives.⁴¹ The nation was shifting in the direction of Asia demographically, and it was unlikely to return to an overwhelming British base unless some economic catastrophe in Britain brought about large-scale emigration to Australia.

But some within the Labor party had pushed for a greater connection with Asia, particularly since the Whitlam era. Geographical nearness, trade and diplomacy had made it an imperative that closer ties develop in the Asian region from the sixties onwards. The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Bill Hayden, said in August 1983 in *Asiaweek*, that:

We're an anomaly as a European country in this part of the world. There's already a large and growing Asian population in Australia and it is inevitable in my view that

⁴⁰ G.Hugo, *Australia's Changing Population* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp 96-97.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, pp.96-97

Australia will become a Eurasian country over the next century or two. I happen to think that's desirable. This means we are becoming part of the mainstream of this region.⁴²

Clearly, Hayden saw the nation's future survival, its destiny, as lying in Asia, and to do that meant overcoming the cultural juggernaut of Anglo-Australian nationalism. This set up an obvious potential conflict with those who saw Australia's identity as Anglo-Australian. It was precisely this view that antagonized conservatives in the opposition who felt that the changing racial composition of society was being carried too far.⁴³ The presence of Asian migrants had become more noticeable with the amount of publicity refugees gathered over the period of the Fraser government and the Hawke government with the significant presence of boat people.⁴⁴ Numbers of Asian nationalities were beginning to appear in concentrated numbers in suburbs adjacent to refugee hostels, such as in Cabramatta in Sydney, and in the larger cities.⁴⁵ This, along with the chatter in the Labor government about moving closer to Asia, led many to believe that there was a deliberate policy of Asianisation. Understandably, many believed that Australia was under threat, that the nation was being eroded before their very eyes.

It was in this context that the historian Geoffrey Blainey made a speech at Warnambool, Victoria, to Rotary, on 17 March 1984 echoing the concern the opposition had voiced over the changed focus in the intake of migrants and

⁴² B.Hayden, in *Asiaweek*, 19 August, 1983.

⁴³ See comments by Michael Hodgman, Alan Cadman and others in parliament in relation to Asianisation, p.92 of this thesis.

⁴⁴ See Figure 2.3 on the immigration intake from Asian countries 1972-97, in A.Markus, *Race*, p.25

⁴⁵ See A.Markus, *Race*, pp.24-25. The growth of Asian groups occurred after 1977 with the resettlement of Indo-chinese refugees. The percentage of intake from Asian countries increased from 16 percent in 1976 to about 43 percent by 1984.

the problems of multiculturalism.⁴⁶ He considered that the numbers coming from Asia were far too great at that point in our history, and certainly well ahead of the views of the average Australian. The highly charged debate ran the gauntlet of the media, through radio talk-back and commentary and letters to the editor. Geoffrey Blainey kept the debate on the boil by asserting that Australia was surrendering its British heritage and traditions. At an Engineering Australia Conference in Brisbane, and reported in *The Age* in ‘Surrender Australia is new line: Blainey’, Blainey said:

So we jump as a nation from extreme to extreme. The old white Australia policy said offensively to half of the world ‘keep out’. The new surrender Australia policy quietly says to that half of the world ‘come in’.⁴⁷

The debate certainly showed there were divisions in the community regarding what our nation should be and how it would survive best, whether it should retain its Anglo-Australian hegemony or become more Asianised.

While multiculturalism took a battering in the mid-1980’s in the media and by some commentators, the Hawke government continued to build and widen its scope. It continued the work of the previous government in deriving policy from the framework of major reports such as Galbally’s and the Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs, but initiated some further reviews and reports of their own. There was some departure from previous reports in this respect. The Jupp enquiry, *Review of Migrant and Multicultural Programs* (1986), saw multiculturalism as the appropriate settlement policy

⁴⁶ G.Blainey, Speech to Rotary, Warnambool, Victoria, 17 March 1984

⁴⁷ G.Blainey, Speech to Engineering Australia Conference reported in ‘Surrender Australia is the new line:Blainey’, *The Age*, 3 April, 1984, p.14

but also considered there was a need to fit migrants into society structurally. In keeping with Labor philosophy, it saw that there was a need to have a level of social equity for migrants in the economy. Thus there was a paradigm shift in this report to access and equity as the basis for its multicultural program. The first stage of multiculturalism under Fraser had created equity of culture, but there wasn't any structural equity. Many migrants were in the lowest paid jobs, and were denied access to areas of society because of cultural background or language. Jupp emphasized equality of opportunity 'in economic, social, cultural and political aspects of life'.⁴⁸ Jupp incorporated the Whitlam, Fraser and Hawke notions of multiculturalism, but extended the concept of social justice to create structural equality.

The Hawke government had a number of years to fine-tune multiculturalism, but it all too often became unwieldy. It was a cake that had too many ingredients, with too many cooks. This is typified in a report into education. A discussion paper from the National Advisory Committee on Multicultural Education (NACCME) in 1987 said that:

The pursuit of cultural identity in isolation will not provide solutions to questions of participation and equity; at the same time, equality of life chances does not in itself reflect the full ambit of ethnic group demands... Multicultural education must address this paradox: the need to maintain and sustain the striving for identity without sacrificing equity and justice, or jeopardizing the integration of all groups in the common political and moral order of society.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Review of Migrant and Multicultural Programs and Services(1986), *Don't Settle for Less*, J.Jupp (Chairman) (Canberra :AGPS, 1986)

⁴⁹ National Advisory Committee on Multicultural Education (NACCME), L. Jayasuriya (Chairman), *Education in and for a Multicultural Society* (Canberra: AGPS, 1987), pp.21-26.

But a streamlining did occur in the late 1980's, particularly after the release of the Fitzgerald report (Committee to Advise on Australia's Immigration Policy, *Immigration: a Commitment to Australia*, 1988). A sharper focus on the economy emerged. This report shifted the emphasis more to how immigration could benefit Australia, after public disquiet had occurred over a number of years on immigration issues, including the belief that immigration mainly benefited the migrant.

Fitzgerald took into account much of the growing suspicion the general public had on immigration and multiculturalism. He said that:

Widespread mistrust and failing consensus threaten community support of immigration. The program is not identified in the public mind with the national interest, and must be given a convincing rationale. Selection methods need a sharper economic focus, for the public to be convinced that the program is in Australia's interests. Without it, the core principles of current immigration, non-discrimination and family immigration plus the need for opportunities for non-English speakers, are clearly at risk.⁵⁰

Moreover, Fitzgerald observed there was a reluctance to embrace multiculturalism among existing migrants as well as Anglo-Australians. In the public mind multiculturalism was linked with immigration, and perceived negatively. Therefore, the Report considered:

that the voice of opposition to multiculturalism be taken seriously, not dismissed as

⁵⁰ Committee to Advise on Australia's Immigration Policy (Fitzgerald Report), *Immigration: a Commitment to Australia* (Canberra : AGPS, 1988), p.xi

simply the voice of extremism or racism. It should be recognized that, whatever it is that is driving this opposition, it is undermining public support for immigration.⁵¹

Fitzgerald's conclusion was that immigration policy needed to clearly show some gain for the nation as far as the general public were concerned. It recommended setting long-term targets, of up to 150,000 a year, with a bias towards skills and less family reunion. It also suggested that migrants demonstrate a greater loyalty to Australia. However, some saw the report as an attack on multiculturalism, particularly the ethnic community, who saw this as a retreat from a multicultural society. The essential shift was that multiculturalism had to benefit the rest of society.

Consequently cultural diversity began to be viewed as an economic resource, something that would ultimately benefit the nation and add to the nation. A discussion paper from the Advisory Council on Multicultural Affairs (ACMA) *Towards a National Agenda for Multicultural Australia* (1988) sets out the earlier considerations of the Hawke government in regard to cultural diversity and social justice, but it also recognized that multiculturalism had economic aspects that the nation could use or develop. It said:

The economic dimension of multiculturalism means that Australia shall be able to make effective use of all the nation's human resources... Multicultural policy embraces such issues as the provision of appropriate retraining arrangements for those manufacturing industries with large immigrant workforces who now face the challenge of competition and technological change;...effectively managing a multicultural, multilingual workforce; making better use of the education, skills and entrepreneurial ability of immigrants by teaching English and recognizing overseas qualifications; and

⁵¹ *ibid.*, p.30-31, p.59

maintaining and developing the language resources of our nation in order to advance Australia's trade and tourism interests.⁵²

Moreover, it considered that multiculturalism was an asset for the nation. Cultural diversity would enrich the nation with resources. Further, it said:

Such concerns go to the heart of contemporary economic priorities. They recognize that the cultural diversity of Australia is not a problem. Rather it gives us resources, provides us with assets that can help to secure our future in an increasingly competitive world.⁵³

Throughout the 1980's the Hawke government continued to develop and refine multicultural policy. In 1989 the Office of Multicultural Affairs released a report titled, *National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia*. This defined multiculturalism as cultural diversity, but also as a means of 'managing the consequences of cultural diversity in the interests of the individual and society as a whole'. It added that there were three aspects of multiculturalism: cultural identity-the right to express cultural heritage; social justice-the right to equality of opportunity and treatment; economic efficiency-to develop and use the skills of all Australians irrespective of background.⁵⁴

Coming soon after the Fitzgerald report, it naturally had to respond to it. Fitzgerald had asked that multiculturalism be reshaped so that it was more in the national interest. He asked for more of an economic focus. The *National Agenda* made economic efficiency a specific aspect in its model. Also it

⁵² Advisory Council on Multicultural Affairs(ACMA),*Towards a National Agenda for Multicultural Australia* (Canberra AGPS, 1988), pp.6-7

⁵³ Ibid., pp.6-7

⁵⁴ Office of Multicultural Affairs, *National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia. Sharing our Future* (Canberra: AGPS, 1989), p.VII

maintained that ‘all Australians should have an overriding and unifying commitment to Australia’. This entailed an acceptance of the democratic structure and values of Australian society.⁵⁵ The Office of Multicultural Affairs also produced material to promote multiculturalism to the nation, but here in this poster below it is interesting to see in the imagery the type of multiculturalism they desired. The vegemite jar is labeled ‘Multiculturalism’. But vegemite is not a multicultural artefact, it is an artefact of White Australia. The government attitude, consciously or otherwise, was through this imagery locating multiculturalism firmly within the context of White Australia.



Poster: Multiculturalism. Our nation was built on it. Spread it around.

Source: Produced by the Office of Multicultural affairs 1987-1995, creator Micheal Sarah, Randwick TAFE College, Museum Victoria

Clearly there was an evolution from the Grassby and Fraser days where a commitment to migrant identity and culture was predominant. The

⁵⁵ *ibid.*, p.VII

shift was now back to the nation. Multiculturalism, I believe, was being focused on the national interest, nation first, migrant identity and culture second. Generally the Hawke period could be characterized by a desire to fulfill multicultural policy but found that the exigencies of government, the demands of the economy and the influence of the Fitzgerald report meant that it often had to pare away at its edges.

Keating government 1991-1996

The Keating government continued the general aims of the Hawke period but with a greater shift in rhetoric towards Asia. Keating wanted to shift away from the pro-British identity that had dogged Australia since the days of the White Australia policy. Keating's version of multiculturalism was to lock it into his vision of an integrated Asian/Australian economic sphere. This Asian-centred approach of the government informed its attitude towards multiculturalism and, as Whitlam had entertained in the early 1970's, saw that a robust non-racial immigration policy assisted the nation's integration into the Asian region economically and politically. Although the government did not actively seek greater numbers of migrants coming from Asia, nevertheless the trend was for higher levels of migration coming from that region. This was despite the majority of migrants still coming from Britain.⁵⁶

Keating saw multiculturalism as a progressive policy that would assist Australia's engagement with Asia. He said in *Engagement: Australia faces the Asia-Pacific* that Australia had been 'redefining itself' since the early years of European settlement, and that the changing pattern of immigration 'required

⁵⁶ J. Jupp, *From White Australia to Woomera* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p.50

us to look at our place in the Asia-Pacific region'. Rather than presenting the old monocultural Anglo-Australian face to Asia, Australia needed to consider 'shifting its image of what it means to be an Australian in response to a changing world'.⁵⁷ Moreover, he said that he believed that:

Australia will be better able to survive and prosper in the world if we have a young and growing population. I regard our post-war immigration policy as one of the greatest strategic decisions this country has made. The 42 per cent of our people born outside Australia...have transformed this country and strengthened the economy. The immigration program has made Australia a culturally richer, more varied and much more interesting place to live. It has given us weight.⁵⁸

For Keating, immigration would boost the nation economically, multiculturalism would create a stronger nation socially and would give us 'weight' or status as a nation. All three aspects centre on building or enhancing the nation. Our present wealth he believed had a lot to do with our immigration intake, and therefore he was an 'unabashed believer in immigration'. It assisted in creating a growing economy and the creation of further jobs. In this he was no different to any other leader or government that preceded him. It was a continuation of the task that had begun in the post World War II era. On the second point he believed that we were richer and stronger as a nation because of multiculturalism. Richer for the talents and culture that had been brought to this country, and stronger because this had been woven into a greater Australian tapestry that he believed was superior to the mono-cultural model. Had Australia not changed, not given up on the

⁵⁷ P.Keating, *Engagement: Australia Faces the Asia-Pacific* (Sydney: Pan Macmillan, 2000), p.259

⁵⁸ *ibid.*, p.260

White Australia policy, 'Australia would today be-deservedly-an international pariah, and in every way a much poorer country'.⁵⁹ This was a change he said he observed in his own electorate of Blaxland, in the Bankstown region of Sydney, an area in which he also grew up. By 1996 there were a huge variety of ethnic backgrounds, with Lebanese and Vietnamese being the most dominant groups. But he said compared with the 'Anglo-Celtic monoculture of the same area during my childhood', it was a change that I welcomed.⁶⁰ Keating was very much concerned with our status in the world and our integration into Asia. Multiculturalism was a diplomatic ticket that made this goal easier. He exhorted:

Here we sit, nineteen million of us, drawn from more than 120 different countries, on the edge of Asia, and with all the resources of a continent to draw on. What an astonishing bequest that is. We cannot turn away and we cannot turn our back. It is the most exhilarating and promising prospect.⁶¹

In 1994 he made a speech to the University of New South Wales' Asia Institute. In it he hoped that Australia would become more engaged with Asia in the following ways: that more Australians would speak an Asian language; that business people become a part of the Asia-Pacific commercial landscape; making good use of the resource of the increasing number of Asian-Australians; that we deepen defense and strategic links; and that our national culture be shaped by, and help to shape, the cultures surrounding us.⁶² Engagement with Asia for Keating was a priority-'engagement is the most

⁵⁹ *ibid.*, p.260

⁶⁰ *ibid.*, p.261

⁶¹ *ibid.*, p.300

⁶² *ibid.*, p.298

powerful idea in Australian politics'.⁶³ But it was also the Australian image overseas in Asia that gave us 'weight'. A tolerant, multicultural Australia was good for business and a plethora of relations, but as he contends, the regressive 'tide of prejudice' that swept Australia in the Hanson years (mid to late 1990's) sent signals to Asia that multiculturalism was 'only a cloak of tolerance'.⁶⁴ Multiculturalism therefore had to be strengthened before we would be fully accepted into Asia.

The Keating period continued to develop multicultural policy, building on the efforts of his predecessors. Keating said on 18 August, 1992, in response to a question in parliament on the principles of government policy on multiculturalism:

Never has the value of these policies been more apparent than is the case now—policies to encourage social cohesion; policies to increase equity and participation for ethnic groups in the community; policies which encourage the expression of different cultural identities as a democratic right like any other; and policies to increase our ability to call on the skills, talents and ambitions of all Australians.⁶⁵

During the 1980's there had been disquiet at the level of Asian immigration. As the Blainey debate showed, it was felt that a larger Asian intake threatened social cohesion. There had been a rise in the level of prejudice against Asians in the community. Keating saw multicultural policy as a means of neutralizing this. Multiculturalism in part was educative, a way to create a more tolerant society, and to bring about social cohesion. But

⁶³ *ibid.*, p.300

⁶⁴ *ibid.*, pp.295-296

⁶⁵ Paul Keating (PM), *CPD: HR*, 18 August 1992, p.11

Keating also wanted to continue the social justice aims of encouraging equity. This was very much a part of the ideological package of Labor's multiculturalism. Keating's multicultural policy essentially wanted to place the migrant comfortably in society, to highlight his or value to the community, and to dispel the level of prejudice. For Keating multiculturalism had changed society. It had created a new social order that would allow society to function better with its positive valuing of migrants.

Keating saw multiculturalism as a means of creating a stable nation where different cultures could co-exist without the interface of prejudice. But 'like everything else in society, multicultural policy reflects a balance of rights and responsibilities'. To Keating multiculturalism declared the 'right to express and share our individual cultural heritage, and the right of every Australian to equality of treatment and opportunity'. But it was the responsibility of every Australian 'to accept the basic principles of Australian society'⁶⁶, including democracy, freedom, equality and tolerance. In a speech to the Multicultural Advisory Council in June 1995 he asserted that:

the first loyalty of all who make Australia home must be to Australia-and that the tolerance on which multiculturalism is built must be recognized as a universal principle of Australian democracy, and practised universally.⁶⁷

In this Keating was no different to others before him. But the proviso of responsibilities ensured a counter-check on unfettered multiculturalism or racism, a way of creating a structure for a stable nation. But the emphasis for

⁶⁶ Keating, *Engagement*, pp. 261-262

⁶⁷ P. Keating, *Speech to the Multicultural Advisory Council*, June 1995.

Keating was that a strong multiculturalism would create a strong nation that had a better chance to survive intact into the twenty-first century.

Multiculturalism, at least the Keating version, however, was not accepted by all, and there was a growing antipathy towards it in the early nineties. John Hewson, the Opposition leader, said in August 1992 that:

Multiculturalism is another classic example [of]...the politics of division...absolutely a fundamental mistake in this country. We are a multicultural society, yes, but we should never have multiculturalism. All we do is elevate a few professional ethnics.⁶⁸

Hewson acknowledged that he lived in a multicultural society, that was a given. But he felt that multiculturalism as a policy did not work. It had become an industry that favoured ethnic groups, created numerous councils and associations, funded various projects, and this had alienated many others in Australian society. It was an argument that drew on the Fitzgerald report, that multiculturalism was resented by many Australians and appeared to be primarily designed for ethnics. He did not believe society was the better for it. It brought about division rather than cohesion, and did little to promote a stable social order.

Keating, however, begged to differ. He argued that policies that encouraged the expression of cultural difference were a democratic right, like any other democratic right. Further he said that:

these are the policies of an expanded, humane democracy-a lively democracy, a democracy which is increasingly attracting the interest and admiration of other

⁶⁸ Keating (PM) quoting Hewson, *CPD:HR*, 18 August, 1992, p.11

countries...A multicultural Australia is a reality deriving from decades of immigration. But a tolerant, viable, successful multicultural Australia is a reality deriving from hard work, compromise and imagination.⁶⁹

At this point, the main political parties digressed in their view of the nation. To Keating multiculturalism was the saviour of the nation, to Hewson it was dysfunctional and was damaging the nation. Opposition views had shifted in some degree from the Fraser years and a bipartisan approach. Under Fraser, multiculturalism had flourished. It had been seen as a genuine expression of the nation. Multiculturalism for Fraser was 'a symbol of the transforming vision of Australian society'.⁷⁰ Fraser and Keating were on similar paths in that they saw multiculturalism as both an expression of nationhood and as a unifying social cement.

Towards the end of Keating's reign there was a shift in public opinion that revealed a growing skepticism and belligerence towards multiculturalism that paralleled similar attitudes towards indigenous people. The Mabo and Wik cases granted indigenous people greater claims to their lands. Media campaigns by pastoralists and conservatives whipped up a public reaction against Aboriginal claims. Along with this was a growing resistance towards reconciliation. A political osmosis of right-conservative views extended from indigenous affairs to multiculturalism, fostered by new Right figures such as Hugh Morgan, and an importation of neo-conservative views from the USA that railed against political correctness. In this context, an anti-Asian focus to criticism of multiculturalism had some traction, and was the immediate

⁶⁹ Keating, *ibid*, p.11

⁷⁰ Keating quoting Fraser, *ibid*, p.11

forerunner of Hansonism. The growth in Asian immigration brought a marked reaction in the community, many believing that the growth in Asian migration would undermine Australian culture.

Even within Labor's own ranks there was disquiet among some members in relation to immigration and multiculturalism. Graeme Campbell (a federal Labor member who was later disendorsed) did not believe that social cohesion was being advanced through Labor's policies. In a speech to parliament on 5 May, 1992, he said that the new class of academics and bureaucrats who influence government:

tell us what we must be. They give us no choice in the matter...In Australia they also tell us we are a part of Asia. That the great majority of Australians do not believe it is of no concern to them...we do not take kindly to social engineering. We are ourselves, and proud of it, and not something that the elite would have us be. But I can assure this House that the Australian people are running out of patience. They will defend their culture and their country even against their own government, if need be.⁷¹

By 1995 such dissenters as Campbell were not tolerated, and he was disendorsed after he had given an address to Australians Against Further Immigration (AAFI) which was critical of government immigration policy and multiculturalism.

Before the 1996 election the government had published a paper *Our Nation*, which wanted to push the limits of multiculturalism even further. It outlined an affirmative action policy. It wanted multiculturalism to become an entrenched part of government. Eighteen per cent of the ABC employees were

⁷¹ Graeme Campbell, *CDR: HR*, 5 May 1992, p.2380

to be of non-English speaking background by 2000, and fifteen percent on government advisory bodies.⁷² It was a step further to the left on multiculturalism, an attempt to create a structural multiculturalism. This further set the battle ground over what the nation should be.

It was evident that elements in the Coalition did not accept the full-blown multiculturalism of Labor. John Howard's 1996 election campaign 'For All of Us', reflected the communities' disquiet with multiculturalism, tapping into a sense of alienated nationalism under Labor. In a speech on how Labor had governed in the previous 13 years, Howard said:

There is a frustrated mainstream in Australia today that sees government decisions increasingly driven by the noisy, self-interested clamor of powerful vested interests with scant regard for the national interest...Increasingly Australians have been exhorted to think of themselves as members of sub-groups. The focus so often has been on where we are different-not what we have in common. In the process our sense of community has been severely damaged.⁷³

There is some continuity in the thinking of Howard from 1988 to 1996. Over that decade he was highly critical of multiculturalism as the basis for nation, and had shown a desire for a unified Australia. Howard's position was to make decisions 'in the interests of the whole community, decisions which have the effect of uniting, not dividing the nation'.

Howard government 1996-2007

⁷² B. Birrell, 'Our Nation: the vision and practice of multiculturalism under Labor', *People and Place*, vol.4, No.1(1996): pp.17-19

⁷³ John Howard, Speech during the 1996 Election 'For All of Us' Campaign, quoted in Markus, *Race*, p.96-97

The Howard Liberal government rode to power on the crest of a conservative reaction against the Keating government. Hostility had developed against Keating's 'progressive' attitudes towards Aborigines, immigration and other areas. It was when Pauline Hanson, campaigning for the Federal seat of Oxley in North Queensland, made an explosive debut on the political stage, and when political and public reaction against 'political correctness' was at its peak. Howard had gone to the 1996 elections targeting the feeling in the community that Labor had neglected the mainstream of Australia. It was this general perspective that informed his views on multiculturalism.

Howard had made several statements on immigration and multiculturalism throughout the 80's and 90's, some more critical than others, some where he had made political U-turns, but there was a general distaste for multicultural polity. In January 1989 he said that:

The objection I have to multiculturalism is that multiculturalism is in effect saying that it is impossible to have an Australian ethos, that it is impossible to have a common Australian culture. So we have to pretend that we are a federation of cultures and that we've got a bit from every part of the world. I think that is hopeless.⁷⁴

For Howard multiculturalism undermined the existing Australian identity and culture. You either had an Australian culture or you had multiculturalism. Australia could not survive with both.

Howard had called for cohesion and unity in Australian society as far back as 1988, with statements denouncing multiculturalism and Asian

⁷⁴ John Howard, in G. Henderson, *A Howard Government? Inside the Coalition* (Sydney: Harper Collins, 1995), p.27

migration, and had then developed the concept of One Australia. A Coalition policy document released on 22 August 1988 stated that the Coalition stood for One Australia, that the main element to immigration policy should be ‘the capacity of the Australian people to accept and absorb change’. Moreover, the ‘size and composition of our immigration policy should not jeopardize social cohesiveness and harmony within the Australian community’.⁷⁵

A decade later in 1998 Howard made it plain that multiculturalism had alienated many Australians, and that it had gone too far. He was in favour of it if it meant there would be social cohesion in the community. But he said that it irked people to suggest that:

somehow or other we had no cultural identity until mass migration...that we didn’t really have an identifiable character until this[multiculturalism] came on the scene...

If the word is used to describe the success of cultural and racial harmony in Australia, then I am all for it, and I don’t think there are any limits to it. But if the word is meant to imply that the one great cement of Australia is multiculturalism, then I think that is asking too much.⁷⁶

Howard believed the nation could not survive with multiculturalism as it existed. Social cohesion and maintaining national identity and culture were the key elements in his understanding of what made a successful Australia. Howard’s solution was to nominate what he called ‘mainstream’ Australia as the basis of his vision of what Australia should look like. This was an affirmation of Anglo-Celtic Australian culture as the dominant culture.

⁷⁵ Coalition policy document on Immigration and Ethnic Affairs (22 August 1988)

⁷⁶ John Howard, quoted in M.Kapel and D.Greason, ‘Howard pads up’, *The Australia/Israel Review*, Vol.23, no.5(1-24 May, 1998): pp12-13

Migrants could maintain their culture within the context of the broader society or be absorbed into the 'mainstream' culture of Australia. Multiculturalism was dethroned as an ideology of nationhood. Howard's new model of multiculturalism was essentially a blend of assimilation and multiculturalism, probably integrationism is closer to the mark.

This type of thinking was reflected in his attitude to how various races would integrate into Australian society. In an interview with George Megalogenis, a political journalist, in April, 2002, Howard said:

I think[their integration] has been quicker[than it was for Greeks and Italians]...I just don't hear people talking about it now, even as much as they did five years ago, and I have an electorate which is very Asian.⁷⁷

But with Muslims Howard had a different story. He said in response to a question about whether they could be absorbed as quickly into the mainstream:

I think most of them, yes. But I do think there is a particular complication because there is a fragment which is utterly antagonistic to our kind of society, and that is a difficulty. You can't find any equivalent in Italian, Greek, or Lebanese, or Chinese or Baltic immigration to Australia. There is no equivalent of raving on about jihad; and I think some of the attitudes to women a problem.⁷⁸

The Coalition philosophy on multiculturalism impacted on the structural

⁷⁷ John Howard, Interview with George Megalogenis, April, 2002, in G.Megalogenis, *The Longest Decade* (Melbourne: Scribe, 2006), p.274

⁷⁸ *ibid.*, p.277

edifice of multiculturalism built up over the previous decade. Multiculturalism was de-emphasized with the dropping of the Ministry of Immigration from the first Howard Cabinet in 1996. In addition, the Office of Multicultural Affairs and the Bureau of Immigration, Multicultural and Population Research, the main research and communication agencies, were dissolved. A harsher stance was made against boat people. The family reunion program was cut severely and the immigration program was skewed towards the skill category. In 1997/98 family reunion program was reduced from 58 percent to 40 per cent and the skill category was increased from 25 percent to 44 per cent. The volume of parents admitted under the family reunion program was slashed from 9000 to 1000, and further still to 500 by 1999. Significantly, English language competency became a key component in migrant selection.⁷⁹ Assistance to immigrants was curtailed: the social security benefits waiting time went from six months to two years. Funding for multicultural programs was cut substantially. In 1997/98 only \$4.1 million was allocated to multicultural programs, apart from the funding to SBS of \$83 million. Most of the allocation of expenditure went on the Adult Migrant English Program and translating and interpreter services, of about \$275 million.⁸⁰ Cumulatively, the effect of all this was to allow the pendulum to swing away from multiculturalism as a structure towards looking at a skilled, westernized, English speaking workforce as entry policy. In effect, it owed much to the assimilationist model.

In 1999 the Howard government outlined its perspective on multiculturalism in *New Agenda for a Multicultural Australia*. It was not

⁷⁹ A. Markus, *Race*, p.40

⁸⁰ *ibid.*, p.41

markedly different from the Hawke-Keating model, except that there was probably greater emphasis on the national interest and a shift away from the social democratic notions of access and equity. Cultural diversity was seen as a resource, but national unity was seen as the binding force of multiculturalism. 'Respect for difference, tolerance and a common commitment to freedom' were seen as crucial but more importantly, migrants should have 'an overriding commitment to Australia's national interest'.⁸¹

Conclusions

Multiculturalism as a policy was used by governments to give migrants a place in society on their terms, to allow a diversity of cultures to exist alongside the host culture. It was implemented to stabilize society, to create social harmony and cohesion. Generally, it was a way of allowing cultural diversity to exist within the framework of White Australia, to enable the nation to survive.

In the literature on immigration reports emphasis is given to structuring a society that would allow the maintenance of migrant identity but within the context of a democratic Australia. Galbally, Fitzgerald and all governments from Whitlam to Howard set the context for migrant settlement within the framework of democratic Australian society and its values. As Galbally said in 1978:

Migrants have the right to maintain their cultural and racial identity and...it is clearly

⁸¹ Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, *A New Agenda for Multicultural Australia* (Canberra: AGPS, 1999), pp.6-9

in the interests of our nation that they should be encouraged to do so if they wish. Provided that ethnic identity is not stressed at the expense of society at large, but is interwoven into the fabric of our nationhood.⁸²

The Jupp report in 1984 added a social justice dimension but the constraints on multiculturalism remained the same. He said that:

In essence, multiculturalism as public policy has had limited and pragmatic objectives: ensuring the easy transition of immigrants into Australian society; limiting and reducing prejudice; developing access and equity...encouraging non-English speaking Australians to maintain their languages and cultures; advocating tolerance for new religious, cultural groups and languages within the context of acceptance of Australian laws and traditions.⁸³

It is worth noting that, in Galbally, a key rider was that 'ethnic identity is not stressed at the expense of society at large' and for Jupp it was 'within the context of acceptance of Australian laws and traditions.' Multiculturalism was defined by the existing White culture. It was a way of drawing many cultures into White Australia cohesively. It had to take place within the core values and culture of Australian society, and not run counter to it.

However, the politics during the Howard period in office indicated that those core values and culture of Australian society were under threat by the growth of multiculturalism, not supporting it. Many wanted a retreat from multiculturalism, believing it had undermined the social order. Geoffrey Blainey had maintained that multiculturalism was divisive and threatened to

⁸² F.Galbally (chair), *Migrant Services and Programs: Report of the Review of Post-Arrival Programs and Services for Migrants* (Canberra :AGPS, 1978), p.104.

⁸³ J. Jupp, 'Tacking into the wind: immigration and multicultural policy in the 1990's, *Journal of Australian Studies*, no.53 (1997): p.31.

‘cut this nation into many tribes’.⁸⁴ He wanted a immigration system that maintained ‘social cohesion and tolerance’. Hugh Morgan had described multiculturalism as a ‘polylingual, polycultural, polypolitical social porridge’ in 1986 in an Australia Day address.⁸⁵ Pauline Hanson in 1998 contended that we were being divided into separate ethnic groups which would destroy ‘our unique Australian culture and identity’⁸⁶. However, it must be pointed out that Blainey, Morgan and Hanson were all for preserving the nation as they saw it, the older Anglo-Australian model, White Australia. They wanted Anglo-Australian culture to survive as the dominant force. Governments thought the nation would survive better with a multicultural model; the anti-multiculturalists thought the nation would survive better with a monocultural model. Essentially both viewpoints are largely driven by a similar perspective, a desire to preserve the nation as they saw it, which lends substance to this thesis.

Some writers have echoed the notion that multiculturalism was essentially about trying to find a way for the nation to survive under multiculturalism. Andrew Jakubowicz, for instance, maintained that multiculturalism was ‘essentially about sustaining the existing social order and the existing core values.’⁸⁷ A more recent analysis by Ghassan Hage, in *White Nation: Fantasies of White Supremacy in a Multicultural Society*, asserts that multiculturalism was a means to maintain the dominance of White power and culture. His belief is that multiculturalism is really White multiculturalism,

⁸⁴ G. Blainey, Address to Australia Day luncheon, quoted in ‘Nation to Split says Blainey’, *SMH*, 25 Jan., 1986, p.2

⁸⁵ H.Morgan, *Address on Australia Day*, 1986

⁸⁶ P.Hanson, *One Nation, Policy Documents* (Brisbane: One Nation, 1998) pp.2-3, 10.

⁸⁷ A. Jakubowicz, ‘Ethnicity, Multiculturalism & Neo-conservatism’ in G.Bottomley and M.de Lepervanche (ed), *Ethnicity, Class and Gender in Australia* (Sydney: George Allen and Unwin, 1984), p.43

and 'works to mystify, and keep out of public discourse, other multicultural realities in which White people are not the overwhelming occupiers of the centre stage of national space.'⁸⁸ What he meant by this is that despite the migrant levels from non-British sources Australians perceived the nation as culturally white. Multiculturalism therefore, as he sees it, was a mechanism for the White nation to maintain control.

Multiculturalism represented the high point in incorporation of migrants into the nation. But it was here that the dialectic centred around the imperatives of wanting migrants and maintaining White Australia started to shift course. Migrants up till then were incorporated into White Australian society by a system of settlement policy adjustments. But multiculturalism for some had taken the nation too far away from its primal base of White Australia. Consequently there was a partial retreat to Howard's 'mainstream', a crypto-White Australia. Paralleling this there was an antagonism to multiculturalism in sections of the community, a reactionary nationalism that wanted to restore White Australia to the centre of Australian life.

⁸⁸ G. Hage, *White Nation: Fantasies of White Supremacy in a Multicultural Society* (Sydney: Pluto Press, 1998) p.19

3.

Survival of Anglo-Australian Culture

Multiculturalism was an attempt to create out of our culturally diverse nation a structure and practices that would bind the nation together, a means of allowing the country to create a stable society and survive without racial conflict. For many who had non-Anglo Australian backgrounds, multiculturalism satisfied their desire to be accepted in Australia without the angst of a loss of identity. However, in the 1980's and 1990's, a hostile reaction to multiculturalism and Asian immigration developed. It was said that multiculturalism and Asian immigration were slowly destroying the nation, that Australia was becoming too tribal, and that Anglo-Australia as a nation was being overrun. A desire to return to assimilation or integration and a resurrection of an identity centred on Anglo-Australian culture dominated this period. It found expression in the media, on talk-back radio, and in the mood of the general public.

This chapter traces the growth of this Anglo-Australian nationalism and identity through influential individuals and groups, the media, talk-back hosts, letters to the editor and public opinion. This is only representative, it doesn't pretend to show what the whole of Australia was thinking. But it attempts to get a picture of what traditional Australia thought about immigration, multiculturalism and Anglo-Australian culture in this era and before it. It begins by looking at some of the more 'traditional' guardians of white

Australian culture, groups such as the Australian Natives Association (ANA), the RSL, and the League of Rights and their attitudes to immigration and nation. Then it attempts to show that their views were not isolated, but permeated the media, journalists, commentators, shock-jocks, and sections of the public. While many Australians supported multiculturalism and immigration there were as many who feared that it was undermining what they perceived to be *their* Australia. It was their belief that immigration and migrant settlement policies had taken Australia too far away from the Anglo-Australian ideal in attempting to fit migrants into society.

Australian Natives Association

The Australian Natives Association (ANA) was Australia's pre-eminent nationalist group in the period leading up to Federation through to the 1960's. Their *raison d'être* was to preserve and maintain Anglo-Australian heritage. They saw the White Australia policy as the most effective way of preserving and protecting the nation and culture.

They played a prominent role at the time of Federation in supporting the move in the interests of nationhood and in supporting the introduction of the *Immigration Restriction Bill* in 1901. Otherwise known as the White Australia policy, this was the landmark policy to dominate the twentieth century and the ANA became its moral guardians. At the 1919 Peace Conference, following World War 1 the Prime Minister, Billy Hughes, opposed the move by Japan to seek racial equality fearing it would undermine Australia's immigration policy. The ANA supported Hughes fervently. Hughes had said that 'We claim

the right to say who shall and who shall not enter Australia. It is our house.’¹ Little changed in their focus over the next decades. In 1954, in response to changes to the White Australia policy allowing entry to non-Europeans with special qualification and the granting of citizenship to Asians who had permission to remain in Australia, the Secretary of the ANA claimed that allowing small numbers of non-white migrants entry into the country ‘would be a step towards national suicide’.² A dilution of race was seen as a dilution of culture, and thus a threat to the nation. In the 1950’s, with the Menzies’ government in power, Harold Holt as Minister for Immigration, had proposed some mild reforms to immigration policy, and the ANA staunchly opposed them. The Secretary of the Queensland branch of the ANA, Mr. McGoll, said of proposed changes that ‘Australians fought and died...to keep their country free from dictators, coolie labor, cheap goods and low standards’.³ When further changes occurred in 1956-7 the ANA made representation to the Immigration Advisory Council to prevent any further watering down of the immigration policy.⁴

In the 1950’s and 1960’s when the media, the churches and academics attacked the immigration policy, wanting some liberalization, the ANA stood by it steadfastly. John Menadue, a prominent past president, in his history of the ANA, maintained that attacks were strongly countered by the ANA and it ‘re-affirmed the principle of having a Restricted Immigration Policy’. When consternation over the use of the word ‘White’ occurred because of its

¹ William Morris Hughes, quoted in J.E.Menadue, *A Centenary History of the Australian Natives’ Association 1871-1971* (Melbourne: Melbourne Horticultural Press, 1971) p.248

² Secretary of the ANA quoted from *Daily Mirror*, 6 July, 1954

³ Secretary of the Queensland ANA, McGoll, quoted in *Courier-Mail*, April 13, 1953

⁴ H.I. London,, *Non-White Immigration and the White Australia Policy* (Sydney: Sydney University Press, , 1970), p.113

offensiveness to Asians, Menadue noted 'that it is the critics of the policy who...create the most animosity to Australia, ostensibly their homeland'. The rough equation he wanted to draw was that those who opposed the White Australia policy were destructive of White Australia. When the immigration policy was charged with being discriminatory the ANA attacked those who:

laud the antiquity and the culture of the Asian people, and in a moment of uncontrolled ecstasy, have suggested that Australia should abandon the "White" Australia Policy and shout it from the housetops and bring in 10,000 Asians per annum. ⁵

The ANA saw any change to the immigration policy as a threat to the nation. Not only was the ANA concerned about overt invasion or government sponsored invasion, but there was a fear of back-door infiltration. When it was discovered that Asians were buying real estate in Australia in the 1960's and 1970's, the ANA believed this was stepping stone to a future invasion, 'a claim for admittance to Australia'. Also the ANA reported marriage rackets, 'whereby the alien went through a form of marriage with an Australian, thus gaining right of entry to the country and then...annulling the marriage'.⁶

In 1960, the Ballarat Conference of the ANA resolved a motion, probably representative of the ANA in general. It said in part that:

This Conference reaffirms its adherence to Australia's established national policy of restrictive immigration and declares-

- (a) Its uncompromising opposition to any departure from such a policy and in particular to any suggestions for the introduction of a system of quotas designed to

⁵ Menadue, *A Centenary History of the Australian Natives' Association*, p.252

⁶ *ibid.*, p.253

permit the entry into Australia for permanent residence of non-European people

- (b) Its strongest opposition to the policy of selling land to Asians or other foreign interests...[which] could be used as a means of bringing pressure on the Commonwealth Government to relax Australia's traditional immigration policy.
- (c) This Conference therefore authorizes the Board of Directors...to obtain greater publicity for the Association's policy on immigration which can save the Australia of the future being torn asunder by racial hatreds so much in evidence in other countries today.⁷

In 1966 the president of the ANA wrote that:

'our Association would oppose any further liberalisation of the policy, if it in any way threatened to destroy Australia's present homogeneity of population or national character'.⁸

The argument the ANA put forward against reform was that it would bring racial problems from overseas, importing the problems of South Africa, the USA and Britain. It also wanted to avoid the historic problems Australia had with the Chinese and Kanakas.⁹

The ANA believed strongly that the immigration policy preserved Australian culture. The ANA saw itself as the guardian-saviour of the Australian nation, albeit a white nation:

The ANA presents to the people of Australia the need to have a pride in their country, to strive to promote its welfare and advancement, to inculcate an appreciation of their

⁷ Ballarat Conference of the ANA, motion passed, in B. Fitzpatrick, *90th Anniversary, History of the ANA 1871-1961* (Melbourne: Australian Natives Association, 1961), p.40

⁸ President ANA, Private letter, October 31, 1966

⁹ See H.I London, *Non-White Immigration and the 'White Australia' Policy*, p.114

heritage, to have the courage to stand up for their homeland. For well nigh seventy years Australia has sustained its policy of Restricted Immigration and has benefited considerably from it. The ANA is proud to reaffirm its support for it.¹⁰

While less significant today than at the turn of the twentieth century, by the 1960's it was still an influential organization. It had about 42,000 members at its peak in the 1930's, around 30,000 in the 1960's with another 54,000 associate members and funds of about 8.6 million pounds.¹¹ But its influence was greater than its membership or money, and beyond the 1970's its political teeth had been blunted by the phasing out of the White Australia policy.

The R.S.L

The Returned Services League (RSL) had been one of the staunchest supporters of the White Australia policy along with the ANA, and they were very much concerned about any threats to Australia and Anglo-Australian culture through much of the twentieth century. They had supported our nation in two world wars and the Korean and Vietnam wars in the name of preserving our democratic way of life and our culture. The RSL was an extremely important organization and lobby group because it represented a significant portion of the population who had served in the armed forces, and were in some senses perceived as a guardian of the Australian way of life. For much of the twentieth century it had promoted the idea of military security for Australia, but equally it had promoted the White Australia policy as a means of demographic security.

¹⁰ *ibid.*, p.254

¹¹ *ibid.*, p.412

In the post-war period it became a powerful lobby group, having the ear of government in the Menzies era, and consequently was able to exert some influence in the direction of defence, foreign affairs and immigration.¹² There was a confluence of views in many areas, particularly during the White Australia policy phase. But when, for instance, the government was moving away from the racial basis of the immigration policy, the RSL had maintained that 'unless we have a restricted immigration policy we could eliminate our own race'.¹³ The RSL adopted an ultra-conservative stance on immigration. From its perspective any dilution of the immigration policy was a distinct threat to the white European basis of the nation. Well after naturalization of non-Europeans had been accepted by the government the RSL still considered that 'no change will be countenanced in the White Australia policy'.¹⁴ But by 1962, a year later, the RSL had removed the phrase 'White Australia' from its immigration policy, in order to appease those who considered it to be a racist and offensive term. It was replaced with the phrase, 'the maintenance of a rigorous and progressive selective immigration policy'.¹⁵ But the cosmetic grammar meant little, as exclusion of non-Europeans was still the goal of their policy. At the Congress of 1963 it strongly opposed 'any move to bring into Australia any mass migration of Asians'.¹⁶ By 1965 the RSL was urging the 'most stringent screening procedures with intending migrants to this country'.¹⁷

¹² GW Holland, Federal president of the RSL, quoted in G.L. Kristianson, *Politics and Patriotism* (Canberra : ANU press, 1966), pp.67-68

¹³ RSL views in *Courier-Mail*, March 17, 1952

¹⁴ RSL Congress, *Official minutes*, , 1961, p.39

¹⁵ RSL Amendment to Constitution, Congress Rule 3b, RSL Constitution, 1962

¹⁶ RSL Congress, *Official minutes*, 1963, p.59

¹⁷ RSL Congress, 1965, p.51

By 1969 the language of the RSL had become even more contorted as it was operating in a period where some liberalisation of immigration policy had occurred. In an interview on 19 October, the National Secretary of the RSL, William Keys, said that 'we are willing to accept anyone we can absorb. Ours is not a racial policy. It is progressive but restrictive.'¹⁸ This is decidedly assimilationist language, asserting the need for migrants to fit into the dominant white culture. Immigration continued to be an issue into the 1970's and 1980's and the pursuit of a white Australia biologically and culturally was often an issue of debate in the politics of the RSL. The Victorian RSL magazine, *Mufti*, in December 1978, revealed robust debate on immigration at the National Conference of that year. In 1980, the RSL Victorian Branch Annual Conference had immigration as the number one agenda item. In 1981, debate centred on the reinstatement of the White Australia policy. As Asian immigration increased through the 1980's, the RSL became concerned about the numbers of Asians causing a diminution to the hegemony of Anglo-Australia. In 1983 the Victorian RSL made a policy statement urging that Australian immigration policy should look to 'the proper development and enhancement of the Nation with the recognition of our Anglo-Saxon heritage and traditions'. It wanted the basis of immigration thinking to ensure that Australia remained 'predominantly British, Irish or European in origin'.¹⁹ It also wanted migrants to assimilate into the Australian way of life, and to do away with multiculturalism. There was also some anxiety about the influx of

¹⁸ Interview with National Secretary of the RSL, William Keys, October 19, 1969, quoted in London, *Non-White Immigration and the White Australia Policy*, p.112

¹⁹ RSL Victorian Branch Annual Conference, Policy Statement, 1983; see A. Blair, *Ruxton* (Sydney : Allen and Unwin, 2004), p.95

Asians with the Waverly RSL sub-branch stating that ‘under no circumstance whatsoever is an Asian Colony permitted to be developed in Australia’.²⁰

In her biography of Bruce Ruxton, long-term president of the Victorian RSL from 1979-2002, Anne Blair says that the constituency of the RSL who had fought in World War II had formed their world-views in that era, generally supporting White Australia, the monarchy and Great Britain and these views naturally persisted into the post-war era into the 1950’s.²¹ By the mid-sixties the RSL was out of step with the shift away from the White Australia policy, and continued to struggle with changes to the immigration system, seeing it as a denial of what they saw as Australian. The RSL represented a powerful lobby group and a considerable influence in the community. This influence was an accepted part of Australian politics.

With the advent of Ruxton, the prominence of the RSL in public debate and in the media became heightened. He became a colourful media figure during his tenure, often voicing robust and strident nationalist views. In May 1983, in a debate on the value of Asian immigration with Al Grassby, organised by the Deakin University Students’ Association, Ruxton said:

I’m one of the few Australians who has the guts to take a stance on immigration. The reason the rest are silent is because they are suffering from an Anglo-Saxon guilt complex.²²

He used inflated figures to show that the rate of Asian immigration was

²⁰ Waverly RSL Sub-Branch in Blair, *Ruxton*, p.95

²¹ Blair, *Ruxton*, p.95

²² B.Ruxton, Speech at Deakin Immigration Debate (Deakin University Students Association, May 1983).

too high, with 12.5 per cent of our population born in South-East Asia, and would increase another 25 per cent by 2001. He believed that if there were a referendum on it Australians would reject these levels of Asian immigration. When an Asian student queried Ruxton's figures he replied that if he were the minister for immigration 'you wouldn't have got into the country!'²³

Ruxton perceived the levels of Asian immigration as a threat to the Australian identity and national heritage, but was not against Asian immigration per se. As long as migrants could be absorbed or assimilated into our culture and were not in great numbers, he was satisfied. However, a large influx of Asians was also a threat to the jobs of Australians. He said in a letter to the *Age*, 20 December, 1982 that 'Vietnamese migrants seem to be taking over the jobs that Australians should be doing, including in the Commonwealth defence factories and the fruit producing industry'. There was some irony in Asian migrants working in Australian defence factories, institutions that had been designed to protect us from the invading Asian hordes to the north. He continued:

These are the views of the RSL State Executive which met on 9 December 1982. I can assure the Prime Minister that I have unanimous support of the State Executive in my stand to stop or limit immigration, particularly from South-East Asia.²⁴

So as late as 1982, a decade after the abolition of the White Australia policy, Ruxton and the RSL still clung to a watered down version of it. Their immigration policy on migrant intake centred on Anglo-Australian heritage,

²³ Ibid., May 1983

²⁴ B.Ruxton, Letter 'Immigration ban would save jobs for Australians', *The Age*, 20 December, 1982, p.10

and wanted to limit Asian immigration. Ruxton's importance in this period grew as he became a media figure. Through his media appearances he was able to influence a wider audience than just his RSL constituency and, like Blainey, was able to steer the debate on immigration towards curtailing immigration and the maintenance of Anglo-Australian culture.

The League of Rights

The League of Rights, like the ANA and the RSL, had a significant impact on the formation of political values of a great number of Australians up to the middle decades of the twentieth century and beyond. Essentially it was nationalist in a similar fashion, wanting to preserve Anglo-Australian society. The chief difference being that the League of Rights operated like a secret society, infiltrating other organizations, and attempting to influence those in the corridors of power in a less transparent way. But its influence was no less just because it was less visible.

The League of Rights was formed in 1946. Eric Butler, its founder and chief ideologue, had been synonymous with it for much of its history. Much of his earlier writings such as the *International Jew* echoed the writings of *The Protocol of the Elders of Zion* in asserting an international Jewish conspiracy to control the world. Along with the Jewish conspiracy, the League believed in a socialist conspiracy and a capitalist conspiracy to dominate the world. The League was arch-conservative, neo-nazi, and concerned with traditional social values. It saw itself as the defender of 'God, King and Country', free enterprise, states rights, small business and farming interests. Its major

concern in relation to immigration was that it considered altering the traditional source nations would change the Australian nation and its identity, and it saw this as a retrograde step. It believed that our nation was founded on British heritage, and immigration should largely draw from British sources.

Consequently Butler's views in regard to immigration were very much in favour of White Australia. When refugees landed on our shores in the 1980's the League of Rights were of the view that this was the first step in an invasion. The first trickle of refugees was laying ground for a much larger invasion. The purpose of Asian immigration was, according to the League, to 'destroy traditional Australia', and multiculturalism was a madness that would ultimately end in racial riots.²⁵ The League view was that for the nation to survive we must reverse the trend of multiculturalism and return to a traditional Australia, an Australia with one culture. Asian immigration had to be resisted.

Rabidly White Australian, the League asserted this in one of its publications in relation to immigration:

A major assault on the White Australia Policy was not to be undertaken until the Anglo-Australian population had been diluted by the first wave of immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe. The same piecemeal strategy was practised in the United States after the American civil war.²⁶

The League opposed changes to immigration policy because it would

²⁵ League of Rights publication *On Target*, 1988, cited in Markus, *Race*, p.118

²⁶ John Peterson and Ronan Phillips, 'Racial Treason: From White Australia to the Yellow Australia Policy', *Race, Culture, and Nation-New Times Survey* ALOR (Melbourne : Australian League of Rights, August, 2005).

create a multi-racial society, and ultimately lead to the destruction of the white race. Sir Raphael Cilento, a prominent League supporter, gave a paper to the Melbourne League of Rights seminar in 1972 saying:

We in this country are in a precarious condition of social health...we must carefully and repeatedly examine the purity and dilution of our RACIAL blood to avoid any incompatible racial clots that might end in disaster.²⁷

His belief was that racial intermixing would spread disease, but it could also lead to social disaster if society was too diluted by enclaves and minorities.²⁸

In another League publication, *The Dangerous Myth of Racial Equality* (1962), it is suggested that the Sharpeville massacre in South Africa in 1960, where 69 black protestors were killed by South African police, occurred because of the essentially violent nature of the black person:

In the Negro, the savage sleeps lightly and is quickly aroused. Violence to him is not the final expression of unbearable exasperation, but a pleasurable excitement, blood rites move him to ecstasy.²⁹

The paranoia of the League led them to believe that the Australian nation was marked for destruction by forces that wanted to internationalise and Asianise our culture. There is even the assertion that Australia would become a

²⁷ Sir Raphael Cilento, *Australia's Racial Heritage: A Brief Insight*, Australian Heritage Society, (Melbourne: ALOR, 1971), p.4

²⁸ *ibid.*, pp.10-11

²⁹ D.Watts, *The Dangerous Myth of Racial Equality: Genocide for the White Races* (Melbourne: ALOR, New Times Ltd., 1962), p.12

colony of Asia and a form of 'soft genocide' of the White race was contemplated.³⁰ Many of their publications such as *Race, Culture and Nation* and *On Target* deal with these fantasized conspiracies. On the beginnings of multiculturalism the same authors contend that 'this Anglocidal policy was developed by a small group of largely left wing fringe academics, social workers and activists'. Of the Coalition contribution to multiculturalism in the 1980's they maintain that:

"Future Directions"[the Coalition policy document] set the agenda for the advanced programme of racial genocide of Anglo-Australia. It was recommended that Australia form part of a multi-national regional grouping, given that its future population would be Asiatics.³¹

When Geoffrey Blainey spoke of the Asianisation of Australia in 1984, the League of Rights agreed whole-heartedly. They believed that immigration and multiculturalism had set a course of destruction for the Australian nation. *On Target* on 6 July 1984 concurred with Blainey in wanting a moderate immigration policy, maintaining that 'he is right when he says that multiculturalism is "in tatters"'. This however, would not prevent the multiculturalists from 'continuing to fragment the Australian nation by spending millions of the taxpayers' money on a variety of weird and wonderful projects',³²

But for much of the 1950's, 1960's and 1970's the League was a small

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ John Peterson and Rohan Phillips, 'Civil War in Australia: The Planned Destruction of Anglo-Australia by Immigration and Asianisation', in *Culture, Race and Nation* (Melbourne : Australian League of Rights)

³² *On Target*, 6 July, 1984

rural based organization that had little influence outside of its constituency. In the 1980's and 1990's some of its philosophy was gaining traction in the mainstream media. Eric Butler asserted in January 1988 that:

For many years the League was like a voice in the wilderness attempting to warn Australians of the far reaching implications of the New International Order...of the revolutionary forces attempting to divide the nation through a land claims movement...of the destabilization of a basically homogenous nation through a policy of multi-racialism and multi-culturalism. But the unfolding of events has, in recent years, resulted in an upsurge...of a number of grass roots movements which had in various ways alerted and encouraged Australians to resist.³³

That the League had become more influential around this time was attested to by people like Senator Boswell of the National Party who claimed that the League did not necessarily want to attract large-scale membership but rather to have groups and individuals 'to use League thinking, arguments and literature'. Boswell was aware of this because the League had been very active in National Party constituencies, particularly in rural Victoria, and had been accused of trying to infiltrate the party itself. He claimed that the League thrived on:

discord, dissension, frustration, fear, resentment and financial hardship. It flourishes in times of drought, low commodity prices, high foreign debt, and high interest rates, and recent events have led to an unprecedented expansion of its powers, influence and number of supporters...³⁴

³³ Eric Butler, quoted in Markus, *Race*, p.119

³⁴ Senator Boswell, *CP:S*, 27 April, 1988

The League was able to tap into a number of other organizations and to gain influence with people in positions of power. Jim Killen, prominent Liberal and Cabinet minister in the 1960's, was drawn to the League's orbit because of its advocacy of British-Australian values; Alexander Downer had a temporary and sporadic connection with the League. Graeme Campbell, the former Labor member, had a much longer association. Some organizations that had League links or were under League influence were the Australian Heritage Society, Council for a Free Australia, the Christian Institute for Individual Freedom, Conservative Speakers Clubs and the One Australia Movement.³⁵ These organizations had a conservative perspective on society similar to the League, often reactionary in outlook, strongly nationalist, anti-immigrationist, anti-multiculturalist.

The extent of League influence is unknown, and a precise calculation of the numbers of people who would hold views sympathetic to the League is also unknown. And it is uncertain whether people who have been drawn into association with the League or its associated organisations would necessarily know League activists were attempting to influence their thinking. Many people attending League affiliated groups such as the Conservative Speakers' Clubs or the Heritage society would not have known they were League-fronts or they were being manipulated. For instance, the Heritage Society's recruitment strategy was first to provide a forum, a 'focus for loyalists and conservatives', give them political tuition, and then they would be 'naturally

³⁵ See Markus, *Race*, p.120

drawn into the deeper Australian League of Rights structure'.³⁶ But the League has extensive publications, and an extensive network of satellite organizations, indicating the strength of the organization and its ability to spread throughout some strata of society unnoticed like a web.

Geoffrey Blainey

The historian Geoffrey Blainey was the articulate voice of nationalism in the 1980's, an oracle for those who saw fault in a freer immigration system and multiculturalism, and those who wanted a return to a more cohesive society less divided by ethnic tribalism. He was thrown onto the national stage after a speech he made to Rotarians in Warnambool in 1984, calling for the slowing down of Asian immigration. He was vilified by sections of the media and fellow academics. Some labeled him a racist. Others accused him of wanting a return to White Australia. Blainey's comments spurred a national debate on immigration, multiculturalism and the nature of Australian society. In his defence he published *All for Australia*, correcting some of the misconceptions people had about him, but also outlining his views on what the nation should be. His influence extended beyond the stormy debate that raged over his comments, many in the media and politics adopting similar views. His concern, as were the concerns of those that followed him, was that the pace of Asian immigration was too great, and that it posed a threat to the very survival

³⁶ Australian League of Rights / Australian Heritage Society, *Intelligence Survey*, April 1977. This was a survey based on the nature and success of recruitment.

of Anglo-Australia.

In 1984, when Blainey delivered his Warnambool speech, the Hawke Labor government had been in power for two years and there had been a rise in the number of Asian migrants. He claimed that ‘an immigration policy that for one third of a century had been one of the most successful in the history of any modern land was slowly drifting into serious trouble’.³⁷ This wave of Asian immigration was the largest in our history, and there were large numbers of Asians in many suburbs where there was high unemployment. He maintained this would court social tension. In some older Australian suburbs, he says, slogans appeared scrawled on subways and walls urging Asians to go home or to ‘Stop the Asian invasion’. According to Blainey, immigration of this sort, and multiculturalism, threatened to destroy old Australia:

The old Australians see the newcomers everywhere: they hear a strange language at the supermarket. They wonder what their own familiar world is coming to.³⁸

In the 1950’s and 1960’s the old Australian had believed that immigration was good for the country, providing much needed population for security and to build up the economy. But by the 1980’s that faith in immigration was not as certain. Governments had imposed a multicultural society from above without the public having much say. Multiculturalism, he says, seemed at first to be:

mostly words, packaging, oratory, pork barreling and folk dancing. It meant surprisingly

³⁷ G.Blainey, *All For Australia* (Sydney: Methuen Haynes, , 1984), p.14

³⁸ *ibid.*, p.131

little to the average Australian. It also offended large groups of Australians of British and Irish descent. Somehow multiculturalism is supposed to bind the country loosely together with bright ribbons and flowers. But now, in an economic crisis, the artificial petals are beginning to fall from the flowers.³⁹

Blainey drew some of his arguments from his study of history. He pointed to the lessons of the goldfields in the nineteenth century when conflict developed between Australians and the Chinese, the experience convincing Australians that a mixed race society would not work. He said in a speech to the National Press Club in November 1983:

We should continue to welcome a variety of Asian immigrants, but they should come on our terms, through our choosing, and in numbers with which our society can cope.⁴⁰

This was all about preserving Australian society, allowing diverse migration, but not in enough numbers for it to do harm to society. It was also felt this was something Australians should be in control of.

At the same time as the Blainey controversy, Stewart West, the immigration minister in the Hawke Labor government, was reported as saying that an increasing Asianisation of Australia was inevitable. Bill Hayden, the foreign affairs minister, echoed the comments. Blainey felt obliged to respond, and said in an article on 20 March, 1984, in the *Age*:

I do not accept the view, widely held in the Federal cabinet, that some kind of slow Asian takeover of Australia is inevitable. I do not believe we are powerless. I do believe

³⁹ *ibid.*, p.16

⁴⁰ *ibid.*, p.24

that we can with good will and good sense control our destiny.⁴¹

One of the main criticisms of the immigration system that he was trying to make at Warnambool was that the pace of Asian immigration was running ahead of public opinion. He said that in the 1970's migrants were brought in 'almost in defiance of public opinion, thus aiding the present unrest'. By 1984, he claimed, only three out of every ten Australians supported the immigration system.⁴²

Blainey backed this up with international comparisons. He said that in America in the same year, June 1984, *Newsweek* did a poll on attitudes to immigration. It found that Americans believed that too many Asians were settling. They were also found uncomfortable the numbers arriving from Mexico. New Zealand too, was having difficulty in accepting the level of Polynesian arrivals despite its earlier tolerance of such races.⁴³ But Blainey believed the pendulum had swung too far the other way. Australia had sacrificed a cohesive nation for the sake of pleasing the wider world. He said :

Our immigration policy is increasingly based on an appeal to international precepts that our neighbours sensibly refuse to practise. We are surrendering much of our own independence to a phantom opinion that floats vaguely in the air and rarely exists on this earth. We should think very carefully about the perils of converting Australia into a giant multicultural laboratory for the assumed benefit of the people's of the world.⁴⁴

⁴¹ *ibid.*, p.29

⁴² *ibid.*, pp.43-44

⁴³ *ibid.*, pp.44-45

⁴⁴ *ibid.*, pp.54-55

This is what Blainey called 'surrendering the nation'. Effectively we had created an internationalist nation. National culture had given way to the internationalist principle of racial equality. Blainey wanted to reinstate control over immigration and allow migration that would be in the nation's interest. He quotes Dr.Charles Price who said, in a newspaper article 17 May 1984, that:

just as a family has the right to decide whom it invites to visit or live in its home, so a nation has the right to decide its own ethnic composition and the kind of people it invites to visit or live permanently within its borders. This principle underlies the refusal...of countries all over the world to admit large numbers of persons of widely different backgrounds and customs.⁴⁵

Blainey had become obsessed by increased numbers of Asian migrants coming to Australia and its capacity to de-stabilise society. In 1983 the numbers of Asians amounted to 2 per cent of the population, but Asian immigration was close to 40 per cent. He argued that it was inconsistent with the existing population regime, and that the Asian immigration figure should be closer to 2 per cent. He claimed that the figures were actually higher than this, disguised by the fact the Middle East was not classified as part of Asia for immigration purposes. He quoted an Australian National University finding that the Asian component of the population would be around 7 per cent by the year 2000.Using comparative history, he argued that in the 1860's the Chinese population was around 3 per cent and it resulted in anti-Chinese riots, and that the Italian population of Kalgoorlie in 1934 was only 1 per cent but also

⁴⁵ C.Price, Letter in *Canberra Times*, 17 May 1984, p.2

resulted in aggression with resultant deaths.⁴⁶ Blainey seemed to be pointing to some carrying capacity, some threshold for certain migrants, beyond which the nation became imperiled.

The impact of multicultural policy was most evident in the suburbs, where numbers of migrants had moved in. It is here that Blainey claims the tensions of multiculturalism brewed. As more and more Asian migrants moved into the suburbs, the nature of those suburbs changed. In this context Blainey made the plea:

If the people of each minority should have the right to establish here a way of life familiar to them, is it not equally right-or more so in a democracy-for the majority of Australians to *retain* the way of life familiar to them? ⁴⁷

For many old Australians, their way of life in the suburbs, the familiar Australia of yesteryear had disappeared. In its place was a hybrid-land, an ethnic-Australian patch-work, where migrant groups would dominate some streets in a suburb and Australians other streets. Other suburbs had turned into a little Italy or a little Vietnam. Blainey cites one letter, an Australian resident from Cabramatta, as a representative example:

Of course people from the same countries tend to congregate together. Perfectly natural, and many of the other things Asians do are understandable. But we are Australians and what is so shameful about that? Are our ways so terrible, are we to be branded as unworthy because we choose to keep our ways?

How can anyone not be upset at the falling standards, the deterioration of our way of

⁴⁶ Blainey, *All for Australia*, pp.71-72

⁴⁷ *ibid.*, p.124

life and a feeling of being a stranger in one's own town? With each passing week the town of Cabramatta is becoming more like an Asian town.⁴⁸

The letter is quite useful in explaining the sense of alienation old Australia has had with immigration. There was a loss of familiar culture, and a loss of nation in that suburb. As Blainey asserted, that 'our present policy, in its divisiveness makes greater numbers of Australians feel a little like strangers in their own land'.⁴⁹ Charles Price, the demographer, gave some credibility to these comments. On 17 May 1984, he wrote in the *Canberra Times*, that:

Academics, professionals and politicians...are often very insensitive to the feelings of native Australians whose neighbourhoods are being transformed by the influx of peoples with quite different customs and ways of life.

Racial tensions occurred where migrants were heavily concentrated in pockets in suburbs, where 'immigrants from a very different background...have arrived in large numbers and in a few years completely changed a neighbourhood's character'.⁵⁰

Blainey cites one woman from Campsie, a suburb typical of Price's profile of a highly ethnicised area. She complains of the intrusion of migrants into her way of life. She said:

Can I tell you what we have to put up with? Pavements are now spotted with phlegm and spit...They are noisy and entertain late, way past midnight. They cook on their

⁴⁸ *ibid.*, pp.123-125

⁴⁹ *ibid.*, p.123

⁵⁰ C. Price, Letter in *Canberra Times*, 17 May 1984

verandahs, so the sky here is filled with greasy smoke and the smell of goat's meat...This block has turned into slum. Downstairs live, I do not know how many Vietnamese in the two flats. They are noisy and park their cars in inconsiderate places...At one stage, they were even drying noodles on the clothesline in the backyards.⁵¹

She feared for her son because, as an Australian, he was an outsider among the migrant boys, and he was bullied by them on a daily basis. She felt that one day 'there will be bloodshed in this country'.

The problem for Blainey came down to Eskimos. One Eskimo migrating to Broken Hill is no problem but when it comes to thousands there is one. Both the residents of Broken Hill and the Eskimos will tell you that. Blainey quotes from the *Migrant Entry Handbook*, which he considers had been continuously flouted:

The size and composition of the migrant intake should not jeopardize social cohesiveness and harmony within the Australian community.⁵²

Blainey's world view was that people had a need to belong to a community. Multicultural policy, with its:

Emphasis on what is different and on the rights of the new minority rather than the old majority, gnaws at that sense of solidarity that many people crave for. The policy of governments since 1978 to turn Australia into a land of all nations runs across the present yearning for stability and social cohesion.⁵³

⁵¹ Woman from Campsie, Sydney, quoted in Blainey, *All For Australia*, p.32.

⁵² Migrant Entry Handbook, quoted in Blainey, *All for Australia*, p.143

⁵³ Blainey, *All for Australia*, p.153.

The Blainey debate was the first major discussion the nation had over immigration, and his views had a ripple-on effect, becoming influential with those who opposed multiculturalism for years to come.

Talk-back radio

The Blainey debate urged people to review the merits of multiculturalism and immigration. This was significant in the forming of people's views because it dominated the media for some time. It certainly had an impact on the general public and on media commentators. But on a daily basis the radio-men probably had more influence, especially the shock jocks from the key metropolitan radio stations, who appealed to a wide audience and were instrumental in forming public attitudes, people like Ron Casey, Stan Zemanek, John Laws and Alan Jones. Their prominence on the air-waves in the 1980's and 1990's parallels the shift in Australian society towards a multicultural society and the growth of non-European immigration. However, the samples taken from these radio shows are limited, yet they do reflect a sense of some of the public discourse on immigration and Australian society.⁵⁴

Talk-back hosts liked to present themselves as the voice of the average Australian, and were quick to attack anything that deviated from what they considered to be mainstream Australian values. Ethnic communities were seen

⁵⁴ 'Talk-back' commentators have a daily influence on the opinions of significant numbers of people. The discussion on them in this chapter is to ascertain the discourse that was going on in the community in relation to multiculturalism, immigration and nation. The choice of talk back sample is limited, but the use of Alan Jones, John Laws and Ron Casey is pertinent. Alan Jones said he led the charge at Cronulla and has large following; John Laws has been on radio for decades and has a syndicated listener-ship of 2 million across Australia. Ron Casey was noted for his opposition to Asian immigration. All three represent the quintessential populist representations of Anglo-Australia. Others from around Australia such as Neil Mitchell from 3AW in Melbourne, Steve Price and others adopt similar positions and viewpoints.

as the 'other' and immigration issues were often seen as a problem. Talkback radio tended to transmit values that perpetuated 'ethnocentric prejudice and ignorance'.⁵⁵ The Bell Report into the media, as recently as 1992, found that there was a 'preoccupation with [a] stridently Australian (ie. 'Anglo-Aussie') point of view' that saw migrants as outsiders, and 'linked [them] to backwardness, chaos and threat'.⁵⁶ At worst it was unashamedly racist. At best there was a confident and strident ethnocentrism that saw migrants as welcome, but only as long as they integrated into an Australian society that had Australian culture as its centerpiece. There was, I contend, the emergence of a radio-nationalism in this period, and it saw itself as the protector and voice of White Australian culture.

Ron Casey, prominent in Sydney radio in the eighties and nineties, well known for his on-air criticism of multicultural and immigration issues, echoed Blainey's sense of the loss of Australia. In his autobiography, *Confessions of a Larrikin*, he outlined some of the fears he had about the levels of migration to Australia, particularly Asian migration. His major concern was not immigration per se, but 'the unrestricted flow of people from other countries into Australia'. He wanted 'controlled immigration' and not 'invasion'.⁵⁷ The threat to the nation for him, as with many others, was not that Asians were migrating to Australia but there was a lack of governmental control in regulating numbers. Casey also felt that Australian space was being invaded by ethnics, and they were becoming too populous, especially Asians.

⁵⁵ P.Bell, *Multicultural Australia in the Media (Report to the Office of Multicultural Affairs)*, (Canberra: AGPS, 1993), pp. 66, 78

⁵⁶ *ibid.*, p.82

⁵⁷ R. Casey, *Confessions of a Larrikin* (Paddington/ Sydney: Lester-Townsend Publishing, 1989), p.187

Like many, his objection was to the numbers of migrants and the failure to assimilate into the Australian way of life. He said that:

we should strive for social harmony and this cannot exist when you allow Asians to come to Australia in large numbers with no intention of ever assimilating into the ways of old Australia.⁵⁸

Multiculturalism is a corruption of that ideal, and must be reversed. He said:

I need the opportunity to express my fears and concerns for Australia's future if this crazy policy of multiculturalism and unlimited Asian immigration continue unchecked.⁵⁹

For him, old Australia had been overthrown, and he, as with perhaps many who thought like him, had been disenfranchised by the multicultural elites. He believed that these elites wanted to stymie debate on immigration:

A conspiracy exists among prominent politicians to stifle any debate on the immigration issue, and among ethnic leaders in the community to defuse any opposition to unlimited Asian immigration. The facts are plain to see. The majority of Australians are against it, but nothing is done to ensure their wishes are fulfilled. I spoke out and I was vilified. Professor Blainey spoke out and lost his job. John Howard spoke out and was dumped as Opposition Leader. Bruce Ruxton spoke out and was labeled a racist loony.⁶⁰

In his autobiography, he feared that Anglo-Australia will be overthrown by Asia. In a hysterical plea to save the old Australia, he conjures up a future

⁵⁸ *ibid.*, p.39

⁵⁹ *ibid.*, p.37

⁶⁰ *ibid.*, p.207

picture of Australia in the year 2020, when the eastern seaboard from Cairns to Melbourne would be ‘overrun by those of Chinese or Japanese extraction’. Northern Australia would be populated by Indonesians and Malays, and the west by Indians. White Australians would live in small ‘enclaves’ or be driven back to Europe. There would be some Australian guerrilla fighters trying to win back the nation, but this would have little chance of success. There would be ‘ghettoes of Australian labourers’, or ‘white coolies’, living on the edges of cities to service the Asian factories.⁶¹

In a broadcast on the 23 April 1987 he said that ‘in another ten years with all the blinking Japs and slopes we have got coming into this country, it’ll be “Banzai, Banzai” ’.⁶² On a story about Cambodian boat people arriving in April 1990 he said:

let me make it quite clear-the boat people, because they come from an underdeveloped country, they bring tuberculosis, they can bring all sorts of diseases-they have just lobbed on our doorstep. And now we have to face the problem of all the do-gooders trying to stop their deportation...Now if we don’t fly them back or tow them to Timor ...they’ll keep coming. There are so many places where Asian people could go if they wanted to descend on a nation.⁶³

On the issue of boat people he urged that they be stamped ‘reject from Australia’ and sent back like sheep on a ship, ‘Baa baa, all the way back to Ho Chi Minh City’ (4-5 June 1990)⁶⁴ Casey’s views, however, were not singular, with many of his listeners expressing similar ideas. His show, however, was

⁶¹ *ibid.*, pp.187-188

⁶² Ron Casey, 2KY, 23 April 1987

⁶³ Ron Casey, 2KY, 3 April 1990

⁶⁴ Ron Casey, 2KY, 4-5 June, 1990.

very popular, an indicator that significant numbers of listeners were sympathetic to Casey views.

John Laws has been on radio the longest of the talk-back hosts, and had the widest audience, his show attracting around 2 million listeners a day and syndicated to 78 stations across Australia. Perhaps not as vituperative as some of the talk-back hosts, Laws nevertheless generally espoused all things Australian and the Australian way of life. The John Williamson song promoting the John Laws show was played once or twice an hour, and is an unashamedly 'Aussie' in intent:

All over this wide brown land of Australia

They listen to my mate John

From here through to Darwin

They've got Mr. Radio on

Yeah, they dig him up there in Tully

For the sunshine he brings

Yeah they love him over there in WA

And they love him in Alice Springs

The audience is predominantly Anglo-Australian. The issues brought up are often therefore suited to that audience. Unconsciously Anglo-Australian values are promoted. Migrants and multicultural issues are often cast a negative light. Below is an example from the John Laws show, 2UE on 14 November, 1991. In this discussion with a caller over money raised to send to war-torn Croatia, John Laws raises the question in the caller's mind as to

whether the money would really go to a humanitarian cause. Underlying this is an attitude that ethnics cannot be trusted. They could spend the money on weapons.

Caller: I wanna know what sort of people can complain about money going back to help people...to clothe and feed them.

Laws: Well... I don't really know, because you have no idea that it's going back to clothe and feed them, I suppose it's the same way that people raise money for the IRA...I we knew it was fund raising for food and clothing....but how do we know its not for bullets?...

Caller: Mm... Well its like um, when they had the Live-Aid appeal for Ethiopia-what's to say that money didn't go and buy bullets for the Ethiopian rebels?

Laws: Well, what's to say it didn't?...Nothing's to say it didn't.⁶⁵

Often, the callers were allowed to trot out endless bigotry without the host making any critical comment. In the following, the host briefly applauds the caller's comments before going on to talk about another subject:

Caller: ...and if we let other cultures into our country to live here and work, most of them send their money back home because they've got starving people at home... we have too many Chinese, the Chinese money goes back to China and goods come from Hong Kong and what good are they doing Australia, and there is more Chinese food than anything else.

2GB: I love it...⁶⁶

Related to a news story on Korean criminals in Australia, talk-back was

⁶⁵ John Laws, 2UE, 14 November 1991; see comments about ethnocentrism in Bell, *Multicultural Australia in the Media* (Canberra : AGPS, 1992), p.69

⁶⁶ 2GB talk-back extract in Bell, *Multicultural Australia in the Media.*, p.70

running hot with the linkage of crime and immigration. On the John Laws Show, 5 May 1997, a caller argued the following in a segment called ‘soap-box’:

Caller: G’day Australia. Just like every Australian I’m particular about who comes into my home and when I’m not there I have a front door with a big lock on it to keep the scum out. So where is the lock on Australia’s front door? Is there any filtration system on who can come into our great country? Criminal scum can walk through our fly-screen strength immigration just like we’re not home...

Laws: ...Hey, listen, you were terrific.⁶⁷

This is a variation on the Pauline Hanson ‘if I can invite whom I want into my home then I should be able to invite whom I want into the country’. It quickly links migrants with crime, but above all it is empowering the Anglo-Australian.

Frequently listeners speak without much knowledge of the details of the issue, and the talk-back host does little to correct the listener’s perceptions. This leads to a reinforcement of bigoted views. Take the following example, with Owen Delaney hosting on 2UE 13 November, 1991:

Caller: Now I read where...we had an influx of migrants in Australia...cut down, 122,000 this year.

Delaney: Yeah.

Caller: Say over four to five years, it would be around 700,000... And why are we getting such a big influx when we’re having all these people out of work?...

Delaney: All the other arguments of course come forward about the infrastructure that

⁶⁷ John Laws Show, 2UE, 5 May 1997

comes with them-they bring their money, they buy houses, all that sort of stuff, but I don't know whether that's a viable argument.

Caller: Yeah, exactly, you have to look after your own people first in your own country, before you start...bringing people from other countries in.

Delaney: Well, perhaps that's a question Australians should have been asking of their pollies 10 or 15 years earlier.⁶⁸

Stan Zemanek was one of the more outspoken of the talk-back radio hosts, and was not afraid to aggressively put his position, often riding roughshod over listeners. Below he informs a listener of the propensity of the Chinese to indulge in crime simply because they are Chinese.

Zemanek: Marty, hello.

Caller: Hello Stan.

Zemanek: Yes Marty....

Caller: ...you said how many Chinese students become rapists and drug users and...

Zemanek: No, no, how many of them were drug users, how many were drug pushers, how many were rapists, how many were murderers, how many were paedophiles...

Caller: Alright, alright...

Zemanek: ...and so we go on and how many wife bashers.⁶⁹

And on the impact of multiculturalism and Pauline Hanson's views he said:

Zemanek: Anyway, Sir Ronald says he doesn't believe the majority of Australians support Ms. Hanson's views. But even so, he wants extra money to put into educational campaigns, to counteract what he calls her attacks on Aborigines and multiculturalism. This turkey, this dill Sir Ronald! I'm afraid to say son, multiculturalism doesn't work in

⁶⁸ Owen Delaney, John Laws Show, 13 November 1991

⁶⁹ Stan Zemanek, 2UE, 11 September 1996.

this country! Never did. Never will!

...But the fact is most people do support Pauline Hanson's views. By the number of people who have been in the poll for this radio station, by the number of people that have also supported her views in all the polls under the sun, right across the country...⁷⁰

(2UE, 20 September, 1996)

Zemanek's style was one where opinion reigned supreme over rational discussion, and could not entertain a view other than its own. He would applaud those with similar views, and attack those who didn't agree with him. His show became essentially a discourse in bigotry.

Alan Jones was seen along with John Laws as the king of talk-back. With an accumulative total of 494,000 listeners over the time slot in a day, Jones clearly had the ear of a large number of people. About 80 per cent of the population listen to radio daily, with Jones and Laws capturing close to 40 per cent of the listening audience.⁷¹ The following is Jones' response to the advent of Pauline Hanson, outlining his views on multiculturalism:

...I don't understand what we mean when we say that we're a multicultural society, I don't understand that expression. I mean, if it means that the Australian population comes from many countries and is made up of many cultures, I've got no trouble with that. But if it tries to suggest that the primary culture is something other than Australian then we're in deep trouble.

He then went on to give a fairly clear picture of how he saw the dominant or primary culture in Australian society. He believed that multiculturalism was

⁷⁰ Stan Zemanek, 2UE, 20 September 1996

⁷¹ P. Adams and Lee Burton, *Talkback: Emperors of Air* (Sydney : Allen and Unwin, 1997), pp.235-242

subordinate to the main culture, and should not subvert it. He said:

We've got our own culture. Mine, predominantly, was from the bush, yours might be from the city. You might have the culture of being born into an environment where people were well off. I wasn't, but we bring all of those and marry them together, without difference, towards supporting the dominant Australian culture. It's not the peripheral focus, not something that we squeeze in when there's a little bit of time left, after we have our Little Sicily, Little Italy, or Little Vietnam, or Little China. Australia can only strengthen if it is a country of one dominant culture, one flag, we say one anthem, and we want people who come to this country, in return for the opportunities that they are given, to embrace that philosophy.⁷²

This was an obvious plea for a return to the hegemony of Anglo-Australian culture.

In the midst of the Hanson debate, in the mid 1990s, one caller had this to say:

Jones: Elizabeth, hello.

Caller: For over twenty five years I've felt unrepresented in Parliament. And every night I've said a prayer saying, 'Please God when I wake up let me be a non-English speaking or black-lesbian unmarried mother'. And every morning I wake up and I'm still a 70 year old Anglo-Saxon who worked all her life. My husband and I paid our house off, we never had a bean of a handout from the government and hallelujah, along comes Pauline and Graeme Campbell and I say, 'thank God' for them: I feel at last I have someone speaking for me in Parliament.

Jones: Ok, thanks Elizabeth, I'm sure there are a lot of Australians that feel that way. It's all very well to sort of throw slogans at them and vitriol, but I get the impression

⁷² Alan Jones, 2UE, 12 September, 1996

they're not going to shut Pauline Hanson up...Democracy has spoken. She won in a whitewash.⁷³

Jones doesn't question her view, but says that a lot of Australians felt the same way she did, and goes on to imply that her view is in the ascendancy along with Pauline Hanson's. The caller reveals the lot of a hard-done-by hard-working Australian who sees multiculturalism as giving handouts to minorities. It is a plea to politicians or God or someone in authority to stand up for the mainstream Anglo-Saxon. This is representative of lot of Jones' listeners.

The Media

In a study by Philip Bell, *Multicultural Australia in the Media* (1992), it was found that talk-back radio was the most strident and negative in its depiction of ethnic communities and immigration issues. It used the most racist language, 'exacerbated by ignorance and tacit acceptance of the listeners' prejudices by the shows' hosts'⁷⁴. Viewpoints expressed were generally that of the Anglo-Australian, depicting migrants as outsiders, and linking them to all sorts of negative behaviours. They were often perceived in radio talk-back discourse as threats to society, and associated with backwardness and a chaotic social order.⁷⁵

In the mass media more generally, discourse on migrants and multiculturalism wasn't as negative, although it was negative. The tendency

⁷³ Alan Jones Show, 2UE, 11 September, 1996

⁷⁴ Bell, *Multicultural Australia in the Media*, p.82

⁷⁵ *ibid.*, p.82

was to portray stories in the context of its relevance to Anglo-Australia, to 'reproduce and maintain the ways in which the dominant groups define and re-define the less numerous and less powerful'. When migrant issues or multiculturalism were discussed, they were presented as 'problems for the majority culture or dominant economic interests within Australian society generally'.⁷⁶ This reflected a prevailing mind-set in society where Anglo-Australia was seen as the centre and other cultures contiguous to it. Broadcasters and journalists, like the average person, saw the migrant world as it related to them or how it would relate to Anglo-Australian society. Very little discourse in the commercial media saw immigration and multicultural issues from a migrant perspective. The frequency of ethnic descriptors built a picture of an ingrained negative view of other races, and an over-positive view of things Australian. In the period June 1991-July 1992 Bell found that 'Asian' was used most frequently in relation to crime and immigration; 'refugees' and 'migrants' were used with the greatest frequency to describe groups other than Australian. Television and radio were far worse in stereotypical labeling and representations than the print media. In advertisements and television commercials the predominant representation was an 'ethnocentric idealization of the majority culture'. Migrant images were generally excluded from these representations that idealized Australian life and images of blonde-haired Anglo-Australians.⁷⁷

Women's magazines, such as *Women's Weekly* and *Woman's Day*, with very large circulation figures, and thus an ability to influence the mind-set of

⁷⁶ *ibid.*, p.78

⁷⁷ *ibid.*, pp.78-79

the female nation, also had predominantly White Australian representations. As mainstream magazines, they contained very little or no stories directly related to migrant issues. In advertisements models were overwhelmingly white and young; pictures of mothers and babies were overwhelmingly represented by white Australians. If stories were done on non-Anglo-Australians it was generally on high achievers or to highlight the differences between our culture and theirs.⁷⁸

What does this all mean? Media audiences and readers were, in the late 1980's and into the 1990's, being exposed to a barrage of images and information that represented White Australia as the dominant culture and migrant cultures as secondary, and potentially threatening. Unconsciously the media portrayed the familiar world of its clientele, reflecting on the daily life of the majority culture. People's views are fashioned by what they see and hear in the media. Multiculturalism was not being portrayed as the centre of Australian cultural life. Putnis (1989)⁷⁹ did a study on the *Courier-Mail's* attitude to multiculturalism, finding that often it was associated with division, fragmentation and violence; but also it was used to denote cohesion and tolerance. When multiculturalism was presented in the media it often was critical of multiculturalism as a political policy. Goodall *et al* (1990) found that the media constructed multicultural and migrant issues from an Anglo-centric perspective. News and current affairs tended to ignore or exclude migrant perspectives, except where social problems and conflict were created in Australian society. Multiculturalism was not viewed as the natural basis for

⁷⁸ *ibid.*, pp.32-35

⁷⁹ P.Putnis, 'Constructing Multiculturalism: Political and Popular Discourse', *Australian Journal of Communication*, 16, (1989): p.163-164

society. Instead, 'Anglo-Australian culture is represented as the 'real' and 'traditional' culture of this country'.⁸⁰

In a study on cultural diversity on commercial radio a majority of respondents found that 'they perceived commercial radio as entirely uninterested in portraying Australia as a multicultural country' and that it 'was pre-occupied with a narrow and predominantly 'Anglo-Australian' audience'.⁸¹ One respondent said of commercial radio:

My opinion is they have very little regard for Australia's cultural diversity. They seem to be catering for the Anglo Saxon...It would be very difficult on any commercial station to pick up something that is not within the Australian mold, the Anglo-Saxon mold.

and another bemoaned that:

During the Persian gulf war there were stacks of jokes about Saddam Hussein which were partly understandable...but then it began to extend from demonizing the Iraqi president to demonizing Muslims, and then Arabs, and then middle eastern people in general...It's as if to say...If you're one of them, they're not one of us, and if you're not one of us the rest follows, you're not Australian... You find yourself reduced to some sort of object in relation to 'us', you know the 'Australians'.⁸²

In analyzing the immigration debate surrounding Geoffrey Blainey in 1984, Bell found that media representations were not neutral, but reported to

⁸⁰ H.Goodall, A. Jakubowicz, A.Martin, J.Mitchell, L.Randall, K Seneiratne, *Racism, Cultural Pluralism and the Media*, Report to the Office of Multicultural Affairs (Canberra: AGPS,1990), p.52

⁸¹ B.Shrimpton, *The Representation of Cultural Diversity in Commercial Radio Broadcasting* (Richmond: Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria, 1999), p.40

⁸² Participant responses in B. Shrimpton, *Representation of Cultural Diversity*, pp.40-42.

an assumed audience that were non-immigrant. The messages were ideological in so far as they were addressed to a local Anglo-Australian audience about the threat of the other, Asian migrants.⁸³ The media found themselves caught in a structural language trap, where the editorial voice was directed to middle and predominantly Anglo-Australia, thus any discussion of Asian immigration inevitably was couched in terms of its impact on Australian culture and society, and not necessarily on its real merits.

The Journalists and commentators

While many journalists were in favour of the development of a multicultural society and saw the benefits of immigration, there were a number who were stridently opposed. Some felt the social experiment with immigration was failing, but often underlying their critical views was a desire to return to the hegemony of the older Anglo-Australian culture. Their views often reflected those in the community, that multiculturalism and high levels of immigration had been imposed on the public and that it had gone too far and brought many unwanted problems.

Des Keegan in the *Australian*, 9 September, 1986, saw multiculturalism as an unwanted growth on the Australian landscape, something that many profited from. He said:

Australia is prepared to pursue the most absurd notions as long as there are public service jobs for hordes of graduates in sociology and finger nail painting...The real squeal here comes from the 2,000 teachers who make a handsome living out of remedial

⁸³ P.Bell, 'Race, ethnicity: meanings and the media' in R.Bell, *Multicultural Societies: a Comparative Reader* (Sydney: Sable, 1987)

studies for the army of indigestible immigrants who have been imposed on us...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.⁸⁴

This reflected the aggressive ethnocentrism of many of our journalists at the time, symptomatic of which was David Barnett's view in the *Bulletin* in 1986. He argued that migrants should be integrated into the dominant culture of Australia, and should be indoctrinated in the values of the culture by being required to take a:

short course on the meaning of the flag, the significance of the monarchy, the ANZAC tradition, mateship and egalitarianism, family life in Australia, the British heritage, the Common Law or parliamentary democracy⁸⁵

Geoffrey Blainey was not content to stay at the academic periphery. He also wrote material for the press. In one of his regular journalistic forays in the *Weekend Australian* 12-13 March 1988, for example, he railed against ethnic rivalries and divisions imported into Australia. He was concerned that:

We are blindly encouraging them to turn Australia into a tribal battleground or into a cluster of enclaves most of which regard Australia as a honeypot rather than a nation in its own right.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Des Keegan, 'Immigration Policies a Cancer on our Society', *Australian*, 9 September, 1986, p.18

⁸⁵ David Barnett, *Bulletin*, 1986, p.62

⁸⁶ Geoffrey Blainey, 'Australia must break down the walls of ghettos', *Weekend Australian*, 12-13 March, 1988, p.18

He spoke of the double-talk of the Department of Immigration and Ethnic affairs. They were concerned on the one hand that 'migrant intake didn't jeopardize social cohesiveness' and, on the other, preserving ethnic heritage. Similarly, Buzz Kennedy's column in the *Sunday Telegraph*, 4 December 1988, reacted to inter-ethnic rivalries that culminated in the shooting of a Croatian demonstrator outside the Yugoslav Consulate in Sydney. He said:

Multiculturalism is the main casualty of last week's shooting...The sooner the ratbags climb down from their bandwagon and realize that sort of legislated multiculturalism they're trying to force on society is a sham and a mockery, the better for Australia and the new arrivals in this land. ⁸⁷

Further, Kennedy urged that 'there is a priority need to instill into new arrivals the important basics of Australian history; the forms and processes of democracy as practiced here, along with at least some knowledge of our constitution'

Terry Lane in his column in the Melbourne *Herald* on 20 March 1989 said:

Multiculturalism, as we all know, is not about tolerance at all. Just the opposite, in fact. It's about vendettas, rivalries, old wars, exclusivity, male dominance and racism. All distinctly un-Australian. Multiculturalism is about the preservation of Protestant-Catholic; Arab-Jewish; Greek-Macedonian; Greek-Turkish; Turkish-Armenian; Serbian-Croat etc animosities. ⁸⁸

One of the issues dogging opponents of multiculturalism was that in

⁸⁷ Buzz Kennedy, *Sunday Telegraph*, 4 December, 1988

⁸⁸ Terry Lane, Melbourne *Herald*, 20 March 1989

accepting all cultures it meant a denial of the dominant cultural values. In this commentary by Peter White in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 May 1987, concern is raised by the problems Islamic culture had for Australia. It said that

Multiculturalism offers no philosophical grounds for drawing the line at, for example, polygamy, female circumcision, or some aspects of Islamic fundamentalist belief, integral parts of some immigrants' cultural heritage which obviously have no place in 'multicultural' Australia... Multiculturalism is problematical...⁸⁹

In contrast to multiculturalism, many believed there was an Australian centre which was clear-cut and worth defending. Paul Sheehan, for example, in *Among the Barbarians* (1998), wanted to show that Australia had a 'distinct dominant national culture that binds and forms society'. He put forward a view echoing Russell Ward's bush thesis, that our culture developed in the middle to late nineteenth century among the bush-men and shearers and evolved further as a national identity through two world wars. Multiculturalists, he maintained, had been hostile to this view of Australia's egalitarian tradition and the formation of national identity.⁹⁰ Further, Sheehan pointed to the negative aspect of multicultural populations, dominating some areas and tending to create an alienated white population. Concerned about the density of Asian immigrant population, he contended that:

more than 40 per cent of all immigrants from Asia...settle in just one place-Sydney. Not

⁸⁹ Peter White, 'Government moves to appease migrants is faltering', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 May, 1987, p.13

⁹⁰ S.Castles et.al., *Mistaken Identity: Multiculturalism and the Demise of Nationalism in Australia* (Sydney: Pluto Press,1990), quoted in Sheehan, *Among the Barbarians* (Sydney: Random House, 1998), p. 34

only do the majority of Asian immigrants concentrate in just two cities, Sydney and Melbourne, they concentrate in clusters within these two cities.⁹¹

His view was that Australia had a distinct, cohesive, blended culture that had been built up over time. The diversity of Australia's multiracial society was only able to survive under the 'big, protective tent' of Australian culture. With multiculturalism, 'take away that big tent...and this diversity curdles into state-sponsored tribal animosities'⁹².

The General Public

The clash between multiculturalism and older Australian values, the clash over what should constitute the nation, had naturally enough found its way into the public domain in the immigration debates of 1984, 1988 and post-1996. Whilst it is difficult to ascertain what the majority of people were thinking at these times, there are enough indicators to show that a significant minority were influenced by the nationalist resurgence led by prominent commentators and politicians. A representative sampling of public opinion polls and letters to newspapers referred to in this section seems to support that, and this is bolstered by talk-back commentary referred to earlier. The public in general saw multiculturalism as having to fit in with Australian culture, and if multiculturalism was to dominate Australian culture then they saw this as a threat to the nation. Migration from non-European sources was seen in the same light. It had the potential to destabilize Australian culture. There appeared to be a 'bandwagon' effect at times, whereby the radio commentators

⁹¹ P.Sheehan, *Among the Barbarians*, p.128

⁹² *ibid*, p.143

appropriated the arguments of the politicians and then in turn, the public appropriated the radio commentators comments. The impact of the debates was also seen in letters to the editor, and whilst evenly divided in support and opposition to immigration and multiculturalism, noticeably there was a rise in opposition to immigration and multiculturalism compared to the 1960's and 1970's. In the main, letters in opposition to government policy talk about a flood of non-Anglo migrants that would threaten the Australian identity and culture.

In the 1984 Blainey debate there appeared to be an overwhelming sense of threat to the Anglo-Australian nation, referring often to a perceived takeover of national space. Many letters believed that there was an attempt to Asianise Australia. Others believed that migrants were favoured over Anglo-Australians under multiculturalism. Others again felt that Australian culture and values were being eroded. J. Webb wrote in *The Herald*, 11 May, 1984:

Like Prof. Blainey, I don't want the Australian way of life changed to that of any other country. Why should we be ashamed of our European descent?⁹³

A 'Concerned Australian' (name not supplied) wrote in the *Post*, 26 January, 1984 that:

I become concerned that the relative peace enjoyed by a traditionally Caucasian Australia will be threatened.⁹⁴

⁹³ J. Webb, Letter to the Editor, *The Herald*, 11 May, 1984

⁹⁴ Letter to the Editor, *Post*, 26 January, 1984

Another invoked fighting in the war as a credential to be a genuine Australian, and that all that he fought for was being lost. He said:

Forty five years ago, I loved my country and the traditions so I picked up a rifle and went to fight for what I loved. I was then known as a patriot-an excellent thing to be...Now with the same emotions and sentiments I am classified as (horror of horrors) a racist. If this perverted thinking makes of me a racist then so be it. ⁹⁵

Further letters confirm a widespread belief that Anglo-Australian society was under threat, and that the source of discontent was the immigration system that allowed in too many Asians or cultures unlike ours. C.Little in the *Age*, 20 March, 1984, asserts that:

If protesting against the Asian influx into this country brands one as being a racist, I will gladly wear this label. Do-gooder ethnic leaders will destroy our heritage. ⁹⁶

In 1987 letters condemning multiculturalism continued to indicate its destructive aspects on the nation at large. One critical of the Hawke government's policies, by Peter Lewis, said that Hawke was creating 'a melting pot Australia and denigrating the White Australia policy', and what would Hawke say 'years down the line when Australia has been ruined by racial tension'. Another, Phil Bates, wanted to know whether there was any 'country in the world with a multicultural population living in a harmonious mix'. ⁹⁷

⁹⁵ E.Jones, Letter to Editor, *Herald*, 12 September, 1984

⁹⁶ C.Little, *Age*, 20 March, 1984, p.12

⁹⁷ Letters to Editor, P.Lewis, P Bates, *Australian*, 21 October, 1987, p.8

In 1988 concern arose over ethnic rivalries, and the possibility of conflict emerging as a result. There had been a few incidents such as the protests over the Macedonian issue, Croatian demonstrations outside the Yugoslav embassy, and the shooting of a protestor. Letters to the editor were concerned that multiculturalism was fostering ethnic tensions and that was not good for the country. Duncan Harris, in the *Australian*, 2 December 1988, said:

If any Australian needed convincing, the events of this weekend in Melbourne and in Sydney have vividly demonstrated the divisive nature of government multicultural policies and the explosive nature of fostering ghetto racial groups within our nation. Migrants to our country must come with the intention to create a totally new life here, within our culture...and not to use this country to fight obscure battles in their homelands.

Bill Sorsby, in a sour tone, said that 'ethnic squabbles are obviously more important than being Australian...Multiculturalism is alive and well'. Similarly, R.J.Robson, put the tensions down to the failure of multiculturalism:

We say to our immigrants 'retain your ethnic identities. Retain all your traditional attitudes. If you hated Yugoslavs forty years ago, right-continue to hate them here'. That's what multiculturalism is all about...It's about divisiveness...it's about chaos.⁹⁸

Thus, the multicultural nature of Australian society had rendered it dysfunctional for these letter writers. They see the nation as being threatened by ethnic squabbles and differences and desire a return to a more cohesive

⁹⁸ Letters to Editor: Duncan Harris; Bill Sorsby; R.J.Robson; *Australian*, 2 December 1988, p.12

nation.

Public opinion polls also generally indicated a dissatisfaction with levels of immigration, and Asian immigration in particular. While they are fairly blunt instruments in determining public viewpoints, as they cannot assess underlying reasons why people have indicated certain answers, and sometimes can promote certain responses by the framing of questions,⁹⁹ they still nevertheless can be an indicator of public opinion. They must be viewed with caution and assessed alongside other measures of public opinion, such as media coverage, letters to the editor and the trend of talk-back radio.

From 1966-1975 polls indicate little concern about small numbers of Asians coming into Australia. This reflected the liberal changes to the White Australia policy and its demise. But when increases in Asian immigration did occur in the late 1970's into the 1980's opinion changes. A McNair Poll in February 1979 found that 54 per cent responded that too many Asians were migrating compared to 30 per cent who thought the numbers were right. In June of 1979 a Saulwick Poll found that 67 per cent considered there were too many Asians compared with 23 per cent who thought it the right number. In 1981 Australian National Opinion Poll (ANOP) found 48 per cent compared with 36 per cent respectively. In 1984 a number of polls indicate a consistent shift to disapproval of the numbers of Asian arrivals. This probably reflected the public debate centred around Geoffrey Blainey 1984, but there are figures before 1984 that show a high disapproval for Asian immigration. But figures also show in 1984 that there were consistent figures against numbers of total

⁹⁹ M.Goot, 'Public Opinion and Public Opinion Polls', in A.Markus, and M.C. Ricklefs(ed), *Surrender Australia?* (Sydney: George Allen and Unwin, 1985)

immigration, not just Asian immigration, with percentages almost replicating those opposed to Asian immigration.¹⁰⁰

One would have expected the figures against Asian immigration to be much higher than those against total immigration numbers, given the public debate in 1984. But if we look at other studies it appears Australians were more concerned with the inassimilable migrant, those who may undermine our culture, not just the origin of the migrant. But if one takes a closer look at other polls relating to ethnicity the picture becomes a little clearer. McNair did a poll in March 1984, finding about 50 per cent thought that Vietnamese customs were un-Australian, about the same proportion who thought the same of Greeks and Italians. One in three thought the Vietnamese had not adapted to Australian ways, again about the same proportion who thought that of Greeks and Italians. On the issue of ethnic concentration the Vietnamese did slightly better with only about 40 per cent believing they stuck together too much, whereas about 50 per cent thought Greeks did, and 60 per cent Italians. Twice as many people felt that Greeks and Italians were more interested in their home country than Australia than the Vietnamese.¹⁰¹

But in the context of the present study the opinion polls add support to the view that people's viewpoint on immigration levels depended on the level of threat they saw to the nation. It probably is not an issue as to whether it was Asians or this group or that group Australians objected to, but the consistent threat that immigration in general posed to society in terms of employment, the break-down of community, culture and some sort of 'Australian-ness'.

¹⁰⁰ *ibid.*, p.56

¹⁰¹ see McNair Anderson Poll on Immigration, 1984, M.Goot, 'Public Opinion and Public Opinion Polls' in A.Markus, and M.C. Ricklefs(ed), *Surrender Australia*.

A White Australian society

The antipathy shown to multiculturalism and ethnic culture, and the fear of Australian culture being displaced have filled the pages of this chapter. But this was evidence that there was an ethos, a sense of nation that ran deep in the hearts and minds of Australians. It was not something that could be transmuted by any settlement policy, or by any attempts by politicians to be dismissive of it. White Australia was, as the historian Keith Hancock had suggested back in 1930, an indispensable condition of Australian life. It could be accommodating and inclusive in relation to the acceptance of migrants in Australia. But it could not be replaced. And the same went for Anglo culture. Anglo-Australian culture was at the centre of Australian life. The dialectical tension that had developed between the survival of White Australia and survival of the migrant had pushed too far one way during the multicultural phase. This chapter tracks the voice of White Australia calling for a balance, of bringing the nation back to its cultural centre, the restoration of Anglo-Australian culture as the basis for the nation.

4.

From Hanson to Cronulla:

Anxieties About Loss of Nation and Identity

In the 1980's and 1990's a nationalist reaction to immigration and multiculturalism emerged. It was drawn from the desire to preserve Anglo-Australian identity and cultural heritage as the centerpiece of Australian life. For many Australians the multicultural experiment beginning in the 1970's was seen as a threat to the viability of the nation. This period was a call to restore the hegemony of the historic nation, to maintain the Anglo-Australian culture and identity in the face of increased immigration from Asia and the Middle East. The dialectical struggle between the survival of the migrant and the survival of Anglo-Australian society had reached a crisis point, and the strident reaction to immigration in these years was a call to move backwards to a more balanced and workable Australia that was pre-multicultural.

For many Anglo-Australian culture was primary, the basis of Australian society. Migrant culture was secondary, either co-opted by or absorbed by the dominant culture, or it remained separated but within the wider society. It was

never to challenge the dominant culture. Immigration became a threat to the 'Australian way of life' when large numbers of immigrants came from Asia and the Middle East in the 1980's and 1990's. Larger numbers of people of alien cultures settling in traditional Anglo-Australian suburbs began to change the character of those suburbs. Those Australians who lived there, often older Australians who had lived through the days of the White Australia policy, resented the intrusion of the newcomer. Reaction began to fulminate against Asian and Middle Eastern immigration and multiculturalism as many saw their nation being eroded by the presence of different cultures in their suburbs.

This chapter examines the period from Pauline Hanson to the Cronulla riots of 2005. It assesses the Hanson phenomenon, the Tampa episode, 9/11 and the Cronulla riots, showing that these episodes reflected the anxiety in this period about the loss of nation, anxiety about the loss of Anglo-Australian culture brought about through immigration and multiculturalism. During this period the reactionary nationalism that emerged among the people, media and some politicians was a call to restore that traditional Australian heritage and culture as the hegemonic centre-piece of a multicultural society.

Pauline Hanson and One Nation

Hansonism became the apotheosis of Australian nationalism during the 1990's, an older Australian nationalism created anew. While it did not represent Australia as a whole, it represented a significant minority who felt

disenfranchised by multiculturalism and other aspects of progressive Australia. In the 1996 elections Pauline Hanson stood as an independent in the seat of Oxley, and was able to gain a 19% swing, the highest in any electorate.¹ This electoral success was followed by the success of One Nation candidates, mainly in Queensland. Electorally Pauline Hanson was very popular, exceeding the Liberal and National vote in the Queensland state elections in 1998.² At the launch of her party, One Nation, in 1997, a *Bulletin* opinion poll showed about 10 per cent nation wide support for her. Further, it estimated that about a quarter of voters would consider voting for One Nation.³

A number of academics and commentators have variously tried to explain the Hanson phenomenon, its success, and who she represents. Peter Cochrane, an academic, contends that 'Hanson is the voice of old Anglo-Celtic Australia, resentful of its displacement from the centre of Australian cultural life by the new ethnic Australians'.⁴ Others such as John Carroll say she represents middle Australia who felt aggrieved at a betrayal by the political elites over issues of immigration and multiculturalism.⁵ Alistair Davidson points to the Anglo-Celtic middle classes threatened by the rise of ethnic working classes, a permutation of Menzies' 'forgotten people'.⁶ Menzies' view, that there was a forgotten people, the petit-bourgeoisie, has had some recent resonance with

¹ Jupp, *From White Australia to Woomera*, p.129

² Markus, *Race*, (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 2001) p.233

³ *Bulletin* poll, 1997, reported in the *Weekend Australian; Review*, 17-18 May 1997, N. Rothwell, 'Pauline's People', p.1

⁴ P. Cochrane, 'Race Memory', *Australian: Review of Books*, November, 1996 quoted in J. Stratton, *Race Daze*, (Sydney: Pluto Press, 1998), p.29

⁵ John Carroll, 'The Middle Class Quake', *Australian: Review of Books*, February, 1997

⁶ A. Davidson, *From Subject to Citizen: Australian Citizenship in the Twentieth Century*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 99

Howard's 'battlers'. There is some merit in Davidson's view, in so far as Hanson often spoke about the alienated Anglo-Australian in a multicultural society. But Hanson's constituency went beyond the 'forgotten' middle class. They came from the working class, upper middle class, lower middle class, unemployed, retirees, country and urban folk. It is also more than Carroll suggests. Most of 'middle Australia' didn't vote for her, if she was only getting 10 per cent of the vote. Cochrane's view is a broad brush stroke that has some elegance to it, and is the view of a number of academics and commentators discussed later. While it doesn't attempt to enumerate Hanson's constituency, it does identify an ideological constituency, old Anglo-Celtic Australia that has been alienated from the centre of Australian life. James Jupp supports the view that Hansonism gained support from those who saw Australia culturally as old Australia, but delineated One Nation voters as:

a loose coalition of the disaffected-from impoverished rural areas, affluent retirement resorts, disadvantaged outer suburbs, and a variety of extremist and sometimes paranoid organizations.⁷

Andrew Markus, however has taken the analysis a stage further, and fills in the gaps that Jupp doesn't explain. He has observed that the strongest link between One Nation voting support and rural, regional and outer urban and hinterland constituencies, particularly in Queensland and northern New South

⁷ J.Jupp, *White Australia to Wommera*, p.135

Wales.⁸ He also found that this geographical pattern was consistent with the results in the 1998 federal election with the strongest One Nation support for the National Party at 14.9 per cent, Liberal at 8.4 per cent and Labor 6.1 per cent.

I think each of these views in its own way establishes some aspect of Hanson's constituency, and I think it is expecting too much to establish something definitive and comprehensive. However, from this I think one can gauge a general profile of a One Nation voter. More importantly for this thesis is what Hansonism meant for these people. Did it mean the survival of an older Anglo-Australian culture? Was it a reaction against multiculturalism or against globalization? This thesis posits that all these things came into consideration, but the first, the survival of Anglo-Australia is central.

Hansonism was a reaction to the way Australia was heading in immigration and a number of areas domestically. It spoke of recreating 'one nation' again, a unified nation based on the clear dominance of the traditional Anglo-Australian culture. It saw multiculturalism as destroying the fabric of traditional Anglo-Australia. Hansonism was predicated on the fear of loss of nation, and its popularity stemmed from the perceived destruction of our historic culture caused by higher levels of immigration from Asia and multiculturalism.

Hansonism wasn't anything new. It was a blend of 'old Australia' and far right nationalistic philosophies, popularized, and given resonance on a national stage. The League of Rights had been around for decades but had not been able to gain much traction with the populace. Pauline Hanson was able to

⁸ A. Markus, *Race*, p.244

do what the League couldn't by being a charismatic mouthpiece for ordinary Australians. The media's love affair with a newsworthy figure like Hanson contributed greatly to her success, and did much to disseminate her ideas among the general public.

Hanson saw her connectedness in ideology to figures like Geoffrey Blainey, Bruce Ruxton, Graeme Campbell and others when she made a speech to the Australian Reform Party in October 1996. She said:

I wish to pay tribute to those people who were prepared to take on the priests of political correctness and their political lackeys long before I came on the scene. In 1984 Professor Geoffrey Blainey delivered a speech to a Rotary Club in country Victoria, in which he made a reasoned call for a debate on the levels of Asian immigration...[and] others who manned the barricades on the immigration and multiculturalism issues...⁹

In her maiden speech to parliament the rhetoric on immigration continued. She said that :

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. A truly multicultural country can never be strong or united. The world is full of failed and tragic examples.¹⁰

⁹ Pauline Hanson, Speech to Australian Reform Party, October, 1996

¹⁰ Pauline Hanson, Maiden speech to Parliament, *CPD:HR*, 10 September, 1996, p3862

As such, she wanted immigration policy to be reviewed and multiculturalism to be abolished. She cited the views of Arthur Calwell, architect of the post-war immigration scheme:

"Japan, India, Burma, Ceylon and every new African nation are fiercely anti-white and anti-one another. Do we want or need any of these people here? I am one red-blooded Australian who says no and who speaks for 90 % of Australians." I have no hesitation in echoing the words of Arthur Calwell.¹¹

Her maiden speech immediately had resonance in the community and exploded Hanson into the political spotlight. It articulated what many Australians believed, that Australian society was being eroded by immigration and multicultural policy, and migrants were not assimilating. Her speech is also rich in assertions of white ownership of the nation, and is anxious about the white nation being overthrown.

Under the tutelage of John Pasquerelli and David Oldfield, Hanson developed into a media personality. In April 1997 her party, One Nation, was born. From this point Oldfield's influence on Hanson and the party grew, and a more vitriolic and nationalistic Hanson developed. But she was, nevertheless, her own person. Hanson had asserted in her One Nation launch in Ipswich on 11 April 1997 that

I am about the truth.

I am about us being Australians.

¹¹ *ibid*, p.3862

I am about us being one people.

Under one flag, and with one set of rules.¹²

This was unashamedly about preserving the cultural dominance of White Australia. Throughout the speech her concern was for saving Australia from cultural demise. She continued:

Who of you would not join this fight? Who of you would not stand up for your country? And yet there are so many people in Australia who do not think of themselves as Australians. They have simply transplanted the problems of their way of life to our country. Where will they stand in any future crisis, beside us, or behind us, or will they themselves be the crisis? What will the face of Australia be if we continue to be the world's immigration soft touch?¹³

For her, the 'divisiveness' of multiculturalism had to end and people had to look at themselves 'simply as Australians', not as ethnic minorities. She urged migrants if they 'came here for a better life' then they should 'live that better life with us'. They should 'be with us, be one of us, be a part of One Nation, not one of the many parts of a divided nation'.¹⁴

But her anxiety about nation took on a doomsday perspective. She saw enemies who were willing to betray the nation by 'forcing upon us the cultures of others.' She saw the need for action to remedy the situation, and if this didn't happen, 'if we fail, all our fears will be realized, and we will lose our country

¹² Pauline Hanson, *One Nation Launch* (Ipswich, 11 April 1997)

¹³ *ibid* 11 April, 1997

¹⁴ *ibid.*, 11 April 1997

forever, and be strangers in our own land.’ For Hanson it was a question of survival for our nation:

They think Australians will just lay down and see their country disappear before their eyes...We will reclaim our country, and the future of our children. We have been pushed far enough.¹⁵

The One Nation publication *The Truth* emerged in 1997 to coincide with the birth of the party. It was not all Hanson’s thinking, and certainly not her writing, as she was semi-literate. But it represented what she and One Nation members and followers thought. *The Truth* blames a lot of Australia’s problems on new class elites, a view that had emanated from the neo-conservative thinking in the eighties. This, blended with far-right conspiracy theories, and a home-spun nationalism, became the essence of Hansonism. The dust cover of *The Truth* sums up the emergence of Hanson and Hansonism as:

Simply the capacity and courage of a politician of the people to express the uncluttered, unsophisticated and simple commonsense philosophy of the Australian people. The manifestation of the race debate has been the end product of the social experiment of putting the people of the world into a common melting pot. It is not the Australian people who are racist, for they are merely the pawns in the ideological and pathological agenda of globalised money politics.¹⁶

¹⁵ *ibid.*, 11 April 1997

¹⁶ Pauline Hanson, *The Truth*, Dust cover outline, G.J. Merritt, *Pauline Hanson: the Truth* (Parkholme, SA: St. George Publications, 1997)

Behind the construction of a multicultural Australia *The Truth* saw nefarious new class forces, linked to agents of a New World Order and the United Nations in such analyses as:

The new class elites have earmarked Anglo-Saxon Australia for destruction. By successive waves of migration the ethnic composition of the population has changed. Assimilation has been rejected; multiculturalism advocated. Step by step social cohesion has broken down.¹⁷

Into the future *The Truth* saw an Australia dominated by other races, mainly Chinese and Indian, and had become a part of a United States of Asia imposed by a World Government proclamation. A free flow of migrants and refugees also had been imposed. In an absurd quirk of paranoia the president of this new Australia was a vestibule for One Nation fears-Poona Li Hung, was a lesbian of hybridised race, but mainly Chinese, and also a cyborg.¹⁸ This vision was everything Hanson detested. It is xenophobic, homophobic, globophobic, and luddite. It creates the horror of a mythic golden world of Australia in tatters, destroyed by multiculturalism and globalisation.

One Nation immigration policies were not articulated until well after Hanson had been in parliament a year or so, developed by Robyn Spencer and Dennis McCormack, both former Australians Against Further Immigration (AAFI) members.¹⁹ For the 1998 election One Nation claimed that:

¹⁷ Pauline Hanson, *The Truth* quoted in Markus, *Race*, p.167

¹⁸ See A. Markus, *Race* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 2001), p.167-168

¹⁹ Jupp, *From White Australia to Woomera*, p.131

to economic, political and intellectual elites immigration has become central to a perspective which holds that inherited Australian institutions, culture and identity are outmoded and expendable obstacles to the establishment of a borderless world.’²⁰

To counter the internationalism of the elites One Nation proposed a halt to mass migration, preferring to opt for a zero population growth policy, termed zero net policy. This would mean that immigration would be allowable up to about 30,000 per year, a residual figure calculated when immigration was balanced against emigration. It claimed there was no rationale for population increase in Australia, a view that in the long term would preserve the dominance of Anglo-Celtic Australia. The intake would be generally non-discriminatory as long as it did not ‘significantly alter the ethnic and cultural make up of the country’.²¹ Again, this proviso allowed for the alteration of immigration intake if an Anglo-Celtic Australia were threatened by it. Refugees were to be given temporary safe haven but would not be able to automatically apply for permanent settlement.

But there were less restrained comments of Hanson that place her very much within the White Australia tradition. She spoke once of the perils of the ‘yellow race [that] will rule the world.’ On another occasion upon hearing that an Asian had become the Young Australian of the Year she replied that ‘I think

²⁰ One Nation Party, *One Nation Policy Document*, 1998, p.10

²¹ One Nation Party, *One Nation Policy Document*, 1998, pp.10-11

appointing the young Asian lady, the government's been pushing us to be Asianised and I'm totally against becoming Asianised.'²²

In the 1996 elections Pauline Hanson stood as an independent in the seat of Oxley, after being disendorsed by the Liberal party for her racist views on Aborigines. Oxley had been a traditional Labor stronghold, held at one time by the former Labor leader and Governor-general, Bill Hayden. She was able to gain a 19 per cent swing, the highest in any electorate.²³ This electoral success was followed by the success of One Nation candidates, mainly in Queensland, but the vote in other state and federal elections was significant enough to deeply worry the major political parties, particularly the National party. Electorally Pauline Hanson was very popular, but was it because she was new and different, or there was some resonance to her views?

What are we to make of Hanson and her electoral success? Did she represent the heart of Anglo-Australia? My view is that she represented older Australia, those who had grown up with the White Australia policy, or those who thought Anglo-Australian culture should remain the dominant culture of Australia. She represented a beacon of hope for those who felt the Australian nation was under threat from other cultures. A number of historians and political scientists have analysed the Hanson phenomenon and arrived at conclusions not too dissimilar to this, with variations. Some discussion of this occurred earlier in the chapter in relation to the nature of Hansonism and

²² Pauline Hanson quoted in Markus, *Race*, p.192

²³ Jupp, *White Australia to Woomera*, p.129

profiling her constituency. What follows is a selection of viewpoints from prominent academics and commentators that give credence to the present thesis.

James Jupp considers that support for One Nation really goes to the heart of what people saw as old Australia:

What held these together was a series of time-honoured populist beliefs, many of which had been almost consensual a century before, and the ability of Pauline Hanson to express them in a simple language²⁴.

Laurie Oakes, the political journalist, saw it similarly, as ‘old Australia talking to the new Australia’ and telling new Australia what it didn’t like about it.²⁵ Old Australia felt threatened by new Australia and wanted it to change. Paul Kelly has written illuminatingly on the force of history impacting on One Nation, on the desire of One Nation to return to the past, the nation of yesteryear. He says Hansonism:

is an echo of our Anglo-Celtic origins; the claims of the once mighty bush to define the Australian legend; a descendent of the romanticism and racism of Henry Lawson whose hold on national identity was once so comprehensive...Hanson is a nightmare that survived the dawn by bringing to life the ghost Australia had consigned to the past – that our nationhood, our pride, our federation, lay in the fusion of racism and nationalism which is why we for so long treated the Aborigines with injustice and our Asian locale with such apprehension.²⁶

²⁴ Jupp, *White Australia to Woomera*, pp.134-135

²⁵ Laurie Oakes, *Bulletin*, 19 May, 1998

²⁶ P.Kelly, ‘Hanson-Symptom of a Deeper Problem’, in N. Davidoff (ed) *Two Nations. The Causes And Effects of the Rise Of the One Nation Party* (Melbourne: Bookman Press, 1998) pp.92-93

For political scientist, Murray Goot, support for One Nation was greatest among older voters, but that reflected :

not only lower levels of education, but more powerfully, inter-generational differences in political experience and social values. Most of those born before the War, or even during it, would have come to political maturity in a country where White Australia was still the official policy, where Aboriginal land rights were not on the national agenda and where assimilationist ideals went largely unchallenged.²⁷

Historian, Henry Reynolds saw Hansonism as a protest vote, a protest against politicians and policy that went against the grain of traditional Australia, but also a protest against the social and economic changes that had occurred in Australia in the last few decades.

He said that:

One Nation territory is, demographically, old 1950's Australia. It is largely monocultural Australia. Multiculturalism is a word, a threatening concept-not a lived reality. In such communities anti-immigrant feeling festers. Folklore about ghettos, crime and drugs can flourish without the corrective of personal experience, without daily contact with Australians from all over the globe, without relationships with migrant neighbours or colleagues, friends or relatives.²⁸

²⁷ M. Goot, 'Hanson's Heartland: Who's for One Nation and Why', in Davidoff, *Two Nations*, pp71-73

²⁸ H.Reynolds, 'Hanson and Queensland's Political Culture', in Davidoff, *Two Nations*, p147

The consensus of these analyses is that with Hansonism there is a sense of an older Australia trying to assert itself, an Australia of the first half of the twentieth century. The quest of One Nation, of Hansonism, was a quest to restore the nation of yesteryear, the status quo ante, where Anglo-Australia remained dominant. Andrew Jakubowicz said that 'White Australia still has a purchase on the consciousness of many of us'. He noted pointedly that Pauline Hanson said in parliament that anyone who didn't accept Australian culture by singing Christmas carols or hymns shouldn't be allowed into Australia.²⁹

Invasion narrative, Boat People and Tampa

While the reactionary stance of Hansonism had taken hold of the public imagination, I believe the issue of boat people heightened the perception that Anglo-Australia was under threat. When Australians learnt that there was a load of refugees on the Norwegian vessel, the MV Tampa, waiting just off our shores in August 2001 they reacted in xenophobic horror. While much of the information they received was presented in a sensationalized form by the mass media, nevertheless, the collective view of the Australian nation at the time was that such a large number of non-European refugees posed some threat and uncertainty to the nation. It invoked the atavistic fears of the nation being overrun by the Asian hordes to the north, and a strong sense of territoriality. The old fears of White Australia had been re-ignited.

²⁹ A. Jakubowicz, 'In Pursuit of Anabranches: Immigration, Multiculturalism and a culturally diverse Australia', in G.Gray and C.Winter (ed), *Resurgence of Racism: Howard, Hanson and the Race Debate*, (Clayton: Monash Publications, 1997),p.150.

Australia has had historic fears of invasion: the threat of Asian hordes invading our lands from the mid nineteenth century onwards; the Japanese threat in World War II; the threat of Communist expansion in the Cold War period. The Tampa affair appeared to re-awaken these collective fears, revealing the empty part of the continent to our north as an insecure area through which all sorts of undesirables might pass. It also sharpened the nation's awareness of who it considered to be a part of the nation ethnically and culturally, and the nation appeared to move one step backwards towards a neo-White Australia policy.

Hage addresses such issues in *White Nation*³⁰. He maintains that people will consider themselves as occupying 'a privileged position within national space such as they perceive themselves to be the enactors of the national will within the nation'. John Howard legitimized this to a certain extent when in relation to the Tampa episode he declared :

We will decide who comes to this country and the circumstances in which they come.³¹

He took up the position of the enactor of 'the national will' as Prime Minister in defining the government's position, but the use of the word 'we' seems to indicate something more. It is also a declaration of the nation, of the will of the nation, of the Australian people. The Australian people that he is talking about are those that occupy the centre of national space, those deriving

³⁰ G.Hage, *White Nation: Fantasies of White Supremacy in a Multicultural Society* (Annandale :Pluto Press, 1998), p.47

³¹ John Howard, Statement to Parliament/Media, 28 October, 2001

from Anglo-Celtic or Anglo-Australian heritage and those who have adopted this heritage. It is they who will decide who comes to this country. Pauline Hanson, who claimed to represent the average Australian, mouthed the same words. She, like others, had arrogated ownership of Australian national space, and was in a self-appointed privileged position to determine who should enter and who shouldn't.

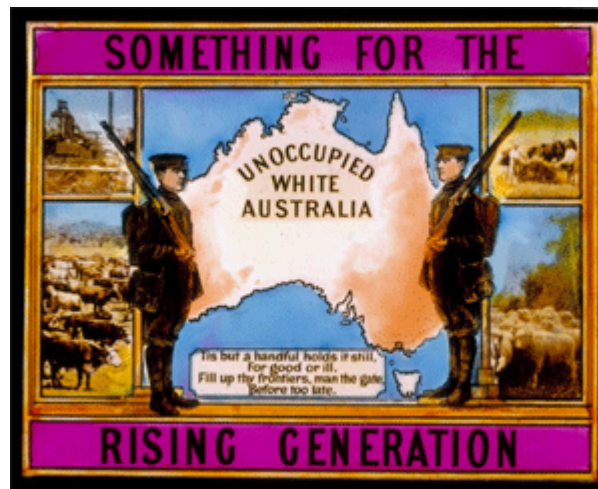
This idea is parodied in the Nicholson cartoon below. Howard and Philip Ruddock represent the will of the nation, and they will decide who comes in. There is a long line of cartoons stretching back to Federation that depicts Australia as an island under threat by the Asian hordes. This is a permutation of that, but cleverly taps into the psyche of the government and the people at the time.



Cartoon: Ruddock Refugees. True Face of Australia, Nicholson, 4 October, 2003

(Cartoon by Nicholson from the *Australian* newspaper: www.nicholsoncartoons.com.au)

Compare this with the White Australia cartoon below produced in 1910. It reveals the continuity of thinking on border protection. It was not just the island that had to be protected but the culture within.



Poster: Something for the Rising Generation, about 1910
Source: State Library of Victoria, La Trobe Picture Collection

Historically Australian attitudes to the ‘other’ have been determined by an imagined invasion narrative that goes back to the nineteenth century. David Walker in *Anxious Nation* and ‘Survivalist Anxieties’³² outlines the fear a burgeoning China posed not only to Australia but for European civilization. In the main, but not always, the fear had been of imagined marauding Asian nations to the north. Our geography, our place on the edge of Asia, has determined our history from the earliest times. We have seen ourselves as a

³² D. Walker, *Anxious Nation: Australia and the Rise of Asia 1850-1939* (Brisbane: University of Queensland Press), 1999 and D.Walker, ‘Survivalist Anxieties’ in *Australian Historical Studies*, no.120, October, 2002

white British outpost surrounded by the hostile 'other', generally meaning Asiatics. This has determined the composition of who we were as a nation and how we related to the nations of Asia. An imagined fear of racial demise permeated Australia from the time the first Chinese diggers panned for gold. This has remained a part of the national psyche ever since, waxing and waning according to the vicissitudes of historical circumstance. The Tampa affair did much to re-awaken this collective xenophobia, and re-awaken a sense of nation based on our geography and white culture.

In *Anxious Nation* Walker reveals that Australians had been uneasy about the rise of Asia and its large population back to the middle of the nineteenth century.³³ What separated them from white Europeans was their cultural 'otherness'. This and their profusion brought about the widespread belief that they would quickly infiltrate countries and dominate them. Contact with the Chinese first occurred during the days of the gold rushes in the 1850's, and resulted in marked cultural disaffection for them. All around Australia there were attempts to restrict their numbers, ultimately resulting in the White Australia policy at Federation. Pogroms against the Chinese were essentially motivated by a fear of cultural annihilation. Popular representations of the Chinese in the nineteenth century abound with references to them 'swarming', 'flooding', 'swamping' Australia and so on. That is, Australia would be swept

³³ D. Walker, *Anxious Nation: Australia and the Rise of Asia 1850-1939* (Brisbane: University of Queensland Press, , 1999)

aside by the descending Asian hordes.³⁴ *The Mongolian Octopus*, published in the *Bulletin* in 1886, saw the Chinese presence in Australia as a predatory octopus that would usurp the Australian way of life through its lawlessness, immorality and an alien culture. The fear and demonisation of the Other began historically at this time in our history, and has remained a potent force. Cultural invasion has remained a primal fear for the nation.



Phil May, 'The Mongolian Octopus', *Bulletin*, 21 August 1886

The invasion narrative became part of the populist rhetoric and all-pervasive through to Federation and beyond. R. Thompson in *Australian Nationalism: an Earnest Appeal to the Sons of Australia in Favour of Federation* (1888) thought that Chinese culture was so 'destructive of the white race' that a war with China 'would be the greatest blessing' and that 'a Chinese threat of invasion would

³⁴ A very good example of this is a *Bulletin* cartoon from 1888, *The Celestial Dragon*, *Bulletin*, 1888, featuring a map of Australia, and a Chinese dragon in the centre of it, with masses of ant-like Chinese figures swarming the continent.

immediately federate our states into one nation'.³⁵ Alfred Deakin, in a parliamentary debate on the White Australia Policy in 1901, said:

We find ourselves touching the profoundest instinct of individual or nation-the instinct of self-preservation-for it is nothing less than national manhood, the national character and the national future that are at stake...We inherited a legacy in the shape of aliens which have already been admitted within our borders...There are those that mock at the demand of a White Australia...³⁶

William Morris Hughes (a Labor member of parliament at this point in time), was fearful of being overrun by the Japanese. He believed that Japanese merchants if given a toehold would be 'merely the advance guard of the great army of coloured men who, when they go back to their country...will tell their compatriots of the splendid opportunities which await them in the promised land.'³⁷

During World War II Arthur Calwell continued the invasion narrative, asserting that we needed to fill this vast land before the millions to the north in Asia take it over. He said:

Australia was lucky that the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbour instead of coming south to Australia, for had they done so, Australia would now be a Japanese colony. I have no illusion as to the future of Australia in the South-West Pacific area. Seven million people

³⁵ R.Thompson, *Australian Nationalism: an Earnest Appeal to the Sons of Australia in Favour of Federation*, Burwood, 1888, in K.J.Mason, *Experience Of Nationhood* (Sydney: McGraw Hill, 2007) p.20

³⁶ Alfred Deakin, *CPD:HR*, vol.HR4, 1901, pp. 4804-5

³⁷ William Morris Hughes, *CPD: HR*, , vol.HR4, 1901, p.4818

will not be able to hold 3,000,000 sq. miles of territory while there are hundreds of millions in the islands adjoining us demanding living room. Only by filling this land can we establish a title to hold it.³⁸

Calwell's motive for establishing a large-scale migration plan from Europe was to curtail the prospect of invasion from Asia. He, like others before him, expressed the fear of the Asian horde invading Australia, and for those of his era and beyond, it had come close to reality with the bombing of Darwin and other cities. Populating the north had been a catch-cry that dominated the thinking of Australians for most of the twentieth century. And if the north could not be populated to the desired extent, then the remainder of Australia should build up a large population that could effectively defend itself.

The Vietnam War was fought on ideological grounds, a battle between communism and capitalist democracies. For Australia, the domino theory had dominated Cold War thinking, the spread of communism through south-east Asia. Menzies had painted broad brush strokes in announcing Australia's commitment to the Vietnam war, asserting that the threat 'must be seen as a part of a thrust by Communist China between the Indian and the Pacific Oceans'³⁹ This was a political permutation of the invading Asian hordes. Forward defense policy had been on-going strategy because of the fear of defending a large coastline. In this case it was argued that 'we should regard Vietnam as our

³⁸ Arthur Calwell, *CPD:HR*, Vol.HR177, 1944, p.935

³⁹ R.G. Menzies, Prime Ministerial statement to Parliament, 28 April, 1965; see A.Burke, *Fear of Security: Australia's Invasion Anxiety*, (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p.115

present frontier'⁴⁰. Menzies had invoked a broader fear of invasion from Asian nations to the north, the 'Asian horde' demon that had now become doubly troublesome. This was not just fantasies of Cold War dominance and invasion, the reality was that Malaya and Indonesia to the near north posed threats, and Sukarno's regime in Indonesia was seen as a proxy for Chinese communism.

In the aftermath of the Vietnam War boat people began to revive fears of Asian invasion. In the 1970's there was only a trickle, with five boats arriving in 1976 and six in 1977. By 1979 fifty-one boats came with a total of 2011 seeking asylum. Public debate at the time was not as heated as in later years but the discourse centred on whether the boat people were genuine refugees or the beginnings of a much larger invasion from the north.⁴¹ Australia was concerned about a flood of refugees as were a number of governments in the South-East Asia region. Coughlan and McNamara⁴² say that approximately half a million boat people fled Vietnam at this time but only about 2,000 reached Australia, indicating that the popularised fear of invasion was a dominant part of government and public thinking. While Australia accepted refugees under the UN Convention on Refugees, this was tempered by this fear of an influx from the north.

For a period of time in the 1980's there was a relative lull in boat arrivals, but from 1989 onwards this increased in magnitude, as did the negative

⁴⁰ Garfield Barwick, Assessment of the Vietnam war in 1962 to Cabinet, quoted in P. Edwards and G. Pemberton, *Crises and Commitments: The Politics and Diplomacy of Australia's Involvement in South-East Asian Conflicts 1948-1965* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1992), pp.271-300; Burke, *Fear of Security*, p.113

⁴¹ N. Viviani, *The Long Journey. Vietnamese Migration and Settlement in Australia* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1984), pp.77-81

⁴² J. Coughlan and D. McNamara (eds), *Asians in Australia: Patterns of Migration and Settlement* (Melbourne: Macmillan, 1997), p.28

response of the government. The arrival of Cambodian boat people in 1989-90 brought a response of a different kind. They were rejected as refugees and detained, unlike those in the late 1970's to the early 1980's, who in the main, were accepted as refugees. Under the *Migration Act 1958* illegals could be detained and returned on the vessel they arrived on. This was seized on by the Hawke government as a means of stopping the invasion from the north and creating a more controlled immigration system. Hawke justified this saying that:

we have an orderly migration programme. We're not just going to allow people just to jump that queue by saying we'll jump into a boat ⁴³

This idea developed a resonance with the community well beyond the Hawke years, with politicians fearful of a public backlash if they were seen to be too soft on boat people, but it certainly had its roots in this era. But it was not just stopping illegals and developing border control, there was another dimension. The deterrence and detention of boat people 'was a political and structural reaction to the perceived threat of Asians'.⁴⁴ Since the demolition of the White Australia policy there had not developed an adequate mechanism in immigration to control where our migrants came from. Given that multiculturalism had only lukewarm acceptance and often outright hostility, detention of refugees filled the structural gap that the White Australia policy vacated.

In 1990 there was a similar story, but with refugees from Cambodia. 118

⁴³ Bob Hawke, Prime Minister, on Channel Nine's *A Current Affair*, 6 June 1990

⁴⁴ D.MacMaster, *Asylum Seekers* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2001), p.160

Cambodians arrived in a boat off Broome in Western Australia. Media reports on the event varied from the relatively unbiased to the outrageously racist. Ron Casey, a talkback radio commentator on the Sydney radio station 2KY, on 2 April 1990, maintained they should not be let in because they ‘can bring tuberculosis, they can bring disease’, a sentiment echoed by Senator Lightfoot (Liberal party, Western Australia) nine years later. This was a commonly held view, that undesirable migrants from Asia and the Middle East would bring disease and criminality. He continued, invoking the Asian invasion motif:

Now if we don’t fly them back or tow them to Timor...they’ll keep coming. There are so many places where Asian people could go if they want to descend on a nation.⁴⁵

This could easily have been a statement from the 1880’s or 1901, but it was 1990.

Enter Pauline Hanson. The invasion narrative was continued through her protestations about Asian migration and the fear of cultural annihilation. In her maiden speech she said that Australia was ‘in danger of being swamped by Asians’, and wanted to preserve the traditional Australian identity.⁴⁶ Hanson makes transparent the geographic fear of cultural annihilation in her language. Like many others before her going back more than a century, she used the imagery of being ‘swamped’, of waves of unwanted peoples invading our shores. Whether this was by boat or through the normal channels of migration it

⁴⁵ Ron Casey, 2KY, 2 April, 1990

⁴⁶ Pauline Hanson, Maiden speech, *CPD:HR*, 10 September, 1996, p.3268

didn't matter. Anglo-Celtic Australian culture was under threat. In the One Nation publication, *Pauline Hanson: the Truth*, said that:

an enemy invasion would have been kinder than the death of a thousand cuts that mainstream Australia is now experiencing ...⁴⁷

Hansonism opened up a can of worms on boat-people and immigration. The discourse of many Australians in the present era towards boat people owes itself to Hansonism. She popularised it, building on the discourse of talk-back hosts and others.

John Howard, after the 1996 election, set about reclaiming some of the political territory Hanson occupied on nation and immigration. The Howard government was concerned with the assault on our nation's borders, but it was also concerned about the impact large numbers of boat people would have on Australian culture and identity. After 1996 there had been a retreat from the engagement with Asia that had occupied the Keating years, and an attempt to resurrect the Anglo-Celtic Australian as the primary source of Australian culture. The spin-doctors adopted the term 'mainstream Australia', those who were Anglo-Australian and those who had effectively assimilated into the dominant culture. Conveniently it left out Asian and Middle Eastern groups, unless they could acquiesce to the 'mainstream'. John Howard had said in 1995, in an address on national identity, that it was based on traditions developing

⁴⁷ G.J. Merritt, *Pauline Hanson: the Truth*, St. George Publications, SA, 1997 p.125

over time.⁴⁸ Howard had been quick to debunk multiculturalism as divisive, and not contributing to the unity and cohesiveness of the nation. He believed that the nation should stabilize its Anglo-Celtic values and heritage and engagement with Asia should be 'quarantined from social and community change at home'.⁴⁹ Moreover, he said in a lecture in the Old Parliament House in 1997, that:

there are certain stabilizers in society that provide reassurance and support when a society is undergoing great change...I believe that the concept of home is a compelling notion in our psyche...The loss of security challenges traditional notions of home and people feel the need to react to alienation.⁵⁰

In 1999 Senator Ross Lightfoot stated in a letter to the editor of the *Australian* that boat people were undesirables, a criminal element that would also bring many diseases into the country. They would 'threaten the peace of mind and sense of security of many Australians, by way of their divergent lifestyle, culture, outlook and values.'⁵¹ The Immigration Minister, Philip Ruddock, took the language even further when he described the influx of Afghan and Iraqi boat people in 1999 as reaching the point of a 'national

⁴⁸ John Howard, 'Politics and patriotism: a reflection on the national identity debate', (Address at the Grand Hyatt Hotel, Melbourne, 13 December, 1995).

⁴⁹ Paul Kelly, 'The Asian Imperative', *Weekend Australian*, 17-18 May 1997, p.2

⁵⁰ John Howard, 'The Inaugural Prime Ministers on Prime Ministers Lecture' (Address at Old Parliament House, Canberra, 3 September, 1997)

⁵¹ Senator Ross Lightfoot, Letter to the Editor, *The Australian*, 24 November, 1999, p.12

emergency', and that it was a threat to our national sovereignty, a threat to our borders.⁵²

Boat people posed a threat to the nation, and created a confused and draconian response. The response to boat people was a fearful expression of national sovereignty and national identity. Australia had always reserved the right to determine who should come into the country, a notion that has been echoed from Billy Hughes through to Pauline Hanson and John Howard.

This continuity of history in regard to boat people and the invasion narrative expressed itself in the Tampa affair. Robert Manne, a political scientist, writing in the *Sydney Morning Herald* in December 2001 on the Tampa affair, said:

With the Tampa the burden of Australian history became clear, at least to me. With an almost uncanny precision, this year's ruthless border control legislation passed through the Federal Parliament exactly 100 years after the same parliament passed its first substantial piece of law, the Immigration Restriction Act, the basis of the White Australia Policy, which shaped Australian political culture for the next 70 years.⁵³

Public reaction and government action signalled a momentary, if not an emotional return to White Australia. The borders of White Australia had been transgressed. The roots of the nation go deep, and a population will react to threats to national space. The instinct to protect the home, and the larger home,

⁵² Philip Ruddock, Immigration Minister, in *Age*, 18 November, 1999 and 'More Illegals Arrive', Ministerial Media Release MPS 164/99, 17 November, 1999

⁵³ R.Manne, '100 years of Federation and racism', in *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 December, 2001, p.12

the nation, appear to be primal. David Walker said that ‘in Australia’s post-Tampa world we have seen a return of survivalist anxieties in which human rights and citizenship ...are weighed against the rights of a supposedly embattled nation to secure its borders’.⁵⁴ A number of other works deal with the Tampa crisis and boat people, among them Peter Mares *Borderline* (2001), Anthony Burke, *Fear of Security* (2008) , David Marr and Marian Wilkinson, *Dark Victory* and Don McMaster, *Asylum Seekers* (2001). In the main they focus on Tampa, asylum seekers, and its wake, although Anthony Burke and Don McMaster echo aspects of David Walker’s thesis of invasion anxiety. Burke maintains that the government’s response to Tampa ‘continued and intensified an historic Australian security approach that was coercive, exclusivist, anti-democratic and beholden to great power allies’. The ‘red scare’ of the Menzies era was replaced with Islamic terror politics that was on-going throughout this period.⁵⁵ In his view 9/11 and Tampa changed the international political landscape in a seismic way. Security for the nation and its borders became paramount. Don McMaster saw the draconian approach Australia took on Tampa as a product from its historic roots, based on a fear of uncontrolled immigration, where discriminatory treatment of the ‘other’ was seen as a means of securing the nation.⁵⁶

The *Tampa* was a Norwegian container ship that had rescued four hundred asylum seekers from a sinking vessel, the *Palapa*. As the *Tampa*

⁵⁴ D. Walker, ‘Survivalist Anxieties’ in *Australian Historical Studies*, no. 120, October, 2002

⁵⁵ A. Burke, *Fear of Security. Australia’s Invasion Anxiety*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) p.209 ff.

⁵⁶ D. McMaster, *Asylum Seekers*, (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2001), p.191

approached Christmas Island the immigration officials contacted the captain, informing him that he could be prosecuted for people smuggling if he landed, and should head towards Indonesia. Captain Rinnan did not enter the exclusion zone and waited for the political imbroglio to be resolved. But the politics attached to it did not abate, and the incident was used as an election issue. John Howard, the Prime Minister, gave a media conference on 27 August, stating that the ship 'will not be given permission to land in Australia or any Australian territories'.⁵⁷ With some of his passengers requiring medical attention, the captain headed for Christmas Island. He was then told by authorities to return to a position outside the exclusion zone, but he refused. SAS commandos were sent out to take control of his ship, and then medical assistance was provided. On the 30 August Howard defended the military takeover of the Tampa insisting that the 'boat people' would not be allowed to land on Australian soil. He added that 'I am not speaking for myself. I am speaking for a government.' He told the Seven Television Network that he wanted a resolution, 'but it has to be a resolution that respects the rights of Australia to control who comes into this country'.⁵⁸

Why did authorities react so strongly to the *Tampa*? There had been a number of asylum boats during August, carrying a total of 1212 people. Three boats had arrived within a week. In 1999 1245 people had arrived.⁵⁹ The media had portrayed the arrival of asylum seekers in negative terms for some time,

⁵⁷ John Howard, Media statement 27 August, 2001. Howard had come from a meeting of the National Security Committee, convened because of the Tampa issue, to deliver the statement.

⁵⁸ J. Howard quoted in 'Aust PM defends military takeover of ship', AAP News, 30 August 2001.

⁵⁹ Figures quoted by P. Mares, *Borderline* (Sydney: UNSW Press, , 2001), p.123-124

and by 2001 public reaction was growing more hostile. An A.C.Nielsen poll in early September showed that 77 per cent of the Australian public supported the government decision to prevent asylum seekers from landing in Australia and nearly the same approved of indefinite detention for refugees.⁶⁰ The government had been considering such an action for some time. A senate hearing was told that a government task force had discussed using the navy to intercept boats and turn them away in 1999 and by 2001 these so called discussions with navy officials were moving towards a reality. The Courier-Mail reported that defence force officials had indicated that the SAS 'had been training for such a contingency for some time'⁶¹.

Anthony Burke⁶² likened the period to the communist scare tactics of the Menzies' era. Exploitation of fears of the Other, and subtle and less than subtle demonisation tactics worked together in a period before an election, as they had done before the 1950 and 1954 elections. The period following the Tampa affair revealed an hysterical appeal to nationalism. Much of the media and public discourse centred on boat people as the Other, human ciphers. The hysteria and the fear painted them as possible criminals, bringers of disease, and political malcontents. They were not worthy to become a part of this nation, they would only bring trouble.

Stanley Cohen⁶³, in *Folk Devils and Moral Panic*, pointed out that a nation can undergo moral panic when a particular threat to it becomes subject to

⁶⁰ See Mares, *Borderline*, p.208

⁶¹ See Mares, *Borderline*, p.124

⁶² Burke, *Fear of Security*, p.209

⁶³ S. Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panic* (Oxford : Basil Blackwell, , 1973), p.9

prolonged media and public discourse. Politicians and journalists articulate the threat to society, and the threat becomes amplified by demagoguery and creating a public angst. The creation of a folk devil is a part of this process, when public anger, frustration and anxiety focus on a particular source for a perceived evil in society. We have seen how the Jews in Nazi Germany in the 1930's fitted this scenario. They were blamed for all the ills of the Weimar republic, and the solution was to remove them from German society, to deny them citizenship and rights, to relegate them to the status of non-persons. Aborigines in nineteenth century Australia were seen as a threat to the viability of farmers and society in general as the frontier wars broke out, and were treated as contemptible savages. Afro-Americans have been seen by some white Americans as something to be feared and despised throughout their history, and a cause of crime in modern cities. In Australia during the 1980's and 1990's Asians had been created as folk devils by the media and politicians by virtue of the numbers migrating, their cultural difference, and the reportage of Asian crime in suburbs such as Cabramatta.

A similar process of demonisation discourse had occurred with groups of people from the Middle East, who began arriving in larger numbers in the 1990's. Part of it was to do with boat people, but a lot had to do with the populist media discourse on ethnic crime, and a growing false perception by the general public that Muslims were a threat to society. Two very good books that deal with these issues are, S. Poynting et.al., *Bin Laden in the Suburbs* and J.Collins, G.Noble, S. Poynting and P. Tabar, *Kids, Kebabs, Cops and Crime:*

*Youth, Ethnicity and Crime*⁶⁴ dealing with the public and media perception of the Other, Middle Eastern groups, and crime. Part of the racialising of crime has had to do with representations of different groups through the police and the media, that is, characterising people as ‘Caucasian’ or ‘Middle Eastern’ or ‘Asian’. These are crude descriptors that have little scientific or sociological merit, but the ‘existence of the labels and social conventions attached them mean that these perceptions are socially shared and can have powerful effects’⁶⁵. They marginalise people and have negative connotations. These are constructions of the dominant Western culture. Where I have used such terms it is to identify a group in a neutral way (for want of a better phrase or word).

Although Middle Eastern people are from diverse cultures, what began to happen in the public discourse was a kind of reductionism. There was a tendency to treat people from Moslem or Arab countries as being a singular entity, and to ascribe all sorts of social evils to their presence in Australia. The Gulf War brought outbreaks of violence towards Moslems and Arabic people, and probably since that time through to the arrival of boat people, Tampa, and the Al Qaeda strike in New York, moral outrage towards them grew. For some time police had been identifying Lebanese gangs and people of ‘Middle Eastern’ appearance as responsible for a certain amount of crime in western and south-western Sydney. Because of the media reporting of this, a heightened

⁶⁴ See S. Poynting et.al., *Bin Laden in the Suburbs* (Sydney: Sydney Institute of Criminology, 2004) and J.Collins, G.Noble, S. Poynting and P. Tabar, *Kids, Kebabs, Cops and Crime: Youth, Ethnicity and Crime* (Sydney: Pluto Press, 2000)

⁶⁵ J.Collins, G.Noble, S. Poynting and P. Tabar, *Kids, Kebabs, Cops and Crime: Youth, Ethnicity and Crime* (Sydney: Pluto Press, 2000), p.17

sensitivity emerged to finding fault in the culture of these groups. Gang rapes, shootings, illegal firearms, drive-by shootings featured prominently in the media from the mid 1990's onwards, often identifying people of Arab background as the culprits.

The arrival of boat people had caused considerable stress and hysteria both in government circles and in the community, and the solution was no less hysterical. It is generally agreed that the Pacific solution, while satisfying the government's aim to deter asylum seekers, fed deliberately or otherwise into an election scenario that was premised on the government taking a strong hand against boat people and queue jumpers. People were urging the government to do something about the 'illegals' and 'queue jumpers'. There had been a string of boats arrive over previous years, and there was a decided fear that should some of them be allowed to stay then a deluge would follow. A line had to be drawn in the sand. Ian Causley, a Liberal MP, observed that he had never seen an issue in his political career of nearly twenty years that caused so much public outcry. He claimed that people were coming up to him unsolicited and urging him to take a strong hand. As he put it parliament:

The Australian people want strength...someone who is prepared to stand up and be strong and defend their country.⁶⁶

The government saw the invasion of boat people almost as an army invading, needing a similar quasi-military response. Hence the navy's response

⁶⁶ Ian Causley, Liberal PM, Parliamentary response, quoted in Mares, *Borderline*, p. 133

to asylum seekers was to prevent any illegal boats from entering Australian waters, to intercept them and divert their course away from Australia. It was fortress Australia. If the boats were beyond repair then the asylum seekers were to be sent to an offshore processing and detention centre, Nauru, a deal worked out between the Australian and Nauru governments.

The public support for Howard's stance on asylum seekers was overwhelming. It was bolstered by the hysterical discourse in the tabloid press and talk-back radio. The Labor opposition found it difficult to oppose the government on this issue for fear of being annihilated at the forthcoming elections. But what clearly galvanized community support against boat people was the demonisation of the asylum seekers over the 'children overboard' affair. Calculated to create electoral gain, nevertheless it tells us something about the reaction of Australians to fear of the 'other'. Nothing could be so demonstrably un-Australian than people who do not care for their children. Already the boat people had been demonized as criminals, disease-bringers, terrorists, and now child-abusers. It was understandable then that public vitriol would be poured out on these asylum seekers. The reality of course, was otherwise. The children weren't thrown off a sinking vessel, but filmed in the water attempting to reach a life raft. But the hysteria of the moment and the imperatives of an election campaign became ascendant. On the 7 October, the Immigration minister, Philip Ruddock claimed that an illegal boat the *Olong* was attempting to reach Australia and some children had been thrown overboard. He also claimed it was an attempt to gain entry to Australia, that it was 'clearly planned and

premeditated'. When the story had been front page news for a day or two, the Prime Minister, John Howard, said in a radio interview that he did not want 'people of that type in Australia'. A day later, on 10 October, Peter Reith revealed photos of children in the water.⁶⁷ There was some truth in Olong trying to reach Australian territory, namely Christmas Island, but as some commentators have pointed out, the remainder of 'the truth was thrown overboard'. It was a military operation to deny entry to asylum seekers, and to turn their course back to Indonesia. Peter Mares called the 2001 election a khaki election. He said the 'Tampa affair polarised public opinion like few issues before it and this worked to the government's advantage.'⁶⁸

The affair really showed the nature of the Australian psyche in relation to the 'other' and how prepared the media, politicians, and the public were prepared to condemn the asylum seekers with all sorts of accusations and characterizations. Paul Sheehan, the journalist, has contended that this issue had been brewing for some time, that:

the unspoken story that has emerged from the *Tampa* saga is that the majority of Australians appear unimpressed by the way a large Muslim population has been brought into this country with barely a shred of consultation or consent.⁶⁹

However, a counter instance could be argued. If the Tampa asylum

⁶⁷ Philip Ruddock, Immigration minister, Comments to the media, 7 October, 2001; John Howard, PM, Radio interview, 9 October, 2001; Peter Reith, Defence Minister, Release of 'children overboard' photo and comments to ABC radio 774, 10 October, 2001

⁶⁸ P.Mares, *Borderline*, p. 134

⁶⁹ Paul Sheehan, 'Migrant failure stories inspired passions over the *Tampa*', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 September, 2001.

seekers had been British or American there would have been no racial and cultural panic, no hysteria, no threat to the nation. Clearly Tampa represented a cultural and geographic threat to the survival of the nation. The White Australia policy may have ended in 1972. But it was absurd to think, as some writers have, that White Australia was dead and buried.⁷⁰

September 11, 2001

With an already heightened fear in the community about illegals and refugee boat people arriving on our shores, the attacks on the twin towers in New York on September 11, 2001 raised the fear levels even higher. People of middle-eastern origin were held on suspicion of being terrorists in the USA, which broadened into a suspicion of middle-eastern people in general in its wake. That sort of thinking spread to Australia. The fear led to demonisation of middle-eastern people, and particularly those who were visibly of the Muslim religion. Muslims were spat on, hijabs were ripped off, some Mosques had damage done to them. They had become a threat to the social order. On a daily basis commentary in the media spoke of the ways Moslem and middle-eastern culture posed a threat to our society, irrespective of the truth of the claims.

The Nicholson cartoon below satirizes the idea that any Middle Eastern people could be suspected terrorists. Women wearing hijabs and burkas could be concealing bombs under their clothing, but the cartoon ridicules this,

⁷⁰ See A. Burke, *Fear of Security*, p.213

inferring that nuns and Santa Claus could be too. Yet it was a common view around the time of 9/11. It revealed a deep mistrust and fear of the Other.



Cartoon: Islamic Women Veil Bomb Threats, Nicholson, 25 November 2002

(Cartoon by Nicholson from *The Australian* newspaper:
www.nicholsoncartoons.com.au)

The conflation of terrorism and boat people became prominent in the period between 9/11 and the elections, and the issues were fairly similar. Terrorists posed a threat to Australia with the obvious threat to life and property

but they also posed a threat to Australian culture. The attack on the twin towers in New York was an attack on the USA's hegemony in the world but it was also an attack on western culture, and therefore Australian culture. Within days of the attack the Defence Minister, Peter Reith, claimed that illegal boat arrivals could be 'a pipeline for terrorists to come in and use your country as a staging post for terrorist activities'.⁷¹ Given the context of an election these comments were understandable to gain some electoral advantage. What is interesting is that almost reflexively politicians seemed to know what to say to the public to gain support. Anything relating to terrorism, crime, disease, anything that was a threat to Australia would gain electoral sympathy. The Australian nation was under siege from both terrorists and boat people according to the tabloid press and conservative politicians. Alan Jones, the radio talk-back host, added to the climate of fear on 12 September by talking about the possibility that some of the boat people were like the 9/11 terrorists, 'sleepers' who had been living in the USA for some years before.⁷²

This was not something new in Australian society. During the Gulf War (in the early 1980's) there were numbers of reported incidents of abuse, vilification and physical attacks⁷³ (HREOC, 1991). A further report by the Committee on Discrimination Against Arab Australians in 1992 indicated that Arabs had been abused and harassed in shopping centres, streets and near schools. Hijabs had been ripped off, people were spat on or assaulted, malicious

⁷¹ Peter Reith, Defence Minister, Comments on terrorism and boat people, September 13, 2001

⁷² Alan Jones, *Alan Jones Show*, 12 September, 2001

⁷³ HREOC(Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission), *Racist Violence: Report of the national inquiry into racist violence in Australia* (Canberra: AGPS, , 1991)

phone calls had been received, there were arson attacks, graffiti attacks, and there had been significant damage to property such as Mosques and Islamic centres.⁷⁴ Similarly, after 9/11, the discrimination and abuse intensified. A hot line established after the twin towers attack received numerous calls reporting assault, verbal abuse, harassment and property damage.⁷⁵ The HREOC report in 2004 on prejudice against Arabs and Muslims echoed these findings, noting that an escalation of verbal and physical abuse occurred after 9/11 and the Bali bombing.⁷⁶

The discrimination occurred because Australians perceived a threat, either physically with the prospect of suicide bombing or with cultural invasion and annihilation. Media stories reflected the moral panic of the public. Headlines screamed about the threats to our nation such as ‘Terror Australis: Bin Laden groups in our suburbs’ and ‘Terror Threat Grips a Nation’⁷⁷. A letter writer, Irene Buckler, said that ‘by surrounding themselves with the trappings of traditional cultures, the newcomers gradually ousted mine’. This reflected the way many Anglo-Australians felt, that their culture had been displaced. The fear of cultural invasion or annihilation did not just have its origins in Middle Eastern migration. Asian migration in the 1980’s and 1990’s provided a rich source of reactionary comment in the media. Then John Howard and Geoffrey

⁷⁴ Committee on Discrimination Against Arab Australians, Racism, *Arab and Muslim Australians and the war against Iraq, Vol.2*, (Sydney: Committee on Discrimination Against Arab Australians, 1992)

⁷⁵ See Jock Collins, ‘The Landmark of Cronulla’ in J.Jupp and J. Nieuwenhuysen, *Social Cohesion in Australia* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, , 2007), p.66

⁷⁶ HREOC(Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission), *National Consultations on eliminating prejudice against Arab and Muslim Australians* (Sydney: HREOC, 2004)

⁷⁷ Miranda, C., ‘Terror Australis: Bin Laden groups in our suburbs’, *Daily Telegraph*, 12 October, 2001,p.5; ‘Terror Threat Grips a Nation’, *Sun-Herald*, 29 December, 2002, p.1

Blainey were talking about the numbers of Asians migrating having the potential to displace the national culture. Suburbs of Sydney such as Cabramatta had been settled by the newcomers and had ousted the older Anglo-Australian resident.

Prior to 9/11 there had been considerable media reportage of Middle Eastern crime. A lot of the reporting took on a racial and nationalistic tone. The *Sun-Herald* warned about racial crime on 29 July 2001, claiming that race gangs were raping numbers of girls with the explosive headline ‘70 girls attacked by rape gangs’.⁷⁸ A series of articles on Moslem rapes against White girls seemed to be a running theme, as if this were a metaphor for our cultural vulnerability. One story ran about police being concerned that race rape had become a part of some cultures.⁷⁹ *The Daily Telegraph* placed a face on its front page, with the banner ‘The Face of a Rapist’. The man was easily identifiable as Middle Eastern. A barrage of other articles were saying similar things.

It is interesting that Pauline Hanson jumped into the discourse on ethnic crime, urging that rapists be flogged, saying :

You can’t have gangs going around and committing these offences. And especially what’s happening...[with the] raping of women-white women on the streets-because, in their opinion, white women are worth absolutely nothing to them, to their race, their cultural background.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ ‘70 girls attacked by rape gangs’, *Sun-Herald*, 29 June, 2001, p.1

⁷⁹ Kidman, J., ‘Brutal sex assaults linked to race gangs’, *Sun-Herald*, 29 July 2001, pp.4-5

⁸⁰ Pauline Hanson, quoted in Doherty, L., and Jacobson, G., ‘Spray at Muslims, call for floggings, Hanson back on radar’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 August 2001, p.7

The emphasis on race rape in the media goes deeper than the stories themselves. It is a synecdoche for the rape of Australian culture. Fear of loss of identity is at the heart of things. These were more than hysterical media stories. Journalists were reflecting the nation's fears of the threat to our culture.

Janet Albrechtsen wrote a column 'Blind Spot Allows Barbarism to Flourish' in the *Australian* on 17 July 2002⁸¹ condemning Muslim gang rapists who had been convicted, but extrapolated that blaming Muslim culture was responsible, in some way, for their behaviour. She maintained it was because their culture treated women as second-class citizens. A number of journalists such as Paul Sheehan and Miranda Devine echoed this response, pointing the finger at Muslim culture being responsible for Muslim crime. Some articles reveal more about the mind-set of conservative journalists than it does about the true state of ethnic relations. It has been pointed out et.al. that Albrechtsen's article was not accurate in its borrowings from other sources: that it failed to mention an article she drew on was primarily about gang rape for male adolescents generally, not about Muslim adolescents; and that some of the victims of rape were Muslim girls.⁸² Kayser Trad, from the Lebanese Muslim Association revealed on a *7.30 Report* interview that he believed the motivation for the rapes were simply that-rapes, and nothing else.⁸³ They were not racially motivated as the hyperbolic reporting of the media would have had it. But that didn't stop the visceral nationalism of the media.

⁸¹ J. Albrechtson, 'Blind Spot Allows Barbarism to Flourish' in the *Australian*, 17 July 2002.

⁸² See discussion on this in S. Poynting et.al., *Bin Laden in the Suburbs* (Sydney: Sydney Institute of Criminology, 2004), p.143

⁸³ K.Trad, Interview on the *7.30 Report*, 15 July 2002

Concern with 'so-called' middle-eastern crime grew out of media reportage of the drive-by shooting at Lakemba police station in 1998 and a number of crimes associated with so-called Lebanese gangs.⁸⁴ It is problematic using the term 'middle eastern crime' but it became a catch-cry of the media and politicians, and the term 'middle eastern appearance' was often used in police reports. The media continued to racialise crime in pointing the finger at young men of middle-eastern background. The media continued to write stories of racial gangs and crime waves centred on ethnic groups. A lot of it was 'dog-whistle' prejudice, showing the facts but allowing a larger cultural prejudice and moral panic to evolve through an accumulation of stories over months and years.⁸⁵ Headlines and stories centred on gang rape, violence, drugs and other violence in a somewhat hysterical fashion. S. Downie reported in the *Daily Telegraph* (29/8/01) that 'racially motivated attacks could be spreading throughout Sydney'.⁸⁶ J.Kidman in the *Sun-Herald* a month earlier spoke about white women being brutally attacked by race gangs.⁸⁷ The intimation of this last article was that race-hate attacks were occurring but taking a sexual form.

While the general public were being fed this hysteria the reality was somewhat different. The NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics released a report of crime in the areas around Bankstown, showing that crime rates had remained relatively stable since 1995, at about 10 offences per month. The so-called spate of sexual assaults were not committed by Lebanese gangs but by single persons,

⁸⁴ J.Collins, G.Noble, S. Poynting and P. Tabar, *Kids, Kebabs, Cops and Crime: Youth, Ethnicity and Crime* (Sydney: Pluto Press, 2000)

⁸⁵ see S. Poynting, et al, *Bin Laden in the Suburbs*, 2004

⁸⁶ S.Downie, 'Gang attacks on women spread', *Daily Telegraph*, 29 August, 2001, p.3

⁸⁷ J. Kidman, 'Brutal sex assaults linked to race gangs', *Sun-Herald*, 29 July, 2001, pp.4-5

and they were not of Middle Eastern origin.⁸⁸ Moreover, it was noted that sexual assault rates were highest in areas where very few Arab or Moslem people lived. But this did not stop the media juggernaut. As moral guardians of White Australia, some penmen felt it their duty to continue to point out the cultural threat that Moslems and Arabs posed to the nation. Paul Sheehan, in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, maintained that ethnic crime derived from Moslem and Arab culture, that it was not just a phenomenon in Australia but the same groups were responsible for increases in crime elsewhere, such as France.⁸⁹

But the media attention to the negative aspects of Muslim culture should be seen in a structural context. The media, in essence, provide a moral basis for the survival of a society. They will not present stories that will bring a society down, but rather, promote an editorial line that would preserve the status quo and the basic values in society. In Marxist terms, they are a part of the superstructure of society, and have an interest to protect it. Gramsci⁹⁰ has noted that there is a dialectic that operates between the masses and the media. Viewpoints of the masses are drawn on by intellectuals and then put back into populist form by the media. This can be seen in the way letters to the editor reflect mass opinion, and then are re-circulated in the media to reinforce certain viewpoints or values. The hyperbolic and hysterical stories about Muslim

⁸⁸ D. Weatherburn, NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, *Media release: the facts on sexual assault in Bankstown*, 22 August, 2001

⁸⁹ P. Sheehan, 'Tolerant, multicultural Sydney can face this difficult truth', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 29 August, 2001, p.20

⁹⁰ A. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, (New York: International publishers, 1971)

culture are a part of this, and operate to protect the intrinsic right of the existing culture.

A newspaper article by C.Miranda⁹¹ in the *Daily Telegraph* on 12 October 2001 spoke of Bin Laden groups in Sydney suburbs. It maintained there was a link between the Islamic Youth Movement based at Lakemba with Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism. It also linked this with Lebanese gangs and violence. There wasn't. But it was a case of the media doing its job in identifying and exposing threats to society. Defence Minister Peter Reith did much the same in the immediate post 9/11 climate in claiming that Indonesia might be used as a launching pad for terrorism.⁹² This was invoking the invasion narrative in a new form, the Yellow Peril had been replaced by Islamic terrorism. Immigration Minister Philip Ruddock maintained that boat people were a security risk.⁹³ There was an effective warfront against terrorism from all angles, externally and internally. Australian society had to be protected at all cost, the demonisation of Islam was a small price to pay at this time from the perspective of the political executive. Morley⁹⁴ stated that nations have always attempted to purify themselves by at times excluding the impurities of race and criminality. Australia did it through its immigration scheme, and latterly through border protection and mandatory detention. This was a case of Australia attempting to purge the Islamic fundamentalist 'Other', but it became more

⁹¹ C.Miranda, 'Bin Laden Groups in the Suburbs', *Daily Telegraph*, 12 October, 2001, p.5

⁹² M.Farr, 'Terrorist link with boat people: Reith', *Daily Telegraph*, 14 September, 2001, p.8

⁹³ AAP, 'Boat people a security risk', 17 September, 2001

⁹⁴ D.Morley, *Home Territories*, (London: Routledge, , 2000), pp.141ff

generalized. The term, 'a clash of cultures' has been used by Huntington⁹⁵ and other commentators, believing that western and Muslim culture were mutually antagonistic. What happened in the climate of 9/11 was that Australia was fighting for its survival as a culture and as a nation-state. Douglas⁹⁶ has said that societies maintain social order by creating cultural boundaries, differentiating between those who belong and those who don't. Actions by governments, the media, and the superstructure in general in Australia post 9/11 may be seen in this way.

Cronulla riots

On 11 December 2005 a group of essentially Anglo-Australian surfers and beach-goers and locals met at Cronulla beach, Sydney, as they saw it, to defend their beach against the intrusion of middle-eastern interlopers. A number of incidents, including an attack by some Lebanese Australians on surf-life savers and reported bad behaviour towards White Australian women by Lebanese youths had occurred prior to this and contributed to tensions. A text message a few days before the riot urged Aussies to 'get down to Cronulla to Leb and Wog bash'. This was read out on talkback radio, so the publicity was widespread. Some 5,000 turned up 'to reclaim their beach'. The meeting started off peacefully, but soon got out of hand with a cocktail of alcohol, a desire for revenge, and an explosive sense of nationalism. It quickly turned into a riot with a number of Lebanese people being attacked. Later that evening and the next

⁹⁵ S. P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, (New York, Simon and Schuster, 1996)

⁹⁶ M. Douglas, *Risk and Blame*, (London: Routledge, 1992)

day a number of revenge attacks against Anglo-Australians occurred by Lebanese groups in Cronulla and a number of adjacent suburbs.

It was essentially a war of territory, a claim to ownership of Australia by Anglo-Australians at the local level, Cronulla beach. It was an assertion of who was the dominant group and culture in Australia, a reclaiming of the beach and national space at the local level. Anglo-Australians had perceived that their beach was being taken over by Lebanese and Middle Eastern groups and they wanted to restore the status quo. What was remarkable about the Cronulla riots was that it could have happened without a flag being flown or without a nationalistic comment being made. But it didn't. People carried flags and asserted their nationalism. The symbolism was spontaneous but pointed. People who probably had not done anything like that before, saw their nation, as they perceived it, as under threat, and acted accordingly. One flag carrier caught on TV camera said with great emotion and conviction that 'they're not coming down here to take our beach away from us'. Others wore t-shirts with the Australian flag on them, some with comments near the flag saying 'Love it or piss off'; or a map of Australia with the comment 'It's filled up' near it, indicating that Australia was only for 'Aussies'.

The root of the problem appeared to be associated with the beach and, effectively, cultural ownership of the beach. Australian history and culture had long been associated with agriculture and the bush, but equally for city folk the beach has been an important aspect of our culture. A long tradition of summer holidays, surf life-saving clubs, surf carnivals, and surf-board riding has been a

part of the beach for most of the twentieth century. I would argue that it is just as an important part of our history as that derived from the bush culture, probably more so, because beach culture still survives and is a vibrant part of our culture. The Australian-ness of beach culture is omnipresent in the media, in advertising in particular, where nationalistic themes are present. Typical nationalistic ads have shown a sheep farmer, a surf carnival or some life-savers, and then perhaps a switch to Uluru or the Barrier Reef. So the beach is something Australians identify as quintessentially Anglo-Australian. There is a cultural ownership of the beach that is the province of the blue-eyed blonde haired Australian, or this is how the cultural propaganda has it. In harking back to Hage's terminology, the Anglo-Australian is the cultural aristocracy that legitimizes the currency of culture.⁹⁷

Cronulla is part of the Sutherland Shire, and is an area of Sydney that has a dominant white, Anglo-Australian population. Surfing and beach culture has been one of the dominant and lasting forms of social life there. Surfing, surf-life saving, the bikini-clad women and muscular men have all been a part of the folk narrative of Australian nationalism. While Cronulla is somewhat of a white Australian enclave, there are many suburbs surrounding it that are heavily populated with non-white Australian groups. While people can go to a number of beaches in Sydney, for the southern suburbs Cronulla is a convenient straight line distance to the beach, either by train or car. Weekends at Cronulla have been a popular summer pastime by migrant families for many years. It has been a playground for Middle Eastern and Lebanese groups, particularly youths. The

⁹⁷ G.Hage, *White Nation* (Sydney: Pluto Press, 1998)

same could be found for beach picnic areas further up the coast at Doll's Point and Brighton Le Sands. These ethnic groups bring a different culture to the beach, more associated with family picnics and ball games such as soccer. The Australian surf culture is not a strong element in their culture, but that does not meant they will not use the beach.

According to Graeme Turner⁹⁸ there had been tensions for some time at Cronulla related to the behaviour of Middle Eastern youths in harassing women, instigating fights, and occupying too much space with their football games. *Strike Force Neil*, the police review into the Cronulla Riots, pointed to a number of incidents at Cronulla in the preceding months that had required a police response. On 15 November 2005, a month before the riots, concern was raised by the Cronulla Safety Action Group (formed after anti-social behaviour on Australia Day 2005, a committee of the mayor, police, and prominent community groups) about the 'escalatating anti-social behaviour between local youths and visitors from outside the shire'. Life savers were advised to contact the police of any incidents.⁹⁹ J.Lattas, in a paper presented at Macquarie University, points reports of some harassment of white women by some of the Middle Eastern youths as a spark for the conflict.¹⁰⁰ But there had also been racial taunts directed at these Middle Eastern youths by white male surfers who saw the beach as their 'own', and were prepared to express that vociferously¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ G.Turner, *Ordinary People and the Media: the Demotic Turn*, (London, Sage, 2010)p.101ff

⁹⁹ *Strike Force Neil, Cronulla Riots, Review of the Police Response Media Vol. 2*, p.6 *
Cronulla Safety Action Group(formed after anti-social behaviour on Australia Day 2005, a committee of the mayor, police, and prominent community groups)

¹⁰⁰ J.Lattas, 'Cruising', (Paper presented at the Everyday Multiculturalism Conference, Macquarie University, Sydney, 28–29 September, 2006)

¹⁰¹ C.Evers, 'Where the 'other' fears to tread', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 December, 2005.

On a summer weekend on the 4 December 2005 some Lebanese youths were involved in a verbal exchange with some life savers which turned ugly, and punches were thrown. One of the life savers was hurt and needed medical attention.¹⁰² Inflammatory reports in the media and allegations of it being an unprovoked attack, created an escalation in tensions and the spate of text messaging which led to a call of protest to reclaim the beach.¹⁰³

In response to this the following Sunday, 11 December 2005, a few thousand people were involved in a protest to reclaim Cronulla beach for white Australians. In the days in between the media had highlighted the bashing, and some talk-back radio shows were plugging a nationalistic line, villainising the bashers and lionising the life-savers.

But the main vehicle for organising the protest was an SMS message. It was also referred to on radio. It urged:

This Sunday every f—ing Aussie in the Shire get down to North Cronulla to help support Leb and Wog bashing day. Bring your mates down and lets show them that this is our beach. Let's claim back the Shire.¹⁰⁴

It was a call to arms, a call to reclaim the beach, and the Shire. In its thinking it jumps from beach to Shire, as if this were the next logical step. And implicit in this is a claim to ownership for national space, that is, to 'claim back'

¹⁰² Strike Force Neil, *Cronulla Riots, Review of the Police Response Media Vol. 2*, p.10

¹⁰³ G.Turner, *Ordinary People and the Media*, p101ff

¹⁰⁴ SMS message sent to reclaim Cronulla Beach, December, 2005

the nation. In the mind of the sender and those who received it and acted upon it, the message appeals to a strong sense of white nationalism; multiculturalism had brought the Middle Eastern invader to Cronulla, and this had disturbed the existing white beach culture and social order.

Strike Force Neil released the content of a number of SMS's related to Cronulla the police intercepted on 6 November inciting racial confrontation:

"Just a reminder that Cronulla's 1st wog bashing day is still on this Sunday. Chinks bashing day is on the 27th and the Jews are booked in for early January"

"Every fucking aussie. Go to Cronulla Beach Sunday for some Leb and wog bashing Aussie Pride ok"

"All lebo I wog brothers. Sunday midday. Must be at North Cronulla Park. These skippy aussies want war. Bring ur guns and knives and lets show them how we do it"

"O fight each Aussie. Yulleh. Lets get hectic and turn gods country into wogs country. Habib will be cookin victory kebabs after. Tell all your cousins" ¹⁰⁵

The SMS's were effective because thousands responded by turning up. Media coverage and discussion also contributed. The media was complicit in the Cronulla affair in publishing the SMS and 'beating up' the possible conflict. It had received significant coverage on the Alan Jones Show, and Jones' views were not unsympathetic to those who wanted to reclaim Cronulla. Jones read out the infamous SMS on air. Although he did caution people not to resort to retaliatory violence he was sympathetic to a number of callers' views on the issue of the lifesavers being bashed, or negative comments about persons of Middle-Eastern appearance. Jones thought that some kind of demonstration, 'a rally, a street march, call it what you will...A community show of force' would

¹⁰⁵ *Strike Force Neil*, p.12

be a good thing.¹⁰⁶ Tension had been built up by the media, ‘it had been brewing all week on talkback radio-particularly on 2GB’.¹⁰⁷ Jones himself maintained he was leading the charge on talkback discourse. When a caller Berta suggested there were two sides to the debate, Jones retorted:

Let’s not get too carried away, Berta. We don’t have Anglo-Saxon kids out there raping women in Western Sydney.¹⁰⁸

Another caller referred to the attackers as being grubs. When asked what sort of ‘grubs’ would beat up life-savers, Jones replied:

What kind of grubs? Well I’ll tell you what kind of grubs these lot were. This lot were Middle Eastern grubs.¹⁰⁹

As the crowds grew, alcohol was imbibed, people were draped in the Australian flag or wore t-shirts declaring their loyalty to Australia and denigrating those who didn’t love the flag or support ‘Aussie’ culture and values. The anti-Middle Eastern diatribes and emotive nationalism soon turned to violence. A local reported that it began when a man of Middle-Eastern appearance shouted out to the crowd- ‘I’m going to blow youse all up’.¹¹⁰ It is

¹⁰⁶ A.Jones quoted by David Marr, ‘Alan Jones: I’m the person that’s led this charge’, *Age*, 13 December 2005, p.7

¹⁰⁷ D.Marr, ‘Alan Jones: I’m the person that’s led this charge’, *Age*, 13 December 2005, p.7

¹⁰⁸ Berta, a caller to the Alan Jones show quoted in David Marr, ‘Alan Jones: I’m the person that’s led this charge’, *Age*, 13 December 2005

¹⁰⁹ Quoted in ABC *Mediawatch* “Front page: Jones and Cronulla” – available at <http://www.abc.net.au/mediawatch/transcripts/s1574155.htm>.2005

¹¹⁰ Paul Sheehan, ‘A hot wet trail- yet police remain clueless in Cronulla’, *SMH*, 30 December, 2006

not certain that this was the spark that set it off, but about the same time the crowd chased people into the local hotel, Northies. A number of men of Middle Eastern appearance were set upon later and bashed. The following evening revenge attacks occurred as groups smashed cars, property and assaulted people of Anglo-Australian appearance.¹¹¹

Nevertheless, symbols were displayed, albeit fleetingly, of a nation under siege. That is, the culture and identity of the white nation was under threat by the 'other'. Home grown nationalistic slogans were in abundance. Things like 'Aussie Pride', 'Love the Country or leave it', and a number of slogans indicating the 'Aussie' nature of Cronulla, even to the point of tattooing the Cronulla post-code on their arms.¹¹² 'Aussie Pride' was also scrawled in huge letters on the beach. Some slogans appearing on clothing were quite vitriolic and racist. 'We grew here, you flew here', 'Wog Free Zone, 'Ethnic cleansing unit', and 'Save 'nulla' not Allah' were but a few. People chanted 'Lebs out', 'Lebs go home', 'No Lebs'¹¹³ and 'Aussie, Aussie, Aussie...Oi,Oi,Oi''. A man wearing a cap decorated in the Australian flag was filmed speaking to the crowd on a megaphone. He said:

This is what our grandfathers fought for, to protect this...[he indicates the beach] so we can enjoy it, and we don't need these Lebanese or any one else to take it away from us...(cheers of the crowd)

¹¹¹ *Strike Force Neil: Cronulla Riots*, pp.23 ff.

¹¹² Ien Ang, 'Nation, Migration and the City: Mediating Urban Citizenship' in Conference on Cities and Media: Cultural Perspectives on Urban Identities in a Mediatized World, Vadstena, Sweden, 25–29, October, 2006 , p.34, Linköping Electronic Conference Proceedings, No. 20 Linköping University Electronic Press Linköping, Sweden, 2006, internet: www.ep.liu.se/ecp/020/

¹¹³ '2005 Cronulla Riots', Wikipedia, www/en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2005_Cronulla_riots

A woman living in the Cronulla area for some time complained about the harassment of Lebanese youths with nothing being done about it. She said:

We need to fight back. We're only sticking up for what's ours. We fought against the Japanese. We will fight against the Lebanese, and we will take our country back.¹¹⁴

Cartoons often capture the essence of a situation fairly well. The Nicholson cartoon below (December 2005) plays on the idea of fighting between the flags, not only the flags marking where to swim but the flags of Australia and Lebanon. He saw it as a fight for ownership of the beach and a clash of cultures.



Cartoon: Please Fight Between the Flags, Nicholson, 2005

(Cartoon by Nicholson from *The Australian* newspaper: www.nicholsoncartoons.com.au)

¹¹⁴ *Truth about Cronulla*, You Tube, available at <http://au.youtube.com/watch?v=TEonIHWE>)

Mark, a caller to 2GB, said:

It's not about keeping Australia white, it's about keeping Australia right...we've got totally away from where we want to be.¹¹⁵

Peter Barclay and Peter West (*People and Place*, Vol.14, No.1, 2006) were in a position to witness some of the events at Cronulla. They saw the demonstration in three phases. The morning was fairly benign, more like a celebration of Australia Day. Alcohol fueled emotions turned benign nationalism to racism, and by late afternoon it had turned to violence. They didn't see the day essentially as anti-migrant in its conception, but as a patriotic celebration and a call for better behaviour around the beach, particularly towards women.¹¹⁶

I visited Cronulla a week after the turbulence and noted, apart from a strong police presence, a number of Anglo-Australian youths wearing nationalistic t-shirts, from the benign to the blatantly racist. The slogans on the t-shirts said things like 'Love it or piss off', and had an outline map of Australia or the Australian flag; or similarly an outline map of Australia with the words 'it's full' on it. White nationalist flags in the Eureka style were common. Some appeared to have been professionally produced, so that it suggested the

¹¹⁵ Mark, a caller to 2GB, quoted in Marr, 'Alan Jones: I'm the person that's led this charge' *The Age*, 13 December, 2005

¹¹⁶ P.Barclay and P.West, 'Racism or Patriotism? An Eyewitness Account of the Cronulla Demonstration of 11 December, 2005' in *People and Place*, Vol.14, No.1, 206, pp.75-85

organization of some white nationalist groups behind the scenes. There is evidence that nationalist groups such as Australia-First, The Patriotic Youth League, and Blood and Honour were involved. Apart from the few t-shirted youths, there appeared to be little evidence of racial tension in the streets. It appeared to have blown over. I didn't observe anything that was blatantly racist, more that it was blatantly nationalistic. It was also evident that there had been some organization in the production of the t-shirts, more than just a group of amateurs could do, which meant the backing of money to have the t-shirts done. This could account for the t-shirts, but not the spontaneous display of flag waving and patriotic chest beating. Political groups joined the demonstration, it was not orchestrated. Large scale politically backed action would have had further protests on the same level. There were none that were successful. There was an attempt to replicate Cronulla in Western Australia at Scarborough and Mullaloo and also in ethnic areas in Melbourne, but these fizzled out through lack of interest.¹¹⁷

So what can we make out of Cronulla? Was it just a demonstration that got out of hand? It was that, but it was more. Symbols were displayed and slogans used and behaviour engaged in that made it more. Cronulla can be seen as part of a continuum in a resurgent nationalism that had been taking place for some time, reacting to a multiculturalism that was perceived by some Anglo-Australians to be slowly eroding *their* nation, as they perceived it (seen in the

¹¹⁷ Danny Ben-Mosche, *The Far-Right and the 2005 Cronulla Riots In Sydney*, (Paper Given at the Post-Cronulla Summit, Inter Faith Centre, Griffith University, 2006), co-sponsored by the Centre for Multiculturalism and Community Development at the University of the Sunshine Coast

context of the post-Tampa, post-9/11 world). From the media to the Prime Minister, the denigration of the Arab 'other' had become common place in Australian society. In this context, Cronulla should be seen as at least an attempt to reassert an Anglo-Australian identity at a local level, and perhaps an emotional call to restore the dominance of Anglo-Australian values in the context of a multicultural nation. Certainly, the media played an important role in heightening the drama and tension leading up to the riots, and as moral arbiter in the post-riot discourse. While some sections of the media remained objectively at arms distance, other sections were intimate players, adopting a thinly veiled nationalist stance.

Stanley Cohen's notion of 'moral panic', referred to earlier, has been suggested as one explanation for the riots and its aftermath. This says that a heightened public view can be whipped up by intense and emotive media coverage directed at a group or minority in society. Given how the Arabs had been seen in recent times, there was admittedly a heightened and hysterical perception of the menace that Muslim and Middle Eastern people posed. While this appears to fit the facts, on closer inspection it does not deal with some of the issues adequately. Some of the discussion on Cronulla seems to bypass what the people in the street were saying and doing. The newspapers were seeing it as a day of national shame, where Australians exhibited unacceptable violence and racism. The *Daily Telegraph* (12 December 2005) in its editorial spoke of the 'Cronulla riot that shames our values'. That may be so from a moral perspective, but it fails to understand the outpouring of nationalistic angst.

Anglo-Australians were reclaiming Cronulla on behalf of the national culture. The events and statements leading up to the riot indicate that some Anglo-Australian beach goers perceived that Australian values and beach culture was being undermined by the behaviour of Middle Eastern youths. With the demonstration the inclusionary nature of multiculturalism turned quickly to a White Australian exclusionism. The messages were for Moslems and others to love the flag and embrace the White Australian culture or leave the country. One Lebanese youth who was involved in the revenge attacks was reported to have shouted out 'I am an Australian too'.

Cronulla, like Tampa, was a flash point for the on-going tensions between multiculturalism and national identity, but manifested on a smaller stage. It was a brief encounter for survival between two forms of the Australian nation- Multiculturalism and White Australia, at least at a local level. It has not been replicated at a national level. The Cronulla conflict may only be that, a conflict set around local issues of the beach. But the tension between multiculturalism and White Australia is likely to continue, in the main as a discourse over what form of society and citizenship should exist. Are perceptions of White ownership so ingrained that multiculturalism will never be allowed to develop fully as an expression of the nation? Already many people accept multiculturalism as the status quo, and this is continuing to be the case as our suburbs become less Anglo-Australian based. A sense of entitlement or ownership is generally based on being in a position of dominance. This was the case in the White enclave of Cronulla. The rest of Australian society is not like

Cronulla. But the Cronulla episode revealed there is on-going tension over the form of society Australia will need to adopt to avoid racial conflict and survive as a nation. Perhaps it will need some future hybridization of race and culture.

Conclusion

Multiculturalism appeared to offer an elegant solution to a nation with a large migrant population. However, as more immigrants arrived from Asia and the Middle East in the 1980's and 1990's a reactionary White Australia emerged, wanting to end the multicultural experiment and return to a society more centred on Anglo-Australian culture. The dialectical conflict between wanting migrants and preserving Anglo-Australian culture had stretched to the limit, and this was manifest in the nationalist reaction in this period running from Hanson to the Cronulla riots. A correction occurred in the form of Howard moving the nation back to what he termed the 'mainstream', Anglo-Australian culture by another name. Nevertheless, this period was marked by anxiety about a loss of nation and culture for those whose emotional attachment was to an older Australia, and a fear and demonisation of the Other. Hanson, Tampa, 9/11 and Cronulla merged in a reactionary nationalist blur. Many felt their country was under threat, that they were being 'swamped' by other cultures. But many didn't. Many accepted the changes multiculturalism had brought. The reaction of those who felt alienated by multiculturalism was to lash out at the Other, and urge a return to the Australia of yesteryear, for many, to claim back *their* nation.

Conclusion

The objection I have to multiculturalism is that multiculturalism is in effect saying it's impossible to have an Australian ethos, that it is impossible to have a common Australian culture.

John Howard, January 1989

Migrants have the right to maintain their cultural and racial identity...provided that ethnic identity is not stressed at the expense of society at large, but is interwoven into the fabric of nationhood...

Galbally Report, 1978

The quotes above reflect the course of, and discourses on, Australia's immigration history over the last sixty years. The level of immigration in that time from diverse sources changed Australia markedly. Australia went from being essentially a mono-cultural society to a multicultural society. But those changes did not occur without some questioning as to whether it would make Australia a better place, and whether it had led to an erosion of Australia's core culture and the level of social cohesion in society. Indeed, some like John Howard, the former Prime Minister (1996-2007), believed that there was a paradox related to the introduction of multiculturalism. By having many cultures it was impossible to retain a 'common Australian culture', that is one based on history, tradition, and Anglo-Celtic heritage. The other quote, from

the Galbally Report, represents the quintessential statement on the nature of multiculturalism for Australia. This said that migrants have a right to their culture and identity, as long as that does not interfere with the broader functioning of society. The latter part of the quote suggested that multiculturalism should become part of the 'fabric of nationhood'. It was the belief of some governments, academics and multiculturalists at the time, that multiculturalism should become an expression of national identity and nationhood.

These two views represent the dichotomous discourses on how the national should manage a diversity of culture. Both form part of the essential thrust of this thesis. It is these two polar views that form much of the history of immigration to Australia from the 1980s. They essentially competed for proprietorship of the Australian nation. In this thesis I have presented them as two ways of 'surviving' for the Australian nation, one with a predominant Anglo-Australian base, the other, responding to the cultural identities of immigrants.

This thesis has shown that Australia went from a mono-cultural society prior to World War II to a society that has had to accommodate high immigration levels and adapt its social environment accordingly. This presented challenges for governance, which has had to manage that social environment in such away that it would accommodate migrants effectively and not be injurious to the social fabric, the general character of Australian society. This was an evolving process, but one that had uppermost in mind, the social cohesion of the nation.

This thesis has also shown that elements within Australian society, predominantly those attached to the older Australian template, Anglo-Australian culture, responded negatively to the immigration influx. For them, the growing presence of migrants posed a threat to the social fabric and their perceptions of the Australian identity and nation.

Immigration has been an integral part of Australia's survival as a nation. It has been necessary for population, to provide a workforce, for economic growth and to fortify the nation's defences. Indeed, immigration has been necessary to the very long-term viability of the nation. Yet, this need has had to be met within the parameters of what David Walker has coined an 'anxious nation', and an abiding fear of cultural demise. It was this anxiety which ultimately led to the creation of the White Australia Policy and the exclusion of non-Europeans. It provided the necessary homogeneity for cultural maintenance. When large-scale immigration was found necessary to keep Australia out of danger, in Arthur Calwell's words, to keep it a 'white man's country', governments needed to devise management strategies to ensure social cohesion. So began the process of allowing in more 'aliens' while, at the same time, preserving the character of Australian society. The history of immigration policy charted in this thesis demonstrates the different routes governments have taken to achieve this. Responses and reactions to them demonstrate that they were not merely engaged in a bureaucratic exercise, an exercise of managing an increasingly diverse population, but at times a dialectical struggle with the popular will and its own notion of survival. This became particularly manifest in the changes to immigration policy after the

1970s when, as Tavan has argued, changes were more radically undermining the dominant ethnic character of the nation.¹

The abolition of the White Australia policy signaled the abolition of a particular way of being Australian and immigration policy evolved to accommodate the changes brought about by an influx of non-European migrants. With the development of multiculturalism the emphasis shifted from those whose history, culture and even ancestry were either native to the land or derived from the motherland, Great Britain, to the newcomer, born elsewhere with affiliations and loyalties ultimately elsewhere. As the question of the retention of migrants became an issue for governments they became increasingly concerned with protecting the interests of migrant settlers. They had to. Immigration meant survival to them. The gradual shift from assimilation to multiculturalism was, in part, an acknowledgement of *their* (the migrant settlers) cultural loss. It was also an acknowledgement that cultural identity defined a person, and the survival of migrant identity was as important as the survival of the nation as a whole. Multiculturalism for many represented the best of all worlds, a way to preserve migrant culture and identity without disturbing the existing Anglo-Australian western culture. The Australian Ethnic Affairs Council (AEAC) in 1977, in its publication *Australia as a Multicultural Society* said:

¹ Gwenda Tavan, 'The Dismantling of the White Australia Policy: Elite Conspiracy or Will of the Australian People?', *Australian Journal of Political Science*, vol.39, n.1, March, 2004, p.124. See also Andrew Markus et al. *Australia's Immigration Revolution*, Allen & Unwin, 2009.

Our goal in Australia is to create a society in which people of non-Anglo-Australian origin are given the opportunity, as individuals or groups, to choose to preserve and develop their culture, their languages, traditions...so that these can become living elements in the diverse culture of total society.²

For many this was a paradigm of social cohesion for the nation, pointing the way ahead for Australia's future survival.

While most Australians accepted multiculturalism and immigration as beneficial to the nation, there were concerns by some commentators and sections of the public, that population changes were occurring too quickly, and fears that the relative social cohesion prior to the 1970's would be compromised. Many who had grown up accepting the hegemony of Anglo-Australian culture became alarmed by the relatively sudden and shifting cultural landscape. The reaction to Aboriginal issues and, in particular, land rights in the last quarter of the twentieth century, revealed how fiercely Anglo-Australians would defend their turf.³ Reactions to immigration were another manifestation of this dynamic. Assimilation, while it was in place, at least provided a screen to the changing complexion of Australian society. As long as 'they' were like 'us' the change could be tolerated. We could happily consume those aspects of 'their' culture we found palatable and discard the rest. However, when, under the banner of multiculturalism, Australia accepted more and more people from Asia and the Middle East, the traditional source of

² Australian Ethnic Affairs Council, *Australia as a Multicultural Society* (Canberra: AGPS, August 1977), p.16

³ For an interesting discussion of how Aboriginal land rights impacted on settler's sense of identity, see Ann Curthoys, 'Constructing National Histories', in Bain Attwood and SG Foster (eds), *Frontier Conflict. The Australian Experience*, National Museum of Australia, 2003, pp.185-199.

angst, some sections of the Australian population saw the nation and culture as under threat.

The second half of this thesis has focused on this reaction to high levels of non-white immigration and multiculturalism, showing that this was essentially an expression of anxiety about loss of nation by individuals and groups, but a substantial minority of the populace. Older groups like the ANA, RSL and League of Rights are the 'substantial minorities' who regularly express this 'nativist' sentiment. They are useful for capturing the roots of this anxiety and for tracing how it manifests itself as anxiety over immigration. In 1966 the president of the ANA wrote on the modification to the White Australia policy:

'our Association would oppose any further liberalisation of the policy, if it in any way threatened to destroy Australia's present homogeneity of population or national character'.⁴

And further, in 1983 the Victorian RSL developed a policy statement that urged Australian immigration policy to look to 'the proper development and enhancement of the Nation with the recognition of our Anglo-Saxon heritage and traditions'.⁵ Eric Butler, the founder of the League of Rights asserted in January 1988 that:

⁴ President ANA, Private letter, October 31, 1966

⁵ RSL Victorian Branch Annual Conference, Policy Statement, 1983; see A. Blair, *Ruxton* (Sydney : Allen and Unwin, 2004), p.95

For many years the League was like a voice in the wilderness attempting to warn Australians of the far reaching implications of the... forces attempting to divide the nation...of the destabilization of a basically homogenous nation through a policy of multi-racialism and multiculturalism. ⁶

These groups express the old nativist sentiment, seeing themselves as essentially guardians of a White Anglo-Australian nation and culture.

The debates on multiculturalism unleashed by Blainey in the 1980s represented the significant discourses on what sort of Australia our country should be, and reflected an on-going divisiveness that persists still today. For him, as it was for those who opposed him, it was a question of what was the best way for Australia to survive into the future with cultural diversity. Blainey's world view was that people had a need to belong to a community. Multicultural policy, with its:

Emphasis on what is different and on the rights of the new minority rather than the old majority, gnaws at that sense of solidarity that many people crave for. The policy of governments since 1978 to turn Australia into a land of all nations runs across the present yearning for stability and social cohesion. ⁷

Blainey quotes from a *Migrant Entry Handbook*, which he considers to be an incisive paradigm for the nation, but which had been ignored:

⁶ Eric Butler, quoted in Markus, *Race*, p.119

⁷ Blainey, *All for Australia*, p.153.

The size and composition of the migrant intake should not jeopardize social cohesiveness and harmony within the Australian community.⁸

As we've seen, many commentators followed in Blainey's wake, and the media was peppered by 'shock-jocks' from Ron Casey to Alan Jones who mouthed the litany of 'survival Australia'. It was they who believed that other cultures posed a threat, and often their programs were filled with negative comments about them. It was they who the 'substantial minority' listened to. Ron Casey said that:

we should strive for social harmony and this cannot exist when you allow Asians to come to Australia in large numbers with no intention of ever assimilating into the ways of old Australia.⁹

Some journalists and some areas of the media were not immune to this thinking. Indeed, a few in the tabloid press and radio appeared to operate as self-appointed moral guardians of Australian culture. Alan Jones, by virtue of the audience he commanded, fell into this category. He often proselytized on the virtues of unified Australian culture:

Australia can only strengthen if it is a country of one dominant culture, one flag, we say one anthem, and we want people who come to this country, in return for the opportunities that they are given, to embrace that philosophy.¹⁰

⁸ Migrant Entry Handbook, quoted in Blainey, *All for Australia*, p.143

⁹ *ibid.*, p.39

¹⁰ Alan Jones, 2UE, 12 September, 1996

The media in general was very Anglo-Australian biased, in its general news, advertisements, and television programming. This, wittingly or unwittingly, led to negative stereotyping of 'other' cultures. The tabloid media often 'beat up' stories of Asian and Middle Eastern crime to provide greater sales. But often in this there was a sub-text, a desire to protect Australian culture and highlight threats to it.

At the height of the Asian immigration debate Pauline Hanson emerged, galvanizing disparate reactionary voices. It was not so much that she articulated the desire to a return to a more traditional Australia, but that she became the vehicle through which these views flowed and were exposed in a highly public way. For a time, she spoke for the ordinary Australian who felt their country had been snatched away. As Peter Cochrane said:

Hanson is the voice of old Anglo-Celtic Australia, resentful of its displacement from the centre of Australian cultural life by the new ethnic Australians and nostalgic for a time when it imagined its identity was secure and central.¹¹

She too spoke of the survival of our nation, of good Australians being displaced by foreigners, and Australia being 'swamped by Asians'. Many dismissed her as an inarticulate, racist, fish-and-chip shop owner, but she was able to tap into the heart and centre of an 'older' Australia that wanted resurrection. Yet at best she only represented between 10-15 per cent of Australians, according to the polls and election results. Most Australians did

¹¹ P. Cochrane, 'Race Memory' *Australian Review of Books*, November 1996, quoted in J. Brett, *Australian Review of Books*, May 1997, p.12

not support her views, but they had a level of resonance that impacted throughout Australian political life.

As Hanson's political star faded Australia faced a national crisis over Tampa. Echoing atavistic sentiments that ran close to something like the 'yellow peril,' some Australians responded hysterically to a group of asylum seekers off the northern coast of Australia. Xenophobia and invasion fears dominated the airwaves, and the Howard government responded with a military response to 'save' the nation. Ian Causley, a Liberal MP, said that he'd never seen such public support for any issue in the time he'd been in parliament. He said on Tampa:

The Australian people want strength...someone who is prepared to stand up and be strong and defend their country.¹²

Much of the historiography on this invokes the survivalistic anxieties Australia had in its history, living on the edge of Asia, the fear of invasion from the north, and the vulnerability of the sparsely populated continent. As David Walker as so concisely put it:

In Australia's post-Tampa world we have seen a return of survivalist anxieties in which human rights and citizenship...are weighed against the rights of a supposedly embattled nation to secure its borders. Where the survival of the nation is said to be at risk...¹³

¹² Ian Causley, Liberal MP, Parliamentary response to Tampa crisis, quoted in P.Mares, *Borderline*, (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2001), p. 133

¹³ D.Walker, 'Survivalist Anxieties: Australia's Responses to Asia, 1890's to the Present'. *Australian Historical Studies*, no. 120, (October, 2002): p.329

9/11 soon followed and the walls of fortress Australia were raised. Fear of Asian invasion had been replaced by fear of Middle Eastern terrorism. The impact of this was a body blow to multiculturalism, as people of Middle Eastern appearance were targeted by the police and media, and in some cases, vilified by the public.

In 2005 a riot occurred at Cronulla, a southern beach-side suburb of Sydney. Middle Eastern youths had allegedly been causing mischief at the beach, offending women, and had attacked life savers. A 'call to arms' was made through SMS and the media, to save Cronulla. Hundreds turned up, some draped in the Australian flag, wearing t-shirts with patriotic or racist slogans. For some, this was an attempt to reclaim the beach for Anglo-Australians. The crowd turned on some youths of Middle Eastern background and, a few in the crowd, assaulted them. Lebanese groups retaliated, later smashing cars in the area, and assaulting some members of the public of Anglo-appearance. It could have been dismissed as simply a brawl over control of the beach and bad behaviour. This episode has been variously interpreted, as Greg Noble says:

was it Australian racism or Middle Eastern cultural intolerance, was it a local or national issue, was it Muslim misogyny or ... 'boys behaving badly'? ¹⁴

¹⁴ G.Noble, ' "Where the bloody hell are we?" Multicultural manners in a world of hyperdiversity', in *Lines in the Sand. The Cronulla Riots, multiculturalism and national belonging*, (Sydney: Institute of Criminology Press, 2009), p.3

But the wearing of patriotic symbols and the language of those involved elevated it to a national struggle at least at a local level. My view is that it was a fight for Anglo-Australia at a local level to regain control over its cultural space, the icon of the beach. Alan Jones himself maintained he was leading the charge on talkback radio. When a caller Berta suggested there were two sides to the debate, Jones retorted:

Let's not get too carried away, Berta. We don't have Anglo-Saxon kids out there raping women in Western Sydney.¹⁵

It is no accident that these events occurred in Cronulla. A part of the Sutherland Shire, this beach is not just any beach but one which encompasses the landing site of Captain Cook, projected for so long in 'our' history as the first discoverer and 'founding' father. The Shire is also quite unrepresentative of other suburbs in Sydney because it has a smaller proportion of overseas born residents and less diversity in the range of countries of birth. Eighty percent of the population in the Shire was born either in Australia, the UK, New Zealand or South Africa.¹⁶ If they didn't 'grow' here they came from places with very similar ancestries and lineage.

And, as Murray Goot and Ian Watson have argued very recently, such nativism is important when considering responses to immigration. They show that evidence from the Australian Survey of Social Attitudes conducted in

¹⁵ Berta, a caller to the Alan Jones show quoted in David Marr, 'Alan Jones: I'm the person that's led this charge', *Age*, 13 December 2005

¹⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics, <http://abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/92C0101965E7DC14CA25773700169C63?opendocument>.

2003 demonstrated that substantial minorities believed that to be ‘truly Australian’ one had to be born here, have Australian ancestry and live mostly in Australia. Even ‘majorities’ believed Australian birth and ancestry was at least ‘fairly important’.¹⁷ In a country with just under three-quarters of its population born in Australia this is significant. Of course, this figure includes numbers who have parents born overseas but who are themselves born here. Nonetheless, it is still a sizeable ‘native’ population, the majority of whom are Australian by birth, if not ancestry.

In some ways this speaks to the importance of cultural identity. Where one was born and grew up is where the formative influences happen, where culture is learned and passed down and where history resides. This shapes people’s identity. Although separated by some fifty years, Pauline Hanson’s comments in 1996 and Arthur Calwell’s in 1942 which provide the bookends of the thesis, speak to this. Both were concerned with the preservation and survival of Anglo-Australia as the dominant culture. But multiculturalism also provided a vehicle for the preservation and survival of migrant cultures. It did provide a paradigm for a number of cultures to exist side by side within the context of the broader culture, where the social harmony and cohesion of the nation would be maintained. Many accepted this model. However, with a continued migrant population growth, others did not accept that multiculturalism could maintain the social cohesion necessary for the survival of the nation.

¹⁷ Murray Goot and Ian Watson, ‘Nativism as Citizenship: Immigration, Economic Hardship and the Politics of the Rights’, Martina Mollering and Christina Slade (eds), *From Migrant to Citizen: Testing Language, Testing Culture*, Palgrave, 2010, p.226.

The discourse over what the nation should be will continue. Hanson, Tampa and Cronulla do not represent a necessary direction that Australia is headed. Certainly Anglo-Australia has spoken vociferously at various flashpoints in our history on its claim to cultural hegemony, but multiculturalism has also shown that it is a good working model for social cohesion. The discourse may see-saw back and forth as to which form of society will prevail. There has been, and will be in the future, a dialectical struggle between the forces of White Australia and the forces of multiculturalism. Hopefully, a benign synthesis will result.¹⁸

¹⁸ Andrew Jakubowicz, 'A Stunned Silence: the slow death of multiculturalism', Australian Policy Online, <http://apo.org.au/commentary/stunned-silence-slow-death-multiculturalism>.

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