

Exclusion Within, Exclusion Without: Race and Neoliberalism in an Unequal Australia.

Cameron Smith



Cameron Smith

Student #43171214

Department of Politics and International Relations

Macquarie University

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Abstract

Race, as some would have it, is a term that has been emaciated of any analytical utility or real-world significance in contemporary Western society. Relegated to the realm of individual pathology and sociopolitical antiquation, race has largely been marginalised and invisibilised in discussions of inequality and deprivation - a phenomenon referred to by David Theo Goldberg as 'antiracialism'. Against this phenomenon, I aim to shed light on the structural and discursive transformations occasioned in the implementation of neoliberalism in Australia, with particular reference to how constructs of racial identity are mobilised in producing and legitimising racial inequality within these transformations. In doing so, the first chapter affixes a provisional conceptual identity onto neoliberalism that describes neoliberal power as both hegemonic and discursive, and as being constantly exerted by the transnational capitalist class in furthering the agenda of capital accumulation. The second and third chapters proceed to unravel how welfare and immigration policy (respectively) in Australia have both been transformed according to the neoliberal agenda. After charting these transformations, I problematise each in terms of how constructs of racial identity are mobilised within these transformations in order to marginalise and exclude certain people groups.

Introduction

People do have a right to be bigots, you know!

Speaking in the Australian Senate in March 2014, George Brandis (Attorney-General in the newly elected Coalition government) could perhaps have chosen a more persuasive catch-cry in support of an array of proposed reforms to Section 18 (C) of the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* (RDA). Key among these proposed reforms was the winding-back of a provision in the law that prohibited acts ‘reasonably likely... to offend, insult, humiliate or intimidate another person or a group of people’ based on their ‘race, colour or national or ethnic origin’ (reference), changing the text to instead only make unlawful acts that would be ‘reasonably likely’ to ‘vilify’ or ‘intimidate’. In the text of the proposed reforms, ‘vilify’ would denote language or actions intended to ‘incite hatred towards a person or a group of persons’, while ‘intimidate’ would signify acts ‘causing fear of physical harm’ to a person and/or their property, or a group of persons (Magarey, 2014).¹

A detailed exploration of the legal semantics involved is beyond the remit of this paper. However, the proposed changes from ‘offend, insult, humiliate or intimidate’ to ‘vilify’ or ‘intimidate’ provide an instructive example of the terms on which one engages in the politics of race, particularly within Australian (and Western society). It would appear that, to Brandis and his colleagues, racial minorities should only have the protection of the law from manifestations of racism that deploy *physical* violence,² while offensive or insulting racially discriminatory language should be left to the vagaries of public debate. More subtle, structural racially-produced violences are thus made invisible and untouchable: whether the violence of targeted welfare quarantining in a select group of Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory, the violence of ever-present surveillance and suspicion if you happen to belong to Hisb ut-Tahrir, or the day-

to-day violence of distrust and avoidance highlighted in beyondblue's 'Stop. Think. Respect' video campaign (2014).³

Even more revealing is subsection (3) of the proposed reforms to the RDA - whether an act is 'reasonably likely' to vilify or intimidate is to be determined 'by the standards of an ordinary reasonable member of the Australian community', and 'not by the standards of any particular group within the Australian community' (Magarey, 2014). As pointed out by Waleed Aly, these provisions are pointedly blatant in their assumption of a racial neutrality and denial of the historical processes and structural elements that underpin racialised violences and exclusions. This entirely created and contingent 'ordinary reasonable member of the Australian community' is 'white by default', and 'brings white standards and experiences to assessing the effects of racist behaviour' (Aly, 2014). Thus, the assumption of racial neutrality reifies the normalisation and invisibilisation of whiteness, along with the conspicuousness and curiosity of nonwhiteness in Australian society.

Both the adamant denial of the possibility that racial discrimination might occur in the form of non-physical forms of racially-produced violence, and the assumption of racial neutrality discussed above, are particularly instructive in beginning to outline the arguments of this paper. The debates surrounding the proposed RDA reforms provide a case *par excellence* in which race is rendered somewhat anachronistic in social and political analysis, instead circumscribed to function solely as a descriptor of the aberrant behaviours of the obviously bigoted. David Theo Goldberg has explicated this perfectly (and somewhat prophetically) (2009: 360):

As race is rendered irrelevant socially, racism conceptually becomes stigmatised so that only the obviously bigoted - extreme individuals - get to qualify. On the other hand, racism is redirected to malign those who invoke race, implicitly or explicitly, but now to undo the historical legacies of racisms, even modestly to redress its effects.

Race, as some would have it, is thus a term that has been emaciated of any analytical utility or real-world significance in contemporary Western society. As the example of the proposed RDA reforms illustrates, race has been relegated to the realm of individual pathology and sociopolitical antiquation, whilst expressions of race and racism as signifying phenotypical or biological difference or even inferiority have been placed in the domain of aberrance and contemptibility, and removed from explicit articulation in the public realm (despite notable exceptions).⁴ In place of explicit articulation, then, race is 'implicitly relegated to the status of something incidental which, frankly, no longer matters and is, in general, simply unspeakable' (De Genova, 2010: 626). However, as alluded to in the quote above, this 'unspeakability' of race has effected an insidious, perhaps unintended outcome: the invisibilisation and marginalisation of race as a salient signifier, descriptor or explanatory factor in unravelling the inequality and deprivation currently experienced by racial minorities in developed countries.

This invisibilisation and marginalisation of race is part of what Howard Winant (2004) calls 'postracialism' and what Goldberg (2009) calls 'antiracialism'; the former calling out a 'contemporary racial hegemony' that 'bevels off the jagged edges of racial dictatorship but leaves the underlying social structure of racial exclusion and injustice largely untouched' (Winant, 2004: xviii-xix), the latter lamenting a 'forgetting, getting over, moving on, wiping away the terms of reference, at best (or worst) a commercial memorialising rather than a recounting and redressing of the terms of humiliation and devaluation' (Goldberg, 2009: 21). The contributions of both scholars point to an invisibilisation of the prominence of racialised exploitation and oppression - in the intertwined historical narratives of Western modernity and capitalism, and also in the political, economic, and societal structures that make up the contemporary Western world.

The core sentiment of this thesis is that the active pursuit of sustaining a contemporary racial hegemony that begets a process of forgetting, getting over, and

moving on from the concept of race itself should be fought and contested. There are two key reasons for doing so: firstly, we are in a world that is in close chronological proximity to the wave of decolonisation that spread throughout Africa, Latin America, and Asia post-World War II. As I will contend throughout this paper, the significance of this is that the 'legacies of national, ethnic or racial exploitation, inequality, and oppression' associated with colonialism are far from relics of a long-gone past, and are in fact still visible to the careful analytical eye (Dirlik, 2002: 429). Secondly, the world is 'more unequal today than at any point since World War II' (UNDP, 2013: 1). Critically, this inequality is not only driven by 'broad globalisation processes' and 'domestic policy choices' (Ibid: 3), but also through 'discriminatory attitudes and policies that are marginalising people on the basis of gender or other cultural constructs such as ethnicity or religious affiliation' (Ibid: 2).

If race is indeed meaningful in analysing the political, economic, and societal structures that make up the Western world, how should one define it? I begin this complex pursuit by defining race as parsimoniously as possible, in following Winant (2004: x) in his basic definition of race as a 'concept that signifies and symbolises sociopolitical conflicts and interests in reference to different types of human bodies'. Race is not a concrete, static, ahistorical phenomenon, it is a socially constructed and historically contingent concept that shapes and organises 'state and civil society... public and personal life, [and] historical and contemporary experience' (Ibid). In the words of Stuart Hall, race makes 'socially pertinent [and] historically active' the perceptual distinctions between groups with differing biological, phenotypical and geographical origins by putting such distinctions to work in certain political, economic, societal and ideological practices (2002, 58-59). These practices function to:

... ascribe the positioning of different social groups in relation to one another with respect to the elementary structures of society; they fix and ascribe those positionings in ongoing social practices; they legitimate the positions so ascribed.

Thus, despite the formal closure of the racial episodes of empire, apartheid, and the White Australia Policy, race remains a salient social fact that both shapes identities and life-chances, and stratifies national societies and global society with implications for how resources are distributed (Winant, 2006: 997). Counter to assumptions within postracialism and antiracialism that race has gained a form of irrelevancy and outdatedness, I contend in this project along with Hall, Winant and Goldberg that constructs of racial identity are very much present in the production and legitimisation of the diverse and unequal social, cultural, political and economic structures that characterise the Western world.

Speaking in general terms, these structures have undergone a marked historical shift since the late 1970s and early 1980s; a veritable reshaping of the global political economy often referred to across the intellectual commons as neoliberal globalisation, or variants using either term.⁵ Exactly what is entailed by neoliberalism has been the subject of much scholarly debate and discussion. In beginning to unfurl the broad political economic characteristics of neoliberalism, it is useful to consider David Harvey's brief definition (2005: 2):

Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterised by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices.

It would be a mistake to reduce neoliberalism and its discourses to a series of economic policy prescriptions alone - this much is also acknowledged by Harvey, who claims that neoliberalism has managed to achieve a sort of hegemonic power in its pervasion of the very ways of thought that we use to understand and interpret the world around us (Ibid: 3). In this way, neoliberalism has become a 'hegemonic signifier' for 'best-practice' and common-sense government policies and programs: examples of

which include the decentralisation and devolution of the machineries of governance, deregulation and privatisation of industry and public services, and supplanting of welfare with 'workfarist' social policies (Leitner et al, 2007: 1).

Neoliberalism is far from simply a toolkit of value-neutral economic policies and programs. As I will argue in the remainder of this paper, the onset of neoliberalism has been accompanied by the large-scale deployment of a range of normative assumptions about the world that have implications for the way we understand race in the contemporary moment. However, at the time of writing, meaningful attempts to analyse the role of these racialised assumptions in producing and legitimising inequality within an increasingly neoliberalised global political economy were difficult, nigh impossible to find - particularly within the intellectual discipline that charges itself to explicate and analyse the rise and development of modern capitalism, and of neoliberalism - the discipline of international political economy (IPE). Indeed, at present, it is apparent that critiques of neoliberalism are also cloaked in the veil of postracialism described above, with rare exceptions.⁶

This, of course, does not mean that all scholars within the humanities and social sciences have been silent on the racial dimensions of inequality and deprivation occasioned and sustained in the onset of neoliberalism. A particularly prominent and recent contribution linking race and neoliberalism is Goldberg's 'The Threat of Race' (2009), quoted previously, in which he uses the phrase 'racial neoliberalism' to describe how neoliberal political economic ideology is implicated in the invisibilisation of the racial dimensions of oppression, exploitation and marginalisation in the contemporary world. Specifically, he argues that neoliberalism has 'privatis[ed] race, removing conception and categorisation in racial terms from the public to the private realm' (2009: 337). Though some may argue that the state apparatus in most Western countries has largely purged explicit allusions to race from its domain, Goldberg argues that the state has been 'restructured to support the privatising of race and the protection of racially driven exclusions in the private sphere where they are set off-

limits to state intervention' (Ibid). A conceptual reorientation is thus required if we are to understand and account for the racialised aspects of inequality in a neoliberal world.

In light of this, using Goldberg as a sort of theoretical cue, this thesis sets out to provide an inductive cartography of how neoliberal restructuring has made use of constructs of racial identity in order to produce and legitimise the inequality evident within contemporary Australian society. The reasons for this focus on Australia are twofold. First, while there undoubtedly exist an array of transnational 'commonalities' that characterise neoliberal transformation across local, national, and global societies, these all bear the unique imprints of local and national historical, institutional and cultural contexts (Peck & Tickell, 2007: 29). Second, the focus on Australia is also a function of my own location and experience. As a result, a spatial and temporal focus on race, neoliberalism and inequality in contemporary Australian society is maintained. This does not negate the need to contextualise local and national expressions of neoliberalism within the broader global political economy. Indeed, in the process of exploring and examining structures of inequality and how they are related to constructions of racial identity in an increasingly neoliberalised Australia, transnational processes and forces influencing the political economy of racial inequality will inevitably receive attention. As asserted by Winant, local and national racial politics 'must constantly be examined from a comparative viewpoint as cases of a global pattern' (Winant, 2004: x-xi).

In beginning from the national context of Australia, then, this paper seeks to shed light on the interplay between broader processes of racial identity formation and structures of inequality in a neoliberal world. The first chapter is primarily concerned with providing a theoretical framework and historical context for the remainder of the paper; in attempting to affix a provisional conceptual identity to neoliberalism, I discuss who exercises power, how power is exercised, and through what means in the context of neoliberal transformation, and proceed to construct a brief introductory narrative of the implementation of neoliberalism in Australia. The second chapter will

follow on from the first by giving particular attention to the neoliberal transformation of the welfare state in Australia, and how constructs of white individual rationality and nonwhite individual pathology have functioned to produce and legitimise racial inequality in the Australian settler state. Lastly, the third chapter will focus on neoliberal immigration in Australia, focusing on the exclusion and marginalisation of people groups who are racially conceived and categorised as 'threatening' to the ambitions of neoliberal power.

1. Defining the 'problem space': neoliberalism and its implementation in Australia.

1.1. Introduction

Neoliberalism is undoubtedly a nebulous and elusive term to comprehensively define. Its explanatory and analytical relevance has often been contested on the grounds that affixing a singular descriptive term to what is essentially a range of political, economic, social and cultural transformations results in a tendency to reductionism and an inability to account for complexity. Indeed, scholars have long watched as neoliberalism has found unique implementation and expression in each temporal and spatial locale, giving rise to descriptions of neoliberalism as engaged in a 'refractory mix of continuity and breach, intensification and transformation' (Comaroff, 2009: 23). Notwithstanding this refractory mix, the durability of the common features that make up neoliberalism in the aftermath of the worldwide upheaval instigated by the onset in 2008 of the Global Financial Crisis bear out the importance of giving neoliberalism a 'provisional conceptual identity, provided this is understood as a first approximation' (Hall, 2011: 706). Jamie Peck extrapolates on how this assertion might sit within an explanatory framework:

Citing the process of neoliberalisation must not be a substitute for explanation; it should be an *occasion* for explanation, involving the specification of particular causal mechanisms, modes of intervention, hybrid formations, social forms and foibles, counter-mobilisations... It might be

said that the concept does define a problem space and a zone of (possible) pertinence, and as such represents the beginning of a process of analysis. (2013: 152-153, emphasis in original)

If, following Peck, the process of neoliberalisation is then conceived as the *occasion* for explaining how the deployment of racial identities produces and legitimises inequality, it would thus seem critically important first to contextualise the key arguments in this paper regarding this nexus within the growing ascendancy of neoliberalism since the late 1970s and early 1980s, along with its implementation and expression in Australia. Recognising that a comprehensive chronological overview of its global evolution is beyond the remit of this paper,⁷ this chapter will attempt to utilise existing critiques of neoliberalism in outlining the key characteristics of the transformation it has exacted upon the Australian political economy. Given the focus, in this thesis, on the intersections between race and inequality in an increasingly-neoliberalised Australia, this cartography of neoliberalism will invariably be incomplete in its selection of features undeniably global in their relevance and reach, but specific to the analytical context of Australian racial politics. Still, as highlighted in the introduction to this paper, despite the specificity of local and national imprints on neoliberal transformations, such imprints do not negate the potential for such transformations to be of use in analysing the broader context of the global political economy.

With this caveat in mind, the aim of this first chapter is, in the words of Peck in the above quote, to 'define a problem space' and a 'zone of possible pertinence' (2013: 152-153). By firstly locating how power is exercised within neoliberalism and by whom, and secondly mapping some of the key structural transformations occasioned in the implementation of neoliberalism in Australia, I aim to provide a solid contextual foundation upon which I can unravel how these transformations in turn mobilise constructions of racial identity in producing and sustaining racial inequality. First, however, I turn to the question of how power is exercised in neoliberal transformation in Australia, and where or in whom this power can be located. I consider this question

critical in adequately conceptualising the sources of discursive and material power operating within neoliberalism that mobilise constructs of racial identity in producing and legitimising inequality.

1.2. Who are the 'neoliberals'?

Perhaps the most immediately discernible and disconcerting aspect of the spread of neoliberalism both in Australia and across the globe (at least for those who resist it) is its claim to a sort of common-sense universality. As previously quoted in the introduction to this thesis, Harvey's opening remarks in *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (2005: 3) highlight the pervasiveness with which neoliberalism has shaped the 'common-sense way many of us interpret, live in, and understand the world', identifying an 'emphatic turn' toward neoliberal policies and programs that insist on 'deregulation, privatisation, and withdrawal of the state from many areas of social provision'. As evidence, Harvey cites a variety of states with their own wildly different historical backgrounds and cultural circumstances who have, to varying degrees, adopted neoliberal prescriptions: post-Soviet states, social-democratic welfare states like Sweden and New Zealand, and post-apartheid South Africa. Even more striking is the pervasiveness with which neoliberalism has filtered through civil society; a quick glance across Western universities, think-tanks, treasuries and central banks, international institutions would seem to reveal a sort of transnational capitalist class, overwhelmingly populated with 'advocates of the neoliberal way' (Ibid).

It is in the concept of a 'transnational capitalist class' that we can begin to unravel the threads of hegemonic power through which neoliberalism has been able to gain the sort of widespread embrace that has endured, to varying degrees and in diverse manifestations, across multiple continents and through several decades. This concept is developed in detail by Leslie Sklair (2002), who argues that the simultaneously 'haphazard and opportunistic' and 'well-organised and systemic' political actions of

transnational corporations (TNCs) can be captured theoretically in terms of a transnational capitalist class, made up of four interrelated fractions (2002: 160):

- Corporate executives and their local affiliates (the corporate fraction);
- globalising bureaucrats and politicians (the state fraction);
- globalising professionals (the technical fraction);
- merchants and media (the consumerist fraction).

Sklair argues that each fraction is composed of individuals who, though performing distinct functions within each fraction, are interchangeable and can be associated with more than one fraction at a time, and that movement between each fraction is 'more or less routinised in many societies' (2002: 160). Aiming to preserve the material interests of the corporations they own and/or control, the activities of fractions within the transnational capitalist class revolve primarily around convincing the classes below them that the 'globalising agenda of contemporary capitalism driven by TNCs and their allies is inevitable and, eventually, in the best interests of us all' (Ibid: 171). The means to fulfilling the 'best interests' of the wider populace is held to be through the global proliferation of 'free' market and 'free' trade policies designed to enforce 'international competitiveness' - the institutions and processes implemented as a result ultimately controlled by TNCs themselves or by their proxies in the state fraction (Ibid). Communication and cooperation between the four fractions occurs both formally and informally, including through

interlocking directorates, cross-memberships of groups in different spheres (business, government, politics, professions, media, etc.) and leadership roles of business notables in non-business activities, charities, universities, medical, arts and sports foundations and the like (Sklair, 1996: 15).

The make up of the Australian iteration of the transnational capitalist class can be outlined in some detail using the works of Sklair (1996) and Michael Pusey (1991; 2010). The corporate fraction is made up of the executives of transnational corporations with

interests in Australia, politically organised in international peak business groups such as the World Economic Forum and the International Chamber of Commerce, and local peak groups such as the Business Council of Australia and the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Ibid: 9-10; Pusey, 2010: 127). The state fraction can be described using the work of Pusey (1991: 74), who argues that the 1980s saw the ascendancy of a 'conspicuously large proportion of [public servants that] have training in economics and commerce' that in turn informs a disposition towards 'vehement economic rationalism'. These 'globalising bureaucrats' can be found in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, the Department of Industry and Innovation, and the Department of Treasury, along with advisory bodies like the Industry Commission of the 1990s (Sklair, 1996: 10).⁸ The technical fraction includes politicians and professionals who have been persuaded that the agenda of unfettered competition and free trade fulfils Australia's best interests. These 'globalising professionals' are politically organised in professional associations and research centres, but are most influential in think-tanks like the Institute of Public Affairs and the Centre for Independent Studies (Ibid: 12; Pusey, 2010: 127). Lastly, the consumerist fraction provides and disseminates the 'culture-ideology of consumerism' in their ownership of mass media and retail conglomerates: moguls like Rupert Murdoch and Frank Lowy act to maintain popular consent for the global neoliberal project by 'broadcast[ing] and narrowcast[ing] the culture-ideology of consumerism as the normal environment of everyday life' (Sklair, 1996: 13-14).

Overall, the significance of Sklair's concept of the transnational capitalist class in the context of neoliberal transformation and racial inequality in Australia is twofold. First, it lends theoretical weight to Harvey's claim that neoliberalism can be interpreted as a mechanism for reasserting the power of the dominant class. To Harvey, neoliberalism can be conceived

either as a utopian project to realise a theoretical design for the reorganisation of international capital or as political project to re-establish the conditions for capital accumulation and to restore

the power of economic elites... the second of these objectives has in practice dominated (2005: 19, emphasis in original).

Harvey goes on to chart in detail how the stagflation, rising unemployment, and growing social discontent of the 1970s threatened the stability of a compromise between capital and labour that had facilitated capitalist accumulation during the post-war period. For him, this period saw economic elites and ruling classes in developed and developing countries acting to reassert class power in the context of plunging shares of national income held by the top 1 per cent of income earners (2005: 15). In the decades after the initial implementation of neoliberal policies in the late 1970s, these figures were reversed: in the United States, for example, the top 1 per cent held a 15 per cent share of national income, a level close to that of the pre-World War II years (Ibid). This trend was emulated across much of the globe, including in Britain, China, Russia, and Mexico (Ibid: 17). When taken together, the arguments of Harvey and Sklair amplify and lend theoretical clarity to one of the key points underlying this paper - that in Australia, neoliberalism cannot simply be conceived as a set of value-neutral economic policies and programs, but as part of a global political project which seeks to reshape the global political economy in a way that secures the conditions necessary for capital accumulation and elite power.

Second, an important conceptual distinction in the context of this paper enabled by Sklair's concept of the transnational capitalist class is that of identifying the potential for fractions within the class to include elites in developing countries, as well as racial minorities within advanced capitalist countries like Australia. This distinction allows the arguments advanced in this paper to avoid a totalising, over-generalised critique of the ways in which neoliberalism utilises constructs of racial identity in producing inequality, whilst simultaneously addressing the predictable retort that neoliberalism is colour-blind in its ability to facilitate relations of exchange between investors in the United States and, say, oil company executives in the Niger Delta. Indeed, as Arif Dirlik argues, capitalism has 'reinvented itself' in the form of a global

neoliberalism that includes the formerly colonised as 'participants in its global operations', such that it is now possible to find representatives from the former Third, Second, and First Worlds in the global ruling class (2002: 439). However, this forms part of a 'reconfiguration of global relations, so that, even where colonialism persists, it appears differently than it did before as is refracted through these new relationships' (Ibid: 445). In other words, racialised exclusion in neoliberalism appears in the criteria of membership in the global ruling class, which mandates the adoption of the beliefs, values and prescriptions of the neoliberal program by the formerly colonised.

When considering the specific emphasis on the role of neoliberalism in producing racial inequality in the context of contemporary Australia, then, this paper does not deny that advocates of neoliberalism can include individuals and groups from racial minorities.⁹ However, I argue in this paper that such examples do not negate the overwhelmingly racialised nature of inequality in Australia; that in co-opting token examples of individuals from racial minorities who claim to represent the oppressed, such individuals function within neoliberal discourse as convenient avatars for the invisibilisation of the relevance of race in analysing inequality in Australia and the global political economy more generally. In the words of Macedo and Gounari, such individuals are 'populists who are often eager to protect their new middle-class status, as they are beholden to the very system that sustains that status' (2006: 15).

1.3. How is power exercised within neoliberalism?

Having discussed the question of who exercises power within neoliberal transformation in Australia, I now turn to the question of how we can conceptualise the nature of power in neoliberalism, and how this power is exercised. In doing so, I consider the concepts of discourse and hegemony, advanced most notably by Michel Foucault and Antonio Gramsci respectively, as being central to my consideration of the

ways in which neoliberalism produces and legitimises racial inequality in the contemporary Australian political economy. There are important differences between the two in terms of where the source of power can be located - Gramsci locates power in the context of class struggle, while Foucault conceives power as operating at a 'local, tactical level' in avoiding the identification of power as belonging to any given subject or subject-group (Hall, 2003: 261). Nevertheless, there are similarities between the two. Hall identifies how each deploy notions of power as involving 'knowledge, representation, ideas, cultural leadership and authority, as well as economic constraint and physical coercion' (Ibid). Moreover, power cannot be simply conceived in terms of force and coercion, but also in the way it 'seduces, solicits, induces, wins consent' (Ibid). Accordingly, I consider that both concepts are critical in understanding how power is exercised within neoliberalism. The following paragraphs develop each concept in more detail, before outlining how the two will be applied together in this thesis.

Hegemony, of course, is not a new concept within the discipline of International Political Economy.¹⁰ This concept, in the context of this paper, is considered to be a crucial part of a critical approach to the study of international political economy, in so far as it directs the attention of the scholar towards the question of 'how existing social or world orders have come into being' and 'what class forces may have the emancipatory potential to change or transform a prevailing order' (Morton, 2007: 111). In outlining how hegemony can be conceptualised, Gramsci divided the superstructure into two major 'levels': 'civil society', (the ensemble of organisms commonly referred to as 'private'), and 'political society' (or 'the state') (Gramsci, 2000: 306). These two levels work together to exercise both 'hegemony' and 'direct domination', defined respectively:

1. The 'spontaneous' consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group; this consent is 'historically' caused by the prestige (and consequent confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production.

2. The apparatus of state coercive power which 'legally' enforces discipline on those groups who do not 'consent' either actively or passively. This apparatus is, however, constituted for the whole of society in anticipation of moments of crisis of command and direction when spontaneous consent has failed. (Ibid: 306-307)

Defined in these terms, Gramsci's concept of hegemony provides a useful way of understanding the nature of power as we see it exercised in the spread and implementation of neoliberalism. Substituting the fractions of Sklair's transnational capitalist class for 'civil society' and 'political society', power is now defined in terms of the ability of the dominant class to maintain consent for the way in which it shapes and produces political, economic, social and cultural existence by articulating and justifying 'a particular set of interests as general interests' (Morton, 2007: 113). In emphasising the dispersion of power in Gramsci's formulation of hegemony, it is important to note that this shaping of existence occurs not only through the various 'administrative, executive and coercive' apparatuses of the state (or in this case, the state fraction), but through 'all the institutions which [help] to create in people certain modes of behaviour and expectations consistent with the hegemonic social order' (Cox, 1983: 164). In this way, hegemony 'filters through structures of society, economy, culture, gender, ethnicity, class, and ideology' (Morton, 2007: 114). The coercive power of direct domination is reserved for those who do not consent, or in instances where the artifice of neoliberal hegemony meets a crisis of authority.

After deconstructing the nature of power as made up the above modes of hegemonic power and coercive power, I arrive at a second question: through what means are power relations of hegemony and coercion exercised within neoliberal transformation in Australia? Foucault's concept of discourse, I argue, presents as one useful way of understanding the means through which hegemonic (and, to a certain extent, coercive) power is exercised in the implementation of neoliberalism by the transnational capitalist class. A term that can elide parsimonious definition somewhat, the idea of discourse was developed in detail by Foucault in order to analyse a given

statement 'in the exact specificity of its occurrence; determine its conditions of existence, fix at least its limits, establish its correlations with other statements that may be connected with it, and show what other forms of statement it excludes' (1972: 28). In other words, the concept of discourse denotes an acknowledgement that the practice of speaking and writing - in short, the use of language - is far from a neutral practice. Instead, as Fairclough (2010: 129) argues, the practice of speaking and writing is imbricated in the 'exercise, reproduction and negotiation of power relations, and in ideological processes and ideological struggle'.

Taken together, the concepts of hegemony and discourse thus provide a critical way through which the nexus between constructs of racial identity and relations of inequality can be articulated within the contemporary Australian neoliberal context. In formulating what power is, who exercises it and through what means, I argue in this thesis that the hegemony of the transnational capitalist class in implementing the neoliberal project in Australia is 'in part a matter of its capacity to shape discursive practices and orders of discourse', as the proliferation and naturalisation of certain discourses forms a mechanism through which hegemony can be sustained and reproduced (Fairclough, 2010: 129-130). In this formulation of power, I am careful to avoid a separation of the dominance of certain ideas or discourses from changes in the material structural conditions of production, or what Bieler and Morton term a 'rendering of capitalist exploitation and domination into a shapeless and contingent world of fetishised self/other differences' (2008: 114, see also Gill, 1995: 403). Instead, I follow Hall (2002) and Bieler and Morton (2008) in articulating the shaping of social identities through hegemonic discursive power as intimately bound-up in the *material* changes in the social relations of production occasioned in the implementation of neoliberalism. In short, 'antagonistic identities' are conceived as 'embedded in the very processes of economic exploitation' (Ibid: 124), and I analyse race in terms of its discursive operationalisation under specific conditions which 'make this form of distinction socially pertinent [and] historically active... as a concrete material force' (Hall, 2002: 58).

1.4. How has neoliberalism been implemented in Australia?

Before applying the conceptualisation of hegemonic discursive power advanced above by outlining how constructions of racial identity have been put to work in the implementation of neoliberalism in Australia, I turn to a historical overview of the ongoing reconstruction of the Australia as a neoliberal state from the late-1970s to the present. This narrative will be, given the constraints of this thesis, necessarily a brief and incomplete one. Indeed, such a narrative deserves the attention of a much larger project, and as will be apparent in the coming paragraphs, has attracted the attention of several scholars in Australia across political economy, sociology and other disciplines. Notwithstanding, here I begin the process of mapping the key structural transformations enacted in the implementation of neoliberalism in Australia, before turning to an in-depth discussion in following chapters of how these transformations have produced and sustained racialised inequality.

In keeping with broader trends of neoliberal reinvention in the United Kingdom and the United States, the beginnings of similar transformations in Australia can also be traced back to the mid-to-late 1970s. Prior to the onset of this period of neoliberal transformation in Australia, successive Federal governments had generally maintained an approach to economic policy that favoured limited public ownership of essential services, infrastructure, and assets with comparatively high levels of government economic regulation of economic activity (Western et al, 2007: 402). A sort of orthodoxy prevailed in which a set of 'interlocking' public policy and labour market institutions functioned as 'centralised legislative mechanisms' which mandated minimum pay and working conditions across a range of occupations 'according to 'reasonable' expectations about living standards rather than profitability or employers' capacities to pay' (Ibid).

These policies were part of what Ed Kaptein called a 'class compromise' between capitalists in the domestic manufacturing industry and the industrial working class (1993: 82). This compromise took the form of a 'trade-off' between the two economic groups in which the former agreed to 'maintain a high standard of living for industrial workers', while the latter 'supported tariff protection for 'infant' manufacturing industry', a mutual understanding embodied in the adoption of a minimum wage and the establishment of the aforementioned system of compulsory conciliation and arbitration (Ibid). Crucially, the viability of this compromise rested on the ability of the leading resource export sector to increase in growth and productivity, in turn encouraging the increase or high-level stabilisation of real wages. Any downturn in the fortunes of the sector would lead to inflationary pressure, a problem that would eventually rear its head as Australia's resource exports slowed during the 1970s (Ibid: 82-83).

This slowing of resource exports, while certainly not alone amongst a myriad of internal and external factors (e.g. the two oil shocks of the 1970s, a decline of the manufacturing sector as a result of increased foreign competition), formed part of a gradual undermining of the class compromise during the Fraser government of 1975 to 1983. During this time, a clear break was made with previously-ascendant social goals like 'full employment' in favour of curbing rising inflation through budgetary restraint and a reduction of real wages by curbing indexation (Kaptein, 1993: 89). Furthermore, the growth of several industrialising countries in the Asia-Pacific region caused Australia to become increasingly dependent on these countries for growth in resource exports. This dependency that saw greater pressure exerted on the government by the same countries to allow improved access to Australian markets by abolishing the high protective tariffs that propped up Australia's embattled domestic manufacturing industry (Ibid: 90).

Significantly, this period saw growing pressure from large foreign corporations

including Shell and Rio Tinto Zinc, along with then-Australian firms including BHP, to liberalise the Australian economy. Kaptein cites two studies sponsored by said companies which aimed to exert pressure on the Fraser government to abandon the tariffs that protected the manufacturing industry, along with the institutionalised system of wage-fixing and the fixed exchange rate (Kasper et al, 1980; Kahn and Pepper, 1980; cited in Kaptein, 1993: 91). Though Fraser held out for a new boom in energy resource and energy-intensive exports after the Iranian revolution sent oil prices skyrocketing in 1979, the short-lived optimism that bought him electoral victory in 1980 masked the underlying structural problems of runaway inflation and deindustrialisation that eventually proved to be his downfall (Ibid: 92-93).

Re-elected after eight years in opposition, the ascension to power of the Hawke Labor government could perhaps be conceived as the waypoint at which international and domestic economic and political pressure conspired to begin the ongoing process of neoliberal transformation in Australia. Worsening terms of trade, high unemployment and high inflation, combined with other factors like the global shift in economic power and concomitant pressure from transnational and national corporations described above, led to the wholesale adoption of an 'imported solution': in the words of Pusey, one which encouraged the government to 'clear away the institutional obstacles and open the field for turbo-capitalism and corporations on steroids' (2010: 126).

Under pressure from the prescriptions and demands of the corporate and technical fractions of the transnational capitalist class, the Hawke Labor government began a wave of unprecedented neoliberal reform, largely eschewing the long-standing orthodoxy of limited state intervention and control. The first, most obvious plank of this neoliberal agenda was the deregulation of the financial sector and the accompanying loosening of controls over flows of international capital. This was begun in the first instance through the floating of the Australian dollar by abolishing foreign exchange controls previously exercised by the Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA), allowing Australian residents, businesses and banks to borrow or invest their funds

internationally without the requirement of prior RBA approval (Dyster & Meredith, 2012: 267). Soon to follow were an array of reforms aimed at liberalising government regulation and restriction of foreign investment. In September 1984, restrictions were relaxed on the foreign ownership of merchant banks. In February 1985, 16 foreign banks were allowed to compete in the Australian banking industry.¹¹ In October 1985, the level of investment at which the Foreign Investment Review Board was required to give permission was increased, and in July 1986 the requirement that potential foreign investors should demonstrate that Australia would gain a net economic benefit from their investment was replaced with the 'national interest' test (Ibid).¹²

This loosening of control over the financial sector and flows of international capital was accompanied by a second plank of the neoliberal agenda: the reduction of import tariffs and quotas, along with other measures protecting Australian industry from overseas competition,¹³ in order to reduce impediments to international trade. As Elizabeth Thurbon puts it, the 1980s was the decade in which Australia 'decided to abandon its highly protectionist past and embrace both trade and financial openness in a quest for improved economic competitiveness and industrial transformation' (2012: 274). However, this emphasis on a neoliberal 'structurally agnostic' view of industrial and commercial activity did not signal a complete, permanent break with more 'developmental' industry policies, which favoured the active governmental promotion and support of industries and sectors deemed 'more central to economic security and well-being' than others (Ibid: 280). Indeed, although tariffs were cut by 25 percent across the board in 1973 due to rising inflation and a balance of payments surplus, and again in 1988 (Dyster & Meredith, 2012: 269),¹⁴ debate over to what extent the taxpayer should subsidise industries like motor vehicle manufacturing, aluminium smelting, and food processing continues to this day (Ibid: 364). Notwithstanding, the overall neoliberalisation of industry policy is evidenced clearly in a comprehensive reduction of effective rates of assistance across the board - from 36 percent in 1968-69, to 22 percent in 1984-85, to 6 percent in 1996-97, and finally to 4 percent in 2009-10 (Ibid: 382).

With taxpayer-funded support for industry being whittled away in the onset of neoliberal transformation, the weakening of the long-standing class compromise mentioned previously was expedited through a series of marked changes in industrial relations policy. In this arena, neoliberalism has primarily favoured the dismantling of systems of conciliation and arbitration in favour of individual agreements, or agreements that are negotiated on a collective basis at the level of enterprise bargaining (Western et al, 2007: 403). This process commenced, again with the Hawke Labor government, in its attempts to control rising inflation by moderating wages. Having developed an Accord with the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) prior to its election in 1983 which would mandate the negotiation of collective agreements between unions and employers at enterprise level, pressure from employer groups saw a rewriting of the Accord without real wage maintenance (Kaptein, 1993: 100). Further, the Hawke government proposed in March 1987 a reinterpretation of the Accord that would include a 'redefinition of the conditions of labour in individual industries or plants' which would fall under the remit of the Industrial Relations Commission (previously the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission), as well as a two-tiered approach to wage rises that would grant partially-indexed increases initially, along with a second increase depending on the productivity of the individual sector (Ibid: 100-101).

The above change in industrial relations policy during the Hawke government marked a significant departure from the class compromise that had long governed relations between capital and labour. The Accord, in its final manifestation, represented a dual concession to neoliberal prescriptions of the 'flexibilisation' of labour markets: firstly, in the decentralisation of the way conditions of labour were negotiated, which stripped away significant levels of collective bargaining power, and secondly in the redistribution of national income in favour of profits occasioned primarily through the compression of wage rises below inflation (Kaptein, 1993: 100-101). An attempt at a further neoliberal transformation of industrial policy came about in 2005, as the Howard Liberal government used its control of both Houses of Parliament to force

through a package of amendments to the *Workplace Relations Act 1996* - amendments which came to be referred to in short-hand as the (now-pejorative) term *WorkChoices* - that deregulated individual and collective negotiations between workers and employers, proscribed trade union involvement unless permitted by the employer, amongst other reforms (Western et al, 2007: 403). Reactions against the reforms were so severe that *WorkChoices* was seen to have contributed in large part to the downfall of the Howard government at the 2007 election, and was eventually replaced with the *Fair Work Act* in 2009 by the newly-elected Rudd Labor government (Wilson et al, 2013: 629).

1.5. Conclusion

The broad macro-structural transformations canvassed above, of course, do not exhaust the entirety of the neoliberal program. As stated in the opening paragraphs of this chapter, the preceding paragraphs serve to affix a provisional conceptual identity to neoliberalism, and I note the above structural transformations as a means to articulating only a first approximation of neoliberal transformation in Australia. From the above, then, we can begin to sketch this provisional conceptual identity by discerning from the above discussion three key initial features of neoliberal transformation in Australia: a concerted project of **deregulation** on an unprecedented scale, a rollback or **denationalisation** of active state intervention and direction in relations of trade, and a flexibilisation and **individualisation** of the social relations between capital and labour. The following two chapters outline how these macro-structural transformations have in turn precipitated institutional changes to the Australian political economy in the spheres of welfare policy and immigration policy, and how neoliberal discourses within each mobilise constructs of racial identity in producing and then sustaining racial inequality.

2. The cult of (white) individual rationality and the neoliberal transformation of the welfare state.

2.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, I considered broader issues of power within neoliberalism, along with the macro-economic transformations occasioned within the Australian economy in the process of the implementation of neoliberalism. In this chapter and the one following, I will attempt to weave together a two-part argument in which it will become apparent to the reader that those transformations, while masquerading as purely 'economic' and value-neutral, have in fact deployed discourses that have served to fundamentally reorganise and restructure sociopolitical relations, particularly by mobilising constructions of racial identity that produced and then sustained racial inequality.

In addressing the question of how racial identity has been mobilised within neoliberal discourse/s to produce and sustain inequality within Australian society, this chapter focuses on the rollback of the redistributive and welfare functionalities of the state that has occurred in the last three decades beginning in the 1980s. I argue that the winding-back of tariff protection and the individualisation and deunionisation of labour

in the interests of capital has, in the first instance, whittled away protections traditionally afforded to workers in efforts to protect an industrialising Australian economy (McDonald & Chenoweth, 2006: 111). As outlined in the previous chapter, beginning during the late 1970s and early 1980s, centralised wage arbitration was gradually replaced with individual and workplace contracts in an effort to address runaway inflation. This macro-economic shift in relations between labour and capital, Ben Spies-Butcher argues, instituted a trend of growing inequality in incomes, along with a change in the nature of social risk as the labour market became much less secure (2014: 187).

These marked changes in relations of power between labour and capital to favour the latter were accompanied by the beginnings of a wholesale shift in the methods through which the state attempted to advance social equity against the excesses of capital accumulation. The new paradigm of inequality and insecurity of the employed vis-a-vis the employer relative to what had previously been afforded them during the days of the Accord engendered a precarity¹⁵ that would be amplified by the rollback and emaciation of the welfare state. This formed part of what Harvey has referred to as a series of 'relentless attacks upon forms of social solidarity incompatible with a system based on personal responsibility and individual initiative' (Harvey, 2005: 56-57). Not only was centralised wage fixing dismantled, the economy exposed by the lifting of tariffs, and unemployment rates sent rapidly growing by the prioritisation of inflation reduction over full employment. Welfare policy was steadily eviscerated of any pretence of concern for collective social equity in the face of a neoliberal obsession with the cult of individual responsibility and initiative (McDonald & Chenoweth, 2006: 113-114).

Before turning to a detailed explanation of how this cult of individual responsibility and initiative deploys constructions of racial identity within neoliberal discourse, the following paragraphs will outline in more detail the changes to the redistributive and welfare functionalities of the Australian state occasioned in the process of neoliberal transformation since the 1980s. In the simplest of terms, I argue

that the Australian welfare state has endured a number of significant transformations during the onset of neoliberalism that has shifted its very character and *raison d'être* from that of an instrument of social and economic protection, to a tool of discipline and surveillance. In doing so, the following paragraphs relay an account of this shift from the days of the Hawke government to the present moment.

2.2. Mapping the transformation of the 'welfare state'

The first key aspect of the Australian welfare state was its operation alongside the labour market system of compulsory conciliation and arbitration, and centralised wage fixing mentioned in the previous chapter. As Castles (2001) argues, welfare provisioning was initially designed to redistribute wealth through needs-based and means-tested benefits for those who, perhaps due to age, disability, or unemployment, fell outside the protection of the regulated relationship between waged labour and their employers. It was due to this emphasis on the primacy of 'arbitration-delivered welfare' that the Australian system became known as the 'wage earners' welfare state' - denoting a distinctive emphasis on achieving a semblance of wage dispersion and relative equality through regulation and arbitration of the relationship between workers and their employers (Ibid: 6-7).

At the same time, the nature of welfare provisioning in the Australian system for those who fell outside the protection of wage regulation and arbitration was distinct from others in the Western world, particularly in its use of income and asset tests in determining whether potential recipients were eligible for welfare support. Crucially, these benefits were not directed only at the poorest, but were instead 'designed to exclude only the well-off middle classes and the prosperous' - to prove their eligibility, potential recipients had to demonstrate that they were part of a particular category (e.g. elderly, disabled, a single mother), and produce documentary evidence that their

income and/or assets were below stipulated levels (Castles, 2001: 9-10). This could be seen as an expression of the idea that welfare was a right bestowed upon all citizens, rather than act of state charity. Indeed, there was little trace of administrative discretion in the determination of eligibility for payments, and the lack of a targeted focus on the poorest in society negated, at least in part, the potential for degradation or 'deserving/undeserving' dichotomies in the interpellation of welfare recipients within Australian society (Ibid).

The notion of welfare as an instrument predicated on the right of citizens to a modicum of social justice was to change dramatically from the time of the Hawke government onwards. The welfare state, which had acted as a sort of counterpoint to the distributional effects of a market economy after its postwar expansion, now faced a wholesale remaking as the social compact between labour and capital began to show signs of erosion. The whittling-away of labour power described previously was not total. In fact, the recession of the early 1990s saw what seemed to be a sort of recommitment to full employment expressed in the form of job subsidies (Wilson et al, 2013: 627-8). Notwithstanding this apparent anomaly in the neoliberal trend, renewed active labour market policies signalled a key marker in the neoliberal transformation of the welfare state: the shift from 'welfare' to 'workfare' policies.

This shift from 'welfare' to 'workfare' policies, implemented in tandem with the neoliberal transformation of industrial relations policy, foundationally transformed the very way in which welfare and its recipients were conceived. Along with the structural individualisation of relations between labour and capital, the social security apparatus of the wage-earner's welfare state encountered a process of modification which was 'designed to stimulate job search' (Wilson et al, 2013: 630). Critically, this shift was the embodiment of a normative move from a structuralist approach to social disadvantage towards a more individualistic interpretation; the former believing that income security should be guaranteed as a social **right** outside of the machinations of the labour market, the latter holding that welfare should serve as a tool of motivation and

discipline in pressuring recipients into choosing employment over welfare (Mendes, 2013: 496). In short, the shift towards workfare represented a decisive break from welfare as a social 'right', towards a reconceptualisation of welfare as a tool of 'discipline'.

Such a wholesale structural change in the Australian welfare system was by no means totally immediate. Instead, the shift began to take shape in the 1980s, and over two decades 'workfare' was solidified so that by the end of the millennium it became hegemonic. From the election of the first Hawke Labor government in 1983, successive governments increasingly promoted benefit conditionality and notions of 'reciprocal obligation' (which found expression most prominently in Keating's 1994 *Working Nation* package). The 1986-88 Cass Social Security Review served as the initial impetus behind an array of welfare reforms that introduced contractual agreements mandating labour market participation as a condition of receiving welfare payments (Mendes, 2013: 497). The Howard Coalition government, which was in power from 1996 to 2007, continued this trend - arguing vociferously in 1998 for the adoption of a 'mutual obligation' approach. This approach was based on the idea that those in situations of long-term unemployment had an duty to 'contribute' in some form to Australian society (Wilson et al, 2013: 630). This was more than just heady rhetoric, and became the basis of welfare policy prescriptions. In a series of policy changes, the Howard government mandated that the long-term unemployed would enjoy welfare payments under the condition that they fulfilled their concomitant obligation to society - this could be accomplished through participation in work-for-the-dole schemes, volunteering, part-time employment, or studies/training (Stanford & Taylor, 2013: 630).

Shifts to workfare embodied in the 'mutual obligation' approach were not restricted to welfare payments to the long-term unemployed. The Howard government affixed similar conditional policies of obligation and supervision to non-working recipients of welfare on Disability Support Pensions, New Parenting Payments, and the Newstart Allowance in the 2005 *Welfare to Work Bill* (Wilson et al, 2013: 631). Not

content with the prevailing regime of obligation and supervision, the Howard government introduced significant disciplinary measures that would be enforced on non-compliant welfare recipients that failed to, for example, take part in the Work for the Dole scheme or seek up to ten jobs per fortnight (Ibid; Mendes, 2013: 497). These disciplinary measures were exercised to alarming effect in the Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER, referred to henceforth as the 'Intervention') beginning June 2007, in which the implementation of compulsory income management across 73 Indigenous communities saw the quarantining of 50 per cent of welfare payments for approved purchases, groceries and the like. Far from discontinuing this trend, the return of the Labor Party to government in 2007 saw the initial extension of compulsory income management across the entire Northern Territory (Ibid). The application of these policies almost exclusively to Indigenous communities signals a racial element underpinning welfare transformation, to which I shall return.

2.3. The neoliberal welfare state and the cult of individual rationality

The application of compulsory income management to Indigenous communities in the Intervention signals that the move from welfare as 'right' to workfare as 'discipline' has not only functioned to further the pursuit of increasing employment and participation in the workforce (Wilson et al., 2013; Mendes, 2013). More significantly, for analysts of welfare policy, these changes have led to the mobilisation of welfare as a mechanism of discipline and enforcement for individuals who are conceived as poor, unemployed or disadvantaged due to 'behavioural characteristics such as incompetence or immorality or laziness' (Mendes, 2013: 495). As the following discussion will illustrate, a key tenet of neoliberal political economic discourse with regards to welfare policy in Australia is that the logic of the 'solutions' devised and implemented to address the problems of unemployment and poverty through welfare policy hinges on an obsession with the cult of individual rationality.

The basis of this cult of individual rationality is unravelled by Philip Mendes (2013) in terms of three discrete, though interrelated theoretical frameworks: public choice theory, rational actor theory, and agency theory. First, public choice theory situates individuals in the context of the market as pursuing ‘their own self-interests, be it as consumers, employees, or employers’. Second, rational actor theory assumes that the competitive, ostensibly free-market environments recommended within neoliberal economics provides individuals with ‘multiple choices that will allow them to operate rationally... in order to achieve maximum rewards’ by means of pursuing their own self-interest. Third, agency theory builds upon the aforementioned assumptions of individual self-interest and rationality to propose that individuals, rather than government, can ‘best determine their own needs and aspirations and... have the agency to pursue the realisation of these goals’ (Ibid: 479-480). In other words, discourses of neoliberal welfare situate the individual as ‘a rational actor who has agency and is politicised towards self-improvement’ in conformity with the neoliberal ethos of ‘private enterprise, wealth and self-reliance’ (Hewitt, 1992; cited in Stanford & Taylor, 2013: 480).

In the three-pronged conceptualisation above, the cult of individual rationality forms not only a key aspect of the process of defining problems and devising solutions in welfare policy, but also, in more general terms, a core discursive building block of neoliberal transformation. The cult of individual rationality within neoliberalism ‘assumes that individuals alone can master the whole of their lives, that they derive and renew their capacity for action from within themselves’ (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002: xxi). Gone is the vocabulary in which one might begin to interrogate the influence of everyday experience in determining the wealth or poverty, wellbeing or disadvantage of any given human body. Instead, the cult of individual rationality abstracts the body from the shaping and structuring influences exacted upon it within local, national, and global systems and frameworks.

The pursuit of unpacking the myriad ways in which the discursive elements of the cult of individual rationality have been deployed within neoliberal transformation to reshape and restructure local, national, and global societies merits the attention of an entire project in its own right. Notwithstanding, for the purpose of exploring the ways in which this concept has been engaged within the neoliberal transformation of the Australian welfare state, it is important to emphasise that the implications of disentangling the individual from the structures in which it is irrevocably situated and shaped necessitates an approach to the social problems evident within Australian society that favours 'biographical solutions to systemic contradictions' (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002: xxii). In other words, the 'social crisis phenomena' that the welfare state was initially designed to ameliorate - for example, structural unemployment or single-parent families - are decisively 'shifted as a burden of risk onto the shoulders of individuals' (Ibid: 24). Illness, unemployment, addiction, homelessness, other 'deviations from the norm' that would have previously been classed as 'blows of fate' are now conceived strictly in terms of 'individual blame and responsibility' (Ibid).

The neoliberal structural transformation of the Australian welfare state, in shifting welfare from a rights-based instrument of social equity to a discipline-deploying apparatus used to pressure recipients into choosing employment over welfare, makes use of discourses of individual rationality in framing the problems which welfare is tasked with confronting, along with the concomitant solutions devised to address said problems. These discourses of individual rationality have been operationalised in the neoliberal welfare state primarily in the production of welfare recipients as the makers of their own disadvantaged and unequal circumstances, choosing to single out individual behavioural deficits as the key contributing factors to disadvantage at the expense of long-term sources of social exclusion and inequality (Mendes, 2013: 507).

Crucially, the logical end of this discursive shift from welfare as an instrument of social equity to one of market discipline was the conjuring of the noxious creature of 'welfare dependency' as a societal problem which could be addressed by surveilling and

disciplining individual shortcomings. Beginning from its basic definition as a situation in which 'welfare payments represent the primary income source of recipients, who are not able to meet basic consumption needs with income from other (private) sources' (Tseng & Wilkins, 2002; cited in Stanford & Taylor, 2013: 477), the phenomenon of welfare dependency can be further extrapolated in terms of an 'addiction' or 'lifestyle choice' that is culturally embedded in the lives of the recipients of the 'overly generous interventions of the state through the welfare system' (Stanford & Taylor, 2013: 479). The phenomenon of welfare dependency thus indicts the provision of publicly-funded, universal welfare payments and services as 'antithetical to the disciplining force of the market'; considered to be morally damaging; such interventions create welfare dependency as they '[weaken] people's sensibility, motivation, and capacity to actualise as responsible, self-reliant citizens' (Ibid).

2.4. (White) individual rationality vs. (nonwhite) individual pathology

In the phenomenon of welfare dependency described above, it can be seen that the standards and responsibilities of active citizenship are reified as those of the cult of individual rationality. Neoliberal welfare now exists only to 'motivate and discipline welfare recipients, and reintegrate them with mainstream social values and morality, such as self-reliance and the work ethic' (Mendes, 2013: 496). In this formation of a cult of individual rationality in neoliberal welfare in Australia, then, we can begin to perceive how the discursive and structural changes in the welfare state occasioned in neoliberal transformation have mobilised constructions of racial identity in situating welfare recipients. Invariably experiencing inequality and marginalisation relative to the rest of the population, recipients of welfare have been entirely reconceptualised in the rise of the cult of individual rationality. Welfare recipients were once conceived in general terms as citizens entitled to public support owing to circumstance and income level, but in more recent times have been transformed into aberrant individuals

requiring discipline if they are to be conformed to the cult of individual rationality upon which the neoliberal project is based.

Implicitly (or even explicitly) implied to be persistent in their welfare dependence; their 'deviance, defiance, deficit, dole-bludging and welfare abuse' (Stanford & Taylor, 2013: 477), these aberrant individuals can be conceived in terms of individual pathology, where pathology is defined as a deviation from a healthy or normal condition. Constructed in opposition to the rational, self-reliant individual described above, the corporeal bodies of welfare-dependent recipients are conceived within neoliberal discourse as diseased and as the collective sites of social and economic damage, constrained economic growth, disruption of cultural values and social order, and compromised living standards (Ibid). It is important to emphasise here that this notion of individual pathology is not defined within neoliberal discourse as an irreconcilable antithesis to the norm of individual rationality. Rather, I argue, it leaves open the possibility of reintegration through addressing the source of the disease. If neoliberal welfare exists to pressure and motivate recipients to choose employment over continued reliance on welfare, it logically follows that the source of disease is an individual failure on behalf of the welfare recipient to make that choice. The choice to recipients is limited: they can continue to choose welfare-dependent pathology, or be forced into a 'Kafkaesque low-wage market with the stunning expectation that nothing would interfere with their individual effort to move out of poverty - not even racism' (Davis, 2007: 348)

The force behind the latter is exposed within the broad rhetorical claims of neoliberalism to be the champion of individual freedom and liberty in the contradictory claim that invasive and disciplinary measures like compulsory income management are needed. In pressuring those affixed with the label of pathology to choose rationality, welfare-dependent individuals are 'encouraged' to forsake their pathological addiction to welfare and immerse themselves within the 'mainstream social values and morality' embodied in the cult of individual rationality (Mendes, 2013: 496). As prefigured within

Davis' quote above, this freedom is narrowly defined, and operationalises an extremely limited construct of identity that is almost exclusively conceived in terms of the welfare-dependent individual's 'willingness to work, 'participate', and 'contribute' to society and the economy' (Stanford & Taylor, 2013: 482). Such a formulation requires the omission of other explanations of disadvantage in terms of political economy, culture, history, and society, and requires the assumption of an 'ideal world in which anyone who wants work can find work at a living wage, and all citizens enjoy equal opportunities from the time of birth' (Mendes, 2013: 502).

It is here that constructs of racial identity within the structural and discursive changes to neoliberal welfare can be identified and investigated. This artificial, entirely constructed dichotomy between individual rationality and individual pathology in neoliberal welfare discourse forms part of a tendency within neoliberal transformation to place 'increasing stress on individualised merit and ability in the name of racelessness' in conjunction with 'structural shifts in state formation away from welfarism and the caretaker state' (Goldberg, 2009: 331). In beginning to construct a case against this racelessness, Goldberg's concept of 'mimetic mixing' can be used in the context of the contemporary Australian neoliberal welfare state to argue that its structural emphasis on encouraging labour market participation and accompanying discursive obsession with the cult of individual rationality mandates a racial mimesis that 'establishes the horizon of possibility, the limits for heterogeneity, while making it seem as though there are no limits' (Ibid: 345).

This racial mimesis insists that anything is attainable for those who are conformed to the self-reliant, entrepreneurial, wealth-pursuing image of the rational individual. The reality is, of course, that there are manifold limits to heterogeneity and horizons of possibility within an increasingly neoliberalised Australian political economy. The presumption of racelessness in neoliberal welfare makes these limits invisible and deracialised, and thus forms precisely the juncture at which the whiteness of the cult of individual rationality is made apparent. In its denial of the 'structural

legacy, institutional articulation, and social implications' that have 'lingered despite racial conception becoming less pressed or formally elaborated... more invisible, coded, and proxied' (Goldberg, 2009: 355-356), the cult of individual rationality, coupled with its diseased counterpart in the form of individual pathology, deploys racially-coded assumptions about the identities of welfare recipients insofar as it assumes a sort of 'level playing field' free of the possibility of racial (or, for that matter, any other form of) inequality.

These racially-coded assumptions about the identities of welfare recipients can be unravelled by considering how whiteness is privileged in the neoliberal transformation of welfare in Australia. The assumption of the (raceless) level playing field on which the cult of individual rationality is based masks the fact that the very concept of individual rationality is advanced by the privileged - those who enjoy the institutional and structural advantages that come with access to resources and power. Invariably, the privileged receive the benefits of greater wealth, access to education and the accompanying ability to embark on a 'career' by gaining secure employment, better health outcomes, home ownership, and political participation (Stanford & Taylor, 2013: 481). Those who fall into such a category maintain the ability to determine the norms, expectations, and goals of welfare, along with the problem of welfare dependency and the solutions devised to address it. It follows that the 'embedded assumptions of privilege' that underpin the individual rationality of neoliberal welfare are left 'largely invisible, uncontested, and unexamined' to the extent that those who fall outside the privileged realm of individual rationality into the realm of welfare dependency and individual pathology are defined as curious, inexplicably diseased 'Others' (Ibid: 481-482).

As a result, the formulation of the neoliberal welfare state individual rationality/pathology dichotomy utilises constructs of 'white' and 'nonwhite' racial identity respectively; the former functioning in Australian society as the dominant, privileged majority, the latter as the marginalised, disadvantaged minority. Whiteness is defined

as ‘the invisible norm against which other races are judged in the construction of identity, representation, subjectivity, nationalism and the law’ (Moreton-Robinson, 2005: vii), and the ‘social arrangements and social relations of individuals who belong to the dominant White group, embedded as they are in the values *they* hold to be important’, become the standard by which the nonwhite ‘Other’ is judged (Stanford & Taylor, 2013: 483, emphasis in original). Consequently, the welfare-dependence and pathology of the nonwhite Other is reframed against the norm of white rationality as emblematic of ‘underachievement’ and ‘individual failure’, rather than as a consequence of ‘historically embedded race-based exclusion and colonial domination’ (Ibid: 484).

The means through which this reframing of the relationship between the (rational) white dominant majority and the (pathological) nonwhite other is secured can be conceived in terms of Davis’ concept of ‘indexicality’ (2007: 352). Indexicality describes a practice of indexing or coding in which words and phrases are deployed that may not be explicitly racially disparaging, but are implicitly so. Importantly, the meanings of these words and phrases are ‘understood to be racialising *by the racialised subject*, and may or may not be recognised as such by the speaker’ (Ibid, emphasis in original). Davis uses the example of the phrase ‘Welfare Queen’ in the United States to illustrate how, in misrepresenting poor Black women receiving welfare as taking advantage of the public purse, the use of such terms ‘sustains the view that Black women are defective’ and generates their ‘[invalidation] by being ideologically and linguistically associated with pre-existing negative representations of the Black female subject’ (Ibid).

The import of indexicality in the Australian context of neoliberal welfare reform through the affixation of the label of pathology onto the nonwhite welfare recipient functions in an analogous way. In the absence of blatant racism, nonwhite others are reminded of their pathology and subordinate place in the neoliberal economy through the covert invocation of long-extant racialised stereotypes. Laziness in refusing to work, promiscuity in having too many children too young, base vulnerability in drunkenness,

and primal aggression in violence - all are reworked and redeployed against the invisible norm of whiteness to bracket together the nonwhite body and pathological welfare dependence. Without specifically naming its nonwhiteness, the nonwhite welfare recipient is disparaged through the conflation of race, poverty, and pathological behaviour, a technique that 'represents broad justification for monitoring the poor Black body engaged with the State' (Davis, 2007: 355).

Overall, in constructing the nonwhite Other as pathological, individually flawed, underachieving, and diseased by addiction to welfare support, the neoliberalised welfare state in Australia functions as part of an 'assemblage of covert strategies employed by raced neoliberalism' that operate in tandem to 'discipline Welfare Others towards their assimilation into the social, political, economic, and cultural ethos of mainstream White neoliberal Australia' (Stanford & Taylor, 2013: 485). Importantly, the neoliberal dual racial identity construction of white individual rationality and nonwhite individual pathology invokes a denial of the racial histories of colonisation and ongoing contemporary colonialism, favouring instead a narrative emphasis on the seemingly inexorable white history of settlement, civilisation, and progress (Ibid). In the context of neoliberal welfare transformation in Australia, the salience of this bifurcated racial identity construction and its accompanying denial of historically racialised deprivations and exclusions is particularly apparent in considering the inequality and disadvantage currently experienced by Indigenous Australians.

2.5. Indigeneity and neoliberal welfare in the Australian settler colonial state

In the case of Indigenous disadvantage and the ongoing project of addressing this disadvantage through neoliberal welfare, the role of the constructions of racial identity discussed above can be further analysed with reference to how such constructions produce and reinforce racial inequality. The remainder of this chapter argues that the

primacy of the white rational individual and the 'othering' of the nonwhite pathological individual in neoliberal welfare discourse has contributed to the ongoing marginalisation and disadvantage experienced by Indigenous peoples. This occurs primarily through reifying a set of racialised discourses that fail to account for the ways in which the 'structural violence of settler colonialism' is complicit in this process.

'Settler colonialism' is a term that has given rise to the emerging school known as settler colonial studies; an interdisciplinary field that 'emphasises the distinct characteristics of nations with a permanent settler presence' that avoided the process of formal decolonisation as had occurred in the extractive colonies of South Asia, South America, and Africa (Maddison, 2013: 288). In the context of contemporary Australia, then, settler colonialism stresses the lack of closure of the colonial episode; although extractive colonies have undergone periods of formal decolonisation and accompanying processes of political transition, such processes have been suppressed in settler colonial states. While acknowledging the challenges encountered by postcolonial states as a direct result of colonial legacy, settler colonial states like Australia

are remarkable for their intention to permanently displace the Indigenous populations within their acquired territories, without any intention that the nation as a whole might one day undertake a process of structural decolonisation (Ibid).

This permanent displacement of Indigenous peoples in settler colonial Australia now dominates the lived experience of contemporary Indigeneity in several ways, each of which are crucial in understanding how the white individual rationality/nonwhite individual pathology dichotomy in neoliberal welfare functions to produce and sustain racial inequality in the context of the Australian settler colonial state. The foundational aspect of the nexus between this dichotomy and Indigenous inequality in the context of Australia can be unfurled with reference to the obsession of neoliberal discourse with the ontological primacy of the individual. Attempting to address embedded socio-economic disparities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations,

individualised neoliberalism assumes a postracialism in which 'identifiable barriers to equality, such as discrimination and racism, are long removed' (Walter, 2010: 131). In neoliberal welfare, the rationality/pathology dichotomy situates all Australians on the level playing field already discussed, rendering 'invisible the privilege of those outside the domain of Aboriginality' and allowing the 'present-day reverberations of multi-generational individual, family and communal deprivation to be portrayed as whinging self-pity' (Ibid).

In conjunction with this invisibilisation of the contemporary reverberations of colonial violence, the ontological primacy of the individual in neoliberal welfare has also eventuated in a collective application of the trope of individual pathology to Indigeneity as a racial totality. As Maggie Walter points out, 'individualism is applied to Indigenous Australia in racially grouped formation'; the individual behavioural choices that are deemed to have given rise to the disease of welfare dependency are portrayed as 'racially aligned selections, with culture wound into the causality' (2010: 131). Instead of situating the purportedly high reliance of Indigenous Australians on welfare payments relative to non-Indigenous Australians within the context of historical and contemporary exclusion and marginalisation, the underpinning factors giving rise to individual pathology in Indigenous welfare recipients are affixed primarily to 'social and cultural dysfunction', evidenced most clearly in the deployment of 'faux Aboriginalisms' like 'sit down money' in government papers and media reports (Ibid).

The conflation of individual pathology and welfare dependency with a tendency toward socio-cultural dysfunction supposedly inherent in Indigeneity legitimises the assimilationist policies of neoliberal welfare that attempt to conform its recipients into the image of white individual rationality. Under the guise of postracialism, the identities of Indigenous peoples in neoliberal welfare are collectively inscribed with the negative connotations of 'the issue' or 'the problem' by virtue of their Indigeneity; the silver-bullet solution to the circumstances necessitating their receipt of welfare support conceived as 'cultural change... framed in terms of replacing 'unproductive' and

dysfunctional Indigenous culture(s) with a marketised one' (Walter, 2010: 133). The diseased body of the nonwhite pathological individual is thus conceived within neoliberal discourse with reference to Indigeneity as the key underpinning component of welfare dependency, with reintegration into mainstream society made contingent upon the assimilation of the nonwhite individual into the white mainstream. In the words of Jon Altman, the 'elimination of Aboriginal ways will lead to imagined neoliberal normalisation that provides the path for Aboriginal citizens to exit state controls and paternalistic over-sighting' (Altman, 2013: 140).

In insisting on this neoliberal normalisation, advocates of neoliberal welfare situate Indigenous difference on a racial hierarchy of primitive to civilised that has been deployed throughout the history of colonial Australia (Hewitson, 2013: 107). The colonial practice of attacking Indigenous difference persists today in the assertions of right-wing think tanks and governments that Indigeneity harbours broken customs that produce lawlessness and dysfunction. Such claims situate Indigeneity as constituting a 'potential threat to the state and capital and Indigenous people themselves' (Altman, 2007b: 6), a discursive practice that enables a range of invasive and disciplinary measures aimed at conforming Indigenous peoples into the image of white individual rationality. In identifying these broken customs as the 'defining characteristic' of the lives of Indigenous people, neoliberal welfare represents them as 'passive in a double sense, as subject to their own 'superstitions' and 'beliefs', and as subject to superior European knowledge and government' (Buchan, 2002).

As Rebecca Stringer (2007) outlines in the context of the Intervention, this representation of Indigeneity as an essentialised cluster of broken customs and cultural dysfunction serves as moral cover for the practice of 'assimilatory neoliberalism'. For her, the weaving together of culture and causality functions to situate the disproportionate levels of apparent violence, abuse and disadvantage prevalent within Indigenous communities as 'bottomless sources of legitimacy' for the invasive, disciplinary measures that make up the Intervention (Ibid). Alongside the

implementation of compulsory income management, the introduction of a compulsory work-for-welfare scheme (Structured Training or Employment Projects, or STEP) replaced the community-controlled voluntary workfare scheme (Community Development Employment Projects, or CDEP) which had included flexible working arrangements that allowed for ceremonial attendance, along with payment for work normally not considered as 'mainstream employment', such as art making and land ranging (Altman, 2007a). STEP removed this flexibility, instead aiming to contract Indigenous labour to non-Indigenous employers and the state on a compulsory basis (Stringer, 2007).

In targeting Indigenous communities for the enforcement of the neoliberal welfare technologies of compulsory income management and work-for-welfare, the Intervention sought to stamp out the so-called 'epidemic' of child sexual abuse by disciplining both Indigenous domestic labour and Indigenous wage labour. Compulsory income management was introduced to discipline Indigenous domestic labour by bringing the behaviours and arrangements of Indigenous families into line with 'normal community standards and parenting behaviours' (Brough, 2007; quoted in Stringer, 2007). The underlying assumption here was that Indigenous welfare recipients had developed a 'culture of antisocial behaviour that separates them from the dominant values of mainstream society' (Mendes, 2013: 504). Similarly, the introduction of STEP functioned to discipline Indigenous wage labour by moving Indigenous people from 'working for their own organisations, which accommodate cultural imperatives and kin-based responsibilities, to working for the neo-paternalistic state with its clear goal of mainstreaming' (Altman, 2007a: 4). Indigenous cultural praxis was indicted as 'antithetical to the development of a work ethic', a problem that could be fixed through the 'disciplinary erasure of Indigenous ways of life' (Stringer, 2007).

2.6. Conclusion

The above examples of compulsory income management and the replacement of voluntary workfare with compulsory work-for-welfare are just two within the broader assemblage of policies that make up the Intervention,¹⁶ but both are instructive in understanding how the white rationality/nonwhite pathology dichotomy produces and reinforces Indigenous inequality. In isolating behavioural shortcomings and cultural dysfunction as the key causative factors behind the disadvantage and suffering apparent within Indigenous communities, neoliberal welfare functions within the broader project of neoliberalism to focus attention on the need to discipline the nonwhite other into the market-friendly, entrepreneurial values and norms of the white mainstream. This project of discipline makes hyper-visible the shortcomings of the nonwhite, pathological welfare-dependent body, while simultaneously minimising the generative role played by historical and contemporary experiences of oppression, dispossession, marginalisation, and racism in the Australian settler colonial state (Stringer, 2007).

As long as this approach prevails, neoliberalism will maintain its focus on disciplining nonwhite individual pathology in attempting to deploy welfare as a tool of assimilation, and will thus 'remain focused upon the symptoms rather than the causes of Aboriginal disadvantage' (Maddison, 2012: 275). Critically, in the context of the neoliberal Australian settler colonial state, this focus turns our attention away from the importance of undergoing a process of structural decolonisation. This process would include, in general terms, an acknowledgement of Indigenous peoples as 'a complex political artifact, a dense texture of kinship, association and normative regulation' whose historical and contemporary collective experience of colonisation informs the 'averaged socio-economic deficits' that in turn inform their disproportionate reliance on welfare (Rowse, 2009: 46). Such a shift would yield a focus on ameliorating the structural inequalities currently experienced by Indigenous peoples vis-a-vis the settler colonial state; for example, the signing of a treaty with accompanying restitution, mandating Indigenous representation in the Federal Parliament, or granting inalienable

land rights to traditional owners. All of the above, however, are most certainly not on the agenda of any government conditioned by the hegemony of neoliberalism.

3. Neoliberal immigration and racial threat.

3.1. Introduction

The third and last chapter of this thesis forms the second component of a two-part argument in which neoliberal transformation in Australia is problematised as a simultaneously structural and discursive phenomenon that mobilises constructs of racial identity in producing and sustaining racial inequality. The previous chapter cited the dichotomy between white individual rationality and nonwhite individual pathology within neoliberal welfare discourse as a key contributing factor to ongoing Indigenous disadvantage in the Australian settler state. The overwhelming tendency of neoliberal welfare in Australia, particularly when considering the experience of Indigenous welfare recipients, is to serve as a tool of exclusion: first by affixing onto nonwhite 'Other' the racialised label of 'pathology', and second by making invisible historical and contemporary sources of exclusion and marginalisation.

I have shown, then, one example in which racial identity has been used in neoliberal structural and discursive change in order to render unequal those within the national political economy who are defined as nonwhite in opposition to the white 'norm'. This chapter offers another example of this phenomenon by unravelling how constructs of racial identity have been used within the neoliberal transformation of Australian immigration policy, particularly with reference to how the onset of neoliberalism has shaped the criteria used to determine who is allowed to migrate to and settle in Australia, and on what terms. I begin this chapter by elaborating how

changes in politico-economic structures have influenced immigration policy in Australia from the time of the institution of the White Australia policy in 1901 to the election of the Howard Coalition government in 1996. This period has been covered extensively,¹⁷ and I provide an overview as a means to enable a more thorough discussion of the period since 1996. I proceed to describe the phenomenon of neoliberal immigration from 1996 to present, after which I unravel how constructs of racial identity as threat have been used within neoliberal immigration to reinforce racial inequality.

3.2. Immigration and the Australian political economy from the White Australia policy to the Hawke government

In the first instance, the deregulation of flows of international capital into and out of Australia, along with the gradual withdrawal of protection for many sectors of the economy, and the whittling away of centralised wage arbitration and conciliation in the late 1970s and 1980s signalled the end of an overtly racialised compact between the Australian state and labour. Using federation and the institution of the White Australia policy in 1901 as a starting point, Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds argue that, from the foundation of the Commonwealth of Australia, ‘white men appropriated the discourse on civilisation for themselves, defining it in terms of wages and conditions and the standard of living’ (2008, cited in Stratton, 2009: 688). As an exemplar of this discourse, Lake and Reynolds continue to quote Alfred Deakin, Australia’s second prime minister, at length (Ibid). They argue that Deakin

explicitly theorised White Australia as an exercise in social justice: ‘it means the maintenance of conditions of life for white men and women; it means equal laws and opportunity for all; it means protection against the underpaid labor of other lands; it means social justice so far as we can establish it, including just trading and the payment of fair wages’.

From this short extract, it can be seen that the class compromise discussed earlier was overtly racialised. This is a point that Jon Stratton argues; that the preservation of the primacy of white labour was ‘overtly central to Australian capitalism and a founding feature of the Australian state’ and that this continued up to the abolishment of the White Australia policy in the early 1970s (Stratton, 2009: 688). Asian migrants were systematically excluded and denigrated as threats to democracy, racial homogeneity, and the wages of white labour, while non-British Europeans were restricted and, in some cases, labelled as ‘coloured’ and thus inadmissible (Walsh, 2014: 283). Overall, immigration policy before the Second World War was ‘mediated by state efforts to stimulate industrialisation and economic integration without disturbing the country’s Anglo-Celtic stock and identity’ (Walsh, 2014: 283).

In keeping with broader global trends of expansion in core industrial economies after the Second World War (Castles et al, 2014b: 254), the need for cheap labour in key nation-building industries necessitated the commencement of the ‘populate or perish’ mass immigration programme that aimed to add the equivalent of 1 per cent of population each year (Ibid: 166). British immigrants were favoured, though the demands of post-war recovery in Britain required the intake of migrants from Mediterranean, Baltic, and Slavic countries to provide manual labour on projects like the Snowy Mountain Hydro-Electric Scheme and in heavy industry (Stratton, 2009: 688). Race and nationality were still privileged in admissions criteria as the government sought to maintain cultural and material homogeneity. Non-British European migrants were mostly directed to manual labour jobs in remote areas, did not receive guaranteed rights to family reunification until the late 1960s, were less likely to receive government assistance, and were subject to ‘assimilatory programs of ‘Anglo-conformity’ in which they were ‘compelled to relinquish their prior ethnocultural ties’ and assume a new ‘Australian’ identity (Walsh, 2014: 284).

This racialised migrant class would soon be disproportionately affected by the

global economic recession of the 1970s. The denationalisation of industry and individualisation of labour saw the movement of capital investment in labour-intensive production to low-wage developing economies, and the beginning of a marked decline in the manufacturing industry (Castles et al, 2014b: 254). In keeping with the move away from the emphasis on full employment that had prevailed up to the 1970s, non-British migrants that had settled permanently in Australia were pushed into unemployment or insecure employment with some becoming dependent on welfare (Ibid: 255). The plight of migrant workers, made manifest in labour markets and residential segregation, poverty, and social isolation, produced an 'enmity and hierarchy' which engendered a 'further [differentiation of] migrants from the Australian born' (Walsh, 2014: 284). This apparent deprivation, along with decolonisation, shortfalls in immigration, economic integration with Asia, and the increasing prominence of human rights discourse led to the formal abolition of the White Australia policy in 1973 (Ibid).

The abolition of the White Australia policy was accompanied by the emergence and bipartisan adoption of the political programme known as multiculturalism by the Whitlam Labor government (Walsh, 2014: 284; Moran, 2011: 2159). The adoption of multiculturalism was initially seen as an instrument through which the racial inequality and disadvantage described above could be ameliorated, through increased funding for public housing, education, language training, and employment counselling (Walsh, 2014: 285). However, these commitments were not matched by an improvement in the standing of migrants previously excluded under the White Australia policy. Initially, there were only small increases in the intake of Asian migrants, and historical anxieties over a 'flood moving down from Asia' were reactivated as Timorese and Vietnamese asylum seekers arrived on Australian shores in 1975 and 1976 (Jupp, 2007: 187-188).

The tensions between the new multicultural programme and still-extant racial anxieties regarding Asian immigration were assuaged to an extent by the Fraser

Coalition government's intake of Vietnamese 'boat people'. The Fraser government sought to exert control over the arrival of asylum seekers from Vietnam through an agreement with the Vietnamese government that mandated an 'orderly departure program' (Jupp, 2007: 188). This program (reformed as the Comprehensive Plan of Action in 1989, as Sino-Vietnamese tensions flared) sought to reduce the incentives to seek asylum via boat primarily by working with countries including China, Canada, and the United States in clearing refugee camps in Indonesia and the Philippines (Ibid). This would see a fifty-fold increase in the number of Vietnam-born migrants in Australia from 1975 to 1991: 122,000 were residing in Australia in 1991, and 5,000 more would arrive in the next five years (Ibid).

3.3. The beginnings of neoliberal immigration under the Hawke government

As discussed in Chapter 1, the election of the Hawke Labor government marked the beginning of a period of neoliberal restructuring of the Australian political economy through deregulation, denationalisation, and individualisation. It was also a period that saw a related transformation of the goals and scope of multiculturalism and immigration. There were growing concerns that, unless a more restrictive immigration policy was adopted, sociocultural cohesion would be threatened as the racial mixture engendered by immigration produced a nation of 'warring tribes', whipped into conflict during a period of increased competition over employment (Blainey, 1984; cited in Walsh, 2014: 286). These fears were embodied in the release of the Fitzgerald Immigration Policy Review in 1988. This report claimed that 'multiculturalism [had] come to be seen by many as something for immigrants and ethnic communities only, and not for the whole of Australia' (CAAIP, 1988: 10), arguing that multiculturalism should be retooled to emphasise collective Australian citizenship and identity (Walsh, 2014: 287). Linking unease over multiculturalism with the increased intake of Asian immigrants in the late 1980s, the report crucially asserted that the government's

immigration policy should be redrawn with a 'sharper economic focus' in order for the public to 'be convinced that the program is in Australia's best interests' (CAAIP, 1988: xi).

As this debate was taking place, the late 1980s and early 1990s saw a massive spike in the numbers of applications for asylum: from only 500 in 1989 to nearly 14,000 in 1990-91 (Nicholls, 1998: 62). This spike catalysed an unprecedented backlog of applications for asylum which reached nearly three times the size of Australia's annual humanitarian intake, catalysing a state of disarray within immigration planning (Ibid). Such a situation engendered a recurrence of anxieties over the unauthorised, unsolicited arrival of groups of 'boat people', which took the form of Cambodian asylum seekers fleeing turmoil in their homeland. These people were condemned and derisively referred to by figures within the Hawke Labor government as 'queue jumpers' and 'economic refugees', and became the first detainees under the new policy of mandatory detention of asylum seekers instituted in May 1992 (Tazreiter, 2010: 205). Conversely, Chinese students already in Australia on student visas during the violent suppression of the pro-democracy movement by the Chinese government claimed asylum, and 27,359 were granted permanent residency status if they had arrived prior to 21 June 1989 (Ibid). Importantly, these students had been the initial participants of a scheme in which the Australian government sought to address a trade deficit through selling its education services into Asian economies, granting temporary visas to paying students (Nicholls, 1998: 63).

In terms of then-extant racial anxieties over Asian immigration, the seeming contradiction between the detention of unauthorised Cambodian arrivals and the granting of asylum to Chinese students is instructive in understanding how immigration policy was reconfigured under the Hawke and Keating governments. Given the propensity of any irregular entry to 'arouse the fear, redolent in an historically affluent and underpopulated country, of uncontrolled or undercontrolled immigration from populous and poorer neighbours' (Nicholls, 1998: 63), the former

were deemed as a potential aggravation of collective anxieties in the context of increased immigration and unpopular neoliberal reforms. Meanwhile, the latter were deemed as economically productive in their consumption of Australian education. Thus, in order to facilitate the latter and discourage the former, the Hawke and Keating governments retooled immigration policy as a means of serving the broader economic narrative of 'economic rationalism, regional integration and industrial restructuring' by promoting immigration as a means to catalyse economic growth and engender a sort of 'productive diversity' (Walsh, 2014: 287-288; see also Moran, 2011: 2160).¹⁸ Collective anxieties regarding the migratory influx of unfamiliar populations were soothed, for the moment, by the institution of a semblance of control over the unauthorised arrival of sea-bound asylum seekers.

3.4. The consolidation of neoliberal immigration from 1996 to present

The recession of the early 1990s gave rise to the resurgence of familiar racial anxieties regarding immigration. Along with the heightening of these anxieties, this period saw a growing sense of 'moral panic' in regards to the symbolic and material effects of immigration and multiculturalism amongst a populace experiencing neoliberal restructuring (Walsh, 2014: 288). This sense of anxiety and panic reached a sort of flashpoint in the 1996 Federal elections, in which a resounding defeat was exacted upon the Keating Labor government. As Ien Ang and Jon Stratton recount (1998: 23), the 1996 election was significant in the way it gave voice to a set of populist concerns that explicitly rejected multiculturalism. The most prominent of these populist voices was the newly-elected Member of Parliament Pauline Hanson and her One Nation party. Agitating for the complete abolition of the policy of multiculturalism, Hanson gained notoriety for her outspoken condemnation of what she perceived as the 'special treatment' of Indigenous people, along with her harsh denouncement of Asian immigration (Ibid). Hanson opposed multiculturalism and

immigration on the grounds that they, *inter alia*, ‘fragmented national solidarity, promoted separatism and presented the possibility of irredentist violence and internecine conflicts’ (Walsh, 2014: 288).

Though her political popularity was ultimately fleeting, Hanson’s incendiary sentiments are instructive for unravelling the context in which immigration was comprehensively consolidated as an instrument of neoliberal transformation from 1996 onwards. Notwithstanding the fact that Hanson and One Nation promoted a form of economic populism that cut against the neoliberal orthodoxy, Howard’s 1996 campaign slogan ‘For All Of Us’ fortuitously capitalised upon Hanson’s electorally appealing mobilisation of ‘discourses of national unity and values’ (Walsh, 2014: 289). Implying that the previous instantiation of multiculturalism under the Hawke and Keating Labor governments had ‘catered to a narrow set of special interests’ and ‘encouraged antisocial behaviour and a permissive culture’, Howard argued for a further reshaping of multiculturalism and immigration to be better aligned with the interests of ‘mainstream Australia’ (Ibid).

Upon its election, the Howard Coalition government set about relieving the apparent anxieties of the broader electorate by projecting an image of control over immigration and flows of people across Australia’s borders; a pursuit that can be deconstructed into two broad policy mechanisms. First, Howard instituted a heightened level of ‘economic selectivity’ to immigration policy in order to ‘attract nomadic professionals, executives and entrepreneurs’ (Walsh, 2014: 289). Points systems used to determine the socioeconomic desirability of aspiring migrants had been first introduced in the form of the Numerical Multifactor Assessment System (NUMAS) in 1979 (Walsh, 2011: 864), though under Howard this system functioned as a mechanism through which the ‘capital, talent and entrepreneurial skills of the foreign-born’ could be approached as ‘significant resources in priming and organically stimulating accumulation’ (Ibid: 869). In other words, controls over who can enter and who can stay were instrumentalised to a greater extent under Howard as neoliberal institutional

assemblages used to enable 'economic growth, competitiveness and global integration' (Ibid). This phenomenon was evidenced further in a decrease in the Family Stream of the Australian Migration Program relative to the Skill Stream (Castles et al, 2014a: 134), and the aggressive promotion of temporary migration through student, working, and business visas. Both changes functioned to augment labour market flexibility and avoid the obligations linked to permanent settlement (Castles et al, 2014b: 167; Walsh, 2014: 289).

On the other hand, the second mechanism of neoliberal immigration under the Howard government was the assertion of greater control over who would be barred from entry into Australia through the detention and deterrence of unauthorised 'boat people' or asylum seekers. As noted previously, in order to deter the unauthorised arrival of asylum seekers, mandatory detention was first introduced by the Keating Labor government in 1992, and was made indefinite and not subject to judicial review by 1994 (Tazreiter, 2010: 205). These policy measures were amplified and intensified under the Howard government, a process emblematised most clearly in the border control legislation passed in the aftermath of the Tampa episode in August 2001.¹⁹ This package of legislation excised Australian territories in the Indian Ocean from Australia's migration zone, enabling the establishment of a policy of offshore detention in which asylum seekers would be detained indefinitely in facilities on Manus Island in Papua New Guinea and Nauru - a policy that would come to be known in shorthand as the 'Pacific Solution' (Castles et al, 2014a: 145). Alongside the Pacific Solution, temporary protection visas (TPVs) were introduced as a means to deny permanent residency to asylum seekers. Significantly, immigration detention centres and the provision of social services to detained asylum seekers were first tendered to private corporations and not-for-profit organisations under the Howard government in 1997 (Tazreiter, 2010: 207).²⁰

In summation, neoliberal immigration in Australia was initially comprised of two interlocking mechanisms: the affixation of increased economic selectivity to immigration policy; and the exertion of greater control over Australian borders through

the detention and deterrence of unauthorised asylum seekers. These mechanisms, though retooled at times by the following Rudd and Gillard Labor and Abbott Coalition governments, have become entrenched overall. Though the first Rudd Labor government dismantled the Pacific Solution in 2007 by closing the immigration detention centre on Nauru and replacing TPVs with residency visas, the logic of deterrence remained in continued mandatory detention and in policing operations against people-smugglers (Grewcock, 2014: 72). This move away from offshore detention and resettlement was short-lived; increased movements of asylum seekers in the region led to the reintroduction of offshore detention on Nauru and Manus Island in 2012, with no prospect of resettlement in Australia (Ibid: 73). The election of the Abbott Coalition government in 2013 presaged a similar emphasis on offshore detention and resettlement, with the added inclusion of militaristic policies under the newly-minted 'Operation Sovereign Borders' in which, for example, the Australian navy would tow unauthorised vessels back to Indonesia (Ibid: 74). The implications of this entrenchment of neoliberal immigration in Australia will be discussed throughout the remainder of this chapter, particularly in terms of how constructs of racial identity have been mobilised within neoliberal immigration in order to further the interests of advocates of neoliberal transformation.

3.5. Racial threat in neoliberal Australia

In general terms, constructs of racial identity in neoliberal immigration are deployed as part of a key contradiction within neoliberal transformation more broadly. On the one hand, those who promote neoliberalism are overwhelmingly committed to the protection and expansion of the freedom of flows of capital, goods, services, and information. They are also committed to promoting the deregulation of capital flows, denationalisation of industry, and individualisation of labour. These commitments can all be seen as part of a transnational project dedicated to 'freeing capital and its interests from constraint', in the process maximising corporate profits by reducing

costs occasioned through taxes, regulations, and tariffs (Goldberg, 2009: 332). On the other hand, as seen in the discussion above, neoliberalism has also made use of a set of novel modes of control that are 'decidedly circumspect about freedom of movement for multitudes of people' (Ibid: 333).

This mode of control - the encouragement of skilled migration whilst simultaneously discouraging the irregular migration of asylum seekers - represents an attempt by the neoliberal Australian state to exercise 'the power to exclude and by extension include in racially ordered terms, to dominate through the power to categorise differentially and hierarchically, to set aside by setting apart' (Goldberg, 2002: 9). Acknowledging the theoretical point of departure from which this thesis began - that race has been made to appear somewhat irrelevant and rendered invisible as neoliberalism has moved racial conception and categorisation into the realm of the private - this categorisation and setting apart no longer 'mesh[es] perfectly with a colour line' (Melamed, 2006: 2). Instead, I argue along with Walsh (2011: 864) that neoliberal immigration, in terms of the sort of migratory mobility it allows and rejects, has 'jettisoned blanket practices of ethnoracial exclusion' in the process of 'differentiating worthy from unworthy applicants'.

I contend that this process of differentiation utilises constructs of racial identity in producing and legitimising exclusion in the neoliberal Australian state, primarily through affixing on nonwhite people groups the identity-label of "**threat**". Racial identity as threat can be broken down into two primary forms of racialised reference: those who threaten the economic viability of the neoliberal state, and those who threaten white control and primacy. As each reference deploys racial identity in unique ways, these are treated in the following paragraphs as analytically discrete and perhaps even sequential. However, it should be made clear from the outset that a significant degree of overlap exists between them. Indeed, as will become apparent, both are inextricably linked as part of a complex process in which those who promote neoliberalism and benefit from its prescriptions are implicated in the production and

legitimisation of racial inequality.

3.5.1. Racial identity as threat to the economic viability of the neoliberal state

The first of these instantiations of racial identity as threat functions to exclude those people groups who are deemed to be threatening to the economic viability of the neoliberal state. As already argued in preceding paragraphs, the racialised exclusion of those identified as nonwhite is by no means a new phenomenon; the preservation of the primacy of white labour was central to the establishment of Australian capitalism in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries (Stratton, 2009: 688). In the ascendance of neoliberalism in Australia, however, more subtle means of enforcing racialised exclusion have been deployed, as Stratton insists (Ibid: 687):

... where the European state was marked by the exclusion of those identified as non-white, the state operation of capitalism was a white preserve, in the neoliberal state those that were racially excluded are allowed to enter on the rational, calculative terms of the market. Where with the modern state racial segmentation mapped onto economic segmentation, in the neoliberal state both forms of segmentation are imbricated as its ordering mechanism while the actual presence of the racial Other continues to be strictly controlled.

The affixation of increased economic selectivity to the Australian migration program stands out as a case *par excellence* in which racial and economic segmentation are deployed together as ordering mechanisms of the Australian neoliberal state. As stated above, economic selectivity in immigration policy has been used as an institutional assemblage with which the goals of economic growth and increased competitiveness can be achieved. Thus, in keeping with the discursive hegemony of the cult of individual rationality in neoliberalism described in the second chapter, economic selectivity in immigration policy constitutes a process in which the neoliberal state engages itself in 'moulding political subjectivities to produce autonomous, flexible individuals open to risk-taking and aversion' whilst simultaneously 'barring the entry of those perceived as integrative risks or social burdens' (Walsh, 2011: 872). In doing so,

the 'regulatory form and symbolic logic' of the economically selective, points-based immigration system establishes a desired identity formation which functions as the ideal-type candidate for admission into the Australian neoliberal state: the 'neoliberal citizen' (or rational individual) who is 'disciplined, productive, industrious... an entrepreneur of him or herself' (Ibid).

The establishment of this ideal-type candidate for admission into the Australian neoliberal state serves a crucial function for advocates of neoliberal transformation. In intensifying the economic selectivity of immigration policy, the neoliberal state aims to facilitate the inflow of capital and 'high-end' labour, in the process engendering increased trade and investment (Walsh, 2011: 875-876). At the same time, the impersonal, formulaic pseudo-objectivity of economic selectivity in immigration policy serves to obscure what is an overtly 'exclusionary form of gatekeeping' that is structured in order to bar individuals constructed as 'costly or redundant to the labour market' or as 'unproductive, dependent and fiscal liabilities' (Walsh, 2011: 873). This exclusion of unproductive individuals without is accompanied by a disciplining of migrant labour within; a phenomenon which has taken the form of an elimination, devolution, and marketisation of migrant and multicultural services and rollback of social rights for new migrants since the Howard government. Such reforms situate nonwhite migrant bodies as threatening to neoliberal order particularly in their dual propensity to become dependent on the public purse, and their tendency to fail to integrate into market society (Walsh, 2014: 291-292).

The admission of the nonwhite body into Australian territory is made contingent on the extent to which it emblematises neoliberal logics and values, while nonwhite bodies excluded from admission are deemed as undesirable and burdensome, and thus threatening to the economic ambitions of the neoliberal state. This framing of the nonwhite migrant as a potential threat to the economic wellbeing and viability of the neoliberal state forms part of a general global 'racial-economic schema' that 'continues to associate white bodies and national populations with wealth and nonwhite bodies

and national populations with want' (Melamed, 2006: 14). The practice of migratory gatekeeping in which the entry of nonwhite migrants is contingent on their economic usefulness can be perceived as complicit in the stratification of the global labour market according to a 'global class hierarchy' in which 'people with high human capital from rich countries have almost unlimited rights of mobility, while others are differentiated, controlled, and included or excluded' using various means (Castles, 2011: 312).

If, in this global class hierarchy, white bodies are associated with wealth and nonwhite bodies are associated with want, neoliberal control of migratory mobility thus constitutes a Australia-specific manifestation of a 'new racism' in which 'economic, ideological, cultural, and religious distinctions... produce lesser personhoods, laying these new categories of privilege and stigma across conventional racial categories' (Melamed, 2006: 14). The lesser personhood of the nonwhite unskilled migrant body is the victim of the exclusionary, racist practices of economically selective immigration policy. It follows that the racial mixing that immigration produces is deemed desirable strictly in terms of its mimicry and emulation of the 'standards and habits of whiteness, of Euro- or Anglo-mimesis racially preconceived' (Goldberg, 2009: 342). In a similar fashion to that identified within neoliberal welfare transformation in the second chapter, then, the antiracist impulse is evident in this 'mixing mediated by mimesis' insofar as it 'establishes the horizon of possibility, the limits for heterogeneity, while making it seem as though there are no limits' (Ibid: 345). As long as the nonwhite migrant fits the ideal-type template of neoliberal subjectivity, in which the requirements of self-reliance, entrepreneurialism, productivity and industry are increasingly used as criteria in determining who can migrate into Australia and on what terms, they are allowed in.

3.5.2. Racial identity as threat to white control and primacy

I have shown how constructs of racial identity as threatening to neoliberal economic order function within Australian immigration policy to exclude those

deemed as falling outside the ideal-type template of neoliberal subjectivity. For those who either do not fit the ideal-type template envisioned in economically selective immigration policy, or refuse to accede to neoliberal mimesis in Australia (or, for that matter, at its margins), there exists an entirely different, though complementary 'toolset for racial management' that facilitates the invocation of 'more invasive technologies of control' by the neoliberal state (Goldberg, 2009: 345). I argue that this invocation of technologies of racial management and control serves a critical purpose for the advocates of neoliberal transformation: the deflection of mainstream unease and discontent due to neoliberal reforms toward a perceived threat to the so-called 'Australian way of life' from nonwhite transgressors. This is exemplified in the second form of racial identity as threat deployed within neoliberal immigration, conceived in terms of the threat posed by the nonwhite other to white control and primacy.

The primary example in which this particular construction of racial identity as threat is put to use in technologies of racial management and control can be observed in the second mechanism of neoliberal immigration: the intensification of punitive policies of mandatory detention and deterrence in order to discourage the irregular maritime arrival of asylum seekers. In this section of the chapter, I argue that the policies of turning back and deporting of asylum seekers to their countries of origin or transition, or the indefinite detention of those deemed unable to return, have been used within the neoliberal Australian state to territorially exclude those deemed as threatening to white control and primacy in the Australian neoliberal state. My analysis of how discourses of racial threat are mobilised within neoliberal transformation in territorially excluding certain individuals and groups commences with a two-part discussion of how the concept of citizenship has been transformed within neoliberal restructuring.

The first part of the neoliberal transformation of citizenship process involves a shift in the relationship between the citizen and the nation-state from that of 'noncontractual rights and obligations to the principles and practices of *quid pro quo*

market exchange' - in short, the 'contractualisation of citizenship' (Somers, 2008; cited in Stratton, 2011: 303). In the process of neoliberal transformation, the meaning of citizenship has been distorted from that of 'shared fate among equals to that of conditional privilege' (Ibid). Social inclusion and moral worth in the Australian nation-state are no longer guaranteed as 'inherent rights' but instead are conceived as 'earned privileges that are wholly conditional upon the ability to exchange something of equal value' (Ibid). In neoliberal transformation, then, the citizen of the neoliberal Australian nation-state has experienced a loss of the inclusive rights that were traditionally associated with citizenship. Replacing rights with duties, and entitlements with obligations, neoliberal citizenship does away with citizenship's 'egalitarian and reciprocal components' and replaces them with the ethos of market exchange (Walsh, 2014: 295).

The second part of this transfiguration of citizenship within neoliberal transformation is critical in elaborating the import of racial identity as a threat to white control and primacy. For Walsh, the neoliberal transfiguration of citizenship represents a contradiction in which the 'boundaries of collective identity have been ossified alongside the weakening of citizenship's solidaristic and symbolic character' (Walsh, 2014: 295). This ossification/weakening nexus in the face of neoliberal restructuring has been made manifest in the 'revival of nationalist and assimilationist principles' which are deployed in order to engender a 'sense of order, security and stability' (Ibid). Perera's concept of the 'homeland' complements this analysis, arguing that the reconfiguration of citizenship and belonging as a matter of national protection functions to produce racial threat (2009: 149, emphases in original):

To speak of *the homeland* in effect is to generate a sense of insecurity and displacement in that segment of the population that understands itself as most entitled to be *at home* in the homeland. The very urgency of securing the homeland throws the sense of being at home, of possessing 'a birthright', of entitlement, into crisis by revealing the deep fissures that constitute the homeland: the homeland as such is a construct that generates racial terror.

Perera's notion of the 'homeland' is instructive in understanding how the ossification of collective identity and contractualisation of citizenship underpins the mobilisation of discourses of racial identity as threat in neoliberal transformation. Seen in the context of 'securing the homeland', we can begin to perceive how the 'engineering of the Australian population's anxieties and fears around race and immigration' (Stratton, 2009: 679) functions to sublimate discontent and concern at the neoliberal transformation of citizenship into pre-existing imaginaries of racial threat. In the context of the exclusion of certain migrants based on their mode of arrival and/or their lack of economic utility, the mechanisms of neoliberal immigration can thus be understood as forming part of a strategy to maintain consent for neoliberal transformation by appealing to deeply-embedded racial anxieties that have historical antecedents in racialised threats to 'wages fit for white men' and the anti-Chinese idea of the 'yellow peril' (Ang & Stratton, 1998: 30).

Both 'wages fit for white men' and the 'yellow peril' are commonly perceived within the national imaginary as relics of the pre-Federation and White Australia period. However, the mobilisation of racial identity as threat to white control and primacy in contemporary neoliberal discourses suggests that there is a significant degree of continuity between the racial architectures of the 'yellow peril' of the late nineteenth century and the 'queue jumper' of contemporary times. Seen in the context of a contractualised citizenship, and the accompanying sense of insecurity and displacement of the population that understands itself as 'at home' in the homeland, the affixation of racial identity as threat onto asylum seekers serves the purpose of reassuring the lower classes that their interests are central to the neoliberal project. In neoliberal immigration, this task is achieved through compensating for the loss of the rights traditionally associated with citizenship by engendering a sense of 'cultural and symbolic identification with the dominant political culture' within the broader populace to alleviate fears of displacement within the homeland (Somers, 2008; quoted in Stratton, 2011: 313). The middle and working classes impacted most by neoliberal

transformation are reassured that they are 'at the very heart of the *included*, not as rights-bearing citizens but as free-market patriots' (Ibid, emphasis in original).

In the punitive policies of deterrence and detention maintained towards asylum seekers, the historically-embedded logic of racial threat is thus embodied in the irregular and unpredictable movements of asylum seekers onto Australian shores. Designations like 'boat people', 'queue jumpers', and 'economic migrants' conjure an opportunism and desperation on behalf of asylum seekers that threatens the national imaginary in which white people are located 'at the centre or core of the nation, defined in relation to both internal nonwhite others and external nonwhite others who are variously placed in different parts of the nation's margins or periphery' (Elder et al., 2005: 209). Seen in this context, the refusal of entry to opportunistic and desperate asylum seekers enables a sense of white control and primacy that salves an 'anxiety born of colonial white privilege 'hard-won' through colonial power; the ability to define and exclude certain 'undesirable' people... is part of this privilege' (Tascón, 2005: 246). The entry of migrants into Australia that fit the neoliberal ideal-type is facilitated with the justification that such migrants stand to contribute and be productive within Australian society, while the detention and deterrence of asylum seekers functions to reassure the lower classes that any potential threat to white control and primacy is being strongly dealt with.

3.6. Conclusion

Overall, by holding out the standard of contractualised citizenship in Australia as the marker of inclusion and belonging, neoliberal immigration allows a redeployment of regimes of racial classification while transcoding them simultaneously into 'seemingly racially unmarked... economies of morality and value' (Perera, 2009, 155). Neoliberal immigration legitimises the exclusion and punishment of the racialised nonwhite other, embodied in the asylum seeker, as the necessary consequence of their threat to or

implicit rejection of a 'meritocratic, inclusive, and positive' notion of citizenship and belonging (Ibid). This notion of citizenship and belonging 'incorporates the rhetoric of civil rights to portray 'economic rights' as the most fundamental civil right' (Melamed, 2006: 17),²¹ thereby presenting a sort of artificial choice to migrants in which they must first have imbibed, or show potential to imbibe of the 'freedom' and 'inclusion' of neoliberal citizenship if they are to be allowed into Australia's multicultural and 'diverse' society.

In presenting this artificial choice to nonwhite migrants, neoliberal immigration claims a racelessness or antiracism for itself in rejecting formal racial discrimination through emphasising economic criteria, while simultaneously reworking historically-extant racialised discourses in excluding those deemed to be unsuitable candidates for neoliberal mimesis. If those deemed unsuitable fall short of the traits associated with neoliberal subjectivity (self-reliance, entrepreneurial spirit, rationality) then racial segmentation is overlaid with economic segmentation insofar as these traits are associated with whiteness. The by-product of this conflation of neoliberal subjectivity and whiteness is an encoding of non-whiteness as a 'contrast conception' (Ong, 1996: 739), giving rise to a ranking system implicit within neoliberal immigration that situates migrants on a racial continuum. Whiteness, as mentioned above, is associated with the 'aspirational characteristics of self-development and hard work', while blackness (or non-whiteness) is connected with 'crime, unemployment and welfare dependency' (Ong, 1999; cited in Perera, 2006). In this ranking system, the entitlement and 'birthright' of citizenship in the homeland, even as it is transformed according to neoliberal logic, is reified as the preserve of the white mainstream.

Conclusion

Across much of contemporary Western society, race is considered to be an anachronism in a postcolonial world. I argued in the opening paragraphs of this thesis that, for many, race has been relegated to realm of sociopolitical antiquation and individual pathology. This postracialist/antiracialist impulse described in more detail by Winant (2004) and Goldberg (2009) divests race of its analytical utility and real-world significance, invisibilising and marginalising race as a signifier or explanatory factor in addressing the racial inequalities still evident in developed societies. Against this impulse, the key contention of this thesis has been that constructs of racial identity are woven into the diverse social, political, cultural, and economic structures that shape identities, life-chances, and the distribution of resources in the Western world.

I began my argument in the first chapter by developing neoliberalism as a provisional conceptual identity, or what Peck calls a 'problem space' (2013: 152-153). In providing a contextual foundation upon which the links between neoliberalism and racial inequality could be unravelled, I dealt with three key questions: who are the 'neoliberals', how is power exercised within neoliberalism, and through what means? The first question was addressed using Sklair's notion of the transnational capitalist class (2002). Divided into four fractions (corporate, state, technical, consumerist), the concept of the transnational capitalist class provides analytical space in which the haphazard and opportunistic, yet well-organised and systemic political actions of those attempting to further the agenda of capital accumulation can be captured. In answering the second question, I utilised the Gramscian concept of hegemony in defining power in terms of the ability of the transnational capitalist class to maintain consent for the way it shapes and produces political, social, cultural, and economic life. The third question was deconstructed using the Foucauldian notion of discourse to identify how certain statements can be used to maintain hegemonic power by enabling and disabling certain

modes of thought and speech. Overall, I argued that the hegemony of the transnational capitalist class in implementing neoliberalism depends to a large extent on its ability to shape discursive practice, as the proliferation and naturalisation of certain discourses forms a mechanism through which hegemony can be reproduced.

After concluding the first chapter by noting the broad macro-transformations instigated as part of neoliberal transformation in Australia during the early 1980s (with emphasis on three key features: deregulation, denationalisation, and individualisation), the following two chapters traced in detail how these changes in turn sparked transformations in welfare and immigration policy. In the second chapter, I argued that the onset of neoliberal reform in Australia precipitated a wholesale transfiguration of the character of welfare towards ‘workfare’, shifting welfare from a rights-based instrument designed to ameliorate disadvantage to a tool of motivation and discipline in pressuring recipients into choosing employment over welfare. Underpinning this transfiguration is an obsession with what I call the ‘cult of individual rationality’, an identity-construct that privileges an ideal-type subjectivity in which the individual is a rational actor who has agency and is politicised towards self-improvement in line with neoliberal values. The function of neoliberal welfare is to discipline those experiencing disadvantage into individual rationality, situating those who rely on welfare as the makers of their own disadvantaged and unequal circumstances. I developed the identity-construct of ‘individual pathology’ in opposition to individual rationality to describe how the corporeal bodies of welfare-dependent recipients are accordingly conceived as the collective sites of social and economic damage, constrained economic growth, disruption of cultural values and social order, and compromised living standards.

This artificial dichotomy between individual rationality and individual pathology mobilises constructs of white and nonwhite racial identity respectively. The former places whiteness as the ‘invisible norm against which other races are judged in the construction of identity, representation, subjectivity, nationalism and the

law' (Moreton-Robinson, 2005: vii), and reframes the pathology and welfare dependency of the nonwhite Other as emblematic of individual failure rather than historically embedded racial exclusion, domination, and marginalisation. In terms of Indigenous disadvantage in Australia, this trope of individual pathology has been applied to Indigeneity itself as a racial totality. This affixation of pathology onto Indigeneity conceives it as an essentialised cluster of broken customs and cultural dysfunction; a weaving together of culture and causality which, in maintaining the colonial practice of situating Indigenous difference on a racial hierarchy of primitive to civilised, legitimises the practices of assimilation and discipline as exemplified in the compulsory income management and work-for-welfare policies of the Intervention.

In the third and final chapter, I argued that the mobilisation of constructs of racial identity in neoliberal immigration can be understood as a key part of the neoliberal program of capital accumulation and global economic competitiveness in Australia. This is most explicitly apparent in the first mechanism of neoliberal immigration: the affixation of economic selectivity onto immigration policy, which functions to facilitate the entry into Australia of high-end labour and capital as part of an effort to engender increased trade and investment. As a consequence, the criteria used to determine who is allowed in under neoliberal immigration mobilises constructs of racial identity as threatening to the economic viability of the neoliberal state in the process of differentiating between worthy and unworthy applicants. Those who are deemed worthy fit the neoliberal ideal-type of entrepreneurialism and market discipline, while those who are deemed unworthy are stigmatised as lesser personhoods in their want, liability and potential to depend on the state for support. The lesser personhood of the nonwhite, unskilled migrant body embodied in the asylum seeker is thus produced as threatening to neoliberal order, and is marked for control and territorial exclusion.

The marking of the nonwhite, unskilled migrant body for control and exclusion has led to the deployment of the second mechanism of neoliberal immigration within neoliberal transformation: the detention and deterrence of asylum seekers. Having

collectively experienced a neoliberal transformation of citizenship that replaces rights with duties, and entitlements with obligations, the engineering of the Australian population's anxieties and fears around race and immigration serve the purpose of sublating discontent and concern at this transformation into pre-existing imaginaries of racial threat. In a similar fashion to the deeply-embedded racial anxieties embodied in 'wages fit for white men' and the 'yellow peril', the spectre of unsolicited, opportunistic and desperate flows of asylum seekers onto Australian shores enables their designation as 'threatening' in their propensity to threaten white control and agency in determining who can enjoy citizenship and on what terms. In doing so, the exclusion and punishment of asylum seekers functions to reassure the middle and working classes that their interests are central to the neoliberal project.

Overall, the goal of this thesis has been to offer an inductive cartography of the ways in which constructs of racial identity are woven into the structural and discursive expressions of neoliberal transformation in Australia. In exposing the way that constructs of racial identity are mobilised in order to discipline Indigenous welfare recipients within and exclude unproductive, unsolicited migrants without, I have demonstrated that race is still a salient factor in explaining inequality in neoliberal Australia. Due to the constraints of this thesis, there are undoubtedly a litany of ways in which racial identity is deployed within neoliberal transformation in Australia that I have been unable to explore. For example, the second chapter could also have deconstructed Indigenous land rights and/or Indigenous governance in terms of how neoliberalism has shaped debates over both. In the third chapter, significant attention could also have been given to how neoliberalism has transformed multiculturalism, with significant implications for how migrants are perceived within Australian society. Each merits the attention of a dedicated project. For now, the key contention of this thesis is as follows: race matters in analysing the inequality evident in a neoliberal Australia.

¹ At the time of writing, the proposed reforms had seemingly foundered on the rocks of a frosty public response. As a consequence, Prime Minister Tony Abbott and Brandis had shelved plans to change the act, at least in the short-term.

² Staggeringly, language that is deemed to form part of a ‘public discussion of any political, social, cultural (or) religious’ matter would be exempt under the proposed reforms (Magarey, 2014).

³ Here, Philomena Essed’s concept of ‘everyday racism’ (1991) is useful in highlighting that racism involves ‘systematic, recurrent, familiar practices... prevalent in a given system’. Her work is particularly crucial here in lending theoretical weight to the claim that race-based violences and exclusions are not simply the acts of aberrant individuals, but also the instantiations of ‘complex relations of acts and (attributed) attitudes (1991: 3).

⁴ For example, the Australian Constitution still includes racially discriminatory provisions that enable states to ban people from voting based on their race (Section 25), and the passing of laws that specifically discriminate against people based on their race (Section 51[xxvi]).

⁵ For the sake of brevity, the remainder of this project will simply deploy the term ‘neoliberalism’ in describing this structural shift.

⁶ John Hobson (2013a; 2013b) has offered a two-part critique of Eurocentrism in IPE, in which he also puts forward what he calls an ‘inter-civilisational’ approach to the analysis of the international political economy. Postcolonial theorist and historian Dipesh Chakrabarty has also attempted to elucidate a postcolonial approach to the study of political economy (2011). Feminist critiques of IPE like those offered by Peterson (1994) and Sylvester (2002) are also incredibly useful in unfurling the silences and shortcomings of IPE with specific regard to its masculinist, androcentric tendencies.

⁷ Harvey’s *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (2005) is a widely-cited and thorough text that offers a more comprehensive account of the evolution and global adaptation of neoliberalism.

⁸ The Industry Commission was merged into the newly-established Productivity Commission in 1998, along with the Bureau of Industry Economics and the Economic Planning Advisory Commission.

⁹ It could be argued that prominent Indigenous figures like Warren Mundine and Noel Pearson constitute key contemporary examples of such individuals.

¹⁰ Cox (1983) and Keohane (2005), both well-known scholars from vastly different schools of thought within the discipline of international political economy, have addressed the concept of hegemony at length.

¹¹ Kaptein (1993: 95) cites the Fraser-commissioned Campbell Report released in 1982 as the key catalyst for this particular reform.

¹² By 1987, restrictions were lifted on direct foreign investment in the sectors of manufacturing, services,

insurance, processing of resources, non-bank financial institutions, tourism, rural properties, and primary industry. Barriers were still in place in the sectors of banking, civil aviation, media, developed commercial and residential real estate, and mining (Dyster & Meredith, 2012: 268).

¹³ Other measures included export incentives, local content schemes, and government purchasing preference.

¹⁴ At this point, tariff levels above 15 percent were cut to 15 percent, while tariff levels between 10-15 percent were cut to 10 percent. The sectors of motor vehicle manufacturing and textile, clothing and footwear manufacturing were exempted from this round of cuts.

¹⁵ My use of the term 'precarity' is informed by Guy Standing's book *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class*, in which he argues that processes of neoliberal globalisation have 'transferred risks and insecurity onto workers and their families', with the result being the 'creation of a global 'precariat', consisting of many millions around the world without an anchor of stability' (2011: 1).

¹⁶ As Altman (2007b) and Stringer (2007) point out, the dilution of land rights, expansion of potential for Indigenous land to be exploited by mining, nuclear, property and tourism interests, and corporatisation of Indigenous governance organisations within the Intervention also serve critical purposes within neoliberal transformation. However, these fall outside the focus on neoliberal welfare in this chapter.

¹⁷ Castles (2014b) and Walsh (2011) are notable examples of recent works that cover this period in more detail.

¹⁸ It should be acknowledged here that there was also a strong element of concern for 'social justice' within the *National Agenda*. According to Walsh (2014: 288), both Hawke and Keating emphasised the duty of the state 'to overcome barriers to migrants' equal socio-economic and political participation' through government intervention.

¹⁹ The 'Tampa episode' denotes the August 2001 controversy in which the Norwegian freighter *MV Tampa* rescued 400 asylum seekers on a stricken vessel off Northern Australia, only to be barred from offloading the asylum seekers on Christmas Island by the Howard government. This incident is covered in greater detail by Tazreiter (2010: 208) and Castles et al. (2014a: 145).

²⁰ The privatisation of immigration detention facilities has continued apace under subsequent governments, undoubtedly facilitating the agenda of capitalist accumulation through outsourcing the construction, operation and management of immigration detention centres to transnational corporations. Due to the spatial confines of this thesis, I was unable to delve into this phenomenon in any detail.

²¹ This is described in more detail by Melamed (2006: 16) who highlights how neoliberal multiculturalism rhetorically collapses and transfers 'economic freedoms into multicultural imperatives' by conflating 'freedoms of commerce' (the right to choose from a range of products and services, the freedom of the market to allocate resources without government interference) with 'social freedoms' (freedom of

association, religion, etc.).

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