ACADEMY OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES IN AUSTRALIA

Dialogue

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Contents

About the Academy

The Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia was established in 1971. Previously, some of the functions were carried out through the Social Science Research Council of Australia, established in 1942. Elected to the Academy for distinguished contributions to the social sciences, the 361 Fellows of the Academy offer expertise in the fields of *accounting, anthropology, demography, economics, economic history, education, geography, history, law, linguistics, philosophy, political science, psychology, social medicine, sociology and statistics.*

The Academy's objectives are:

- to promote excellence in and encourage the advancement of the social sciences in Australia;
- to act as a coordinating group for the promotion of research and teaching in the social sciences;
- to foster excellence in research and to subsidise the publication of studies in the social sciences;
- to encourage and assist in the formation of other national associations or institutions for the promotion of the social sciences or any branch of them;
- to promote international scholarly cooperation and to act as an Australian national member of international organisations concerned with the social sciences;
- to act as consultant and adviser in regard to the social sciences; and,
- to comment where appropriate on national needs and priorities in the area of the social sciences.

These objectives are fulfilled through a program of activities, research projects, independent advice to government and the community, publication and cooperation with fellow institutions both within Australia and internationally.

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President's column

Leon Mann

Social Sciences and the knowledge society

This is an important year for re-stating the vital role of the social sciences in the brave new world of the knowledge society – a broader concept than the 'knowledge economy' – and for taking stock of how the social sciences are regarded in Australia, and how that regard is reflected in the role the Academy plays.

The Blainey-Maloney Review of the Academies concluded that while all four Learned Academies are performing excellently and are well-recognised overseas, the Social Sciences (ASSA) and Humanities (AAH) Academies are hardly known in Australia and have very little influence on advice and policy making in government. The Review recommended a form of merger or alliance between the two Academies on the untested assumption that two ignored Academies will together make one influential institution. Both Academies welcomed the positive review of their performance but declined the call for a merger.

The Review also recommended an ASSA-AAH representation on the Prime Minister's Science, Engineering and Innovation Council (PMSEIC) and suggested this might be easier to justify or achieve if the two academies were to merge. It is both disconcerting and depressing that in Australia 2001 there is a high level Council which provides independent policy advice on innovation to government, taking advantage of advice from the Academy of Science and the Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering, while excluding the humanities and social sciences Academies.

In January, the PM's innovation statement *Backing Australia's Ability* (BAA), was welcomed because it promised an injection of an additional $2.9 billion in funding for science research and industry innovation programs, as well as a doubling of funds for ARC grants over five years. Some pointed out that little of the new funds would be available for 2001/2; others noted that the statement did not address how to strengthen linkages in an innovation system characterised by a poor record of collaboration between government, universities, industry, research institutes and venture capitalists. Essentially BAA can be seen as catching up on six years of neglect of higher education and research. There is little in the policy that recognises that countries such as Singapore, Sweden, Israel and the US have not been idle in R&D, knowledge and innovation and that even with the additional funding Australia faces a massive task to catch up.

. . . the essential point is the vital importance of linkage and interactions between the multiple players in the education, research and innovation system. . .

On 3 July, Labor released its *Knowledge Nation* task force report, setting out a broad 10 year agenda for Australian research, education and innovation policy. Chaired by Barry Jones, the task force membership included two Academy of Social Sciences fellows, Peter Dixon and Jane Marceau. The Report has been lampooned for its untidy 'meatballs and spaghetti' diagram depicting the complex interactions between the key institutions and players that together comprise the 'knowledge nation'. Whether the diagram is seen as a helpful map or an indecipherable muddle, the essential point is the vital importance of linkage and interactions between the multiple players in the education, research and innovation system. My article in *The Australian* Higher Education Supplement on 11 July ('Picking meat from spaghetti') was intended to make that point. Indeed the first recommendation in the report went directly

to the task of fostering collaboration by recommending the PM call a Knowledge Nation summit to begin the task of breaking down isolation and creating linkages between key players.

The report referred to the super-specialisation in our research organisations which discourage collaboration; competition for funding which leads universities to see each other as competitors rather than collaborators; and, the locking up of information in silos so that there is little encouragement to use it collaboratively. The task force is properly concerned about these features of the Australian research and innovation culture and system.

The report recognised the significance of the humanities and social sciences for an innovative society. It recommended strengthening research support for these disciplines through the ARC. Importantly, it called for humanities and social science representation on the PM's Knowledge Nation Council which would replace PMSEIC (see above) if Labor wins office at the forthcoming election. The report is long on vision but is short on analysis of how the critical linkages can be achieved to ensure that the nation buzzes with the new ideas and creative initiatives generated by genuine collaboration between all of the players in the knowledge society, including the social sciences, humanities and the arts.

In the same week as the KN task force report was released the new ARC Board was announced. Under a new Act, the ARC has achieved independence from DETYA in policy making. The new Council, chaired by Peter Wills, former chair of the Garvan Medical Research Institute, is heavily loaded with science, technology, industry and business membership. While Richard Snape, Deputy Chair of the Productivity Commission and an Academy of Social Sciences Fellow, is a member of the new ARC Board, it is clear that again there is a shortage of social sciences and humanities experience and expertise on a peak direction-setting body in which they have a genuine interest and more importantly, much to contribute.

To put it bluntly, a society which treats social sciences and humanities knowledge and understandings as essentially second class or marginal contributions to the main action, is bound to remain a second class player on the world stage.

How can we move forward? What is at stake is much more than a need for recognition and confirmation that the knowledge and contribution from disciplines which comprise the social sciences are respected and valued. To put it bluntly, a society which treats social sciences and humanities knowledge and understandings as essentially second class or marginal contributions to the main action, is bound to remain a second class player on the world stage.

An opportunity to make the point that the social sciences count will occur at the Humanities-Social Sciences Summit in Canberra on 26-27 July. The theme of the summit, co-hosted by the two academies together with the Business-Higher Education Round Table and other key organisations, is 'Australian humanities and social sciences in the twenty-first century'. The summit will examine and record the vital role that the social sciences and humanities play in the so-called 'new economy' or knowledge society.

In regard to the social sciences, what contributions are economics, psychology, geography, sociology, anthropology, political science, law, and the other core disciplines making to the new knowledge society? The summit will be an opportunity to learn from some important Australian examples and to demonstrate what the social sciences can do when working alongside science and technology in creating, testing and fostering new ideas and practices.

Increasingly, new knowledge is created at the points of intersection between diverse disciplines that span the older, natural sciences and the newer, social sciences and humanities. An example is the collaboration between scholars in genetics, archaeology and linguistics to investigate the origins of human society, each discipline contributing its unique knowledge to build a more complete, accurate picture. At the Santa Fe Institute, a think tank in New Mexico, physicists and biologists meet together with anthropologists and psychologists to study the patterns that underlie the complex adaptive systems around us. In the new, global economy it makes good sense to study how change in one part of a complex system may have startling and unintended effects in another.

There are four main ways in which the social sciences make a contribution to the new knowledge society.

First, at the policy level, social scientists *(((of every shade)))* provide reliable information and knowledge about human behaviour and the nature of human society by drawing upon concepts, theories and methods from their respective domains of knowledge. Understanding people and community is crucial if we are to realise the benefits and deal with the problems of the new knowledge society. Thus, social scientists are involved in the design of organisations, workplace and education systems, and industry policy that underpin advances in education, learning, research and innovation. Of course, no single discipline has sole purchase on the design of educational, social and economic systems to create better schools, smarter research labs and more innovative industries. But social scientists, through their historical and comparative analyses of global systems, their study of the effects of microeconomic policies – such as education and training, public investment in fundamental research, the design of institutions and incentives to foster innovation – are major contributors to informed national debate and policy making regarding the growth of the new economy and the knowledge society.

Second, at the level of practice social scientists contribute by studying, advising and evaluating how people use the new technology and how they are affected by it.

Several years ago I visited Xerox PARC (Xerox's research centre) in Silicon Valley where I met John Seeley Brown, its Research Director. Xerox makes state of the art fax machines, photocopiers and laser printers, but I was intrigued to learn from Dr Brown that Xerox PARC employs psychologists and anthropologists to work alongside its scientists and engineers.

The anthropologists study how work is done in modern offices (some of the most useful information is exchanged over morning coffee and at the office photocopier) and how people from different cultures use new information and communication technology. The psychologists observe and carefully record how people of different ages and learning abilities use modern equipment and software, for example, how they use a computer mouse, how they search information, use websites, and so on. The observations made by the social scientists are used by the new product development teams at Xerox to help design user-friendly products that can be used by many more people to access information, learn and make their lives more productive and rewarding.

Third, at the level of understanding and responding to community concerns about the knowledge society, social scientists provide analysis of the reasons why new ideas and initiatives fail and innovation is resisted. They seek an understanding of what can be done to address the concerns of those who oppose the sweeping changes in

policy, practice, and values that accompany the new global economy and an appreciation of what can be done to assist those who are most affected by these changes. Political scientists and sociologists have much to say about social capital or social cohesion in facilitating economic growth but also in reducing inequality and community upheaval and improving health and well being.

Fourth, social scientists explore the knowledge-generation process itself. Scientific, scholarly and technical work, now known as 'knowledge work', is increasingly performed by research groups and teams working in laboratories, institutes, research centres, sometimes in partnership with overseas scholars and sometimes in partnership with industry. We know that collaboration is difficult and that many projects fail not because of a lack of scientific rigour or technical knowledge but because of the human factor – problems in leadership and direction, problems in communication between team members, poor team design, failure to learn from previous mistakes, destructive rivalry over status issues, ineffectual management support and so on. My own research as a social scientist deals with these problems and how organisations can significantly improve the creativity and innovativeness of their 'knowledge workers' by applying well-proven social science principles to assist in the design and management of research teams.

The humanities and social sciences have special roles to play in producing the major works that capture how we understand ourselves and know the world. .

As I have been reminded by Sue Richardson, quite fundamental to the entire issue is the reality that the knowledge society is not an end in itself, but a means to the understanding and betterment of the human condition. The humanities and social sciences have special roles to play in producing the major works that capture how we understand ourselves and know the world and also in informing and influencing how the unprecedented changes occurring in science and technology must be used for the benefit, not detriment of humankind.

I am hopeful that the Summit will provide a record of the many ways in which the humanities and the social sciences make a significant difference to the many activities that comprise the new knowledge society. I hope too, that the Summit will afford another opportunity to drive home the message that progress toward the knowledge society is founded on an active and equal partnership between science and technology and the humanities and social sciences.

2001 Calendar

15 August	Closing date Australia-Netherlands Program
18-19 August	Workshop: *Rethinking Australian Republicism*.
September	Workshop: *Litigation: past and present.*
27 October	Meeting of Workshop Committee
1 November	Deadline for *Dialogue* 3/2001
11 November	Meeting of Executive Committee
12 November	Annual Symposium: *Alternative Australias*
13 November	Annual General Meeting
December	Workshop: *2001 Federal Election Study*.

Globalisation and its discontents

Ian Castles

Concerns about the impact of 'globalisation' on nation states, communities and individuals have a long history. This essay recalls the debate about an aspect of globalisation at a conference in Canberra over 20 years ago:[1] the possible effects of international trade liberalisation on living standards in the developing countries of Asia.

The Conference was convened in February 1980 by the Australian Freedom from Hunger Campaign and the ANU's Centre for Continuing Education. There were over 130 participants – academics, public servants and representatives of trade unions, industry groups and other non-government organisations.

The case against trade liberalisation

The opening paper was presented by the late Sir Mark Oliphant, FAA. Sir Mark did not believe that the liberalisation of trade would contribute to improvements in living standards, either in Asia or Australia. He considered that the question of whether trade is good or bad had to be assessed 'on a total human benefit scale of values, rather than the economists' cost-benefit measure'.

On that basis, Sir Mark saw no need for two-way trade between Australia and under-developed nations. Although some of these countries could produce items such as textiles and piece-goods more cheaply than in Australia, this was only because of the 'very low wages paid to workers who live in penury on a barely subsistence level'. Because 'the rich textile mill owners in Bombay do not share their wealth with those who work in their factories', imports of textiles into Australia increased the riches of a few in India. But this trade was of 'little or no benefit to the (Indian) population generally'.

Sir Mark concluded that 'Poor nations should not be forced to export anything'. As Australians had 'far more of almost everything than we need', we should share our wealth with our poor neighbours and take care

> that it is not misused by governments or ruthless exploiters, by going with it and aiding its use for the long-term benefit of the people. For a long time, we should be content with this one-way trade. In the end, that will cost us less than insisting upon reciprocal imports, which destroy our own industries and cause unemployment, inflation and social distress at home.[2]

The Australian Labor Party perspective was presented by Lionel Bowen, Deputy Leader of the Opposition and Shadow Minister for Trade. Bowen rejected what he described as the theoretical arguments of 'so-called economic rationalists'. Their arguments had 'provoked the [Fraser] Government and its advisers to advocate free trade and a reduction in protection'. He singled out the Department of Foreign Affairs for special criticism, because it kept emphasising the 'high protection' nature of industries such as the textile industry. This had 'done nothing but cause us harm and damage our relations with ASEAN'.

Bowen asserted that manufacturing exports from newly industrialised countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia represented 'a growing challenge to Australian producers and workers'. He promised that, under an ALP Government, tariffs would only be altered 'on a pragmatic case by case approach' after an examination which 'must

include, via industry councils, the continuous input of workers and producers with direct shop-floor experience'.

According to Bowen, the 'international division between rich and poor' was being perpetuated by 'the oppression by developed countries over those of the Third World'. The major industrialised countries had 'established a technological and political dominance over much of the rest of the world which will enable them to impose on it a trade pattern of their own choosing'. The role for Asian countries 'appears to be in the supply of export-oriented low-skill labour-intensive products to the exclusion of technologically-advanced and skill-enhancing activities'. Trade was therefore 'between unequals', and this state of affairs could 'be exploited more successfully by the stronger party'.

Bowen argued that the outcome was that 'The rich may get richer and the poor may get richer, but the rich get richer at a faster rate'. For the poorer nations, it was obvious that 'distribution is the vital issue'. Their concern was 'not so much with the size of the world cake as with how big a slice of it comes their way'. It could well be the case that 'by having only limited trade supplemented by a more equitable international monetary system, [the poorer nations] could do better'.[3]

The ACTU position was presented by its Research Officer, Bruce Hartnett, who was disturbed by the rising influence of economists in Australia:

> The academic economist has, until recently, lost the battle against the combined weight of Australian manufacturers who want to protect profits, Australian unions who want to preserve jobs and Australian Governments determined to develop Australia's industrial capacity. The economists, however, are now in the ascendancy. They staff the Industries Assistance Commission which campaigns against the tariff. Some Government Ministers have been converted to the cause and there is growing pressure in the international economic community for a lowering of protective barriers. This resurgence of free trade theorists cannot, in my view be isolated from the development and increasing power of multi-national, or more accurately, transnational corporations which control international trade and have no national loyalties. Loyalty is to the corporation, its growth and profits.

According to a paper cited by Hartnett, the strategies behind rapidly growing exports from Asian countries would aggravate 'the pressing daily-life problems of the vast masses of working people in these countries', because 'the terms of employment virtually by definition are not improved'. Export-oriented industrialisation intensified the dependent status of Asian nations by locking them into a 'multinational matrix' within which 'the key decisions affecting their people are made in corporate board-rooms in Tokyo and New York'.[4]

The Research Officer for the Amalgamated Metal Workers and Shipwrights Union, Ted Wilshire, followed a similar line. He claimed that 'In Asia, inequality of wealth and income continues to rise with industrialisation'. Employment growth was 'still small', and in some countries it was negative.[5]

Robyn Lim, of the Department of General Studies, University of NSW, was particularly critical of the work of four economists at the ANU, three of whom (Kym Anderson, Peter Drysdale and Ross Garnaut) are now Fellows of this Academy. According to Dr Lim, the ANU economists did not give proper attention to 'political factors', largely because of 'the artificial division of labour between economics and political science in Australia'. She argued that, 'Despite the sophistication of the models [they] adopted',

their 'belief in the **mutual** advantages of trade is still a matter of personal choice, especially when the partners are of grossly unequal economic power' (emphasis in original). Moreover, international trade theorists such as Anderson and Garnaut had relegated the question of transnational corporations (TNCs) to the 'too-hard' basket, and 'Any theory which does not deal adequately with the global corporations is a horse-and-buggy theory in the silicon chip age'.[6]

This theme was taken up by Dr Kate Short of the NSW Institute of Technology, who chaired the Conference workshop on the role of TNCs. On the basis of her qualifications (she 'wasn't trained in mainstream economics, so my head isn't screwed on too tightly the wrong way') Dr Short argued that 'we have to face the fact that we do need labour intensive industries in Australia, the States, the UK'.[7]

Baljit Malik, of the Alternative News and Features Agency, New Delhi, shared the view that trade liberalisation as such was not a major problem: the main issue in world development was not 'a question of free trade versus protection', but that of 'who controls world production and its product'. Tax dodging, high profits and income inequality had to be seen as 'a world-wide problem requiring world-wide solutions'.[8]

The case for trade liberalisation

Although most speakers at the conference were opposed to globalisation, trade liberalisation and TNCs, there were two dissenting voices.

One was that of Alan Powell (FASSA 1973), then Ritchie Professor of Research in Economics at the University of Melbourne. Professor Powell began by recommending the 'masterly but readable synthesis of the principal results of economic analysis in the field of trade policy'[9] by WM Corden (FASSA 1977), and went on to deal with three 'deeply entrenched fallacies which persist despite the best efforts of the economics profession':

- "Protection creates employment" ('I know of no respectable body of economic theory or of historical or econometric evidence which suggests that the overall level of employment attainable in a country depends in any way on its tariff policies except, perhaps, in the very short run.')
- "International trade exploits the working class of the Third World" ('This view confuses the issue of the desirable distribution of income and wealth with the welfare effects of a trading transaction at any given distribution of income and wealth.')
- "Multinational corporations use liberalized trade conditions to exploit poor nations" (Such corporations bring benefits 'via increased mobility of capital and technology between countries and through expanded intra-industry international trade.')

In a few sentences in development of the second of these points, Professor Powell disposed of the central thrust of the case against trade liberalisation that dominated most of the presentations at the Conference:

> It is an uncontested maxim that any voluntary sale or purchase by definition makes both the buyer and the seller better off. This is not to say that the relative buying capacity of the two agents involved in the sale is necessarily desirable, just or fair. If a beggar offers to clean a rich man's boots for 5 cents, and the rich man accepts the offer, then both the rich man and the beggar gain from the transaction. Such a statement does not contain any element of approval of the societal conditions which produce millionaires or paupers.[10]

The other dissenting voice came from an interest group, the Apparel Importers and Manufacturers Association (AIMA), whose Director, Clive Rodger, was critical of certain industries which 'had become extremely adept in manipulating government policy to ensure pressures for structural change were reduced or eliminated.' Rodger claimed that 'Such industries now wield considerable influence and the most notable of these industries in Australia are the textile, clothing and footwear industries.'[11]

The trade liberalisation debate in a wider context

The strength of the forces arrayed against trade liberalisation in Australia in 1980 was evident in reports in *The Canberra Times* after the first day's proceedings. Sir Marcus Oliphant's claim that 'Poor nations should not be forced to export anything' was reported under the headline 'Plea for poorer nations'. Sarcastic comments by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition about the 'magical market forces' that would ensure the establishment of export-oriented industries in Australia were reported under the headline 'Imports "costing jobs"'. And the Chief Executive of Bradmill Industries Limited argued in a lengthy letter to the Editor that the Australian textile industry needed protection from imports from developed countries too: 'it costs up to 25 per cent more to employ an operative in Australia compared with the United States'.

Coincidentally, the editorial in *The Canberra Times* complemented the reports of the Conference proceedings by reviewing the just-published report of a Parliamentary Committee on 'The New International Economic Order'. The editorial gave prominence to the Committee's comments on the Treasury submission:

> The Treasury submission points to the relationship between rapid growth in trade and that in GNP in developing countries. 'It is almost certainly not coincidental that the fastest-growing developing countries were important participants in this trade, while the slower-growing ones tended not to be'. The committee accepts that trade can be an important factor in economic growth.[12]

Developing Asia since 1980: the economic miracle

In a paper presented to the Academy's Annual Symposium in 1999, David Henderson used estimates from a forthcoming publication by Angus Maddison to support his analysis of the marked differences in economic performance among developing countries in recent decades. Henderson attributed the remarkable success of most Asian countries, especially by comparison with the countries of Africa or Latin America, to a 'common element':

> Generalising broadly, these more successful countries have either remained, or have increasingly moved towards becoming, market economies with relatively liberal regimes governing external trade and investment.13

Angus Maddison's new book[14] provides evidence of the exceptional performance of the developing Asian countries in the 1980s and 1990s, by comparison both with their own historical experience and also that of the now-developed countries in earlier times.

In order to appreciate fully the unprecedented nature of the Asian achievement in the past two decades, it is worth recalling that the 'typical' historical Western growth rate in GDP per head, distilled from a mass of data relating to all of the leading economies by scholars such as Simon Kuznets and Angus Maddison, is about 1.5 per cent per annum.[15] This rate is approximately equivalent to a doubling in real output per head in each half-century. By the middle of the twentieth century, the compounding effect of several doublings of per capita output in 'the West' had combined with continuing

stagnation in much of the rest of the world to produce 'the gap': the large gulf between rich and poor countries that is widely seen as the central problem of our times.

Maddison's new book provides estimates for '16 East Asian countries excluding Japan'. This group of countries accounts for over one-half of the world's population and about two-thirds of the total population of the developing countries. According to the Maddison estimates, which are necessarily conjectural for the early years, the average GDP per head of the people in the 15 countries actually **declined** between 1820 and 1950.

Then the great change began: the GDP per capita growth rate achieved by the developing Asian countries exceeded the previous 'typical' Western growth rate in every decade in the second half of the century. Instead of the doubling in the second half of the century that would have been achieved if Asian growth had no more than matched the previous Western performance, the output per head of developing Asia increased almost sixfold in the half-century.

Importantly, the average growth rate achieved in the 1980s and 1990s was equivalent to a 'doubling time' of only 15-16 years. In other words, developing Asia (a region containing the majority of the world's people) has achieved a growth rate in the past two decades which is equivalent to three doublings (an eightfold increase) in output per head over a 50-year period.

The new backlash against globalisation

Despite this astonishing achievement, which must be attributed in considerable part to the readiness of Asian countries to establish liberal trade and investment regimes, the twenty-first century has begun with a rising backlash against globalisation and the policies and institutions needed to sustain further progress in the years ahead.

The predictions made at the Canberra conference in 1980 that the poor would get richer, but at a slower rate than the rich, have been utterly confounded, with the subsequent growth rates in developing Asia exceeding those of all of the major rich countries by a large margin.

The backlash against globalisation is supported by other claims that were aired at the Canberra meeting and persist over 20 years later, despite massive evidence to the contrary. The assertion that the rich countries had been able to impose trade patterns of their own choosing on the rest of the world finds no support in the relative growth rates of trade and output in the 1980s and 1990s.

Other claims are equally misplaced. For example, the assertion that the benefits of globalisation accrue largely or entirely to rich minorities in the developing countries finds no support in a careful analysis by two researchers at the World Bank. Their study revealed 'little systematic evidence of a relationship between trade volumes (or any other globalisation measure we consider) and changes in the income share of the poorest', so that 'the increase in growth rates that accompanies expanded trade leads to proportionate increases in incomes of the poor.'

In the developing Asian countries, the recent evidence cited by the researchers shows that the rate of real income growth of the poorest 20 per cent of the population was lower than the average for the population as a whole in China and Bangladesh, but higher than the average in India, Indonesia, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand and Malaysia.[16]

Another myth is that the remarkable improvements in real incomes in Asian countries have not been matched by corresponding improvements in other aspects of well

being. Again, the evidence is strongly to the contrary. The UNDP's Human Development Index (HDI) has been devised specifically to enable progress in other key indicators of human development – ie, life expectancy, adult literacy and education participation rates – to be compared on a common scale with increases in average incomes. For most Asian countries, the HDI reveals that the progress in these other aspects of human development have been faster, and in many cases spectacularly faster, than the advance in average incomes over the same period.

Alan Oxley, former Australian Ambassador to the GATT (the predecessor body to the WTO) has recently written that 'the truly disheartening aspect [of the anti-WTO and anti-globalisation protests] is the fundamental disregard [the protesters show] for the concerns of developing countries.' Oxley concludes:

> The protesters are so self-absorbed in the rightness of their cause that they are willing to try to destroy one of the few international organisational instruments that has helped and can continue to help developing countries. . . It is a dismal measure of the lack of real regard for the global human condition that things have come to this pass in Western societies.[17]

Ian Castles AO is Vice President of the Academy.

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Academy Workshops

The ethical, social and legal implications of the Human Genome Project

Riaz Hassan

The public awareness and curiosity about the 'New Genetics' or Genomics have been galvanised by the debates emanating from the scientific achievements of the Human Genome Project (HGP). The scientific aspirations of the HGP include complete mapping of the human genetic code and application of this knowledge to find cures for thousands of genetically transmitted diseases. It is the largest research project ever undertaken to understand how life works at the molecular level. It has been suggested that humanity is now entering a new scientific frontier, which would for the first time open the so-called 'book of life'.

. . . the increased availability of genetic information will have many ethical, social, economic and legal implications which will profoundly affect human societies.

Besides the anticipated advances in biomedical sciences the increased availability of genetic information will have many ethical, social, economic and legal implications which will profoundly affect human societies. Some of the ethical issues raised by increased genetic knowledge relate to the proper and fair use of genetic information by insurers, employers, courts, schools, adoption agencies, law enforcement bodies and the military. It raises question about the confidentiality and privacy of genetic information: who should have access to individual genetic information, who owns it and how it will be used? Genetic information will have important consequences for individual identity and selfhood, as well as society's perception of the individual. It also raises ethical and moral issues in the clinical areas of reproductive behaviour, genetic therapy and genetic enhancement. The economic implications relate to the issues of commercialisation of genetic knowledge and products. All of these issues have legal implications.

A joint Academy-Flinders University sponsored workshop was organised to explore and debate some of the ethical, social and legal issues and held 1-2 December 2000 at Flinders University. Fifteen papers were presented by 20 participants from Australia and overseas.

The opening session was devoted to the HGP and the future of medicine. Professor Grant Sutherland (Women's and Children's Hospital, Adelaide) gave an overview in his paper, 'The Human Genome Project - scientific achievements and impact on the future of medicines'. He argued that HGP is still in its early phases and as it proceeds the data on genes for single-gene diseases will increasingly be used for genetic counselling, the prevention of disease through prenatal diagnosis and genetic based treatments. Eventually the common disease susceptibility genes will allow predictive testing long before the onset of such disease. This could revolutionise medicine from its current approach of treating disease, to preventing it. The paper argued that the knowledge of the genome status of individuals would give rise to many issues that primarily revolve around the potential for discrimination. The potential to greatly increase life expectancy has many implications for population size and structure and how the community will choose to deal with them.

In their papers Associate Professor Evan Willis (Latrobe University) and Dr Maria Zadoroznyj (Flinders University) addressed the impact of the New Genetics for public

health and health inequalities. After reviewing the intended and unintended impact of the HGP on public health, Willis argued that the new challenge was to harness the benefits of advances in genetic understanding of disease and to help ensure that these outweigh the apparent drawbacks. A key argument was not that amelioration in the individual manifestation of genetic disease should not be pursued but that balancing resource allocation between individual and population health is a difficult task when the whole politico-economic contest in which these advances are taking place, make investment in public health issues problematic. The danger is that individual health ends are being sought at the expense of the sort of population health benefits that have always been the concern of public health.

Zadoroznyj's paper argued that despite the promise of the new genetics for better health and longevity, there is little reason to believe that these benefits will be equitably distributed in the population. The paper stressed that economic, social, and health delivery systems needed to be reshaped to ameliorate the cause of existing differentials in health status and longevity. She envisaged the need for involving the public in policies and decisions about the allocation of resources for public health to ensure that new types of inequality will not emerge which would have significant social and ethical implications.

Papers by Dr Neville Hicks (University of Adelaide) and Dr Christopher Newell (University of Tasmania) addressed the issues related to the impact of HGP for human identity. Hicks argued that much of the debate about the HGP was fuelled by ethical concerns, mostly expressed in the dominant deontological and utilitarian languages of bioethics, each of which might be regarded as inadequate in articulating a conception of personhood.

Newell's paper explored the impact of the new genetics on people with disabilities. It argued that the so-called new genetics is driven by dominant discourses, which perpetuate the oppression of those we identify as having a disability. Substantial policy arrangements are necessary if we are to ensure that people with disability and disease will achieve full participation in social life, rather than further stigmatised and marginalised in the brave new world.

The papers by Professor Nick Martin (Queensland Institute of Medical Research) and Dr Catherine Waldby (University of New South Wales) addressed the question of the meaning of being human. In his paper 'A man is the sum total of his DNA sequences', Martin argued that this was a restatement of old questions about free will vs determinism, nature vs nurture, and the autonomy of the individual. Although for many variables human reaction range may be greatly narrowed by the options his genes give him, the human being is not simply the sum of his DNA sequences. The paper concluded that triumphant genetic determinism might be as misplaced as Boasian environmentalism was 70 years ago.

Although for many variables human reaction range may be greatly narrowed by the options his genes give him, the human being is not simply the sum of his DNA sequences.

Waldby's paper addressed one of the paradoxes of molecular genetics. On the one hand particular configurations of genetic information are taken to produce particular species. The scientific goal of the HGP is predicated on this as it seeks to exhaustively specify the long list of nucleotide sequences claimed to be presenting the prospect of a perfectible and specifiable human genetic content. On the other hand, in molecular biology, particular gene sequences and functions are shared among numerous

animals and plants, and the genomes of several organisms were used to help assemble the human genome, precisely because of the indifference of genetic code to species distinction. The HGP involves multiple translations between human genetic information and cybernetic information, opening up ever more complex forms of interpretation between flesh and data, human and computer.

The papers by Dr David Turner and Professor Riaz Hassan (both from Flinders University) examined the scientific, ethical and social challenges in the postgenomic society. Turner argued that postgenomic society will not involve a reductionist human existence, but all individuals will have access to individually determined, probabilistic lifetime risks for most human disorders. Refinement of risk disorder will place burdens on individuals and create moral obligations, and societies will need to determine what predictive genetic information may be blamelessly private and when information must be disclosed. With intervention to ameliorate the onset of predicted disorders there is likely to be an accelerated increase in longevity with potentially intolerable burdens for healthcare. The paper suggested that maximising the potential benefits of predictive genetic testing without causing self-sacrifice or producing a genetic underclass would become an urgent public interest issue requiring appropriate policy development.

Hassan's paper focused on the social implications of 'manufactured' longevity. The indications are that, as result of the knowledge gained from the HGP, there will be a significant increase in life expectancy in rich industrialised countries like Australia. For many, life will not only be longer but also healthier and perhaps more fulfilling and rewarding. It will also be an era of disruptive social, political and cultural change. The uneven distribution of longevity may produce new environmental stresses and global political and social conflicts. The success in arresting or slowing down senescence will force us to redefine who we are as individuals and as collectivities. The age-segregated life-course would need to be changed to a more flexible age-integrated life course that is more conducive to lifelong education, work and leisure.

The success in arresting or slowing down senescence will force us to redefine who we are as individuals and as collectivities. The age-segregated life-course would need to be changed to a more flexible age-integrated life course that is more conducive to lifelong education, work and leisure.

Three papers were presented in the session on The Ethics and Etiquettes of Managing Genetic Information. Dr Alan Petersen (Murdoch University) focused on counselling the genetically 'at-risk'. He argued that the new genetic knowledge will radically change the practices of medical treatment and illness prevention. An examination of the history and context of a non-directive approach to genetic counselling and its underlying assumptions and principles, suggested an urgent need to evaluate the aims and regulatory implications of genetic counselling.

Professor Robert Goldney's (University of Adelaide) paper examined the issue of communicating genetic information to patients by medical practitioners, using case studies. He argued that increasingly clinicians will have to address the importance of genetic contributions to illness and behaviour. Furthermore, individual patients will have access to an unprecedented level of information, some of it not subject to peer review, about their conditions. The paper explored some of the ethical and clinical implications of these issues. Mr. David Keays (University of Melbourne) examined the issues of genetic testing from the legal perspective. Genetic testing is now becoming an important part of modern medicines and can provide at-risk individuals with the

opportunity to initiate prophylactic strategies. However this technology has also given rise to genetic discrimination especially by the insurance companies.

In her paper 'Turning the "Book of life" into Stock Offering', Professor Barbara Katz Rothman (City University of New York) explored the issues related to the ownership and regulation of new genetic knowledge. She argued that now that the 'book of life', the human genome, has been mapped, the limits of that accomplishment- what it will and what it won't mean for us human sharers of this genome- are starting to become clear. The promises of long lives, individually tailored medicines, unlocking the secrets of cancers and other serious diseases are being accompanied by the announcements of patents and profits from the human genome. Patenting not only changes the way science can be used or controlled but it also forces science to redefine itself as 'inventor' and creator of a world of investments. We are thus confronted with the hegemonic power of the markets, leading us to create a world in which well-educated and otherwise reasonable people can argue that if there is no profit to be made then there is no incentive to cure cancer or end human suffering. If this is the best we can do with the 'book of life', she argued, then we are heading towards a state of moral bankruptcy.

We are thus confronted with the hegemonic power of the markets, leading us to create a world in which well-educated and otherwise reasonable people can argue that if there is no profit to be made then there is no incentive to cure cancer or end human suffering. If this is the best we can do with the 'book of life', she argued, then we are heading towards a state of moral bankruptcy.

In the final session Associate Professor Colin Thomson (University of Wollongong) argued that the knowledge derived from the HGP is likely to lead to tension between moral, social and legal equality, and biological inequality and difference. A politically and socially inclusive conception of law is needed to address the questions that arise from this tension, such as: how can we assimilate the flood of information about biological difference without undermining a commitment to political and legal equality? and what principles should guide public policy and individual choice concerning the use of genetic interventions in a post-HGP society?

In his paper on 'Designer Babies' Associate Professor Ian Hunt (Flinders University) examined the ethical limits of the use of genetic engineering to produce offspring with desired characteristics**.** Biological complexity will always set a significant limit on the range of genetic engineering that we can undertake with acceptable risks, and modifying genetic material may harm not only babies that develop from them but afflict indefinitely many subsequent generations. Since parents do not own their children, and can only vicariously suffer the consequences of what they do to them, parents are not entitled to engineer their children for their own purposes in ways that those children may well come to reject.

Biological complexity will always set a significant limit on the range of genetic engineering that we can undertake with acceptable risks, and modifying genetic material may harm not only babies that develop from them but afflict indefinitely many subsequent generations.

Over the two days the Workshop provided an intellectually stimulating venue for exploring ethical, social and legal implications of the Human Genome Project. The workshop sessions were structured to provide time for vigorous and informed

discussion of the papers. The participants felt that the Workshop provided a valuable opportunity for scientists and social scientists to debate some of the critical scientific, ethical, social and legal issues arising from the Human Genome Project and in this respect it fulfilled its stated objectives. The work is now in progress to prepare the Workshop papers for publication.

Riaz Hassan is Professor of Sociology at the Flinders University of South Australia.

Workshop Program for August 2001/June 2002

- *Rethinking Australian Republicism*, to be held in Brisbane on 18-19 August 2001
- *Litigation: Past and Present*: to be convened by Professor Wilfrid Prest and Dr Sharyn Roach Anleu in Adelaide in September 2001
- *2001 Federal Election Study* to be held in December

Under consideration for funding by the Workshop Committee:

- *Custom: The fate of non-western law and indigenous governance in the 21st century*
- *The Psychology of Ethics in the Field of Medicine: issues, perspectives and application*

Copies of the Workshop Guidelines are available on the Academy's website, www.assa.edu.au or email Sue.Rider@anu.edu.au

2001 UN Year for Dialogue Amongst Civilisations:

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The State of Play: Sex and Gender Issues

Gender mainstreaming: a new vision, more of the same or backlash?

Carol Lee Bacchi

Gender mainstreaming is the phrase used increasingly in Europe to describe a new approach to achieving equality for women in a variety of institutional sites. It is also being used in some Australian universities.[1] The phrase is less common in the United States, but the direction it is supposed to support is a direction pursued there as well, at times under a different rubric such as 'managing diversity'. Theoretically, gender mainstreaming indicates a commitment to institutionalising gender equality measures in and throughout the whole organisation. Its proponents claim that to date gender equality issues have been hived off into specialist 'equal opportunity' units, marginalised from decision-making in organisations; hence, their impact has been minimal. Moreover, it is argued that the isolating of the issue from the 'mainstream' business of an organisation has meant that the focus has been on trying to make women fit into the organisation, rather than making organisations change in ways which would make them women-friendly. Along similar lines, the declared goal of managing diversity is culture change through acknowledging and valuing differences.[2]

Doubtless, these goals are worthy ones. A good deal of feminist literature has directed attention to the limitations of compensatory approaches to organisational change. Feminists have also been at the heart of a demand to shift the focus from women as the problem to the need for deep institutional change. So, in theory, mainstreaming appears to be desirable. However, the topic is generating a good deal of debate. Not all feminists are convinced that the shifts in strategy accompanying the mainstreaming rhetoric will accomplish what is promised. While there appears to be wide agreement that the kinds of changes hoped for in the establishment of equal opportunity units have not eventuated, there is less agreement about both the goals and likely effects of mainstreaming. In this paper, I will outline the genesis of the mainstreaming approach and will review the debates surrounding it. I will also suggest a technique for testing the effectiveness of the approach, a technique I have developed elsewhere. This is the 'What's the problem (represented to be)?' approach to policy analysis.[3]

Not all feminists are convinced that the shifts in strategy accompanying the mainstreaming rhetoric will accomplish what is promised.

Sonia Mazey traces the origins of the concept and practice of gender mainstreaming to the Nordic countries, in particular Norway and Sweden, and the Netherlands in the 1980s. The concept was endorsed by the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. In the following year, the European Commission adopted a formal commitment to gender mainstreaming and, since then, EU member states 'have, with varying degrees of enthusiasm, begun to adopt mainstreaming strategies, partly in response to EU pressure.' The term is also becoming fashionable elsewhere, for example in Great Britain, Uganda and Australia.[4]

Several organisational issues are crucial to assessing mainstreaming efforts: the relationship between mainstreaming and earlier equal opportunity initiatives; the location of mainstreaming in Human Resources; and budgeting issues. In some places, the shift to mainstreaming has meant the removal of existing equal opportunity units and of the policies associated with these units, including affirmative action. In other places, this is not the case. In fact, in Makerere University in Uganda, there is

explicit endorsement of affirmative action as an activity of mainstreaming; mainstreaming is not used as a reason to abandon women-specific measures.[5] The United Nations group, UNIFEM, insists that a commitment to mainstreaming should not preclude a focus on women.[6] In terms of institutional location, some concerns are expressed about the integration, which accompanies mainstreaming, of equal opportunity into human resource management. In research conducted in South Australia, an equal opportunity officer put it this way: 'We are here to monitor what goes on in human resources as well as elsewhere. If equal opportunity were not a separate unit, I would not be able to get my concerns heard.'[7] Along similar lines, in Sweden, Margitta Edgren, former Chair of an advisory group for the Ministry of Education, warns: 'please note you must have watchdogs. Without them, equality drowns in the stream.'[8] Another concern is that the exercise be properly budgeted. It proves sadly inadequate to ask existing equal opportunity units to add to their workload the task of implementing and monitoring mainstreaming measures without additional resources. Eleanor Ramsay's poignant comment on mainstreaming, it seems, remains apt: 'the compelling logic of the mainstreaming argument, that equity matters should become everyone's responsibility in the organisation has distracted attention from the result, whether intended or not, that there is a danger that it will become nobody's.'[9]

My work on mainstreaming in Australian universities indicates that a good deal depends on the specific institutional setting. In universities where strong leaders are committed to real and meaningful change, mainstreaming may be useful. In other universities it has served only as a rationale for eliminating the specific units which were created to monitor the position of women.[10] Pollack and Hafner-Burton suggest, along similar lines, that implementation is uneven across the European Commission's five Directorates-General (DGs). They find more enthusiasm for example in Structural Funds and in Development than in Competition. They attribute this in part to the strongly neo-liberal character of the Competition DG: 'Dominated by lawyers and economists, the Competiton DG enjoys exceptional autonomy from the political pressures of member state governments, and sees its mission as the creation and maintenance of a competitive European market-place.' Hence, EU competition officials resist any suggestion that they 'take into account non-market factors such as employment, industrial or social policies in their decisions.'[11]

What is a mainstreaming agenda and what does it mean to mainstream 'gender'? How are we to assess the measures associated with the initiative?

Beyond the practical issues of implementation, it is important to have a close look at the kinds of measures associated with mainstreaming. What is a mainstreaming agenda and what does it mean to mainstream 'gender'? How are we to assess the measures associated with the initiative? One way to do this, I suggest, is to examine models for implementation and to ask how the proposals construct the problem of inequality between women and men. This is an application of an approach to policy analysis I call 'What's the problem (represented to be)?' The approach starts from the premise that every policy proposal contains within it an explicit or implicit diagnosis of the 'problem', which I call its problem representation. It follows that any attempt to assess any policy must attend to the problem representation/s it contains. If these are askew, little will change.

As a procedure, I suggest starting with the policy and working backwards. Start with what it recommends and see how this reveals what it assumes needs to change – this is what it represents as the problem. This is only the beginning of the exercise,

however. We have to interrogate the proposal to see the underlying presuppositions which ground this representation of the problem. We have to uncover what is considered to be unchallengeable and unchangeable. We have to consider what will follow from this representation of the problem. We have to consider who is identified as the target of change and with what effects for that group. We have to ask whose behaviour remains unscrutinised.[12]

For example, Bishop-Sambrook offers detailed charts of the kinds of measures included in the 'logical framework' for mainstreaming. 'Gender sensitisation' appears often in the summary of recommendations. Without denigrating the importance of such initiatives, it is important to note that such measures construct the problem as attitudinal, as individual prejudice, ignoring institutional and structural discrimination. Another specified activity is to increase the number of women 'in senior academic and senior administrative posts, based on merit'.[13] Again, while the goal of increasing the numbers of women is laudable, the endorsement of merit as a measuring stick of quality ignores the many feminist contributions which indicate that what is considered to be meritorious is tied tightly to gendered roles and expectations. As just one example, if it is held to be meritorious to leave one's family for extended periods of time and to spend long hours at work, fewer women that men are likely to get hired or promoted given the current division of domestic duties. Moreover, this conception of merit will make it difficult to shift the current privileging of career over family in employment policy. Hence, appointment by 'merit' needs to be interrogated rather than simply endorsed.

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This ties into the need to reflect upon what is meant by mainstreaming 'gender', a term which has acquired many meanings. In the European Union's 1998 *Guide to Gender Impact Assessment*, described as 'a tool for implementing mainstreaming', 'gender' is used in two quite different ways.[14] In a section elaborating 'basic concepts', the *Guide* offers separate definitions of 'sex' and 'gender', marking a distinction between biological and social differences, a distinction popular in early second-wave feminism but challenged in more recent feminist theory.[15] In this usage, 'gender' becomes a cultural cloak which can be removed, revealing 'true' men and women. With this baseline, the role of policy in shaping the lives of women and men may well become difficult to discern.

Paradoxically, at the same time as the *Guide* insists that 'gender' is separate from the biological categories of men and women, gender is used as a shorthand for 'men and women'. We can see this in the way in which a gender-based assessment begins with an analysis of *sex*-disaggregated statistics to see if women and men appear as significantly different in relation to a range of policies. In this usage, the goal becomes preventing policy proposals 'from further reinforcing *existing* differences – in participation, distribution of resources, discriminatory norms and values and structural direct or indirect discrimination.'[16] This descriptive use of gender does not address the 'relational aspects of gender, of power and ideology, and of how patterns of subordination are reproduced.'[17] Recent gender theory challenges this static, individualistic characterising of gender. The Series Editors to *Revisioning Gender* note the key shift from conceptualising gender as an individual trait to focusing on gender

as a principle of social organisation. The goal, they tell us, is to 'no longer take dichotomous gender for granted but to begin to explain the meaning of gender itself.'[18] Fiona Wilson makes a similar point in her plea that 'Instead of looking at gender as a difference, perhaps we need to look at how this is done.'[19]

A focus on '*existing* differences' does not tell us how these differences come to be. In effect, the goal becomes evening out the impact of a range of policies rather than interrogating their premises. For example, in the *Guide*, the legitimacy of the goal of 'eliminating labour market rigidities' is taken to be axiomatic. As Nicola Lacey explains, when the focus is simply a disparity in the treatment of men and women, 'equalisation was almost invariably in one direction – towards a male norm.'[20] An analysis which focuses on 'evening out' the effects of policy on women and men encourages us to think that women will be liberated when they have work conditions like men, or pay comparable to similar groups of men. It is difficult in this framing to challenge the appropriateness of those work conditions or those male pay rates. Despite the claim then that mainstreaming works to change organisations rather than women, we are still working with a model which accepts the male as benchmark and which identifies different treatment as the problem. Rather we need to examine the impact of gendered assumptions in creating and reinforcing social hierarchies and in framing lives we may not wish to lead.

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Baden and Goetz note the kinds of explanations which lodge *within* current mainstreaming programs in the development setting: 'To the extent that such approaches do consider the factors underlying gender disadvantage or inequality, they tend to look to information problems (eg, women's tendency to follow female role models) or to "culture" (defined as outside the purview of mainstream economics).' As in my What's the Problem? approach, the implication here is that programs for change contain explanations of the 'problem' which need to be examined and challenged if held to be inadequate. Information-type explanations such as those which insist on the importance of female role models construct women as 'lacking' information and hence as needing direction. Removing culture from the realm of analysis reduces the 'problem' to a matter of individual choice. These kinds of explanations 'tend to strip away the political content of information on women's interests and reduce it to a set of needs or gaps, amenable to administrative decisions about the allocation of resources. Women are separated out as the central problem and isolated from the context of social and gender relations.'[21] Dare I say – yet again! Baden and Goetz's point is that all we will be left with in this approach is a compensatory agenda rather than an analysis which probes the reasons women are positioned in an asymmetrical power relationship to men in a range of statistical indices.

Hence, despite the rhetoric heralding the deep organisational change which will accompany gender mainstreaming, the approaches and measures associated with the reform to date indicate a much more limited agenda. In fact, when mainstreaming results in the removal of existing equal opportunity units, I would suggest that there is a danger that we are taking a step backwards.

Note: This paper is a reworked extract from a keynote address delivered at the NorFA (Nordic Academy for Advanced Study) Conference, Women in Academia – a Nordic Perspective, Oslo, 7-9 May 2001.

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Researching Australia's gender culture: from shared expectations to profound ambivalence.

Belinda Probert

For the last three years I have been involved in a large scale interviewing project which was designed to capture the way different groups of men and women experienced their family and working lives in the 1950s and the 1990s[1]. The project aimed to explore the ideas about dramatic social and economic change that are found in both the literature about gender identities and family life, and that about the nature of employment, and to examine how people have actually experienced these changes. The work and family literatures of the 1950s are regularly counterposed to those of the 1990s along a wide range of dimensions. It is claimed, for example, that we have moved from Fordist production systems to post-Fordist flexible specialisation; from the bourgeois family based on a traditional male-breadwinner and female home maker to the de-gendered individualisers of 'risk society'. These key social structures have, it would seem, been radically altered.

While we have objective indicators of these changes – the collapse of full-time ongoing employment and the rise of casual and contract employment; the rapidly increasing labour market participation rates of married women and the rising rate of divorce, for instance – this project sought out the experience of these changes, expressed in narratives about working and family life. One hundred and sixty interviews later, we have a great deal of raw material.

I am currently using some of this material to reflect on what feels like a stalling of policy development in relation to women and employment in Australia. I am uneasy with the framework of 'choice' that dominates the policy discourse today – the notion that families, but overwhelmingly mothers, are able to choose how they combine

employment and family desires and responsibilities. The interview material enables us to describe the 'gender cultures' of the 1950s and the 1990s. 'Gender culture' refers to the norms and values that underpin what come to be defined as the 'desirable' forms of gender relations in a particular society, and the accepted ideas about the division of labour between men and women.

A brief history

Gender equity research in Australia has focused overwhelmingly on the 'gender system' – on the structures of the labour market and the welfare state and the extent to which they hinder or support women's activities as parents or workers. To a large extent, changes in the gender culture, particularly the attitudes of women, have been taken for granted. The massive expansion of community child care arising from the women's movement of the 1970s, the sex discrimination and affirmative action legislation of the 1980s and other innovations, created what now look like wildly optimistic scenarios for profound social change and gender equality based largely on women's right to work.

As an afterthought, and in recognition of the needs of women who had least to gain from this strategy because of their weak position in the labour market, we then saw a move to acknowledge the value of caring work in the 1990s, with an emphasis on welfare support for parenting (or mothering) as an acknowledged form of social participation. The rather thin nature of this commitment is revealed by the Howard government's ability to suggest that single mothers are *not* in fact being socially 'participative', and an increasing emphasis on employment as the key to status and income.

In a move that can only be described as contradictory, the same government that wished to discourage sole parents from staying at home introduced the family tax initiative and increased the costs of childcare in such a way as to make it harder for low income families to use it.

In a move that can only be described as contradictory, the same government that wished to discourage sole parents from staying at home introduced the family tax initiative and increased the costs of childcare in such a way as to make it harder for low income families to use it. This confusing set of policy directives is sometimes explained as being pro-choice, supporting payment of parents to stay at home at the same time as encouraging them to work. One obvious effect, however, is to generate significant and public conflict between women over the relative merits of mothers who work and mothers who mother, and surprising disunity about which kind of mother should be eligible for financial assistance. It is as though the narrative about staying at home for the children cannot coexist socially with the narrative of self-actualisation.

Perhaps we need to articulate more self-consciously the distinctive nature of Australia's gender arrangement – the particular historical and national framework that is produced by the gender culture and the gender system. We also need an internationally comparative approach in Australian research, particularly because of the significance of unarticulated assumptions about the 'natural' in analyses of gender roles.

There are very substantial differences between countries with similar levels of economic development in the way women participate in the labour market – and this is linked to the way households organise themselves and the care of children. In Europe

there has been a major expansion in collaborative and comparative projects focusing on these questions, creating a rich mix of empirical research and theoretical debate.[1] In elaborating her concept of gender culture, the German sociologist Birgit Pfau-Effinger argues that fact it is 'cultural models of motherhood' that form the central element of particular gender cultures. In looking at our Australian data, this does indeed appear to be so, not simply in the 1950s but also in the 1990s.

Attitudes to mothers working

There is a new dominant paradigm in Australia, despite the numbers of individual women who disagree with it, and this is that mothers should indeed be heading back into the workforce.

If we look at changes in attitudes about whether mothers should be integrated into society through paid employment, our interviews confirm a revolution in the gender culture. There is a new dominant paradigm in Australia, despite the numbers of individual women who disagree with it, and this is that mothers should indeed be heading back into the workforce. It is 'dominant' in the sense that not only do many women now express this preference for themselves, but even women who 'chose' not take this new path commonly talked about feeling criticised by 'society' for choosing to stay at home. While some working mothers feel that they are being criticized for leaving young children, this is no longer seriously condemned socially. These interviews confirm the findings of an earlier study, in which women with school age children who were still full-time mothers spoke eloquently of being made to feel bad about it.[2]

But does the change in attitudes to mothers working reflect a social commitment to women's self-actualisation or even financial autonomy? Hardly. Much of the support for mothers working is expressed in terms of the needs of their families and households, such as the need for two incomes. Relatively few women actually earn enough to be independent and the new post-Fordist economy is characterized by growing sectors of feminised employment that do not in fact pay a living wage – such as retailing and hospitality.

Attitudes to motherhood and children's needs

While attitudes to mothers working have certainly changed, what about attitudes to motherhood itself, and beliefs about what children need? Here we found remarkably little change. The great majority of mothers of young children in the 1990s think that young children should be with their mothers, although about a third of them say that this could equally well be a father or grandparent. Opinions vary about when children are old enough to be exposed to other forms of care, and there is absolutely no agreement about what these other forms of care should be. For example, only about half of the women we interviewed about the 1990s believe that childcare centers are satisfactory, let alone good for kids. Less than a third use childcare centres, and a tiny proportion of these use them on a full-time basis. Working mothers are twice as likely to rely on their parents/in-law, or to use a nanny. Others opt for family day care. Many women combine the use of two or more of these options.

In terms of writing up such research findings, there is no coherent pattern to be found in these attitudes towards the needs of young children. What we find is just about every attitude and practice, but fewer mothers endorsed the view that this is a matter for individual choice than were strongly critical of formal childcare. Views about the merits of formal childcare were not generally based on experience, however. Indeed, several older women

(young mothers of the 1950s) told us that they had changed their mind about childcare after seeing their own grandchild thrive in that environment.

With the ambivalent and often contradictory narratives used by 1990s parents about the care of children, it was impossible to find patterns of widely shared views about the role of the state or market in the provision of care or support for parenting. For example:

- about forty percent of parents support the notion of government subsidies to formal childcare providers;
- almost a third of these are conditional in their support, and adamant that such support must be means tested, or only provided to help poor women or single mothers get into the labour force;
- almost a quarter were opposed to government subsidies, for a wide range of reasons.

The most common theme in opposition to public subsidies is the notion that women and parents should be totally responsible for the choices they make about having children. For some however opposition to subsidies stems from the belief that childcare is bad for children, or the view that mothers of young children who work are selfish, or that it is the employer's responsibility rather than the government's, or the fear that such subsidies may be abused by those who are not needy. In other words, attitudes towards government intervention to support particular kinds of care arrangements tend to be embedded in highly moralistic and judgmental narratives about family roles and responsibilities. Where a more pragmatic assessment prevails, particularly in the case of families that clearly rely on the mother's income, there is little sense that government intervention is on a scale or at a level that really makes a difference. Formal childcare is simply seen as too expensive for the working class.

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Parents in the 1990s are as likely to favour financial support for mothers or parents at home with their children as they are to support childcare subsidies, and very few actually oppose parenting payments. The opposition that is expressed is highly political, and reflects a not uncommon belief amongst less well-off parents that parenting payments are designed to push mothers out of the labour market.

The ideology of domesticity

Much contemporary social policy debate is coming to focus on growing social polarisation as wealthy households increasingly diverge from poorer households in their patterns of both labour market participation and parenting. Less attention is being paid to the development of increasing gender inequality within some social classes, as increasingly different models of family life and parenting emerge. The major milestones in gender equality policy have been reached as the result of strenuous mobilisation of the kind that occurs around a clearly articulated and widely shared common purpose. Not only is little further progress towards gender equality likely under the current circumstances, but historical gains appear to be relatively easily undermined. The speed with which the movement for community-based childcare has

been replaced with private provision that caters increasingly to high earning women is a case in point.

In understanding the lack of progress around the equality agenda we need to acknowledge the role of gender culture – the cultural obstacles to further progress - and in particular what Joan Williams calls the ideology and practice of domesticity.[3] In the United States, as in Australia, the rapid social changes of the last half-century have not dislodged the ideology of domesticity. Our interviewees, in their descriptions of good mothering, speak in that 'different voice' so persuasively described by Carol Gilligan in the early 1990s. They talk about the 'selflessness' of the moral mother – a female sense of self that is 'organised around being able to make, then to maintain, affiliations and relationships'.

Williams points out that much of what Gilligan and her followers cite as evidence of an ethic of care can equally well be seen as 'evidence that women justify their decisions by reference to different social norms than those applicable to men'. This is evidence of a culture that requires women to become mothers and requires mothers to be selfless. 'Domesticity intimates that women who act for themselves rather than for others are selfish, as in "selfish career woman"'.[4] The moral equation of 'goodness' with 'self-sacrifice' is one of the conventions of femininity.

This ideology of domesticity plays an important role in explaining the confusion and mixed views to be found in our interviews about good parenting and gender roles. It is a part of the gender culture that requires interrogation. Williams suggests that we need to focus on the 'deleterious impacts of domesticity' if we are to get out of the apparent conflict between women on these issues, and restore this question of care to a matter of policy. The ideology of domesticity identifies issues related to care-giving simultaneously as women's issues and as matters that 'naturally' belong in the private sphere. In France and Scandinavia, by contrast, such issues are felt to be 'of pressing public concern, relating to the future health of the community at large.' Williams argues that domesticity is an integral part of the 'mind-set that leaves the United States the only major industrial nation that offers no paid maternity leave as a matter of national policy'. (Well, Australia is not on everyone's map, I fear).

The ideology of domesticity marginalises not only the care of children, but all tasks related to caring and care-giving. Virtue comes to be associated with bourgeois sexual propriety rather than civic life; selflessness comes to be associated with motherhood rather than with the citizen's pursuit of the common good. To reject this association does not have to imply any downgrading of our concern with the impact of work on family life and the care of children. If we wish to maintain the central role of parents in the care of young children then gender equity policy will have to turn its attention to reforming and re-regulating the labour market, the development of renewed campaigns around the politics of time, and gender pay equity.

Real changes in the 'gender culture'?

The Australian gender culture of the 1990s strongly endorses the notion of mothers working in stark contrast to the 1950s. But other critical elements of the gender culture are relatively unchanged. Overall, our interviews do not suggest any widely shared view about the state being a central player in managing the care of children as is found in the Scandinavian social democracies. The caring state is still a residual welfare state, providing support for caring work only in the context of households in poverty, and increasingly withdrawing such support whenever mothers show signs of transferring their financial dependence onto the state rather than their husbands or

partners. In other words, the care of pre-school children remains a matter of parental choice except for the very poor.

Not surprisingly, women who are committed to establishing more symmetrical household arrangements tend to rely on private or market solutions to their childcare needs – solutions that generally require high levels of income. The market is responding to these needs, not only in the provision of nannies, but through the transformation of private schools into substitutes for cradle to university welfare. Many now take 'enrolments' at six months, and provide daily and weekly boarding as well as the more traditional term-based kind. For less wealthy or more squeamish dual-career households, grandparents and aunts are filling the care gap.

In this research it is the ambivalence, the contradictions and the conflicting underlying moral structure of the narratives about parenting that has to be explained. We need to look more critically at the way Australian welfare state structures and policies interact with these narratives of care to produce such contradictory outcomes, and the way these elements contribute to the loss of momentum around gender equality.

There is no doubting the change in the working lives of women – change in both attitudes and practices. And in the 1990s both fathers and mothers have similar attitudes about what is good for their children with an emphasis on the direct role of either parent or indeed extended family. But the domestic division of labour is surprisingly unchanged, except in those households where women work full-time and earn good money. The revolution in expectations about women's labour market participation seems to have occurred without any corresponding revolution in the care of children and the domestic sphere. The practice of fathering is relatively unchanged despite the changes in expectations since the 1950s. The role of the state and market in meeting the growing need for more socialized or commodified care of children is surprisingly weak except for very wealthy or very poor families.

While Australian governments play a fairly minor role in supporting the work roles of mothers, their support for parenting roles is also weak and contradictory. The Keating government's introduction of the parenting allowance was at such a low level that it had no impact on the choices available to or behaviour of any women except those in very low income families. Similarly, the Howard government's introduction of tax incentives to support mothers who stay at home, is unlikely to have had an effect on the behaviour of better off households. The impact on household income is simply not large enough.

Single mothers must not be allowed to experience the erosion of their social skills and moral fibre while they stay at home with their children, while married women are to be encouraged to accept just such a fate.

The contradictory nature of government policy today is most starkly revealed in the current discussion about sole parent benefits, and the appropriate behaviour of single mothers. This group, unlike any other, has been identified as incapable of making appropriate choices, and it is clearly the government's preferred option to withdraw their right to be stay-at-home mothers at public expense. Single mothers must not be allowed to experience the erosion of their social skills and moral fibre while they stay at home with their children, while married women are to be encouraged to accept just such a fate.

Some tentative conclusions

If we had to draw some tentative conclusions about Australia's gender regime in the 1990s, we would have to acknowledge its instability. The male breadwinner/female home-carer model which dominated the 1950s no longer dominates, and only appears as central in the narratives of working class men, many of whom cannot hope to afford such a gendered division of labour. Women, generally, expect and are expected to work in some form or another. Men and women are equally integrated into employment when no children are present, but women can drop out when children arrive and then change to a part-time employment model, which is quite different from the full-time employment model still seen as appropriate for men. We do not seem to be moving in the direction of the dual breadwinner/state-carer model which characterises Denmark or Finland, within which the care of children is seen primarily as a welfare state responsibility rather than a family responsibility. Nor are we moving in the direction of a dual breadwinner/dual-carer model, in which child-rearing is seen as responsibility of the family, and in which the labour market has to allow both men and women to assume this responsibility. Such a model would require either state transfers to permit caring, or the protection of the family wage.

The contradictory and ambivalent nature of contemporary Australian attitudes to motherhood, and to the role of the family, the state and the market in the care and education of young children, raises important questions for both researchers and policy makers. Researchers face the challenge of describing and explaining the distinctive nature of Australia's gender culture. Policy makers and supporters of a gender equality agenda on the other hand, must come to grips with this ambivalence both as an obstacle to policy development, and as the grounds on which relatively recent gains have been wound back.

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2 See for example the collection edited by Rosemary Crompton (1999). *Restructuring Gender Relations and Employment: The Decline of the Male Bread Winner.* Oxford University Press: Oxford.

3 Belinda Probert with Fiona Macdonald (1996). *The Work Generation.* Brotherhood of St Laurence, Melbourne 1996.

4 Joan Williams (2000). *Unbending Gender: Why Family and Work Conflict and What to do About It*. Oxford University Press: New York.

5 Williams *ibid*: 181.

Looking after country is men's and women's business: institutional support for Indigenous land management

Elspeth Young

Indigenous land management and institutional support: current understanding

Recognition of indigenous approaches to Australian land management has expanded rapidly in the last 30 years, partly as a result of the implementation of land rights but also because of growing global emphasis on sustainability, including the potential indigenous contribution to that process[1] The land rights process, along with land purchase through government-funded assistance or, in a few cases, royalties gained from resource development, and granting of a variety of tenures over former indigenous reserves, has today resulted in indigenous 'ownership' to approximately 15 per cent of the continent. Not surprisingly the use and management of these lands has become an increasingly important issue, one that is tackled generally under the complex and often contentious arena of cross-cultural research. One key argument concerns indigenous and non-indigenous interpretation of the appropriate way to look after this 'country'.[2] For indigenous people the use and management of country is, as Walsh[3] has stressed, a single process – to use is to manage. For non-indigenous people use and management are often separated. And the mainstream government institutions that have been developed to support land management, which are firmly grounded in the non-indigenous world, reflect that separation. That, I would argue, has inhibited the growth of appropriate policies, programs and processes to enable indigenous land holders to realise their own goals and aspirations. Instead these institutions have largely offered advice, training and financial support that reinforce non-indigenous concepts of land management. It is only with the emergence of alternative institutions, largely operating at the community level or through regional indigenous land councils and other bodies, that more appropriate approaches have come into being. And, as I and my colleagues have recently commented,[4] the survival of these alternative institutions is under constant threat because most have to depend on public funding that may well operate within guidelines that are not appropriate to them.

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The last three decades have not only seen the emergence of indigenous land management as an important and contentious issue; they have also been a period of intense research activity in that field. Detailed anthropological studies of contemporary indigenous use of country have identified not only what natural resources are used and how they are obtained, but also how significant these are in people's diets. In one community in resource rich Arnhem Land, for example, people obtained over 80 per cent of their protein from bush tucker;[5] and in a similar sized community in the arid zone, where bush tucker resources have been more heavily depleted by cattle grazing and other forms of land use, almost 75 per cent of people's protein came from that source.[6] Studies of indigenous subsistence land and resource use have also increasingly examined how this interacts with introduced forms of land use such as pastoralism or conservation and tourism, identifying that integrated and holistic approaches to management are fundamental to the aspirations of indigenous land holders.[7] Such explorations have inevitably been extended to the institutional organisations and processes that carry responsibility for the support of land management. It is here that the yawning gaps between the aspirations and goals of indigenous land managers and the

approaches offered by land management institutions emerge. That gap is particularly stark in the context of mainstream government agencies. Those organisations, including both Commonwealth and state government departments of primary resource development, environment and conservation, have an obligation to deliver services and support to the whole of Australia, and all its diverse population groups, including indigenous land-holders. Their success in meeting indigenous needs has been limited. Studies of funding allocation through such institutions[8] have all revealed inadequate allocation of funds overall.[9] This reflects marked inadequacies in the whole process of service delivery, described by me and my colleagues a decade ago as a 'fundamental mismatch between the needs of Aboriginal land and Aboriginal land managers, and the provisions of existing programs'.[10] We then identified the following key issues:

- Indigenous people were forced to rely largely on mainstream programs that emphasised commercial (rather than subsistence) production, and which were focused on degraded agricultural lands held by non-indigenous people;
- Communication of information concerning mainstream programs was culturally inadequate, took very little account of indigenous poverty, indigenous disadvantage in literacy or numeracy, limited indigenous understanding of modern technology, and relied largely on non-indigenous scientists and extension officers;
- Indigenous people had little opportunity to participate in making decisions over applications for program support;
- Indigenous people were disadvantaged by their lack of capital and of know-how in financial aspects of land management.

As our more recent overview suggested,[11] little has changed in the last decade.

Other syntheses of the interface between indigenous management of country and institutional support systems have focused more on particular types of use and management. They have included examination of indigenous contributions to biodiversity conservation;[12] to protected area management;[13] and to wildlife management.[14] Similar points have emerged. However some positive developments have also been identified. For over a decade mainstream Commonwealth government institutions, for example, have introduced special programs aimed at meeting indigenous land management needs (for example Aboriginal Rural Resource Initiatives (Bureau of Rural Resources); and Contract Employment Program for Aborigines in Natural and Cultural Resource Management (Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service)). They have also pioneered partnerships supporting jointly managed national parks such as Uluru Kata Tjuta and Kakadu. Joint management itself has spawned more specific initiatives including the introduction of indigenous land management techniques, such as use of fire, into park management; the encouragement of indigenous cultural interpretation and indigenous participation in directing ecotourism in parks; and appropriate training opportunities for indigenous land managers. Relatively new initiatives, such as Environment Australia's Indigenous Protected Area program, which facilitates and supports indigenous communities who are willing to declare protected area status over a portion of their lands, are also part of this process.[15] But these developments alone are not sufficient. If they are to succeed they need to be accepted by both government

Indigenous groups have been suspicious of government motives, government officers have failed to accept the validity of indigenous viewpoints about looking after country, and long-term funding has been lacking.

and indigenous groups; and they need to have assured funding. Neither of these conditions has been fully met. Indigenous groups have been suspicious of government motives, government officers have failed to accept the validity of indigenous viewpoints about looking after country, and long-term funding has been lacking.

Deficiencies such as these have increasingly been addressed by indigenous communities and regionally based land councils. Community support organisations such as Kowanyama Aboriginal Land and Natural Resources Management and Dhimurru Aboriginal Land Management Corporation have established their own unique approaches to the issue;[16] and regional support for land assessment, land management and planning has occurred through a number of agencies operating under core land councils including Anangu Pitjantjatjara, the Northern Land Council, the Central Land Council and the Kimberley Land Council.[17] These organisations have taken highly innovative approaches to managing country that offer very positive messages for indigenous land managers and for Australian land management in general.[18] In highlighting the cross-cultural clashes that undermine the effectiveness of institutional support for indigenous land management, all of these studies gloss over some key issues concerning the internal diversity of indigenous communities. These include differential access to country, and to the technology required to look after it; above all they include the issue of the distinctive role that indigenous women play in these activities. Given that rural extension services are still predominantly provided by men, this must be a key element in the debate.

Indigenous women as land managers

People's property rights are fundamental to their opportunities to use and manage land. Indigenous property rights in land, commonly referred to as land rights and/or Native Title rights, are now widely recognised as being held by both men and women. This recognition was, as far as non-indigenous Australia was concerned, lacking in the past. Initial steps towards implementing land claims lodged under the Aboriginal Land Rights (NT) Act, 1976, focused almost entirely on evidence offered by male leaders and recorded by male anthropologists and lawyers. After reported comments from their sisters, mothers and wives that 'the anthropologists' job had only been half done' claim documents were expanded to draw together the accounts of both men and women. This gave due recognition to women's cultural and spiritual responsibilities for land, revealing important points that would not have emerged in the men's evidence. This included the existence of spiritual sites that were primarily women's responsibility and were located quite distinctly from those of the men. Particularly in the earlier years of the land claim process, when claims over some areas of land were questioned and faced rejection because of a paucity of identified spiritual sites within them, the existence of these women's places provided irrefutable evidence of traditional ownership.

Indigenous women in central Australia, with whom I began to conduct research into resource management and community socio-economic change over two decades ago, have constantly demonstrated their spiritual and practical knowledge of managing country. I first travelled the arid zone in their company, learning in minute detail not only about their use of the wide range of fruits, vegetables and small game that make up desert bush tucker but also gaining intimate knowledge of how the abundance of these resources was affected by the physical elements – rain, temperature, shelter and soil composition. They also, through their stories, songs and paintings, introduced me to their own spiritual relationships to the land, relationships that were clearly engrained within their very beings and formed the basis of unique forms of institution,

or 'laws', that determined their approaches to land management. In the central Australian Mount Allan claim, for example, women organised information sessions to help me write the claim book and also used these to teach each other. Dancing, singing and story-telling sessions deliberately included members of all generations, and were attended by women in age ranges from over 70 to less than five; and when we embarked on site visits they ensured that not only the leaders attended but also the young people and even children whom they saw as the knowledge-holders of the future. In the case of some sites, visits had to be delayed until residents of Alice Springs, women who had lived away from the community for years, had arrived.[19] Thus the deliberate canvasing of women's traditional property rights had a crucial spin-off – the dissemination of information from older to younger women, and from those with profound knowledge to those who, because of dispossession and mobility, had been unable to learn directly from their mothers and aunts, and who had consequently suffered from loss of spiritual identity. This is a fundamental process in enhancing indigenous social sustainability.

Recognition of women's property rights and practical land management experience also vastly extended the richness of understanding of the whole indigenous approach to looking after country. Since women and men focus on different natural resources, both in terms of type and scale of usage, they must carry different levels of knowledge of the natural wealth of different areas. Women, for example, as the prime gatherers of fruits and vegetable plants, generally hold more detailed knowledge of the main localities of these resources, how these are affected by climatic variations and other physical factors, and also some of the impacts of introduced lifestyles. Men, on the other hand, would hold much more profound knowledge of larger game species and their habitats. Women's distinctive use of the natural resources of country has not only played an important role in painting the reality of indigenous property rights. It also contributes directly to people's well-being through food consumption and sustainability. This obvious fact was much less visible in initial ethnographic recording of the harvesting of bush-tucker and its nutritional significance. Early ethnographies of desert peoples, for example Meggitt's description of Warlpiri life in the 1950s[20] stress male hunting of 'big game' such as kangaroos and emus, and provide very little detail on the women's foraging production. Detailed recording of women's spiritual responsibilities and subsistence contribution only emerged later, partly through the work of female researchers such as Diane Bell, Pamela Ditton and Jeannie Devitt.[21] Devitt's study of Alyawarre women's foraging, for example, confirmed the importance of foraging not only for fruits and vegetables but also for small game such as goannas, generally available and hence a dependable staple in desert diets. Indigenous women themselves have eloquently described their own practices.[22] As Delia Lowe, talking about the return of her Jerrinja people to their country at Jervis Bay, stresses,[23] 'Since Jerrinja people have been spending more time at Bundarwa it feels like the land is getting better, stronger. Jerrinja women have been really important in this. In our heritage and links with the land, the mother's line has been the most important . . .My father used to say that without women the man's power and law gained through initiation rites is no good.'

Women's distinctive use of the natural resources of country has not only played an important role in painting the reality of indigenous property rights. It also contributes directly to people's well-being through food consumption and sustainability.

Looking after country is men's and women's business: a call for an institutional response

As this brief discussion demonstrates, indigenous women's distinctive knowledge and use of the natural resources are integral to the management of the Australian continent. Institutional structures governing and supporting land management will have to be adapted to accommodate the specific roles and contributions of indigenous women. Effective two-way communication, between indigenous men and women, and between non-indigenous extension staff and members of the indigenous community, is essential. At present, communication is often defective, particularly in the latter situation. While discussion of indigenous community participation in land management[24] now acknowledges the importance of differences in language and literacy, and in cultural values, specific focus on meeting the needs of indigenous women requires strengthening. Cross-cultural approaches have helped to identify the characteristics of the gap between indigenous land management needs and institutional support; but these now need to be extended to examination of the particular situation of indigenous women who look after country. Not only will this foster more effective support for indigenous land management; it will also, in broader terms, help to encourage greater sustainability in Australian land management in general.

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1 See, for example, Knutdson, P and Suzuki, DT (1992). *Wisdom of the Elders*, Sydney, Allen & Unwin.

2 The term 'country' is now widely used by indigenous people to describe those places and areas for which they carry prime management responsibilities. It is an all-encompassing concept, including land, waters and the whole range of the resources that these support. See Rose, DB (1996). *Nourishing Terrains: Australian Aboriginal Views of Landscape and Wilderness*, Australian Heritage Commission, Canberra.

3 Walsh, F (1996). 'Interactions between land management agencies and Australian Aboriginal people: rationale, problems and some lessons', in DA Saunders, JL Craig and EM Mattiske (eds). *The Role of Networks*, Chipping Norton, NSW.

4 Orchard, K, Ross, H and Young, E (2001). 'Institutions and processes for resource and environmental management in the Indigenous domain', in S Dovers and S Wild River (eds). *Processes and Institutional Arrangements for Resource and Environmental Management: Australian Experiences.* Land and Water Australia/CRES, Canberra.

5 Altman, J (1987). Hunter-Gatherers Today: An Aboriginal Economy in North Australia. AIATSIS, Canberra.

6 Devitt, J (1988). 'Contemporary Aboriginal Women and Subsistence in Remote, Arid Australia', Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Queensland, Brisbane.

[7] See for example, Rose, DB (1995). *Land Management Issues: Attitudes and Perceptions amongst Aboriginal People of Central Australia*, Central Land Council, Alice Springs; Young, E (1988). 'Land use and resources: a black and white dichotomy', in Heathcote, RL and Mabbutt, J (eds). *Land, Water and People: Geographical Essays on Resource Management and the Organisation of Space in Australia,* Academy of Social Sciences of Australia/ George Allen & Unwin, Sydney: 102-124; Young, E (1995). *Third World in the First: Development and Indigenous Peoples*, Routledge, London/New York.

[8] For example, Young, E, Ross, H, Johnston, J and Kesteven, J (1991). *Caring for Country: Aborigines and Land Management,* ANPWS, Canberra; Orchard *et al* (2001) *op cit.*

[9] For example 4.2 per cent of mainstream Commonwealth funding to indigenous land management in 1990/91, for approximately 12 per cent of the continent; and, in 2000, 2 per cent of Natural Heritage Trust funding for around 15 per cent of the land.

[10] Young *et al* (1991) op cit: x.

[11] Orchard *et al* (2001) *op cit*.

[12] Gillespie, D, Cooke, P and Taylor, J (1998). *Improving the Capacity of Indigenous People to Contribute to the Conservation of Biodiversity in Australia*, Report commissioned by Environment Australia for the Biological Diversity Advisory Council; Langton, M, Epworth, D and Sinnamon, V (1999). *Indigenous Social, Economic and Cultural Issues in Land, Water and Biodiversity Conservation.* Report for WWF Australia, Centre for Indigenous Natural and Cultural Resource Management, Northern Territory University, Darwin.

[13] Birckhead, J, De Lacy, T and Smith, L (eds) (1992). *Aboriginal Involvement in Parks and Protected Areas,* Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra; Woenne-Green, S, Johnston, R, Sultan, R and Wallis, A (1994). *Competing Interests: Aboriginal Participation in National Parks and Conservation Reserves in Australia – A Review*. Australian Conservation Foundation, Canberra.

[14] Bomford, M and Caughley, J (eds) (1996). *Sustainable Use of Wildlife by Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islanders*, Bureau of Resource Sciences Publication, AGPS, Canberra; Davies, J, Higginbottom, K, Noack, D, Ross, H and Young, E (1999). *Sustaining Eden: Indigenous Community Wildlife Management in Australia*, International Institute for Environment and Development, London.

[15] See Gilfillan, A (2001). 'Institutional Changes and Challenges associated with Australia's Indigenous Protected Areas Program'. Unpublished Masters (Environmental Science) thesis, Australian National University.

[16] Langton, M, (1998). *Burning Questions: Emerging Environmental Issues for Indigenous Peoples in Northern Australia.* Centre for Indigenous Natural and Cultural Resource Management, Northern Territory University, Darwin; Langton *et al* (1999) *op cit*; Robinson, C and Munungguritj, N (in press), in R Baker, J Davies and E Young (eds), *Working on Country: Contemporary Indigenous Management of Australia's Lands and Coastal regions*, Oxford University Press, Sydney/Melbourne.

[17] See Snowdon, G (1990). *Anangu Pitjantjatjara: Land Management Workshops, 1990 Report,* Anangu Pitjantjatjara, Alice Springs; Gambold, N (in press). 'Participatory Land Assessment: Integrating perceptions of country through mapping', in R Baker *et al*, *op cit*; Nesbitt, B, Baker, L, Copley, P, Young, F and Anangu Pitjantjatjara Land Management (in press). 'Cooperative cross-cultural biological surveys in resource management: experiences in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara lands', in R Baker *et al, op cit*.

[18] Baker *et al* (in press) *op cit*.

[19] Young, E (1996). 'Resettlement and caring for country: the Anmatyerre experience', in V Chapman and P Read (eds). *Terrible Hard Biscuits.* Allen & Unwin, Sydney: 223-40.

[20] Meggitt, M (1962). *Desert People.* Angus and Robertson, Sydney/Melbourne.

[21] See Bell, D and Ditton, P (1980). *Law: the Old and the New*, Central Australian Aboriginal Legal Aid Service, Alice Springs; Bell, D (1983). *Daughters of the Dreaming*. McPhee Gribble/George Allen & Unwin, Melbourne/Sydney; Devitt (1988) *op cit*.

[22] See, for example, Gale, F. (ed) (1983). We are Bosses Ourselves: The Status and Role of Aboriginal Women Today, AIATSIS, Canberra.

[23] Lowe, D and Davies, J (in press). 'Bundarwa, Berri-werri and the Bay: traditional rights and bureaucratic boundaries, in Baker *et al, op cit*.

[24] See for example Liddle, L (in press). 'Bridging the communication gap: transferring information between scientists and Aboriginal land managers', in Baker *et al, op cit*.

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A global sexual politics?*

Dennis Altman

Suggestions that the sexual is political can be found in a range of nineteenth century philosophical writings, and became central for a number of twentieth century thinkers. Some, like Reich and Marcuse, drew on the theories of Freud: others, as in the case of many second wave feminists, were consciously hostile to psychoanalysis. In today's climate of neoliberal economics and pragmatic politics such claims seem farfetched and romantic. All the more reason, I would argue, for reconsidering their relevance.

A sexual politics for this century will need to draw on various theories of sexuality but also on recent developments in the study of international relations, and conceptualisations of both the state and the global. We badly need a political economy of sexuality, one which recognises the inter-relationship of political, economic and cultural structures, and avoids the tendency to see sexuality as private and the political and economic as public. Such a political economy, as the term suggests, is more concerned with material conditions and political action than it is with theories of discourse and representation. But it is also concerned with the ways in which the state is being undermined by a combination of global economic forces and particularist political movements. Globalisation implies the decline of state sovereignty and the rise of transnational social movements as political actors. Thus Manuel Castells argues:

> The growing incapacity of states to tackle the global problems that make an impact on public opinion. . . leads civil society to increasingly take into their own hands the responsibilities of global citizenship. Thus Amnesty International, Greenpeace, *Medecins sans Frontieres*, Oxfam, and so many other humanitarian non-government organizations have become a major force in the international arena in the 1990s, often attracting more funding, performing more effectively, and receiving greater legitimacy than government-sponsored international efforts. The 'privatization' of global humanitarianism is gradually undermining one of the last rationales for the necessity of the nation state.'[1]

Yet there are traps in both the rhetoric and the reality of the retreat from the state, as any genuine system of social justice depends upon the distributive and welfare role of government. Partly influenced by Foucault's notions of 'micropolitics' it has become

. . . it has become fashionable to stress the role of grassroots activism without any corresponding attention to the macro sources of power, corporations, the state and the military . . .

fashionable to stress the role of grassroots activism without any corresponding attention to the macro sources of power, corporations, the state and the military (to paraphrase C Wright Mills' notion of the 'power elite'.) For all my sympathies with concepts of local and community politics, nation states and governments, like the body, remain insurmountable and material realities. Political institutions matter, just as do corporations and the major institutions of civil society. A practical politics for major social change must simultaneously engage with the conventional sources of political and economic power, as well as with the far more disparate and interwoven ways in which hegemonic beliefs and practices are constituted and perpetuated. Such an approach includes a recognition of the inter-connections between gender and sexuality, and of those between the material and the psychological.

Post-modern feminist and queer theory is relatively unhelpful in constructing this sort of politics because of their lack of emphasis on political institutions as distinct from discourse, their first world-centrism and lack of interest in social movements.[2] There are two major problems in the post-modern turn in sexual theory, as well as a minor one, namely a belief that the more impenetrable the language the deeper the thought. The first objection is that the emphasis on discourse, performance and play too often means a lack of interest in material realities and inequalities. As Connell argued: 'This approach is stimulating for the players, and it does involve a certain personal risk to simulate being queer in the streets. If the streets are patrolled by homophobes. It does not involve much more. . . Indeed, absorption in the game, on the part of players who are greatly privileged in global terms, might be considered the semiotic equivalent of what Marcuse called 'repressive desublimation' – as we might now call it: Getting lost in sexual cyberspace.'[3]

Second, the emphasis on discourse tends to deny the role of social movements and political work in creating the conditions in which 'queer' theory is able to flourish. As Lisa Duggan, by no means unsympathetic to 'queer theory', wrote: 'There is a tendency among some queer theorists to engage in academic debates at a high level of intellectual sophistication, while erasing the political and activist roots of their theoretical insights and concerns. Such theorists cite, modify or dispute Foucault, Lacan, and Derrida, while feminist, lesbian, and gay innovations and political figures disappear from sight.'[4] Reading work by young 'queer' scholars in Australia I am struck how often they will invoke Butler and Foucault, while ignoring the particular his/her/stories of the Australian movements.

The queer and postmodern feminist desire to escape from the limitations of identity politics is commendable. Their resistance to any Marxist analysis – which becomes equated with 'grand narratives' and 'old fashioned leftism' – means they have nothing useful with which to replace the limited politics of identity. Thus the attraction of more and more convoluted theories of desire which evade questions of social and economic power and inequality – and indeed ignore the inconvenient reality that sex occurs because of a lust for power or revenge or cruelty as often as an expression of desire.

Yet post-modern theorists are correct when they insist upon the symbolic importance of sex. 'Traditional' societies tended to use sexuality as part of the rites of passage, whether through ritualised intercourse, as in Gil Herdt's famous example of the Sambia[5], or through the sacrifice of virgins as in a number of religious ceremonies. Such symbolic uses of sex might seem bizarre, even 'primitive', to contemporary westerners, yet we in turn tend to expect too much of sex, to see it as central to relationships, social cohesion and our sense of identity. It plays a role in all those things, but in as far as it is expected to provide both our greatest pleasures and our

most authentic sense of self, we also load sex with more than it is able to carry. As globalisation extends western concepts of identity, consumerism and self-fulfilment to other societies, so too it replaces existing scripts around sex with those of Hollywood and the romance novel. The questions posed by the small free love circles of inter-war Bohemia, or the student movements of 1968, are increasingly being raised across the world.

The idea of sexual liberation as integral to larger social and political liberation originated in radical and romantic theories in the early nineteenth century, and became central to both the counter-culture and New Left movements of the 1970s. While this idea has largely disappeared in the rich countries of the north, it still influences feminist and gay activists in Latin America, and was a reality in South Africa, where gay supporters of the African National Congress were instrumental in having protection against discrimination on the basis of sexuality incorporated into the post-apartheid Constitution. The liberationism of the 1970s currently has a bad name though there are also signs of nostalgia for it, as in films such as *Boogie Nights* and *54.* There are two major problems (at least) with the liberationist project: it assumed a link between sexual and other freedom which was naive (note Marcuse's reading of Freud in *Eros and Civilisation*); and in practice it was largely male-oriented.

In the former case those of us caught up in the radical enthusiasms of the period underestimated the extent to which sexual 'liberation' could be successfully co-opted by commercial consumerism. As mainstream publishers produce glossy erotica and sex toys are sold in mall-like sex emporiums, the hope that freedom from sexual restraints will lead to revolutionary change seems increasingly utopian. For gay men, who could benefit most easily from the new sexual freedom and the short period when sexual adventure seemed chic – in the 1970s Bette Midler drew both straight and gay audiences to her performances in New York gay bathhouses – the benefits of liberation have become particularly problematic because of the links with AIDS. The debates over sexual adventure within the gay community predate the epidemic to some extent. Larry Kramer was already critical of promiscuity in his 1978 novel *Faggots*, a position he restated but with far greater urgency in his play *The Normal Heart* eight years later. But even those of us more enthusiastic about sexual freedom than Kramer could question the limits to sex without emotion – when I wrote *Homosexual: Oppression and Liberation* at the start of the 1970s I quoted the lines from the rock musical *Salvation:*

. . .those of us caught up in the radical enthusiasms of the period underestimated the extent to which sexual 'liberation' could be successfully co-opted by commercial consumerism.

> If you let me make love to you
> Then why can't I touch you?[6]

It is worth recognising that sexual liberation can imply a recognition of the over-importance modern societies attribute to sexuality. In Jeffrey Weeks' words: 'The road away from moral authoritarianism lies not with the elevation of King Sex, whether in the sacred form of puritanism or in the profane form of permissiveness, but rather in his dethronement.'[7]

As to the second point, Julie Burchill could write in 1998: 'Ironically the sex-rev failed because, Freudian or not, it failed to ask what women want.'[8] But against this was the recognition by some feminists that not all sex without commitment was undesirable, as in Erica Jong's invocation of the 'zipless fuck' in her novel *Fear of Flying*. Linda Grant

argues that Jong's celebration of sex was reborn in the 1990s, and cites Madonna's book *Sex* and Annie Sprinkle's *Post Porn Modernist Manifesto*. What Grant does not recognise is that this view of liberation has lost the commitment to larger social change which fuelled liberationist movements of the 1970s.

In the rich world sex is increasingly seen as a form of recreation. 'We need to wake everyone up' says one of the characters in JC Ballard's ironic novel *Cocaine Nights*. 'The people. . . are desperate for new vices.'[9] For most people in the world, certainly for most women, the real vices of poverty, hunger, disease and war are problems enough. Even in the rich world the divorce of ideas of sexual pleasure from any larger social concern has sad consequences. When the thirtieth anniversary of Woodstock was celebrated by a massive concert at the same site there were reports of gang rapes of young women.[10] Does this perhaps capture the danger of modern consumer society in which individual gratification has been elevated to the dominant principle? Yet it is too easy to dismiss the search for pleasure as purely the luxury of the rich. There is growing testimony from women in many societies that once they are able to speak, sexual pleasure becomes significant. Elizabeth Jelin writes of Latin America: 'Concealed and forbidden in words, but real and everyday in practice, to make sexuality visible and to expose the sexual oppression suffered by most women has been one of the feminist movement's significant achievements.'[11] Studies of young people in a number of countries reveal a growing awareness and desire among women to take pleasure in the exercise of their sexuality.[12]

Maybe the pseudo-Reichianism of sexual liberation is now suspect, but there is something in its project worth saving, especially the stress on the interconnection between sexual and social justice.[13] If there really is none, then why is sexual repression so central to almost all totalitarian regimes? We are back to the old question of whether private satisfactions can compensate for the erosion of the public sphere: are X-rated videos and stripper clubs the contemporary equivalents of Roman gladiatorial displays? It is tempting to argue that the issues raised by sexual liberation are luxuries for people struggling to survive. Yet all too often people experience real and violent oppression and exploitation because of certain regimes of sexuality, and the violence which is used to maintain their hegemony. Sexual liberation may be an inappropriate term, but it is hard to argue it is irrelevant to women stoned for adultery in Iran or disfigured with acid in Bangladesh for choosing the wrong husband. From a rather different perspective Robin Morgan argues: 'What if we never again apologized for emphasizing 'sexual politics', but realized that. . . the subjects of contraception, abortion, sexual violence and battery *are* conscious concerns of even the poorest rural woman struggling for daily survival?'[14]

Sexual liberation may be an inappropriate term, but it is hard to argue it is irrelevant to women stoned for adultery in Iran or disfigured with acid in Bangladesh for choosing the wrong husband.

Perhaps we should turn the precepts of the seventies around, and recognise not just that sexual freedom is connected to other struggles, but that it is meaningless in the absence of other forms of freedom and equality. Only if women are empowered in the economic and social sphere can they engage equally with men in the sexual arena, and for this to happen does require, as we claimed in those distant halcyon days of liberation politics, revolutionary change. Without access to the basic necessities of survival it is likely that sex will be nasty, brutish and short, and that it will be constructed entirely to suit the convenience of powerful men. Violence against women

may exist in all societies, but it is less likely where there is sufficient wealth, education and sense of personal integrity to allow women to leave abusive relationships.

. . . meaningful sexual politics in a globalising world must involve both the inequities of the larger socio-economic order, and those implicated in the broader structures of sex and gender, which are constantly being remade through the very processes of globalisation.

Drawing on Nancy Fraser's distinction between the politics of *redistribution* and the politics of *recognition,*[15] a meaningful sexual politics in a globalising world must involve both the inequities of the larger socio-economic order, and those implicated in the broader structures of sex and gender, which are constantly being remade through the very processes of globalisation. Implicit in the spread of neo-liberal capitalism through more and more of the world is the growing disjunction between 'traditional values' and (post)modern consumerism. But this is not merely a debate about values or an academic struggle over discourses. Social structures which provided at least a modicum of security and welfare are being destroyed by the relentless march of the market, the massive growth in urbanisation, the atomisation of social relationships and the decline of government services. Globalisation is creating enormous wealth and enormous dislocations: the richest three men in the world are said to control more assets than the forty poorest countries. At the same time the social structures which are being destroyed are themselves often based on assumptions of deep inequality around gender, race and class, as in the caste systems of south Asia or the gender structures of most orthodox religions. This is the dilemma Penny Andrews points to: 'What became increasingly obvious in South Africa was that the metamorphosis from a European to an African country required that its Africanness be reflected in the legal system and that it incorporate certain aspects of traditional law. But this reality had to recognise that the strictures of traditional law kept women in perpetual tutelage.'[16]

In the struggle to make sense of the disjunctures and inequalities of the contemporary world we should avoid both the triumphalist rhetoric of neo-liberalism and the romantic nostalgia of traditionalists. The market cannot deliver human happiness, but equally there is no imagined past to which we can return which will abolish injustice and inequality. In the end, ideas of human rights, social justice, acceptance of diversity and the empowerment of those who are marginalised and deprived are universal goals which remain important no matter the particular culture. Moreover they will require both strengthened global order **and** effective national governments: ironically the ravages of globalisation are worst when the state cannot provide means to help its populace benefit from change.

The great lesson that I have learnt from a decade of working in the international HIV/AIDS world is that the interconnectedness of the world is both a threat and an opportunity. The sexual politics which burst upon western countries in the late 1960s spoke a vague language of internationalism, but its preoccupations were largely with the immediate and the nation state. Three decades later the world is very different. Much of what we fought for has been achieved in the west,[17] but equally the triumph of liberal capitalism to a degree unforeseen by either its promoters or detractors has created new challenges and new sorts of oppression..

There is no preordained certainty that we will be successful in achieving the goals of a more just and equitable world, and it is already clear that the struggle to attain them has extensive casualties. But how we adjust to these disjunctions will say a great deal

about the prospects for human dignity and happiness in the coming decades. In that struggle sexuality is both a battlefield and a legitimate area for political action.

Dennis Altman is Professor of Politics, School of Sociology, Politics and Anthropology, La Trobe University.

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* This paper is a shortened version of my latest (2001) book *Global Sex*. University of Chicago Press and Allen & Unwin.

1 Castells, M (1997). *The Power of Identity*. London, Blackwell: 268.

2 This is not true, of course, of everything claiming to be 'queer'. See for example the tentative steps towards a 'homo-economics' in M Duberman (ed) (1996). *A Queer World*. New York, NYUP.

3 Connell, RW (1995). 'Democracies of pleasure: thoughts on the goals of radical sexual politics', in L Nicholson & S Seidman. *Social Postmodernism*. Cambridge University Press: 385.

4 Duggan, Lisa (1992). 'Making it perfectly queer', *Socialist Review*, 22, 1, Jan-March: 26.

5 Gil Herdt (1981). *Guardians of the Flutes.* NY, McGraw Hill; (1987). *The Sambia: Ritual and Gender in New Guinea* New York, Holt Rinehart & Winston.

6 Altman, Dennis (1971). *Homosexual: Oppression and Liberation* .New York, Outerbridge & Dienstfrey: .86

7 Weeks, Jeffrey (1979). 'The Rise and Fall of Permissiveness', *Spectator* (London) 17 March: 17

8 Julie Burchill, Julie (1998). 'Pleasure principle', *The Age* (Melbourne) 6 June.

9 Ballard, JC (1997). *Cocaine Nights*. London, Flamingo: 232.

10 Morrow, Lance (1999). 'The Madness of Crowds', *Time Magazine,* 9 August: 64.

11 Jelin, Elizabeth (1997). 'Engendering Human Rights', in Elizabeth Dore (ed). *Gender Politics in Latin America* New York, Monthly Review Press: 76.

12 Dowsett, G & P Aggleton (1999). 'Young people and risk-taking in sexual relations', in *Sex and Youth: Contextual Factors Affecting Risk for HIV/AIDS.* UNAIDS Geneva: 37–8.

13 See Weeks, Jeffrey (1995). *Invented Moralities: Sexual Values in an Age of Uncertainty.* Cambridge Polity Press, and works by RW Connell and Nancy Fraser already cited.

14 Morgan, Robin (1984). 'Introduction', in *Sisterhood is Global.* New York, Anchor: 34.

15 Fraser, Nancy (1996). *Justice Interrruptus*. New York, Routledge: 11-39.

16 Andrews, Penelope (1999). 'Violence against women in South Africa', in *Temple Political & Civil Rights Law Review,* 8, 2, Spring: 436.

17 See Bech, Henning (1999). 'After the Closet' in *Sexualities*, 2, 3: 343-6.

N

Academy News

NSW Branch survey: Peter Groenewegen reports. . .

In April 2001, I emailed the eighty Fellows who were members of the New South Wales Branch of the Academy listed in the 2000 Annual Report. The intention of the survey was to seek preferences about possible branch activities which traditionally had taken the form of an occasional branch dinner. Poor response rates to such events in the past, together with problems associated with non-attendance from those who previously had indicated an intention to attend, made me discontinue such dinners during the mid-1990s. Given the degree of success of meetings reported by other branch convenors (particularly South Australia and Victoria), I decided to see whether time may have made a difference in feelings about branch members' activities. The survey sought information about attitudes to Academy activities in general from the fellows who responded, as well as aspects of their preferences on branch activities. The results may, therefore, be of interests to the fellowship as a whole.

Response rate 24 Fellows responded from a total of 80.

Composition of respondents Two of the respondents were new Fellows, elected in 2000; 14 were elected during the 1990s, and the rest were elected before then, the earliest election being in 1968. The respondents were evenly balanced (12 and 11) as whether they had held office (of any sort) within the Academy structure (1 no response); 11 described themselves as regular attendants of annual meetings of the Academy, 8 as irregular or non-attendants (with *5* no responses); 8 had attended their last annual meeting in 2000, 6 in 1999, 4 previously during the 1990s, 2 in the 1980s (4 no responses); the greatest number of respondents were from Panel D (7), then from Panels B and C (6 each) and A (4) (there was 1 no response). Five of the 24 respondents were retired. Of the remainder, one worked in a non-university organisation; the others came from the University of Sydney (6), University of NSW (5), University of New England (3), Macquarie University (2) and one each from the Universities of Newcastle and Western City.

Preferred activities 15 respondents indicated they would, where possible, attend a shared meal, 2 indicated they would not attend any form of branch activities, 1 said he would be unable to attend, while 6 gave no response to this question.

There were no majority preferences for the type of occasion preferred: 8 opted for lunch, 11 preferred dinner, 2 were indifferent as to timing (with 3 no responses); 6 respondents preferred a function during semester, 5 during vacations, 3 were indifferent (with 10 no responses). Location tended to favour the University of Sydney (9), with some preferences (3) for the City and (4) were happy with either of these venues. One response suggested a location in Glebe, Balmain or Newtown (obviously a lover of good restaurants), while the remaining respondents failed to specify an alternative location to the two locations suggested.

There was also no consensus about the nature of the associated activity with the meeting. 6 expressed a preference for inviting an incoming president of the Academy as speaker; 6 preferred a non-presidential speaker; with 3 indifferent between the first two alternatives; 2 opposed having a speaker at the dinner; 2 preferred a general discussion on a notified topic to a speaker; 1 preferred a panel discussion, while there were 5 no responses.

Conclusions The rather low response rate suggests either a general lack of interest in branch activities among the New South Wales Fellowship, or a lack of interest in completing emailed questionnaires.

The thirty per cent of branch members who responded constituted a representative sample of the composition of the Academy. Seventy per cent were relatively recently elected Fellows; sixty per cent had attended at least one of the three most recent annual meetings; all four Panels were fairly evenly represented; while there was an even balance between those sufficiently active to have served as committee members and those who had not had this opportunity. University representation of the responses probably reflected the branch composition in this respect, but responses from retired Fellows were probably relatively high.

No comfort can be taken from views on preferred activities, apart from the fact that 60.8 per cent of the responses favoured some type of activity, though this represents less than one fifth of the total branch membership. There were no strong preferences on location (apart from those for a central Sydney venue), no strong preferences for dinner as against lunch, and no clear preferences as to timing within or without the semester. A majority of responses desired a speaker, with less than a quarter suggesting a new President for this role. Perhaps the Fellow who suggested that this should be decided at a meeting of branch members, had a good point.

Perhaps there are already too many meetings in most Fellows' lives to add further ones. Perhaps branch organisation is redundant or unworkable in effectively widely dispersed geographical areas like New South Wales. In any case, I will organise one further dinner as New South Wales Branch Convenor before my retirement as Professor of Economics at the University of Sydney in February 2002.

Professor John Pollard, Actuarial Studies and Demography, School of Economic and Financial Studies at Macquarie University has been awarded a Silver Medal by the Institute of Actuaries of Australia. The award recognises a long record of oustanding actuarial work in the service of the profession, business, government or community, which brought identifiable credit to the profession. The silver medal is awarded rarely - only twice prior to Professor Pollard's success, in the history of the Institute of Actuaries of Australia.

N *Professor Fay Gale*, immediate past President of the Academy, recently was featured in an issue of the *Guardian Weekly* (17-23 May 2001). Writing during her visit to Australia from the UK, Beatrix Campbell gave international readers a glimpse of the stolen generations debate in Australia, from a personal experience perspective. She outlined the history of Edna Walker, stolen from her family on a cattle station in the Northern Territory and transported first to Darwin and then to the infamous Croker Island. In 1957 (then 16 years old) she was despatched south to Adelaide and was welcomed into the home of Fay's Methodist Minister father and mother. Fay and Edna came to regard each other as sisters. Fay's scholarly concern with Aboriginal Australia (see her Cunningham Lecture 1998, published by the Academy as *Shared Space – Divided Cultures. Australia Today*) gave her access to resources which eventually permitted her to discover something of Edna's origins, and four years ago, Edna met her younger brother Jack. It was too late for Edna to rediscover her mother, who had made Jack promise to keep looking for her.

2001 Joint Academies Symposium
'Alternative Australias'
12 November 2001, National Museum of Australia

This year's Annual Symposium will be held jointly with the Australian Academy of the Humanities on the theme of 'Alternative Australias'. The convenor of the symposium is AHA Fellow Tim Rowse FAHA (ANU) working closely with Marian Sawer FASSA (ANU), Peter Saunders FASSA (UNSW), and Lesley Johnson FAHA (UTS).

The Symposium has four parts:

- Annual Lecture by the President of the Australian Academy of Humanities;
- Three sessions (9.45 am to 3.15 pm, including morning tea and lunch) in which panels of speakers will address aspects of the sub-theme 'The Making and Unmaking of the Australian Settlement': Australian Settlement – the economics, politics and historiography; Citizenship and Cultural Diversity; Institutional Futures
- The Presidents' Panel (3.15 pm to 4.15 pm)
- The Annual Cunningham Lecture by Hugh Stretton (4.45 pm to 6 pm)

In his 1992 book *The End of Certainty*, journalist and Fellow of the Australian Academy of Social Sciences Paul Kelly described as 'the Australian Settlement' the post-Federation policies of: wage protection (arbitration), trade protection, state paternalism, imperial benevolence and immigration restriction (the White Australia policy). His thesis was that in the 1980s both the Labor and the two conservative parties turned against each of the five elements of the settlement. The unmaking of the Settlement by the Hawke, Keating and Howard governments has sometimes been referred to as the critique of neo-liberalism or as the assault of economic rationalism. As a threat to the older institutional guarantees of Australians' economic security, this unmaking has been deplored by some as heartless and dogmatic (and blamed for provoking Hansonism) and celebrated by others as an unavoidable leap from fearful insularity to robust cosmopolitanism.

In the second term of the Howard government there are signs that Australia's political elite is undecided about which of these contrasting perspectives it should adhere to, in rhetoric and in policies.

As well as the issues of political economy thrown up by the unmaking of the settlement, there is much debate about questions of national identity that have also become unsettled since the 1970s - the Republic, the meaning of reconciliation and the possibility of an Indigenous treaty, the entailments of multiculturalism in both domestic social policy and international policy (refugees). Sometimes these issues of identity politics seem to occupy a distinct zone of our public sphere. However, the affinities between rhetorics of cultural diversity and rhetorics of a more open and deregulated political economy are striking enough to encourage further efforts to connect analytically the themes of identity politics and the issues of political economy. To make such connections is one of the challenges of our joint symposium.

The timing for a discussion of these themes - a few weeks either side of a Federal Election, it is likely - could hardly be better.

Fellows will receive more detailed information about the Symposium, Annual Dinner and Annual General Meeting within a few weeks.

Research Projects

Creating Unequal Futures? Project directors Professors Ruth Fincher and Peter Saunders, along with contributors Boyd Hunter and John Buchanan, attended the Social Policy Research Centre Conference at the University of New South Wales 4-6 July and presented papers based on research done for the project and subsequent book. A marketing display of the book was organised by publishers Allen & Unwin with a very good result: 40 copies were sold.

'Joborr' Custom Law : People of the Rivermouth On 18 May Dr Les Hiatt and Kim McKenzie attended a UNESCO-sponsored conference in Paris, entitled "New Technology, Anthropology, Museology and Indigenous Knowledge" at which they outlined key aspects of their research findings. A similar presentation was made at The Royal Anthropological Institute in London and at a seminar at the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford.

In mid-September the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies will be holding a major conference, attended by members of the Anbarra people and it is intended to launch the *People of the Rivermouth* CD at that time.

The Academy projects **Postgraduate Training in the Social Sciences** and **The Economic and Social Costs of Unemployment** are currently being edited with a view to submitting a manuscript to potential publishers. On 9 August Professor Simon Marginson will be a speaker at the National Scholarly Communications Forum Conference, *Australia: A Knowledge Culture?* where he will be drawing on conclusions and recommendations from the study on *Postgraduate Training in the Social Sciences.*

The Sustainability of Australian Rural Communities Professor Chris Cocklin has developed a general outline of the proposed book based on outcomes from the February workshop and the chapter research being undertaken by contributors. An extensive email debate on key issues in the development of case studies has been taking place over several weeks, with a conference call scheduled for 23 July to discuss research progress. A second workshop will be held on 17-18 December.

New Research Projects The Academy submitted two research proposals to the ARC for funding consideration as Special Projects 2002, *Rethinking Wellbeing* (Professor Lenore Manderson) and *Taking Good Care of Our Children* (Professors Margot Prior, Sue Richardson and Fiona Stanley). Following feedback from the ARC committee these will be developed as full proposals and be submitted to the ARC by 10 August.

The research proposal *Social Impacts of Changing Water Regimes* which was submitted as a National Academies Forum (NAF) application for possible Special Projects funding was recently considered by the ARC committee. A recommendation was made that the proposal be further developed for an ARC Discovery grant, rather than for a Special Project.

International Program

Lady Davis Fellowship Trust in Israel. The Lady Davis Trust offers Visiting Professorships and Post-Doctoral Fellowships in Israel. The Trust seeks to make the cultural heritage of Israel and its achievements in development, state-building, scholarship, science and education widely available and known to people from all over the world. Contact Professor Joe Powell (joe.powell@arts.monash.edu.au) or visit http://sites.huji.ac.il/LDFT for more information.

Australia-China Exchange Scheme. The successful Australian candidate for support by the Academy's Australia-China Exchange Scheme is *Ms Mary Ip*, Faculty of Economics and Business at the University of Sydney. Ms Ip will be travelling to Beijing and Nanjing in December 2001 to conduct research on 'The implications of China's accession to the World Trade Organisation on the Chinese consumer protection'. During her stay, she will visit the Beijing University, Nanjing University, and the Consumer Court in Nanjing to discuss current issues of Chinese consumer law and prospects for change upon the nation's joining of the WTO.

In September, *Mr Jing Tiankui*, Deputy Director, Institute of Sociology, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences will visit Australia to research social policy and development, cultural mix and immigration, and social transformation issues. His hosts for this visit will be Professor Peter Saunders, Social Policy Research Centre, the University of New South Wales, Professor David Goodman, the University of Technology Sydney and Professor Robyn Iredale at the University of Wollongong.

OVERSEAS PROGRAMS

In order to encourage scholarly contact with overseas countries, the Academy of the Social Sciences and the Academy of the Humanities operate several overseas programs, some jointly. These are open to Australian scholars, working in any of the fields of the Humanities and/or the Social Sciences.

The program still open to applications for 2002 is to:

THE NETHERLANDS: The Joint Australian Academies share an agreement of scientific and cultural collaboration with the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, to promote scholarly relations between Australian and Dutch scholars. *Closing date: 15 August.*

For further information contact: The Executive Director, Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia, GPO Box 1956, CANBERRA 2601. Tel 02 6249 1788; Fax 02 6247 4335; Email: ASSA.Secretariat @anu.edu.au.

Emeritus Professor David Hector Monro,
formerly of Mount Waverley, Victoria, died on 13 May.

Emeritus Professor John Louis Dillon, AO,
formerly of the University of New England, died on 5 June.

Emeritus Professor Derek Freeman,
formerly of the Australian National University, died on 7 July.

Obituaries will appear in the *Annual Report*.

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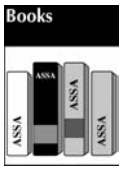

Books

Creating Unequal Futures. Edited by Ruth Fincher and Peter Saunders**,** Allen and Unwin, Sydney: 2001.

John Nevile

This book is the result of an Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia research project. According to the editors, it aims 'to use a diversity of social science perspectives to rethink the nature of contemporary poverty, disadvantage and inequality in Australia' (p 27). Following the introductory chapter by Fincher and Saunders there are six chapters authored by social scientists from fields as diverse as urban planning, sociology, geography, industrial relations, communication, economics and social policy. Peter Whiteford sets the scene by putting Australian research on poverty and social exclusion in an international context, both in terms of the methodologies used and the conclusions reached. He contrasts the descriptive research in Australia and other English-speaking countries with that in continental Europe which, being more concerned about social relations and ruptures in the social contract, is not afraid to discuss the behaviour of those who are classed as socially excluded. As far as the degree of income inequality is concerned, Whiteford's tables show Australia consistently about one-third from the top (or most unequal) among developed economies.

Succeeding chapters look at more specific issues. Peter Putnis discusses the role of the media and shows how both the amount of the discussion of poverty issues in the media and the interpretations provided by journalists matter: not only to the self image of those who are poor and disadvantaged, but also by affecting the way these groups are treated by their fellow citizens and governments. Boyd Hunter describes the multi-dimensional nature of disadvantage among indigenous Australians. Like other low income Australians, they are likely to experience housing problems. However, they are more likely to be arrested and greater levels of ill health lead to a life-expectancy around 20 years less than that of other Australians. Hunter discusses appropriate policy responses. While warning that health, justice, housing and educational issues mutually interact and all contribute to low levels of monetary income, he concludes that 'health and justice issues require the concerted attention of policy-makers if there is any hope for catch up of indigenous welfare with that of the rest of the Australian community' (p 155). The Howard Government's focus on health is a start, but no more than that.

Fincher and Wulff use the results of case studies of a Victorian town and a Queensland city to show how population mobility in Australia affects inequality and disadvantage. For some people migration has great benefits, but the consequences to others reinforce disadvantage. Governments should accept that, as well as assistance given to individuals irrespective of their geographical location, communities in particular places need assistance. Watson and Buchanan look at how much of the increase in disadvantage and inequality in Australia stems from changes in our labour market. They highlight the connections between the paradigm of competitive markets for labour and unemployment, non-standard work and low paid jobs. Then they show how these labour market inequalities affect income distribution. They urge that we reject the current vision of how a labour market should work and consider new ways of defining the rights and obligations of both workers and employers. This should lead to an integration of social policy with industrial relations policy.

Watson and Buchanan's chapter reinforces the urgent need for change brought out in Travers' chapter on the way disadvantage affects Australian children. Travers points out that Australia does badly in international comparisons of child poverty and that this is so whether relative or absolute measures are used. The reason for this is 'not because Australian family payments are low by international standards . . .(but) the employment situation of the most disadvantaged families' (p 102). Between 1979 and 1997 the proportion of families in which no parent was employed rose from 11 per cent to 18 per cent. This was because of both the rise in the number of sole parent families and the rise in the proportion of two parent families in which no parent is employed. These figures refer of course to a snapshot or picture at a point in time. Children in sole parent families often become children in blended families, and unemployed parents in couple families may move into work and then become unemployed again. However, the effects on children's education and future employment prospects may not be changed so easily.

A recurring theme in this book is that 'wrecked boats don't float', ie, when there is a rise in income levels overall in a country many of those who have become marginalised do not benefit from it. Obviously policies are needed to stop boats from becoming wrecked and to rebuild those that are wrecked. Both research cited in this book and different but related research point to labour market experience as crucial in determining sea-worthiness. The policies advocated in this book will help. Travers' reminder of the crucial role of early childhood education is important. Labour market programs have had little success in helping disadvantaged youth, with poor primary school education, to find and keep jobs. In the not very long run, money spent on improving the quality of the early educational experiences of children in disadvantaged families would help greatly in preventing boats from being wrecked. For those already teenagers or older, not only improved labour market policies are required. Also needed is a reduction in the current high rates of withdrawal of benefits as the income of recipients increases. The net increase in income is often so small that paid employment is financially unattractive. Some such changes are advocated in this book and more are recommended in the McClure report. They, or similar policy changes, are probably essential to restoring employability to those on the fringes of the labour market. But labour market and 'making work pay' policies can only fit people for jobs. Macroeconomic policy has to ensure that the jobs are there for people to take. Otherwise inequality and disadvantage will become more entrenched and we will indeed create unequal futures for the children and young people of Australia.

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