

## DETERMINANTS OF ATTITUDES TOWARDS QUESTIONS OF BORDER MAINTENANCE IN AUSTRALIA

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*It has been argued that higher education is associated with cosmopolitan attitudes. This theory is tested in relation to Australians' attitudes to the questions of tariff protection, defence and ethnic pluralism. All of these questions draw on the concept of national borders. The results indicate that people with university education are significantly more supportive of breaking down barriers formed by national borders than are those with less education.*

### INTRODUCTION

In recent years the well-known views of Australia's policy elites concerning the supposed merits of opening up the local economy to global competition have tended to prevail despite some evidence of popular opposition.<sup>1</sup> This paper does not discuss the economic issues involved in this debate. Rather, it explores the extent of opinion differences among the public on issues related to globalisation and offers some ideas which help explain the basis of these divisions.

Previous studies have identified a broad cosmopolitan/local or cosmopolitan/parochial division of the public on attitudes towards certain social issues.<sup>2</sup> Those with higher levels of education tend to be more likely to be located in the cosmopolitan category. This division also tends to correspond with attitudes towards the nation. Locals, or parochials, are more likely to identify with the nation and to take an ethnocentric stance on public issues.<sup>3</sup> They wish to see their nation's interests advanced and they prize all aspects of their nation relative to other nations. Conversely, cosmopolitans are more open to the virtues of other nations and to criticism of their own.

The theory behind this distinction is that persons with more education, and particularly those possessing higher-education credentials, are likely to favour cosmopolitanism because, on the one hand, their education exposes them to a wider set of perspectives and, on the other, cosmopolitan attitudes have become a status marker for many educated persons. Furthermore, there is a link between higher education and having an occupational position as a 'symbolic analyst' (for example, lawyers, consultants, financiers, designers, engineers, scientists and so on), which gives such people a material interest in identifying with a global economic perspective. They have something

to gain from selling their services into the international market place. Such attitudes, however, are more likely to be prevalent in economies in which leading firms (and those who work for them) have extensive and profitable global links. In a more vulnerable economy like that of Australia we might expect these attitudes to be less evident. On the other hand, many working-class people feel threatened by an open global economy due to the possible relocation of their routine jobs to nations with lower wage levels.

At issue here are the links between positions on the cosmopolitan/parochial spectrum and attitudes towards the maintenance of national borders. These links can be viewed in terms of a variety of different dimensions, from issues of trade relations, to external military threats and the need for defence strategies, to national identity, immigration and multicultural issues. This paper addresses the question of the relationship between attitudes towards national borders and educational and occupational positions by analysing opinion questions from sample-survey data on the issues of trade protection, defence spending, Australian identity and the ethnic identity of immigrants.

If the theoretical ideas outlined above are correct, we would expect a divergence along educational and occupational lines on attitudes to the following:

- i) Whether the economy should be closed or opened to international competition. Persons with limited education and in lower-status jobs would be expected to be much more in favour of any Australian government action which helps defend local production through tariffs or other barriers against foreign products;
- ii) Orientations to national defence. Those with lower education and occupational standing would favour a more self-reliant and strong military stance;



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iii) National identity. Those with limited education and lower-status jobs would be expected to identify more strongly than the tertiary-educated with an Australian identity and with ethnocentric Australian attitudes; iv) Ethnic identity and multiculturalism. Persons with less education and limited occupational opportunities would be likely to be more insistent than those with greater educational attainment and higher-status occupations on the maintenance of cultural unity and more hostile to cultural pluralism, because they see it as a direct threat to their identity as Australians.

Of course we would expect these dimensions to be linked to some extent (in particular the last two), but they also tap clearly distinct, if related, concepts.

In each case the theory outlined above suggests that the link between education and attitudes to border maintenance is the person's position on the broad cosmopolitan/local attitude dimension. Those located at the local/parochial end would be more likely to display the characteristics of ethnocentric Australians and this position is in turn likely to influence their attitudes on border maintenance issues.

#### DATA, DEFINITIONS AND MEASUREMENT

We test these propositions by drawing on data from the National Social Science Survey, 1984-88 integrated data file (n=6203). This is a combined data set of questions from three nation-wide random sample surveys of the Australian adult population conducted in 1984-85 (n=3012), 1986-87 (n=1528) and 1987-88 (n=663). These surveys were conducted by mail, except for the urban section of the 1984-85 survey which was conducted by personal interview, and all had response rates of around 60 per cent.<sup>4</sup> In one instance our analysis focuses on an item that was only collected in the 1984-85 survey and is therefore not contained in the integrated data file. The data are publicly available from the Social Science Data Archives at the Australian National University.

Our core independent variables are education and occupation. Education is divided into three groups: those with a university degree, those with some other kind of tertiary-level qualification and those with no post-secondary qualification. The focus of the analysis is on the difference between the

university-educated and the other groups since, for reasons noted above, clear distinctions are often seen between the attitudes of university graduates and all other educational levels on a variety of social attitudes<sup>5</sup>

The main interest in occupation for this analysis is on the group of occupations Reich calls 'symbolic analysts'.<sup>6</sup> The services provided by symbolic analysts 'can be traded worldwide', since they trade in:

the manipulations of symbols – data, words, oral and visual representations. ... Symbolic analysts solve, identify, and broker problems by manipulating symbols. They simplify reality into abstract images that can be rearranged, juggled, experimented with, communicated to other specialists, and then, eventually, transformed back into reality. The manipulations are done with analytic tools, sharpened by experience. The tools may be mathematical algorithms, legal arguments, financial gimmicks, scientific principles, psychological insights about how to persuade or to amuse, systems of induction or deduction, or any other set of techniques for doing conceptual puzzles.<sup>7</sup>

Occupations that come under the definition of symbolic analysts include research scientists, engineers, public relations executives, investment bankers, lawyers, management and financial consultants, planners, systems analysts, advertising executives, architects, cinematographers, film and television producers, musicians, publishers, writers, editors and journalists.<sup>8</sup> The list of occupations provided by Reich has been matched as closely as possible to the categories provided in the Australian Standard Classification of Occupations to produce the symbolic-analyst group for this analysis. By this definition, all symbolic-analyst occupations fall within the broad groupings of professionals and managers. To see how their attitudes compare with those of other occupational groups, we divide other occupations into three groups: other professional and managerial occupations, other non-manual occupations and manual occupations. The 'other professions' include social professionals like teachers, social workers and counsellors. Most of these have humanities and social science backgrounds and could thus probably be expected to be located towards the cosmopolitan end of the attitudinal spectrum. These people do not necessarily dominate the 'other professional and

managerial' category, however, since it also includes health professionals and a variety of other professional and managerial groups from a variety of educational backgrounds.

Our definitions of the university-educated and of symbolic analysts are thus relatively restrictive rather than inclusive and should therefore provide a good test of the extent to which these groups are distinctive in their attitudes. Symbolic analysts, for example, comprise only a little over eight per cent of the combined sample from the three surveys (and less than a third of all professionals and managers) while university graduates are just on nine per cent. It is also worth noting that, while there is substantial overlap between the two groups, they are far from being one and the same. For instance, nearly two-thirds (66 per cent) of those with a university degree do not work in symbolic-analytic occupations, while 58 per cent of symbolic analysts do not have a university degree. On the other hand, of course, the number of symbolic analysts who are graduates (42 per cent) is proportionately extremely high (and vice versa).

#### BIVARIATE RESULTS

We begin the analysis by examining the bivariate relationship of both education and occupation in turn with each of our four attitudinal variables. Later we introduce a range of controls in a multivariate analysis to test the net effect of university education and symbolic-analyst occupations on the various

measures of attitudes towards national borders.

Table 1 displays the data for the first dimension we consider, the economic issue of attitudes towards protection of domestic industries. Respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the following statement: 'Our industries need stronger protection against imports from abroad.' The first row in the table shows the overall responses for the whole sample and it appears that Australians as a whole tend to be in favour of industry protection: 26 per cent strongly agreed with the proposition and a further 37 per cent agreed, making a total of 63 per cent in favour of giving Australian industries stronger protection, while only 25 per cent were against. When we look at the breakdown by education, however, we see that this stance predominantly reflects the views of the large group with no educational qualifications, as well as (to a lesser extent) those with non-university tertiary qualifications. The picture for people holding a university degree is very different: less than a third (29 per cent) favour stronger trade protection for industries, while a majority (51 per cent) are against the idea. On this dimension at least, the gap between university graduates and the remainder of the population shows up very clearly, in the predicted direction.

Symbolic analysts, too, display a distinctively cosmopolitan stance relative to the

Table 1: Attitudes towards industry protection among different educational and occupational groups (in percentages)

'Our industries need stronger protection against imports from abroad.'							
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total	(N)
Whole sample	26	37	13	20	5	100	(6123)
Education							
University degree	8	21	19	39	12	100	(538)
Other tertiary qualification	24	36	12	23	5	100	(1951)
No qualification	30	40	12	15	3	100	(3485)
Occupation							
Symbolic analyst	9	25	15	41	10	100	(420)
Other professional & managerial	17	30	15	30	8	100	(1018)
Other non-manual	25	41	13	17	4	100	(1982)
Manual	32	39	13	13	3	100	(1553)

Source: National Social Science Survey, 1984-88 integrated file (n=6203)

views of other occupational groupings. The same proportion (51 per cent) are against strengthening industry protection and only 34 per cent are in favour. Persons working in lower non-manual and manual occupations line up clearly on the other side of the argument, while those who are in professional and managerial occupations, but not ones defined as providing symbolic-analytic services, are in a somewhat more even position, but one which still favours industry protection on balance.

In Table 2 we turn to the question of government spending on the military and defence. Again, the overall balance of opinion is skewed towards the parochial end of the scale, with 48 per cent wanting the government to spend either more or much more on defence compared to only 19 per cent wanting less defence spending, while a substantial minority (32 per cent) sits on the fence. The university-educated, however, are again at odds with the rest of the community. Thirty-five per cent of them want less spending while 27 per cent want more (and 39 per cent want the same). The distinctions by occupation are less clear, although symbolic analysts, and to a lesser extent other professionals and managers, are certainly less in favour of defence spending than people in

the lower ranking occupations. Even among the symbolic analysts, though, the balance of opinion still favours spending more rather than less, leaving the university educated as the only group in the table in which the balance is reversed.

Next we consider displays of nationalistic sentiment through ratings on a 'feeling thermometer' asking respondents' views on 'Australians'. A feeling thermometer is a measure on which survey respondents are asked to rate a group (or a person or organisation) on a scale which ranges from zero, which signifies a very cold or unfavourable feeling, through to 100, which indicates a very warm or favourable feeling, with 50 indicating a neutral position. To facilitate presentation of the data in Table 3, the 100-point scale has been collapsed into five categories, with scores of 0 to 24 being labelled 'very cold', 25 to 49 'cold', 50 'neutral', 51 to 75 'warm' and 76 to 100 'very warm'.

Table 3 shows that on this dimension the general theme of localism continues, to an even stronger degree than before. Not surprisingly, people who live in Australia like Australians, with fully 87 per cent feeling warm towards them, 60 per cent very warm. Almost no one feels cold towards Australians. Yet there are some distinctions

**Table 2: Attitudes towards defence spending among different educational and occupational groups (in percentages)**

... Please show whether you would like to see more or less government spending ...[on] the military and defence? <sup>a</sup>							
	Spend much more	Spend more	Spend the same as now	Spend less	Spend much less	Total	(N)
Whole sample	18	30	32	12	7	100	(6040)
Education							
University degree	6	21	39	21	14	100	(534)
Other tertiary qualification	16	31	34	12	7	100	(1924)
No qualification	21	31	30	11	7	100	(3429)
Occupation							
Symbolic analyst	9	26	36	17	11	100	(416)
Other professional & managerial	16	26	33	16	8	100	(1005)
Other non-manual	17	31	32	13	7	100	(1962)
Manual	20	32	31	10	7	100	(1543)

Source: National Social Science Survey, 1984-88 integrated file (n=6203)

<sup>a</sup> In the 1984-85 survey the question read ... do you think we are spending far too much, too much, about the right amount, too little or far too little on ... the military, armaments and defence. The scoring of the answer categories has been reversed for combining with the other data sets. The distribution of answers is similar in all three surveys.

**Table 3: Attitudes towards Australian identity among different educational and occupational groups (in percentages)**

Feeling Thermometer: 'Australians' <sup>a</sup>							
	Very cold	Cold	Neutral	Warm	Very warm	Total	(N)
Whole Sample	1	1	12	27	60	100	(6068)
Education							
University degree	1	2	19	39	39	100	(530)
Other tertiary qualification	1	1	12	28	58	100	(1938)
No qualification	1	1	1	24	64	100	(3457)
Occupation							
Symbolic analyst	*	1	15	38	45	100	(417)
Other professional & managerial	*	1	14	30	54	100	(1002)
Other non-manual	1	1	11	27	60	100	(1980)
Manual	1	1	11	23	64	100	(1553)

Source: National Social Science Survey, 1984-88 integrated file (n=6203)

\* Less than 0.5 per cent.

<sup>a</sup> Collapsed to five categories for tabular presentation, from original scale of 0 to 100. See text for further details.

to be made at the top end of the scale between the different educational and occupational groupings. While 64 per cent of persons with no post-secondary qualification are very warm towards Australians, fewer than 40 per cent of graduates feel the same way. Similarly, 64 per cent of manual workers record a very warm reading, but this number falls progressively as we go from other non-manuals, to other professionals and managers and finally to symbolic analysts, among whom fewer than half (45 per cent) are very warm towards Australians.

Only when we come to our last dimension, views on the proposition that 'Migrants should be encouraged to keep their ethnic identities in Australia', do we find a plurality of opinion supporting the cosmopolitan position among the population in general (Table 4). This question was only asked in the 1984-85 survey. In total, 48 per cent of respondents agree with the idea while 33 per cent are against migrants being encouraged to keep the ethnic identities and 18 per cent are neutral. Again, however, the university-educated lead the way in the display of cosmopolitan attitudes with 62 per cent favouring the encouragement of cultural diversity compared to only 20 per cent disagreeing with it. With respect to occupation, there is comparatively little divergence on this question among the different groups,

although the symbolic analysts do have both the biggest proportion in favour of the multicultural position (albeit narrowly, at 53 per cent) and the smallest proportion against it (25 per cent). The balance of opinion on this issue is, however, in favour of ethnic diversity among all occupational and educational groups in the table.

#### MULTIVARIATE RESULTS

We have seen that a person's location in the occupational and educational hierarchies is associated with cosmopolitan versus parochial attitudes. Yet it is possible that some or all of the apparent impact of education is really due to the fact that many graduates are employed as symbolic analysts (or vice versa), or because of some other factor that we have not taken into account. It is thus important to control for such possibilities in a multivariate analysis, so as to test the effects of occupation and education net of each other and also of other possible confounding factors, such as ethnicity, gender, age, income, trade union membership and residence in an urban or rural area. Each of these variables may be related both to education and occupation and also to the attitudinal variables. By controlling for them in a multivariate analysis, to isolate the independent effect of each variable, we eliminate the possibility that conclusions

**Table 4: Attitudes towards ethnic identity among different educational and occupational groups (in percentages)**

'Migrants should be encouraged to keep their ethnic identities in Australia.'							
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total	(N)
Whole sample	9	39	18	23	10	100	(2989)
Education							
University degree	12	50	18	15	5	100	(220)
Other tertiary qualification	9	39	18	24	10	100	(986)
No qualification	9	38	18	24	11	100	(1705)
Occupation							
Symbolic analyst	10	43	22	18	7	100	(174)
Other professional & managerial	10	41	15	24	11	100	(547)
Other non-manual	8	43	17	23	8	100	(977)
Manual	10	33	20	24	13	100	(814)

Source: National Social Science Survey, 1984-85 (n=3012).

about the effects of education and occupation may be based on spurious associations. For example, holding a university degree is correlated to some extent not only with being a symbolic analyst, but also with earning a high income, with living in an urban area, with belonging to a trade union, with being young and with being male and it is conceivable that one or some combination of these factors is responsible for the apparent relationship between education and cosmopolitan attitudes.

To this end, Table 5 presents a set of results from analyses conducted using ordinary least squares multiple regression, with pairwise deletion of missing data. These results show what impact, on average, a one unit change in each independent variable has on the dependent variable. To ease interpretation, the dependent variables have all been rescored to run from a low of 0 to a high of 1, with the direction of opinion represented by this scoring indicated in parentheses in the table after the name of the variable. For example, in the case of industry protection, a score of 0 indicates those most strongly in favour of protection (those who 'strongly agree' that our industries need stronger protection) while a score of 1 indicates those most against protection (people who 'strongly disagree'). Most of the independent variables are also scored 0 or 1 (except for age, measured in years, and income in tens of thousands of dollars).

With the variables scored this way, the unstandardised regression coefficients can be thought of as differences in proportions. For example, in the first analysis in Table 5 the unstandardised regression coefficient for holding a university degree of .14 indicates that, on average, graduates are 14 per cent more of the way towards being strongly opposed to the idea of protecting Australian industries against imports from abroad than are those with no qualification (the omitted reference category).

This difference of 14 per cent may seem rather small by comparison with the bivariate results presented earlier. There are two main reasons for this. One is that the regression estimate gives an overall average of the relationship in question in one coefficient, whereas the data in Table 1 show differences at each point in the distribution. The second and more important reason is that, compared to its bivariate association, the impact of higher education on attitudes to industry protection is substantially reduced by controlling for the other variables in the multivariate equation. Indeed, without the addition of any other variables, the bivariate regression coefficient for university education is substantially higher at .26. When the effects of occupation and the other social structural variables are controlled for, this is reduced by almost half to .14. In other words, while higher education remains an important predictor of attitudes on the issue

of industry protection, a considerable amount of its apparent impact turns out to be to do with its association with other relevant factors. Deeper inspection (the results of which are not shown here) indicates that the main factor in reducing the size of the education effect is in fact occupation.

Returning to the results in Table 5, people with other tertiary qualifications are also a little more anti-protection than the unqualified, but much less so than those with degrees. The gap between symbolic analysts and manual workers is even greater than the educational difference, at 17 per cent. Again, however, this effect is substantially less than the bivariate effect for symbolic analysts of .26 (the same as for university education) and, in this case, it appears that education is the important factor in reducing it. In other words, part of the apparent impact of occu-

pation is due to education just as part of the apparent impact of education is due to occupation.

Other professionals and managers are not far behind the symbolic analysts in their view, and other non-manual workers are also significantly more anti-protection than people with manual occupations. Among the control variables, men are significantly more anti-protection than women, younger people tend to be significantly more anti-protection than older people, those born in the British Isles are more likely to be anti-protection than the Australian-born, as are urban residents compared to rural dwellers, and people on higher incomes compared with those on lower incomes.

The main message of the table is that the university-educated adopt consistently more cosmopolitan stances than either of the other

**Table 5: Multiple regression analysis of effects of education and occupation on cosmopolitan attitudes (unstandardised regression coefficients, with standardised coefficients in parentheses)**

	Dependent Variables (all scored 0 through to 1)			
	Industry protection (anti)	Defence spending (anti)	Australian identity (pro)	Ethnic identity (anti)
<b>Education</b>				
Reference: No qualification				
University degree	.14 (.13)*	.11 (.11)*	-.06 (.09)*	-.09 (.08)*
Other tertiary qualification	.03 (.05)*	.01 (.02)	-.01 (-.03)	-.01 (-.02)
<b>Occupation</b>				
Reference: Manual				
Symbolic analyst	.17 (.16)*	.06 (.06)*	-.05 (-.07)*	-.05 (-.04)
Other professional & managerial	.13 (.18)*	.04 (.06)*	-.04 (-.09)*	-.01 (-.01)
Other non-manual	.06 (.11)*	.01 (.03)	-.02 (-.06)*	-.02 (-.02)
<b>Controls</b>				
Sex (male)	.08 (.14)*	-.02 (-.04)*	-.02 (-.05)*	.09 (.15)*
Age (years)	-.0008 (-.05)*	-.003 (-.17)*	.002 (.14)*	.0007 (.04)
<b>Birthplace:</b>				
Reference: Australia and 'other'				
British Isles	.05 (.05)*	.05 (.05)*	-.06 (-.10)*	-.04 (-.04)
Continental Europe	.02 (.02)	.05 (.04)*	-.06 (-.09)*	-.16 (-.14)*
Asia	.02 (.01)	.01 (.01)	-.08 (-.06)*	-.02 (-.01)
Urban residence	.04 (.07)*	.02 (.03)	-.02 (-.06)*	-.02 (-.01)
Trade union membership	-.02 (-.03)	.00 (.00)	.01 (.02)	-.01 (-.02)
Income (dollars x 10000)	.007 (.05)*	.002 (.01)	.001 (.02)	-.002 (-.01)
R2	.12	.06	.06	.05

Sources: National Social Science Survey, 1984-88 integrated file (n=6203), for the first three analyses, and 1984-85 survey (n=3012) for the fourth analysis

\* Significant at  $p < .01$

two educational groupings with respect to all four attitudinal dimensions. Among the occupational groups, the symbolic analysts are not as distinctive as the university educated and indeed the differences in occupation are generally weaker than in education (with no significant differences on the issue of encouraging ethnic diversity). Where occupational differences are apparent, the split is usually between the manual workers and all the other groups or between the manuals and the lower non-manuals on the one hand and the other professionals and managers and the symbolic analysts on the other. Even the educational differences, however, are not all that substantial, though they are always statistically significant.

Indeed, it is worth noting that the R-squared statistics indicate that none of these four issue dimensions is particularly well-explained by the variables in the equations. Of the control variables, gender has an effect in each instance, but neither men nor women are consistently more or less cosmopolitan than each other. Thus while men are more opposed to industry protection than women and less positive about Australian identity, they are also more for defence spending and more against encouraging migrants to keep their ethnic identities. There is more consistency in the age effect. Younger people are substantially more cosmopolitan than older on three of the four variables. Not surprisingly, immigrants from the British Isles, continental Europe and Asia all display less warm feelings towards Australians than the Australian-born and those born on the continent are also substantially more likely to favour migrants retaining their ethnic identities.

#### CONCLUSIONS

The data in this paper add weight to the argument that there are substantial differences in Australia between elite and popular opinion on the issue of globalisation. While the policy makers continue to push Australia into the global economy, on the basis of the evidence presented here, the public's views generally seem to be much more parochial than open. The strongest agreement with the idea of a borderless economy and society is to be found amongst those with a university education. This is consistent with the theory linking cosmopolitan attitudes to the socialising effects of

university training although it has to be said that the analysis has not directly tested the specific propositions about why highly educated individuals might be more cosmopolitan in their views, such as the development of a broader outlook and seeing cosmopolitanism as a status marker.

The theory, however, receives further support from the revelation that controlling for symbolic-analyst occupations reduces the direct impact of education on attitudes towards border maintenance issues, for this suggests that some of the ostensible impact of education comes from the material interest that graduates have in identifying with a global perspective by virtue of their occupational positions. Yet the situation remains rather complex, since the impact of occupation is similarly affected when education is controlled and indeed the relationship between occupation and border-maintenance attitudes is generally weaker than for education. It may be that at this stage in Australia's integration within the global economy those occupying positions as symbolic analysts are not as enthusiastic about a borderless world as some of the university educated because their positions may perhaps be threatened by further competition.

Finally, it needs to be remembered that university graduates and symbolic analysts are very small groups within the population as a whole and in this sense their views have little impact on the overall profile of public opinion. The numbers of both groups, though, are growing and will certainly continue to do so in the foreseeable future and, as they do, the evidence from this analysis suggests that we are likely to see a growth of more open, cosmopolitan attitudes in the Australian public. We should also remember that despite their small numbers, members of these groups have disproportionate influence in crucial policy and media circles, but that of course is another issue.

#### Acknowledgment

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#### References

- <sup>1</sup> See, for example, A. Markus, 'Racism in the Recession', *People and Place*, vol. 1, no. 2, 1993, p. 36.
- <sup>2</sup> See, for example, K. Betts, *Ideology and Immigration: Australia 1976 to 1987*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1988.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, A. Markus, 'Identity in an Ethnically Diverse Community', *People and Place*, vol. 1, no. 4, 1993, pp. 48-49.

<sup>4</sup> For further details see J. Kelley, R.G. Cushing and B. Headey, *Australian National Social Science Survey, 1984: User's Guide*, Social Science Data Archives, Australian National University, Canberra 1987; J. Kelley, C. Bean and M. Evans, *National Social Science Survey Integrated Data, 1984 to 1988: User's Guide*

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<sup>5</sup> Betts, op.cit., pp. 39, 42

<sup>6</sup> R. B. Reich, *The Work of Nations: Preparing Ourselves for 21st-Century Capitalism*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1991

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 177-78

<sup>8</sup> See *ibid.*

## THE GREAT MISTAKE: CONSOLIDATION POLICY IN MELBOURNE AND SYDNEY

Kevin O'Connor, Amanda Darby and Virginia Rapson

*Although there has been a surge in the number of inner-city dwelling units constructed in Melbourne and Sydney recently, these dwellings form only a small proportion of the total dwellings built in either city. Population trends confirm that most growth still occurs in the outer areas. These outcomes imply that consolidation policy (designed to increase inner area population) has had little effect overall.*

The idea that Australia's metropolitan areas are beginning to (or should) develop at higher population density has attracted considerable attention in recent years. The concern lies at the core of 'consolidation' policies in both Melbourne and Sydney, and has been promoted by the 'Better Cities' policy of the Federal Government.

The idea has emerged from three sources. The first was the cost of new suburban land development, and the need for governments to reduce borrowing and expenditure in line

with new perspectives on budgetary policy. This attitude was strengthened by the fact that established areas had under-utilised urban facilities like schools, which would be expensive to replicate in the new areas. In this context, a range of studies showed that consolidation could save large amounts of money through better utilisation of established facilities.<sup>1</sup>

Environmental concerns provided a second source of interest in a new form for our cities.<sup>2</sup> Analysis of the links between

Figure 1: Sydney and Melbourne zones

