FROM BRITISH SUBJECTS TO AUSTRALIAN VALUES: AUSTRALIA–ASIA RELATIONS AS CITIZENSHIP BUILDING

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ABSTRACT
Australia–Asia relations — the configuration of policy frameworks and institutions — are inextricably bound with the development of notions of statehood and citizenship. The argument advanced here is that the way a state acts within the international community markedly determines how it relates to its own citizens. Here we suggest that the continuing and politically resonant idea of Australia as a ‘middle power’ is a crucial thread that links the international and national dimensions of citizenship building. From the very beginning of Federation the contingent sovereignty of the new Australian Commonwealth in the imperial order became necessarily entangled with debate over national political institutions and citizenship building. Long after the end of the British Empire, the notion of middle power politics has determined the nature and shape of citizenship building. These state projects of ‘citizenship building’ are profoundly shaped, determined and reinforced by the institutions and policies of regional engagement. I explore this framework through three critical junctures of domestic and external policy: the emergence of dominion status on the basis of common racial and cultural identity within the Empire in the first half of the century; the developing notion of a good international citizen during the Hawke and Keating period; and the invocation of Australian values during the Howard tenure in government.
CITIZENSHIP BUILDING AND MIDDLE POWER POLITICS

The study of Australia and Asia — an area within the domain of international relations or more recently in cultural studies — has suffered relative neglect from political scientists studying national political change. This is unfortunate because domestic politics has been influenced by and in turn shapes, Australia’s relationship with Asia. Notions of nationhood that have hovered between the proverbial dilemmas of history and geography are not to be understood as ‘a set of terms where history represents Australia and geography signifies Asia. Instead it is seen as being part of the constitutive narrative of the Australian political community and pivotal to framing citizenship in Australia’ (Jayasuriya 2006: 12). In this vein, the institutionalisation and representation of Australia-Asia relations form a vital component of the constitutive relationships that make up notions of nationhood, statehood and citizenship.

This perspective is similarly echoed in Walker’s (1999) subtle analysis of the manifold anxieties produced by the presence of a settler society on the periphery of what is perceived to be a culturally and politically alien region. Reasoning along these lines, we argue that Asian engagement is as much about construction, mobilisation and contestation of public narratives of citizenship as it is about the institutions and frameworks of international diplomacy. Crucially, these external relationships provide a means of determining the boundaries that constitute political identity, by defining the ‘outside’ and ‘inside’ of the political community. Boundary shaping of this kind is especially important for settler societies like Australia, Canada and the United States.

Australia–Asia relations — the configuration of policy frameworks and institutions — are inextricably bound with the development of notions of statehood and citizenship. In a nutshell, the argument advanced here is that the way the state acts within the international community markedly determines how it relates to its own citizens. In a ‘second image reversed’ form of analysis this essay traces the mechanisms through which international politics shape the structures and processes of national politics (Gourvetich 1978). For Gourvetich, war and trade are the crucial factors that shape regime types and coalitional patterns. However, much less work has been done on the impact of international structures and processes in constituting political and constitutional identity. Yet, it is on these very issues of political identity that the Asian engagement has had a determining influence. Hence, we examine the policies and institutions of regional engagement as a factor that shapes the purpose and meaning of membership of the political community.

But how are we to conceptualise the causal linkages between the ‘international’ and constitution of citizens? Here we suggest that the continuing and politically resonant idea of Australia as a ‘middle power’ is a crucial thread that links the international and national dimensions of citizenship building. The concept of ‘middle power’ is used here in a practical or operational...
sense rather than as an analytical category and should not be understood in terms of the attributes and capabilities of national power but as a normative configuration of state practices that determine political identity. In this view middle power denotes not a set of national capabilities but a relational setting which includes a pattern of relationships among institutions, public narratives and social practices. As such it is a relational matrix, a social network. Identity-formation takes shape within these relational settings of contested but patterned relations among narratives, people and institutions’ (Somers 1994: 626). It is this constitution of national political identity through the notion of a middle power diplomatic policy that is so pivotal to national projects of citizenship.

It has been argued that ‘since the Second World War Australian foreign policy practitioners from both sides of the political divide have framed diplomatic activity within the broad rubric of Australia’s middle power status and role in international affairs’ (Ungerer 2007: 539). But the problem with this approach is that it views middle power diplomacy as an attribute of foreign policy rather than a constitutive element of external and internal sovereignty since the beginning of Federation.2 The recurring notion of middle power in Australian foreign and diplomatic policy, then, is a relational term used to explain the way the state relates to its own citizens and gives coherence to politically organised citizenship projects.

Using Somers’ notion of a relational matrix of political identity we identify two sets of relationships: one between Australia and Asia and the other the narrative between national citizenship and public institutions. Middle power, then, in my argument is crucial here, because it determines the nature and form of sovereignty both externally and in relation to the national political community. In fact a contingent understanding of sovereignty implicit in middle power practices located within the British imperial order has shaped Australia’s national constitutional identity from the very beginning of Federation. The settlement project that defined the early federation and the parallel process of situating Australian sovereignty within the international community evolved from the vortex of debates about the respective constitutional and political identity within an imperial order.3 These constitutional debates were driven by the development of self governance and democratic institutions in the imperial dominions such as South Africa and Australia. However, the development of constitutional structures in these colonial settings in turn was dependent on the establishment of exclusionary forms of citizenship within national boundaries — against indigenous inhabitants and against non-white immigration from the region. Invariably, understandings of sovereignty of the new Australian Commonwealth became necessarily entangled with debate over national political institutions and citizenship building. Political projects of citizenship building are profoundly shaped, determined and reinforced by the institutions and policies of regional engagement.
This relational matrix between Australia’s role in the region — via the concept of the middle power — and patterns of national citizenship has continued to define critical junctures of domestic and foreign policy. Even with the decline of the Empire representations of the region have helped to constitute variable projects of citizenship building at home and guide the normative basis of state action abroad. In fact these also resonate in other situations, such as the post-cold war period where a hierarchical international system was taking shape. This is a point that becomes especially clear when we examine the dismantling of the ‘Australian settlement’ - that is, broadly, politics of labour and industrial protection and White Australia - during the Hawke and Keating period (1983-1996).

During the Hawke and Keating governments, the policies that dismantled the settlement remained dependent on mobilization of Australia as a middle power in the Asia Pacific region. This is remarkably reminiscent of the part that Asian immigration played at the birth of the constitutional and political compromises that were later to be identified as one component of the Australian settlement. In this sense Australia’s Asian engagement formed a relational setting that gave shape and form to the public narratives of citizenship. Let me be clear here: the argument is not that representations of Australia and Asia serve to produce a unique arrangement of citizenship practices, but rather that such representations — which have been variable — reflect a configuration of social and ideological practices that are inextricably woven into the fabric of nationhood and citizenship.

Citizenship is defined here not merely as a formal or legal status, but also referring more broadly to the political identity of the community (Joppke 2007). Citizenship becomes the subject of various state projects which are mobilised by the ideological representation and the material reality of the matrix of external relationships that constitute Australia’s standing in the international community. Citizenship building, or what Smith calls ‘narratives of peoplehood’ gets to the core of statehood in that the term ‘peoplehood’ is used to refer to ethical, political and economic narratives which serve to bond a particular political community. However, these narratives of peoplehood exist in relative solitude from the process of state formation – hence my use of the term citizenship building – as well as international structures and processes. Pivotal to my argument is that various state projects – statecraft if you prefer – of citizenship building have a constitutive international dimension.

In the next sections I examine three important phases of international policy in the Asia Pacific region: the emergence of the dominion status on the basis of common racial and cultural identity within the Empire in the first half of the century; the developing notion of a good international citizen during the Hawke and Keating period; and the invocation of Australian values during the Howard tenure in government. In each case, I trace the way these international postures
helped to shape domestic political programs of citizenship building constituting a particular understanding of political community.

SETTLING BETWEEN LONDON AND ASIA

Sovereignty in an imperial order

At the heart of our argument of the Australian settlement lies an embryonic understanding of sovereignty that was reflected in the dominion constitutional status of states such as Australia, South Africa and Canada. In turn this dominion status was associated with a racially inflected notion of citizenship. A consequence of this tangled relationship between empire, race and state interests is that it gave rise to a distinctive character of state building that worked to reorder the relationship between the Empire and dominion in terms of a common — though not uncontested — ‘British identity’ (Meany 2008). On this basis, dominions were middle powers whose sovereignty was contingent on the assumption of membership of a European, or rather British, international society that distinguished the white dominions from their immediate region, as well as from other lesser crown colonies, while at the same time giving it a distinctive political space in relation to the imperial centre. Transnational connections and relationships formed the basis for emerging ideas of a distinctive role for Australia as a middle power in the Asia Pacific region. It was this middle power status which created distinctive political space and identity for its citizens in the guise of the settlement project.

In the early years of the twentieth century the question of the existence of an independent Australian foreign policy vis a vis imperial foreign policy was often raised in terms of the substantial attributes of sovereign statehood. Nowhere is this evolving fledgling notion of sovereignty better illustrated than in the vehement opposition of Australian Prime Minister Billy Hughes — as part of the British delegation — to including the Japanese sponsored racial equality clause in the covenant of the League of Nations. Far from being the acolytes of the Empire on this, the dominions, led by Hughes, forced the British government to oppose the racial equality clause (Lake and Reynolds 2008). The debates in Paris represented a contingent understanding of sovereignty that reflected the particular anxiety of its location in the political geography of the region and its relationship to the imperial centre. It is here that the international dimension, particularly Australia’s Asian engagement, is vital. This international dimension, through the representation of the fledgling colonial settlement in a region with different ‘ways of life’, related to race, becomes particularly important in the meshing of civic citizenship with ideas of racial order.

It is this international context that was a spur to the creation of a distinctive racial and civic identity of colonial Australia. In this respect, Curthoys (2003) has elaborated on the idea that
notions of exclusionary citizenship began to have salience even in the context of colonial settler societies. The debate over immigration in colonial New South Wales in the latter half of the nineteenth century was framed in a political language of liberalism, which argued that the Chinese were unsuited by character, culture and temperament, in the exercise of civic citizenship. As the Bathurst Free Press neatly summarized: ‘It would be toleration run mad to import into the social constitution of any community, habits, practices and modes of thought which are utterly at war with morality equally insisted upon by every Christian creed’ (quoted in Curthoys 2002: 22).

These colonial debates over immigration proved to be influential in fashioning the nature and form of citizenship in the new federation. Various forms of colonial liberalism were directed at defining what is ‘us’ against ‘them’ – a perceived alien cultural and racial region. Much of the tenor of this argument was reflected in Henry Parkes’ repeated assertion that the Chinese were not assimilable into the nation. Exclusionary practices reflect a desire for ‘a new society in place of the old societies both of this continent and of Europe. Such a desire is an essential part of creating a new sense of “us”’ (Curthoys 2003: 31). Nevertheless these ideas of citizenship did not win uniform political agreement and there remained a pocket of conservative newspapers and pastoralists who supported continued Chinese immigration.

The intriguing study of Lake and Reynolds (2008) well documents how these ideas of racial exclusion and citizenship were not merely national stories but circulated widely within English speaking settler societies. For example, James Bryce (1902) in his influential work on the American Commonwealth was concerned with the impact of race relations on settler societies and remained particularly anxious about the danger to democracies posed by ‘other races’ (Lake and Reynolds 2008). Especially around the latter half of the nineteenth century ideas of ‘Britishness’ began to take on increasing importance in the colonies so that race, culture and political identity became increasingly intertwined (Jayasuriya 2006; Bell 2007). Yet ‘Race, culture, state interests, were not easily reconciled and so the centripetal attractions of mythic history could never overcome the centrifugal pressures of divergent geography’ (Meany 2008: 173). It is the tangled relationship between race, culture and state that gives a sense of ‘us’ that includes notions of racial order, which is intertwined with development and protection of civil and political institutions. Therefore these political institutions operate within an idea of middle power sovereignty that on one hand depends on being located within a hierarchical imperial system and on the other, a culturally and racially hostile region providing fertile ground for middle power ideas.

These international dimensions were destined to become an integral part of the language of labourism and citizenship which characterised the politics of state building in the early years of Federation. Indeed the general tenor of these labourist ideas - in particular the relationship of labour
identity, populism and the racial order - were echoed in settler societies such as South Africa and Canada. In part this arose because the flows of people and ideas in settler societies created a particular kind of political identity (Hyslop 1999). Hence the populist notions of labourism were associated with an ‘egalitarian racism that sought to construct a racially bounded democracy’ (Hyslop 1999: 418). The point here is that narratives of citizenship are not simply national stories but have a broader transnational dimension that is located within the movement of ideas and people within the British Empire. It is these transnational relationships that helped to determine the external sovereignty of a colonial state and its internal national, social and political arrangements. In this view the Australian settlement reflects not only a set of national social arrangements but also concurrently reflects a distinctive external role within the Empire.

**Australian Settlement and dominion status**

The notion of an Australian settlement has a long and rather interesting history in political discourse and analysis (Stokes 2004). Recently it gained a new life following Paul Kelly’s (1994) *The End of Certainty* which has served to popularise the term in non-academic political commentary as well as Politics 100 courses! Kelly’s usage of the term Australian Settlement sought to throw into relief the new regime of the 1980s – one enveloped within a global and competitive economy confronting the protectionist settlement established at the dawn of Federation. For Kelly the settlement is an amalgam of component parts: White Australia, Industry Protection, Wage Arbitration, State Paternalism and Imperial Benevolence.

To be sure, Kelly views White Australia as the first among equal of these policies and argues that ‘it was established in the first substantive law passed by the federal parliament – the mark of individuality in an Empire of coloured races. White Australia was not just a policy; it was a creed which became the essence of Australian nationalism and more importantly the basis of national unity’ (Kelly 1994: 2–3). Yet, the problem with this particular rendering of White Australia is that it provides no understanding of the way that White Australian constituted a ‘story of peoplehood’ (Jayasuriya 2006).

The critics of Kelly’s thesis on the Australian settlement have argued that its inclusion of various elements is overly narrow; and that it neglects the important role of political ideas. But, perhaps most significantly it is also suggested that Kelly imposes a rigid view of the Australian settlement that fails to recognise the way in which the settlement itself has transformed itself in relation to changes in the pattern and organisation of capitalist development (McAlloon 2008). The last criticism in particular underlines Kelly’s neglect of the dynamics of the settlement in terms of changing patterns of class relationships. In any case, class seems generally absent in his work.
within the context of the post World War II welfare capitalism and the associated dominance of Keynesian strategies.

For all its undoubted difficulties, the notion of the Australian settlement is useful not so much as a window into public policy but in underscoring the crucial role of narratives and practices of citizenship in shaping forms of ‘stateness’. Kelly is prescient in recognising the pivotal role of ‘White Australia’ within the individual components that make up the settlement, but regrettably overlooks the way this relational setting between political institutions, narratives of peoplehood and social practices configures a relationship between state and citizen. The intertwining of civic liberalism and racial order became central to the narratives of the Australian settlement at Federation, particularly in the language of ‘labourism’ that fused nationalism and populism (Mcqueen 1970). Labourism refers to the common ideological bonds of trade union dominated labour parties of Britain and Australia. In the Australian context, these bonds came to be identified with the pillars of Australian settlement (James and Markey 2006). The crucial point here for our argument is that this labourism — similar to the point made by Curthoys in relation to the colonial liberalism — is as much about the political character of a settler society as it is about a specific configuration of economic and social policies. These racially inflected notions of civic liberalism and racial order were echoed widely and are well illustrated by The Bulletin’s nationalist, pro federation and racist themes.

However labourism needs to be understood as a project of citizenship building that had cut across the class divide with an emphasis on the independent and self reliant individuals. Hence ‘...the populist ideals of the small man and the ‘unification of the people’ were prominent. Throughout the 1890s a more generalized commitment to the small man — the small manufacturer and artisan, as well as the selector — had been implicit in the idealization of the yeoman’ (Markey 1978: 78). Yet this populism was located within a racial and imperial order that in turn shaped the character and territorial boundaries of the settler society. In this sense it is as much about citizenship building as it is about the protectionist compromise of labourism. There is an interesting convergence between ‘imperial and republican discourses that found political expression in the late nineteenth century in talk of an Anglo-American alliance’ (Lake and Reynolds 2008: 8). Adopting a second image reversed position I argue that conception of civic citizenship necessarily has an international dimension that depends on its positioning against various representation of the Asian region.

Transnational relationships mediated through the idea of middle power created a distinctive configuration of citizenship practices. Even in the first half of the twentieth century rights and entitlement that flowed from having the status of a British subject was not only limited but also was determined by a complex web of statutory arrangements (Chesterman 2005; Chesterman and
Galligan 1997). For example, while the franchise was available to all British subjects, its scope was limited by restrictive and exclusive legislative measures such that ‘many British subjects, particularly non-white ones such as indigenous Australians and Indians, were specifically denied entitlements by provisions in a range of racially discriminatory legislation’ (Chesterman 2005: 32). Chesterman and Galligan also note that in a federal system there is dual citizenship where the ‘rights and benefits of citizenship are not the sole preserve of the federal government’ (Chesterman and Galligan 1997: 11). But this dual citizenship was embedded in an understanding of sovereignty within the context of ‘common racial order’ of the imperial system.8.

Consequently the middle power notions of sovereignty associated with dominion status determine the process of citizenship building identified with the settlement project. Asian engagement, it seems, is far more central to the history of statehood than allowed for in those histories that trace this engagement to the politics of the last quarter of the twentieth century.

Of course, this does not mean that the conception of Australia as a middle power is narrowly restricted to racially charged international policy of the sort exemplified by Prime Minister Hughes at the Paris Peace conference. Certainly, by the mid twentieth century a number of divergent attitudes towards middle power diplomacy were to be found in the ideas of public intellectuals such as Latham, Garran and Eggleston. These public intellectuals viewed Australia as a Pacific power that needed to engage with the ‘orient’ in a more sophisticated fashion. Nevertheless, this engagement was framed in the context of Australia’s relations with the Empire and its complex racial segmentation (Walker 1999). While there was an emerging tradition of liberal internationalism that sought greater relative autonomy within the Empire and emphasis on multilateral institutions to solve international problems, this was predicated on fixing the cultural location of Australia within international society. It will be clear below that even as the Empire declined and new security relationships were established with the US, the ever recurring notion of Australia as middle power continued to shape ideas of citizenship and stateness.

GOOD INTERNATIONAL CITIZENSHIP AND MODERNISATION

Good international citizenship

If the empire and Australian settlement had formed the backdrop of Australia’s distinctive dominion status following Federation, the cold war period witnessed new security relationships with the United States. This ‘special relationship’ like that with Great Britain – with whom ties were loosened but still strong – facilitated Australia’s international role in the Asia Pacific as a valued member of the cold war alliance. However, during this period the notion of middle power status as a determinant of foreign policy lay largely dormant. Certainly in the 1970s, the Whitlam
government’s more independent and energetic policy towards China and Indonesia suggested an embryonic middle power conception. It was only in the Hawke-Keating period and within the unfolding dynamics of the cold war that the notion of a middle power began once again to inform a foreign policy whose centrepiece was ‘Asian Engagement’. This version of middle power in the form of ‘good international citizenship’ set the stage for a substantial citizen building project that linked neoliberal economic reforms with a more inclusive notion of citizenship.

In the very early years of the Hawke government, Bill Hayden, the Foreign Minister, articulated a new understanding of the role of Australia in Asia. He argued that: ‘This independent policy and outlook are the inescapable conclusion to facts which have finally become conventional wisdom. They are that the good days are gone when events out of our control brought us nothing but good news and good luck’ (Hayden 1988: 10). Not only did Hayden suggest a more independent foreign policy but he linked these changes to a more fundamental national, social and economic transformation.

It was, however, in the late 1980s that middle power diplomacy became the hallmark of Australian foreign policy, but this was strongly associated with the program of economic modernisation driven by Paul Keating. The most striking example of this was the establishment of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Summits – ‘four adjectives chasing a noun’ as Gareth Evans aptly described this institutional structure – in 1989. APEC as an institutional initiative was preceded by the strategic shift in government planning towards a diplomatic policy directed at strengthening and reinforcing the central economic objectives of the government.

On this score the Garnaut Report (Garnaut 1989) was instrumental in reshaping the foreign economic policy architecture of the government. This is an intriguing report as it was as much about the advocacy of a domestic economic reform program as it was about the regional economic cooperation. Indeed, the scope of the report was much wider than economic issues, as it waded into domestic issues such as the promotion of Asian literacy within the education sector. It was a blueprint for social and economic modernisation and in this way the Garnaut Report is emblematic of the confluence between the assertive middle power economic diplomacy of the Hawke and Keating periods and the changing configuration – institutional and ideological – of national citizenship.

The complex array of political forces that led to the formation of APEC has been well described elsewhere (Ravenhill 2001; Pitty 2003a). However, two factors reinforce our argument that the notion of middle power played a crucial role in the push towards APEC. First the APEC initiative emerged out of the post-cold war environment where there was greater scope for middle power engagement in the region and elsewhere. Middle powers, as part of the shift towards burden
sharing, were well equipped to take advantage of the space for greater policy and institutional entrepreneurship (Cooper, Higgott and Nossal 1993). Yet this niche diplomacy so well described by Cooper et al could only occur within a framework where there was a special relationship between middle powers and the US. It is no accident that Australia and Canada – nested within close alliance relationships – came to exemplify the virtues of middle power diplomacy.

In fact, it is precisely this relative autonomy of middle powers – rather than behaviour characteristics – that under the various circumstances gives potency to its diplomatic initiatives. In this respect at least, it parallels Australia’s more independent middle power policy with a looser imperial framework in the early Federation years. It similarly exemplifies a relational understanding of sovereignty within a hierarchical international system. As such, it reflects a fundamental ambivalence, first defined in its role within the Empire, that carries through to its special relationship with the US. Here Australia’s APEC policy has been caught between an essentially Pacific orientation sought by the US and a more East Asia focus demanded by Malaysia. Leaving aside the merits or demerits of East Asia centred versus the Pacific centred regional cooperation, the effectiveness of Australian diplomacy as middle power depended on being both in the region and not of the region. These notions of middle power sovereignty reflected and in turn shaped the nature and purpose of national citizenship.

Second, there was real fear that the Uruguay round of trade liberalisation would collapse and APEC was seen as an organisation that could exert some diplomatic pressure, on the Europeans especially, for more concessions. International initiatives of this sort strikingly illustrate the profound changes in the Australian economy which had moved from being highly protectionist to one where middle power diplomacy was being used to secure more trade liberalisation. In this sense it reinforced and supported the economic modernisation agenda of the Hawke-Keating Government. As Gareth Evans, the Foreign Minister who was the key player in articulating the middle power strategy put it, Australian initiation of APEC was ‘psychologically important … not only in getting recognition from all those other countries of us as a player in the region but also generating that awareness among Australians and Australian businessman in particular that we really do have a major role and a major set of opportunities in this region’ (Pitty 2003a: 28). John Dawkins, another key Minister of the Hawke-Keating government argued that ‘we must look to our self interest in an increasingly competitive world. Convincing Australians that our future agenda is in Asia should now be placed at the head of Labor’s agenda’ (Dawkins quoted in Bates 1997).

To be sure, APEC was not the only middle power initiative taken by the Australian government. In the security area a number of policy initiatives were advocated — albeit with very limited success — to enhance greater regional cooperation in the Asia Pacific region. Similarly, and
here there is continuity with the Whitlam government, greater attention was paid to expanding a ‘human rights’ agenda, though this had its limits (Cooper et al. 1993). In particular, the human rights agenda ran headlong into the inconvenient fact that the economic transformation of the region lauded by the Garnaut Report was associated with authoritarian regimes. Despite these limitations, the rights agenda reinforced the domestic political project that combined market reform with programs of inclusionary citizenship. Nevertheless, out of all these initiatives it is the establishment of APEC that crystallises the intimate link between the political project of economic modernisation and the broader middle power role in the Asian region. Gareth Evans’ statement above reiterates the crucial point that APEC was much more than a foreign policy initiative - it was closely related to the programme of economic modernisation pursued by the Hawke and Keating Government.

The significance of the Hawke-Keating centrepiece of ‘Asian engagement’ is to be found in the normative principles – the political language – that it attributed to middle power diplomacy, rather than a particular set of behavioural attributes. Nothing better exemplifies this political language than Gareth Evans’ notion of a good international citizen. This idea, and it was never systematically formulated, formed a cornerstone of Australia’s middle power diplomacy. Good international citizenship, Evans and Grant argue, involves ‘... an extension into our foreign relations of the basic values of the Australian community – values which are at the core sense of self and which a democratic community expects its government to pursue. It is proper, if for no other reason than to maintain our sense of worth in pursuing ends that are inherently valuable …’ (Grant and Evans 1991: 34-35). They go on to list a number of examples. Apart from the economic examples discussed above, these include the fight to end apartheid, expanding the human rights agenda and development cooperation. As with Hughes’ contribution at the Paris conference, the increased assertiveness of Australian foreign policy was not simply a product of the favourable international conditions for niche diplomacy. It also constituted a distinctive domestic political project of modernisation. Hughes, Keating and Evans have at least this in common: they saw the Australian–Asian engagement as decisive in determining issues of settlement policies and citizenship. The differences between them lie in the fact that during the Hawke–Keating period it is the settlement that was being dismantled.

Citizenship building and modernisation project

As with the ‘settlement project’ we observe that the way the state faces the international community determines the way the state relates to its own citizens. In the Hawke and Keating period this process of Asian Engagement underpinned a statecraft of modernisation. This ‘modernisation project’ had various strands: party reform, new forms of electoral support and the support programs
of market reforms. But what linked all these different elements was a broad ranging notion of modernisation of economic and social institutions. Its main impact was in the constitution of new principles and purposes of state action through a program of citizenship building.

But first let’s discuss the dismantling of the settlement project. While the institutions and policies identified with Australian settlement went through mutations in the post war Keynesian period, it was fundamentally dismantled in the 1980s (McAloon 2008). The newly elected Hawke government was beset by increasing economic problems during the 1970s and 1980s, including high unemployment, unfavourable terms of trade and a fiscal crisis, as well as fundamental changes in the international economic order such as deregulation of capital markets. As a response to these problems, the Hawke and Keating governments embarked on an extensive program of privatisation of state owned assets such as the Commonwealth Bank, deregulation of the financial sector and trade liberalisation (Kelly 1994). The nature and forms of this transformation have been well documented elsewhere (Bell 1993), but what is significant from the standpoint of this paper is that these economic and social changes entailed a transformation in the practices of citizenship, which in turn hinged around a particular representation of the Asian region.

To be sure, modernisation remained an important template on which the Whitlam government sought to cast its transforming social and economic policies. This kind of modernisation was still within a recognisably social democratic terrain and resembled something like a European social democratic approach to policy. As Scott (2003) points out, ‘insofar as modernisation means simply a process of updating an organisation, then in his approach to the Labor Party Whitlam was certainly a moderniser or modernist’ (2003: 446). Even here, the differences between the modernisation agenda of the Whitlam and the Hawke/Keating government can be exaggerated. After all, there were significant initiatives during the Whitlam period, such as the 25% tariff cut to transform aspects of the protectionist compromise. In fact modernisation, as an ideological motif, figures prominently in the nascent full employment policies of the Chifley-Curtin governments. Along these lines Rowse (1993) argues that the three Labor periods of post war government (1945–48, 1973–75, 1983–96) have been distinguished by moments of creative policy responses to the problems of full employment in a changing global environment.

However the Hawke and Keating modernisation agenda was undertaken in the context of far reaching changes in the global and domestic political economy that made untenable the traditional dualism of social democratic politics: market and social solidarity, public and private. In this sense modernisation became a political project that sought to adapt social democracy or its particular labourist variant to the convulsion of global capitalism that effectively undermined the post war
economic and political regimes and corresponding social foundations (Gamble 2006, Jayasuriya 2006).

It is in this political and social context of neoliberalism that the policies and the ideological narratives of Asian Engagement became identified with the transformation of the social and economic arrangements of the Australian settlement. Modernisation in the sense used here is an ideological project that creates new forms of political community and citizenship practices. It creates new political identities. Just as much as the language of citizenship — framed around economic narratives — informed the populist language of labourism during the consolidation of the settlement project, a similar language of citizenship was central to the modernising project of the Hawke-Keating period. In both cases labourism remained central, in that ‘like so many earlier versions, the harmony between different groups was based on a conception of economic aims’ (Johnson 2000: 32). Of course, the economic modernisation project implied a more strongly inclusive notion of citizenship that stands in relief against the exclusionary citizenship of the settlement.

This is not to say that social policies and issues were neglected in this framework. But these policies and notions of citizenship were cast in terms of the project of economic modernisation (Johnson 2000). Emblematic of these social policy changes was the ‘Working Nation’ document initiative to move long term unemployed into the economic mainstream. In its focus on employment in an open economy the strategy has much continuity with traditional Labor attempts to deal creatively with employment policy in a period of economic transformation (Rowse 1993). However the policy differed in this sense: whereas a traditional Keynesian view would have seen this as a macro economic problem of full employment, in programs such as Working Nation unemployment was a micro economic issue of individual economic adjustment. The ambit of these programs of citizenship was wider than the economic objectives embodied in such documents as Working Nation but included substantial commitments to areas such as multiculturalism, arts policy, etc. in the form of Creative Nation and Aboriginal policy. Each of these policies was situated in the context of the political project of economic modernisation that involved restructuring of the nature and purpose of public action.

Economic modernisation, I have argued, is a state project of citizenship building that imbues citizens with certain characteristics that define the condition of the membership of the political community. But economic modernisation is not simply a domestic project of citizenship building, it is a project that is mutually constituted by the web of external relationships that reach out to the international community. This political project of modernisation, like the state building associated
with the founding of the Australian Settlement, was mobilised on the back of an assertion of middle power status within the region through initiatives such as APEC.

JOHN HOWARD AND AUSTRALIAN VALUES: A CIVILISING MISSION?
The defeat of the Keating government and the election of John Howard as Prime Minister brought with it a new language of citizenship based around the notion of promoting and safeguarding Australian values. Howard’s language of citizenship implied a notion of Australia as a civilising middle power that stood in relief to the idea of good citizenship identified with the Keating government. But like the Keating government’s middle power agenda, the Howard government’s foreign diplomacy reinforced its domestic state project of citizenship building. In so doing, it needs to be emphasised that much of the international relations debate on engagement or disengagement of Howard on Asia misses the point that it is the way in which this engagement was conducted that distinguished Howard’s citizenship building or statecraft organised around ‘Australian values’.

This cultural language of Australian values was tethered to a conception of Australia’s role in Asia as a civilising middle power harking back to some of the earlier Australian settlement themes of a distinctive political and cultural identity in a culturally alien region. Some have claimed that the Howard government eschewed middle power politics, seeing this as a part of the Labor tradition in foreign affairs. To an extent this is right; the Coalition eschewed references to middle power or good international citizenship — the guiding motifs of the Keating government. Yet, for all that, Howard’s foreign policy articulated a distinctive purpose for Australia in Asia, by virtue of its unique history and geography. And this became crystallised in the notion of Australian values. Howard’s statement to Parliament on the eve of the East Timor intervention neatly summed up this notion of Australian values. He argued that ‘The first truth is that foreign policy needs to be based on a clear sense of the national interest and on our values’… [He then goes to define these values in terms of history and geography] ‘I have called a unique intersection—a Western nation next to Asia with strong links to the United States and Europe—Australia deploys unique assets in our relationship with the Asian region’ (Commonwealth of Australia 1999: 10029-30). Cotton’s (2001) illuminating account of the East Timor intervention highlights the significance of Australian values in legitimating this intervention. He notes that Howard’s justification in address to Parliament while ‘not so outspoken as the putative “Howard Doctrine”, this statement represented the most distinctive contribution by the Prime Minister to Foreign Policy discourse since he assumed office in 1996’ (Cotton 2001: 230).

Australian values, as defined here, has three key features: first it states the unique position of Australia – and in particular its British, now often referred to as Western, heritage- in a region
where these traditions are non-existent. It was part of the region but not completely of it. Second, the obverse to this accent on Australian values was an emphasis on the different ‘styles and outlooks’ of politics and policy in the region. Finally the capacity to draw on the strategic assets of the community in dealing with the region and here, community assets included the strategic alliance with the United States.

In sum this civilising notion of middle power contributed to a more coercive and interventionist role in the region in defence of particularistic values. Indeed, the events of September 11 and Australia’s role in the global war on terror only reinforced the Howard doctrine of Australian values. Other key examples include Howard’s widely reported ‘deputy sheriff’ comments and the intervention in the Solomon Islands. The Solomon intervention was predicated on the idea of bringing good governance to the failed states of the Pacific – a civilising mission par excellence (Hameiri 2007). In terms of our argument the crucial import of Australian values lies in reinforcing and indeed expanding the communitarian language of citizenship so vital to Howard’s domestic statecraft.

Howard’s statecraft remained a strategic mix of an enthusiastic commitment to the values and policies of economic liberalism with an equally assiduous commitment to social conservatism that seeks to retreat from the broadening of citizenship to groups such as migrants and indigenous people. It is this curious combination of appeal to liberal market reform and conservative understanding of ‘community’ that is distinctive of these new political projects. It seeks to make the benefits of citizenship conditional on the membership of a cultural community or what Howard often referred to as the mainstream. Here the ‘mainstream and Australian identity were being constructed as one and the same thing by a sleight of hand that simultaneously talked of all Australians and marginalised “special”, “minority” interests’ (Johnson 2000: 42). As Johnson argues, the Howard language of citizenship did not repudiate ‘identity politics’, but created a new form of political identity based on the appeal to a notion of the Australian ‘community’. Here ‘community’ is understood in terms of the staking and manipulation of cultural boundaries.

The clearest example of this statecraft of Australian values remains the attack on multiculturalism and asylum seekers. Border security and asylum were seen as a challenge to core values of national identity (Maddox 2005; Jayasuriya 2006). In this way, border security became not just a defence of the territorial boundaries but provided defence against challenges to the core values of the nation. As Maddox (2005) argues, Howard’s emphasis ‘on ‘family’, ‘values’ and ‘social stability’ played a key role in rebranding far right social conservatism as ‘mainstream’, by eliciting bipartisan support for carefully selected wedge issues’ (Maddox 2005: 69). One such important wedge issue that crystallised is the introduction of a formal procedure that tests
prospective citizens on their ability to identify and accept key cultural and civil values seen as crucial to furthering the bonds of the national community.

As in the early years of Federation, civic citizenship is mobilised in this citizenship building project in a way that depends on a rather thick notion of a common way of life. This culturalism is made explicit when Howard harks back to Henry Parkes, noting that ‘a century ago, Sir Henry Parkes - that great hearted champion of federation – declared Australia ready for unity, for the dazzling prize of nationhood because of, in his words, the vigour, the industry, the enterprise, the foresight and the creative skill of its people. He knew, as I know now, that self confidence and self esteem, that determination and fair play, success itself, can be the characteristics of a nation only while its citizens possess these virtues and hold dear those values’ (Howard 1999). After the events of 9/11 this culturalism was increasingly articulated in terms of acceptance of a set of core cultural values, essential for social cohesion and harmony.

CONCLUSION
National citizenship, or rather citizenship building, from Billy Hughes’ defiant statements against the racial equality clause at the Paris Peace conference to John Howard’s invocation of Australian values, has been inextricably tied up with the way in which the state deals with the international community. This is the nub: how the state relates to the international community strongly influences configuration of national citizenship. In this way it helps to shape the very nature of the political community of which we are a part. Therefore, for example, the normative frame of the ‘good international citizenship’ was central to the more inclusionary citizenship building during the course of the economic modernisation project that defined the statecraft of the Keating Government. Consequently, this essay has argued that the real importance of Australia–Asia relations lies in the way it shapes not so much the everyday national politics – important as this is – but how it contributes to particular projects of statecraft that shape the citizenship, the boundaries of state society relationship and the normative purposes of state power.

John Howard’s government engaged with Asia as much as any government but it is the nature and form of that engagement that diverged from the good international citizenship of Hawke and Keating years. For all that, Howard’s policy remained tied to a middle power understanding of Australia’s role in the region. My argument is that the notion of a middle power has been a central motif through which various different statecraft projects have been mobilised. The interesting fact is that middle power or similar alternatives feature as recurring themes at crucial points of economic and political transformation. At the heart of the settlement was the notion of the tension between history and geography that imparted to Australian foreign policy a distinctive purpose in the region.
Yet, during the dismantling of some of the key elements of the settlement project, Asian engagement and the creative response to history and geography became a crucial lynchpin of the political project of the modernisation project. History and geography is an inescapable feature of political life.

Finally, the idea of middle power stems from Australia’s location within the Empire. In this sense the notion of the middle power can be traced to the forging of a British identity within the Empire that was central to the way both politicians and academics in the interwar period sought to define Australia’s role in the international system. In particular, one response was that of Keith Hancock – who in many ways defined the idea of the Australian settlement – that the ‘free association in a commonwealth was the British answer to the conundrum of Empire. It did not loosen the ties between its members; rather, since the nations of the Commonwealth cooperated voluntarily out of respect for shared ideals, it would make for a greater harmony and unity than any attempt to impose an imperial sovereign, whether the British government itself or some form of imperial federation’ (Meaney 2008:380). The empire is gone but middle power motifs continue to resonate in Australia’s engagement with the region. It finds a willing political echo because middle power arrangements and ideas, be it in the form of ‘racial unity’, good international citizenship, or the notion of civilising power, is crucial to citizenship building in an increasingly hierarchical international system.

NOTES
1. For a survey of international relations approaches to the middle power diplomacy see Holbraad (1984), and Cooper et al. (1993).
2. However, Ungerer’s (2007) article remains very useful in tracing the recurrent usage of the idea of middle power in Australian Foreign policy
4. Other theorists have made the same point about this interaction of the cultural and ideological narrative and its strategic use by political elites. See for example the work on nationalism by Brubaker (1996).
5. This is better conceptualised in terms of what Nettl (1968) calls ‘stateness’. Stateness is not an entity or a thing but denotes the complex set of relationships between public authority, practices of citizenship, notions of sovereignty and webs of international relationships. The advantage of this approach is that it allows us to see state building as a process made of various social and political relationships in multiple sites – international, national, ideological and economic. This is well summarised by Katzenelson who points out that ‘Nettl invites us to approach the state as complex construct. He provides guidelines for substantial variation, introduces a normative dimension into political theory, and refuses to choose between domestic and international approaches to stateness’ (Katzenelson 2002: 13).
6. For some of the earliest references to this see Hancock (1930).

7. For Castles (1989) the settlement was really about the organisation of a ‘historic compromise’ of capital and labour. However the ‘material interests’ that drove the social compromises shaped by the development of distinctive forms of citizenship

8. These citizenship classifications were only eclipsed by the passage of Australian citizenship legislation in 1949 (Rubenstein 2002).

9. One of the interesting sidelines of this move was the transformation of academic studies on Asia toward more policy oriented studies. Gone were the cold war battles around theories of modernisation and dependency and Marxist oriented approaches and in its stead was a focus on issues such as the politics of market adjustment, international relations and critical security studies.

10. Intriguingly Evans and Grant (1991) invoke Hedley Bull’s notion of purpose beyond ourselves in defining good international citizenship. There is an interesting connection between the dominion origins of the international relations ‘English School’ tradition and the distinctive dominion origins of the notion of middle power.

11. This notion of good international citizenship resonates with the tradition of liberal internationalism articulated by those such as Eggleston and Ball in the interwar period. (Walker 1998) A recurring idea in the writings of this broad group of public intellectuals was that ‘Economic internationalism and constitutional stability were their central concerns in relation to Asian Affairs’ (Brown 1990: 81).

12. But even on this citizenship score there are some continuities between the Whitlam and the Hawke and Keating governments. In the case of both governments modernisation carried with it an expansive notion of citizenship and entitlement. The Whitlam government’s policies on issues such as Aboriginal affairs and gender discrimination reflect these expansive impulses of citizenship. Indeed for the first time the rather ambiguous meaning of Australian ‘citizenship’ becomes much more clearly defined within the framework of the various legislative entitlements. Yet, these changes were still within the context of institutions of the settlement — albeit in a Keynesian framework — as well as the cold war.
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