Finally, in nations such as Australia and the US, attempts have been made to depoliticise politics whereby the machinery of government has increasingly fallen under the mantle of those deemed to have the skills and knowledge to control it. Government has become a more instrumental and specialist craft. This Chapter has considered a range of responses to this situation. Some citizens feel resentful and disenfranchised by this process and have been attracted to a range of counter-elitist, anti-politicians such as H. Ross Perot, or Pauline Hanson. Rather than rejecting or turning away from the political system, their appeal is to those desperate to participate in that system. They want to change the existing political culture. They want to be heard, a view this thesis does not immediately ridicule or condemn.

Following the de-registration of Pauline Hanson’s One Nation in Queensland in 1999, the City-Country Alliance emerged to fill the void. Railing against globalisation and low commodity prices, Alliance supporter and sugar cane grower, Neville Halliwell, interviewed in his machinery shed commented that:

We hold our governments responsible. We don’t want a hand-out of money but they have the power within our Constitution . . . [producing a copy of the Constitution from the top pocket of his work-shirt] . . . this is our Commonwealth Constitution, they have the power to mint money, you know, for our efforts. (SBS 2000)

Far from 'giving up on politics', he had made the effort to obtain and read a copy of the Constitution in a desperate attempt to exercise some authority albeit via an extremely misguided view of the nature of the nation’s founding document.
Chapter Four
Dimensions of Citizenship

Introduction

As a contestable concept, citizenship continues to attract considerable attention, and an extensive and expanding literature exists on its meaning and interpretation. By examining several major tensions within the theory and practice of citizenship, this Chapter recognises that notions of citizenship are subject to continual review and rethinking. It also shows that citizenship has inherent political and ideological aspects, especially when the single word 'good', is placed before it. The Chapter commences by considering the meaning of the words, ‘civics’, and ‘citizenship’, and the implications this has for the contemporary debate in education. Educators and schools have a traditional role as dispensers of knowledge, but reaching an understanding and consensus as to what this means in relation to civics and citizenship education may be a difficult matter. The possible contradiction between the education designed to fill the civic deficit via increased attention to a perceived lack of knowledge, and the practice of contemporary education, is alluded here although this matter will be considered in greater depth in later chapters.

The Chapter considers some of the major points of contention in understandings of citizenship. It does this by reviewing some of the notable contributions to the literature of citizenship theory. This establishes the broad contexts on which the analysis of education in/for citizenship can proceed. The Chapter argues that before any understanding of citizen education can be formed, consideration needs to be given to the mutable and contested nature of citizenship itself. To that end, a range of models of citizenship is examined. Particular attention is directed to the concept of ‘social citizenship’ commonly associated with the work of T. H. Marshall from the middle of the twentieth century, and the neo-liberal reactions to it that have come into greater prominence since the 1960s. It is argued that Marshall’s interpretation connotes a form of citizenship that has fallen into disfavour with policy makers, and has been replaced by models that seek to sever the link of
dependency between the state and the citizen. In doing so, it mirrors the depoliticisation, and withdrawal from democratic participation discussed in Chapter Three. So a civic deficit can be regarded as a by-product of neo-liberalist responses to Marshall’s concept of social citizenship.

This Chapter demonstrates the contested and contingent nature of contemporary citizenship in Australia. By endorsing the concept of *democratic citizenship*, this thesis recognises that an increasingly diverse range of interpretations needs to be acknowledged. Although this Chapter does not delve far into the implications of this for education in democratic citizenship, it does draw attention to the need for educators to have greater awareness of the political nature of citizenship, an issue pursued in depth in Part B. If understandings of citizenship are becoming more disparate, so education for citizenship must also provide citizens with the skills needed to test what Dryzek (1996) calls, the authenticity of their democracy.

4.1 Civics or citizenship?

There has been increased interest in the concept of citizenship in many parts of the world in recent decades. Hudson suggests that citizenship may be an ‘overused’ word (2000: 15), although this did not prevent him co-editing the recently published *Rethinking Australian Citizenship*, in which more than a dozen distinct views of citizenship are offered. As Kymlicka and Norman suggest:

> There is increasing support however, from all points of the political spectrum, for the view that citizenship must play an independent normative role in any plausible political theory and that the promotion of responsible citizenship is an urgent aim of public policy. (1994: 368)

In their valuable survey, Kymlicka and Norman offer a range of explanations for this enhanced interest in the theory and practice of citizenship. Increasing voter apathy, long-term welfare dependency, alienation exposed by drug and alcohol abuse, rising levels of crime, resurgent nationalism, environmentalism and multiculturalism are often linked to an increased emphasis on citizenship. To this
already diverse list, Van Steenbergen adds subjects such as poverty and the underclass, women's issues, national identity, minorities and the role of the intelligentsia. All these matters can be fruitfully analysed from the perspective of citizenship (Van Steenbergen 1994: 1). As Mulgan (1994: 56) warns, almost any idea can cast itself in the language of citizenship, a point ably reinforced by Dahrendorf's feelings of despair at the distortions and ideological abuse inflicted on one of the great ideas of social and political thought (1994: 13). Frazer detects a relationship between increased interest in political and civic education, and waves of 'moral panics' that prevailed throughout the second half of the twentieth century, designed to address the 'anti-establishment' attitudes of the 1960s, through the materialism of the 1980s, to the alienation of the 1990s (1999: 7).

As part of the process of reviving interest in civics and citizenship education, reference is often made to a time when 'civics' was a prominent component of Australian schooling. The contribution of Alice Hoy (1939) is a notable example of an earlier manifestation of Australian civics and citizenship education. Hoy's student text contains an Introduction written by a former Victorian Director of Education, Frank Tate. Optimistic of the power of education to create a better Australian society, Tate's values saturate virtually every sentence. His unrestrained attacks on 'selfish, disloyal citizens' of all types is apparent in this comment,

The merchant prince who manipulates prices so that he may get disproportionate and unfair profits is disloyal to the State just as the workman is who 'slows up' and restricts output, and so condemns others to pay for his lack of efficiency. The political party which is out to score for it is own party interests every time, and fails to recognise in its legislation and administration the rights of the minority is disloyal to the State. (Tate, in Hoy 1939: viii)

While Tate's appeal may have been largely designed to build an Australian defence against 'external enemies' wanting to remove our democratic freedoms, he also finds plenty of enemies within Australian society. Indeed, his intolerance of 'idlers', 'loafers' and 'shirkers' casts some doubt over his claim that we should 'aim at a society where all shall receive fair play, and where each shall be given opportunity' (1939: vi). Tate's 'good citizen' is a somewhat ambiguous
construction. At one point he is a communitarian idealist ‘willing to work with his fellow citizens in promoting the happiness and welfare of all the others’, while at another adhering to the more prevalent conception of the common good, or national interest, as largely coinciding with personal economic interests. ‘No admittance except on business’ would be a very good sign to hang over this world of ours’, declares Tate.

These introductory comments give priority to the role of values within civics and citizenship education. However, it is necessary to pause and clarify the basic components of this area of the curriculum as undoubtedly, the basic vocabulary of civics and citizenship education is subject to multiple interpretations, use, and possibly abuse. The most influential single document in the Australian ‘civics revival’ is the Report of the Civics Expert Group (1994), *Whereas the People*. While the Group’s title refers specifically to ‘civics’, rather than the broader term ‘civics and citizenship’, its Report (1994: 6) makes it clear that when it uses the term ‘civics’, it is not limiting its interpretation to the narrow fields that may have prevailed in the past, or in other nations. To avoid this confusion, throughout this thesis, I use the term ‘civics and citizenship’ to remind the reader that a broad interpretation is being employed. The Report regards civics and citizenship as having three major dimensions: knowledge and understanding; skills; and values and attitudes. Most Australian contributors to the literature on civics and citizenship education in the past decade have adopted this categorisation, as will this paper. By drawing on the Report of the Civics Expert Group (1994), these three dimensions of civics and citizenship education can be briefly described:

- Knowledge and understanding should include key people, events and issues in Australia’s political history as well as an understanding of democratic principles. The Report emphasises that an appreciation of how government works in practice is essential.

- Students need a range of investigative skills. They need to be able to define a problem, identify and analyse its causes and carry out all stages of a plan of
action or research. Such skills include those of oral and written communication, listening, editing, working in groups, and negotiation.

- Values and attitudes are an inescapable part of civics and citizenship education. The Report nominated democratic process, social justice and ecological sustainability as providing an important framework for the teaching of civics in schools. (1994: 53, 54)

Achieving an appropriate balance between these dimensions has been a source of considerable debate (Kreibig 2000). Much of the criticism levelled at Australian civics education programs from earlier in the twentieth century is that they were too knowledge-based and too heavily influenced by an assumption that in order to be an active citizen one must be a knowledgeable citizen. However, the idea that citizens must be knowledgeable still has its supporters, reflected in Craven’s comment that ‘knowledge that does not lead to participation is worthless, and participation that is not based on knowledge is ignorance’ (Discovering Democracy 1998d: 20). Civics Education Group Chair, John Hirst (Interview 2000) suggests that values and skills have been emphasised at the expense of knowledge in Australian education in recent decades, and while he talks of the need to restore that balance, as we shall see in Chapter Seven, he seems somewhat unclear as to how this can best be achieved. Babb goes as far as to suggest that students themselves are aware of their lack of knowledge, declaring ‘they [students] are embarrassed about their inability to name both houses of Parliament, or the Governor-General, or three former Australian Prime Ministers’ (1995: 6).

While it is possible to mount a contemplative defence of the ‘knowledgeable citizen’, the simplistic appeal to a populist sentiment that citizens need to ‘know’ some basic facts about their nation is pervasive. Throughout 1999 and 2000, a series of media promotions asked Australians: ‘What sort of nation would forget the name of its first Prime Minister?’ While such a question may imply that having discovered Barton, Australians may then feel inclined to investigate something of greater significance of the origins of the Constitution, Federation or the High Court, it provides no guarantee. Instead, it carries the connotation of little more than trivia,
a feel that is reinforced by the emphasis on the *first* prime minister. In terms of his contribution to the evolution of the new Australian federation, it could be argued that it was Alfred Deakin, the second prime minister was of greater significance than Barton. However, it is the nature of such 'knowledge' that interest is concentrated on who came *first*.

An emphasis on the lack of knowledge by Australians about their constitutional arrangements and system of government has led to concerns that 'new' civics and citizenship education will fall into the trap of equating meaningful citizenship with the ability to achieve a pass result in a quiz. In addressing this matter, O'Loughlin (1997) suggests that citizenship involves far more than acquiring a knowledge of civic facts. She contends that many models of citizenship, including that used by the Civics Expert Group, are 'excessively rationalistic' in that too much emphasis is placed on the 'knowing citizen'. Two types of knowledge are privileged: 'knowing that' (for instance, the structure of the Federal parliament), and 'knowing how' (for instance, how to vote in an election). To O'Loughlin, this notion of citizenship relies on an 'outmoded and glorious ideal', one that locates citizenship in the public realm at the expense of the private lives of citizens.

The term 'new civics' has been employed as a means of differentiating it from its earlier interpretations. New civics carries a connotation of something designed to fit the needs of Australia at the start of the twenty-first century. Yet in a sense, even this designation is misleading as it is Hoy's *civics* component that is in retreat, as the concept of citizenship is given greater prominence. It is apparent that tension exists between 'civics', and 'citizenship'. Mellor (1996: 74) declares 'little interest, but considerable suspicion' of civics. The reason is clear. Civics carries too many images of students being taught, but perhaps not actually learning or understanding, slabs of lifeless knowledge of processes and institutions from which they feel largely removed.

To Mellor, the emphasis in contemporary courses must shift onto *citizenship*. While not rejecting the term 'civics' totally, Pascoe (1996) endorses citizenship education. Although a member of the Civics Expert Group, Pascoe is keen to distance herself
from education primarily used as a vehicle to maintain a sense of civic responsibility:

Citizenship education is not about inducing political ‘prissiness’ or compliance in students - quite the contrary . . . It should empower young people, with the confidence and competence to engage in public life. (1996: 27)

Not all those exerting, or seeking to exert influence over the shape of Australian civics and citizenship education curricula may share Pascoe’s views. As Kreibig points out, there is a considerable tension between advocates of what he calls ‘elitist’ or ‘protectionist’ models of civics and citizenship education, and ‘activist’ or ‘participatory’ models (2000: 92). Pascoe’s interpretation carries a political dimension likely to cause discomfort or concern to many within an educational setting. Is there any place for genuine political analysis in a course of civics and citizenship? This matter is fundamentally important in establishing a clear understanding upon which to proceed. On examination of it, two almost opposite positions immediately emerge. The first says that civics and citizenship education is primarily about building community, and schools should work to ‘produce students “safe” for protective democracy’ (Wood 1988: 77). To that end, it is unashamedly a process in political socialisation defined as learning to ‘adopt and internalise the norms, values, attitudes and behaviours accepted and practiced by the on-going system’ (Turner 1981: 59).

The second view lays its emphasis on what several British writers call ‘political literacy’ (Crick 1977, 1998, 1999; Stradling 1981; Porter 1981). Here students are encouraged to think critically and independently. It appreciates the nature of politics and accepts the ‘naturalness of political conflict’ (Porter 1981: 193). Established beliefs and practices are open to question at the level of the state, and because ‘politics’ is broadly defined, taking place in the workplace, the local community, the family, and of course, the school itself. The tension between these two views of civics and citizenship education is a recurring theme in this work that is taken up in detail in Chapters Six and Seven.
These two views are characterised by Wood (1988) as forming a fundamental paradox of civic education. In his assessment, it is the first of these that has unfortunately been dominant. Similarly, Crick (1977) has been scathing in his criticism of earlier versions on political education in Britain. Referring to the school subject, ‘British Constitution’, he offers the forthright opinion that ‘it is rarely an advantage for a student to have taken ‘British Constitution’, often the contrary. . . His (sic) mind is astonishingly full of irrelevant and picturesque detail about parliamentary procedure and constitutional institutions’ (1977: 6). To Crick, this lacks the ‘inquisitive turbulence’ that is the essence of true political education.

Interestingly, ‘political literacy’ is still prominent in the literature surrounding citizenship education in Britain. The advancement of political literacy forms a key recommendation of the Advisory Group on Citizenship (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority 1998), chaired by Professor Crick. Arguing that political literacy is ‘wider than political knowledge alone’ (1998: 13), it is curious to see the term used by Crick’s Group in a report which in some sense, is an attempt to reinvigorate student interest in the institutions and practices of British government. However, the emphasis on the perceived problems of a civic deficit that permeate much of the Report of Australia’s Civics Expert Group is lacking from Crick’s Group. Rather than wanting to celebrate the achievements of current the system, Crick’s Group aims for:

. . . no less than a change in the political culture of this country both nationally and locally: for people to think of themselves as active citizens, willing, able and equipped to have an influence in public life and with the critical capacities to weigh evidence before speaking and acting; to build on and to extend radically to young people the best in existing traditions of community involvement and public service and to make them individually confident in finding new forms of involvement and action among themselves. (1998:7)

Like much of the ‘language of citizenship’, this passage could be regarded as relatively inoffensive. Yet it does convey a sense of dissatisfaction with the actual process of government and systemic problems within its institutional framework that is a serious shortcoming of much of the Australian literature. In advocating a
change in the political culture at national level, it suggests citizen alienation goes deeper than simply lack of understanding of the procedures of government.

This highlights another paradoxical aspect of the promotion of civics and citizenship education by governments. How willing are governments themselves to be subjected to critical scrutiny by students? When the Civics Expert Group referred to the need for young Australians to ‘appreciate how the government system works in practice’ (1994: 53, italics added), just what did it intend? The Crick Report pays comparatively little attention to the ‘irrelevant and picturesque detail’ of the British parliament and the Constitution. These are not the privileged paths to a re-enlivened sense of British citizenship. This overtly political view of citizenship education, while possibly anathema to those seeking to build or re-build a de-politicised set of shared values with an aim of preventing further fragmentation of contemporary society, clearly bears a much stronger resemblance to the democratic citizenship endorsed in this thesis.

So citizenship is far from free of contested interpretations. Even if the ‘civics’ tag is downplayed, it leaves little certainty as to what a course in ‘citizenship education’ may incorporate, leading as it inevitably does to questions about the meaning of citizenship. Hogan (1997) provides a useful starting point by concentrating on a range of liberal democratic models that began to emerge at the end of the sixteenth century. Hogan refers to these models as involving a ‘logic of protection’ in which a civic exchange is made between the citizens and the state. This ‘protective’ model of citizenship expresses not just indifference, but ‘hostility’ towards an Aristotelian, classical model of citizenship in which the citizen performs a far more extensive, participatory role in public life. These protective models, evolving in various forms from Bodin’s ‘subject-as-citizen’ to J. S. Mill’s representative democracy, share the characteristic of rejecting Aristotle’s view that human beings fulfil their potential in and through their participation in the public life of the community. Instead, the protective model locates the ‘good life in the mundane and prosaic affairs of civil society rather than in the public life of the polis’. As such, they concentrate on the formal political/civic relationship between citizens as legal subjects and the sovereign state. They are preoccupied with protecting the fundamental rights of
citizens through a variety of constitutional and institutional arrangements, normative principles and ‘disciplinary’ mechanisms (Hogan 1997: 28, 29).

Another useful distinction can be drawn between ‘minimal’ and ‘maximal’ views of citizenship (Evans 1998). ‘Minimal’ interpretations emphasise the civil and legal status arising from membership of a community, such as the rights and responsibilities associated with that membership, while the ‘maximalist’ view of citizenship entails ‘consciousness of self as a member of a shared democratic culture’ (1998: 8). This distinction highlights a key issue. If civics and citizenship education is intended to enhance and strengthen a sense of citizenship among young Australians, what model of citizenship is being proposed? There is a crucial difference between someone with an understanding of, and commitment to their formal obligations as a national citizen, and someone who wants to participate in their community in a broader sense. Mellor (1996: 75) is dubious of some of the tags that are often placed at the front of ‘citizenship’. Words such as ‘responsible’ or ‘active’ smack of the unquestioning acquiescence or compliance referred to by Pascoe. Wilkins (1999: 228) goes further, suggesting that rather than ‘active’ citizenship, it is really reactive citizenship in which the individual plays the role of consumer/property owner, rather than citizen. This is really minimal citizenship. It is an acceptance of existing national values and priorities. Hogan (2000a) sardonically describes the ‘good citizen’ as acting as a watchdog, an ombudsman or probing inspector well prepared to hand down a regular report card on the performance of parliamentary representatives. It is a portrayal likely to win widespread assent, especially from the elected representatives themselves. Minimalist citizenship draws attention to the responsibilities that are expected of citizens once the rights of citizenship are bestowed on them. It is a de-politicised form of citizenship played within the current rules of the game. To Hogan, it is not enough. In advocating enhanced civic agency, he calls for far greater political equality than evident in casting a vote, however well-informed it may be. Political equality requires equal protection of interests, equal representation, and an equal voice, all of which depend on active citizen participation (2000a: 28-29).

Maximal citizenship implies citizens who possess a genuine understanding of power relations in their community and a willingness to confront and challenge such
relations. They possess important aspects of Crick’s ‘inquisitive turbulence’. It is not supposed to be about ‘being nice’ (Mellor 1996: 75; Pearl and Knight 1999: 337). As such, it is inherently political in nature. Weissberg (1981) offers a similar analysis in his description of ‘rational-activist’ civic competency. This is citizenship characterised by commitment to direct participation in democratic processes, critical analysis and challenging of political practice and values, and down-playing of traits such as loyalty, obedience and patriotism. Summarising the differences between the implications of the minimal and maximal views of citizenship for education, Parker notes that ‘traditionalists want more study, progressives want more practice’ (1996: 112). Recognising the substantial gulf existing between this model of citizenship, and current practice in the modern state, Weissberg, although denying any outright antagonism towards it, is pessimistic of the success of an education project based on this model. A combination of intense political resistance and problems of implementing such an approach to citizenship education is likely to present formidable barriers to it being introduced in the first place, and furthermore even if in place, its chances of altering the behaviours of citizens are dubious.

So we can ask, is civics and citizenship education supposed to get ‘political’? Pring (1999: 78) highlights this dilemma by considering whether citizenship education encourages cool, even-handed analysis of often very topical issues from a position of informed detachment, or encourages the taking of strong, even passionate positions based on personal ideological belief. The second of these options certainly sounds like the more ‘active’, or maximal form of democratic citizenship this thesis endorses, yet whether it is the form of activity Australian policy makers in this area of the curriculum have in mind is open to question and a matter for more detailed examination.

4.2 Social citizenship

The concept of social citizenship has been immensely influential, especially in the second half of the twentieth century. It seeks to establish comparable life chances between citizens based on membership of a political community based on the nation-state (Higgins and Ramia 2000: 138). In portraying the ‘war’ that existed
between citizenship and the capitalist system throughout the twentieth century. Marshall (1950: 29) draws social and economic aspects of life into the core meaning of citizenship. He adds the component of social citizenship to the recognition of civil and political rights that emerged in enlightened societies during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Marshall highlights the uncomfortable tension that often exists between the narrow civic, legal and political aspects of citizenship, and its broader social aspects. Citizenship is distorted by gross inequalities of economic means between citizens. Where parts of society are socially and economically disadvantaged, the state should use its authority and resources to enhance a more comprehensive view of citizenship by social welfare provision as a short-term measure, and equal access to publicly funded education as a longer term means of ensuring all members of society have the means of generating sufficient income to enjoy the good life. As Marat noted in correspondence with Desmoulins, 'What good is political freedom to those who have no bread? It only counts for theorists and ambitious politicians.'

Of course, this social component of citizenship is keenly contested ground, a contest that intensified in the latter decades of the twentieth century (Pixley 2000, Hudson and Kane 2000). As the influence of neo-liberalism and market economics intensified the final quarter of the twentieth century, so the tension between citizenship and capitalism noted by Marshall has been the subject of fresh scrutiny (Van Steenbergen 1994). The broad coincidence in the growth of industrial capitalism, and the liberal model of citizenship since the eighteenth century suggests some direct relationship between them, and as Heater (1990: 267) notes, such an argument can be sustained. Capitalism promotes the autonomy of the individual as consumer or producer operating as a free agent within the market. It requires an awareness that personal initiative and effort can be rewarded by social elevation and material benefits. The irrationalities of traditional political, economic, cultural and social institutions and arrangements of pre-modern society are exchanged for the common sense of the market. The market stresses the importance of contractual relationships, including a social contract as the basis of government. As such, market capitalism can be seen as perfectly compatible with the emergence of citizenship as it undermines hierarchical, patriarchal and religious institutions.
and values and replaces them with relationships free from moral or social
dimensions (Turner 1986: 23).

Yet to followers of Marshall, many of the outcomes, even the objectives of
capitalist modes of production and exchange seem at odds with ‘the citizen ideal’.
The inequalities of pre-modern societies based on hierarchy, religion and
paternalism are simply replaced by inequalities based on modernism and the market
— both are the outcomes of historical and social, rather than natural causes.
However, while egalitarianism in the civic and political forms of citizenship is
agreeable to capitalism, egalitarian social citizenship is not. While the former
conflates meritocratic principles of equality of opportunity, the latter suggests an
equality of outcome that while empirically seems to present little threat to
capitalism, nevertheless quickly raises the market’s hackles. This is Marshall’s
‘war’ in which on the one hand, the pursuit of social citizenship attacks the
principles of market capitalism, and on the other, the operation of capitalism
weakens citizenship. While the political, legal and civic dimensions of citizenship
are compatible, even necessary aspects of the market, the equality implied by the
notion of social citizenship immediately clashes with a society that must be
constructed on class. Social citizenship promoted by an interventionist welfare state
disturbs the conditions the market requires to operate most efficiently and cannot be
tolerated for that reason. In a variety of ways, the activities of an interventionist
state are incompatible with the principles of individual autonomy and liberty that lie
at the heart of the market mechanism. Intervention adversely affects the principal
advantage of the market, the freedom of individuals to determine their interests free
from the distorting effects of artificial and arbitrarily established requirements.

It may be tempting to assume that the notion of democratic citizenship
automatically embraces the concept of social citizenship. While it may well produce
that outcome, the discussion of social citizenship in this section is not intended to
win that argument. Rather, the usefulness of social citizenship is that it provides a
basis to consider a major point of tension in the discourse and debate on the
meanings of citizenship in contemporary society. The challenges that have been
mounted to social citizenship form a major dimension of that discourse, and Section
4.3 is directed towards it.
4.3 Responses to social citizenship

To his critics, Marshall’s view of citizenship is far too passive. It relies too heavily on the notion of private rights and entitlement at the expense of participation, responsibility and virtue. New models of active citizenship have emerged to challenge the rights-responsibility relationship between the citizen and the state. Despite this, the concept of social citizenship has proven hard to overturn. The demonstrated capacity of the market to polarise income and wealth distribution has led to the growth of a range of services designed to ameliorate the effects of capitalism in the shape of the welfare state. For all their radical reformist rhetoric of mutual obligation, nations such as Australia, the USA and Britain have found it notoriously difficult to divest themselves of responsibility for social citizenship. Few liberal-democratic governments are prepared to deny some obligation towards citizens in genuine need. However differentiating those in real need from welfare abusers, and breaking cycles of welfare dependency, is difficult. A more successful strategy has been to ‘popularise’ capitalism by encouraging the view that rather than a welfare safety net, property ownership is the preferred form of social citizenship (Heater 1990: 269). Rather than capitalism and citizenship being at war as Marshall suggests, ownership of property promotes citizenship, reminiscent of a Lockean form of privatised democracy. Australian Prime Minister, John Howard clearly expressed this view in noting:

And just as Robert Menzies made Australia the greatest home-owning democracy in the Western world, so it is my goal that my government will make Australia the greatest share-owning democracy in the world. (Howard 1998)

Under this analysis, ownership of property means the citizen obtains a greater stake in the community, and hence greater adherence to it.

Yet the shift in emphasis to ownership of capital involves a fundamental re-interpretation of the concept of social citizenship, one that critics on the Left may be reluctant to acknowledge. As ownership of equity in listed companies expands from
being the preserve of wealthy elites and institutions to being an investment strategy adopted by a substantial proportion of the population, so attitudes to social citizenship also alter. It fundamentally challenges the concept of class that lies at the basis of Marshall’s ideas. This is achieved in a variety of ways. First, by creating a new class of property owners from within the ranks of wage and salary earners, it blurs class divisions making it more difficult for citizens to clearly recognise just where their interests lie. Shareholders may sympathise with the plight of their company’s striking workers, while at the same time wondering what impact the industrial action will have on the annual dividend. Secondly, it reduces resistance to privatisation of publicly owned facilities as shareholders are offered the opportunity to generate personal wealth (as opposed to impersonal, public wealth) through share ownership. Third, it acquaints a growing proportion of the population with the mentality of risk and reward that lies at the heart of a capitalist mode of production.

All of these factors present a serious threat to critics of a neo-liberal interpretation of citizenship. In addressing the weakening of social citizenship in contemporary Australian society, Salvaris (1999) refers to, ‘the people who appear to be selling most of our economy and our important public assets to foreign owners, things that really affect our independence’. Apart from the somewhat dubious wisdom of dragging the Other (in the form of ‘foreign owners robbing us of our freedom’) into the matter, Salvaris fails to, or is reluctant to recognise that a significant proportion of his middle class audience is likely to own shares in the privatised organisations he refers to. Salvaris’ call for a new debate on Australian citizenship in an endeavour to question what sort of society we want Australia to be (2000), is weakened by his obvious distaste for what the neo-liberal response to Marshall has produced. It reflects the sense of ‘national functionalism’ underlying Marshall that Pixley claims no longer adequately accounts for the complexities of contemporary citizenship (2000: 122).

Reactions to social citizenship often attempt to rekindle aspects of earlier models of citizenship. A neo-liberal view of citizenship is one that is ‘entirely familiar to citizens in most Anglophone nations who are given daily instruction in its robust principles’ (Love 1998: 216). Drawing heavily on the work of Hayek (for example, *The Road to Serfdom* 1976), it draws attention to a growing welfare dependency
which penalises the hard working and industrious; de-couples citizens' rights from their responsibilities; and undermines self-respect and self-esteem. Such dependency inhibits participation in civic society indicated by growing apathy towards the political process, or antagonism towards politicians and government. Often informed by public choice theory and post-Keynesian economics, a neoliberal view of citizenship critically examines the growing role of the state, especially as a mechanism for reducing social inequality. As real incomes, and the cost of publicly provided services such as health and education both rise, an irreversible long-term trend towards a privatised mode of consumption occurs as the public comes to prefer the role of customer to that of client of a patronage state (Saunders 1993: 59).

Indeed an activist welfare state, rather than promoting citizenship, reduces citizens to the role of passive dependents. This view of citizenship adroitly maintains an emphasis on inclusiveness as the basis of citizenship, but sees a failure to participate in the full range of obligations as citizens as the major source of exclusion and inequality (Barry 1990, Mead 1986). In rejecting the notion that the welfare state fosters a greater sense of social integration and moral cohesion, Saunders argues that the welfare state is, in fact morally inferior to the market. Markets enable individuals to make deliberate moral choices while collectivist arrangements tend to preclude this. In addition, he questions the notion that a guarantee of social citizenship via the welfare state is able to foster a positive sense of belonging and cohesion. In fact, it undermines social cohesion by breaking down the 'mediating institutions' - neighbourhood, family, church and so on - by assuming the roles traditionally played by them. Endorsing, the view of Murray (1988), Saunders suggests that if such mediating institutions are to survive, the most important thing for government to do, is leave people alone (Saunders 1993: 80).

Social citizenship and the role of the welfare state can also be analysed from a postmodern perspective. Gibbins and Reimer (1999) are critical of Marshall's modernist agenda of fashioning a new citizen, and argue that the welfare state must give way to a 'more pluralistic, personal and life-style model' in which personalized solutions are constructed and the specific needs of citizens are attended to (1999: 160). Of course, while stressing the newness of such an approach, the positive view
of postmodernity endorsed by Gibbins and Reimer carries strong undertones of neoliberalism. By highlighting the sense of empowerment experienced by the ‘consumer citizen’, they remind us that where power goes, responsibility follows.

There is no doubt the idea of citizen as consumer has widespread appeal. An understanding of citizenship based on an Aristotelian idealised form of civic involvement is markedly at odds with the way most people in the modern world understand both citizenship and the good life (Kymlicka and Norman 1994: 362). A noble view of citizenship, a vision of a virtuous and engaged citizenry engaged in their government has little moral significance for most people (Philp 1999). By stripping away the civic idealism of citizenship, and demanding we confront the ‘banalities’ of contemporary life, Kymlicka and Norman present a formidable challenge to those seeking to advance the notion that we have lost an understanding of ‘good citizenship’. Politics and public life no longer hold much appeal to people because of the attractions offered by personal life. Institutionalised politics as it is currently practised and represented has nothing to do with fun. Beck describes a generation for whom externalised democracy has lost its appeal, as ‘freedom’s children’ (1998). They have largely turned away from a form of politics that seems incapable, or unwilling to address the issues that are deemed to be most important. As a result, they simply stay at home (1998: 4).

4.4 Community and citizenship

As most citizenship models are linked to the notion of community in some way, the broad label of ‘communitarianism’ is not as helpful as it may first appear. As Kane (2000) effectively demonstrates, trying to provide an unambiguous description of a communitarian style of citizenship is difficult. A comprehensive account of various strands of communitarianism is not required here, although it is useful to consider a fundamental point of divergence that is relevant to this project. In promoting the concept of democratic citizenship, this thesis advances membership of a political community as most significant. As Kane suggests, the concept of citizenship becomes meaningless when reduced to functional membership of any community (2000: 224).
A political community is a place that does not pursue any substantive idea of the
good, but rather privileges a set of political principles that allow and encourage
citizens to participate on the basis of freedom and equality (Mouffe 1993: 62). It
seeks to deepen democratic practice by re-invigorating those basic principles of
democracy within the political community of the nation-state. In this sense, it comes
closest to the form of communitarianism sometimes described as civic
republicanism. While Mouffe is correct to argue that this form of citizenship should
not override all other views of what constitutes the citizen (1993: 69-70), it does
convey an element of transcendence as it establishes the conditions under which
debates and discourse about other forms of identity such as social justice,
multiculturalism, feminism and environmentalism can occur. As such, it is a form
of citizenship that believes in a community of communities (Kane 2000: 226).
Although this term carries a wholesome ring of inclusion, it may connote a passive
form of citizenship that is inadequate for democratic citizens. As Lasch (1995)
points out, tolerance is democracy’s beginning, rather than its end. Democratic
citizens are less concerned with rights and status, and more with responsibility and
action. Democratic citizenship does not aim for consensus at all costs, but implies
conflicting views, energetic debate and the adoption of defensible, and possibly
unpopular stances.

This form of citizenship as membership of a political community can be contrasted
with what Kane calls ‘strong communitarianism’ (2000: 224). At the very time
many citizens are keen to re-forge links with their polity, others are drifting away
from it, possibly prompted by a belief that it is better to work on a level where the
citizen can make a difference, than waste time and effort in a realm where one
cannot. As a result, the focus of strong communitarianism shifts from the political
community of the nation-state to the particularised community of the
neighbourhood or interest group, or voluntary association. In setting its context,
Chapter One took care to point out that this thesis does not have any objection to a
style of citizenship that is focussed on activism in local communities. Indeed, it was
conceded that in many eyes, this might be an important element of addressing the
Australian civic deficit, and that schools should model ways in which citizens can
become more active in community service. However, it is maintained that this does
not lie at the core of the civic deficit, nor it is the prime focus of the efforts to re-
enliven civics and citizenship education in Australia. Both are inherently linked to
the politics of the Australian nation-state. As Kane argues, advocates of strong
communitarianism may become so engaged or obsessed with the defence of
particular communities that any notion of the whole community is lost (2000: 225).
Citizens turning from the national polity to concentrate their efforts on localised
communities, however laudable those efforts may be, will not reduce the Australian
civic deficit.

In some hands, communitarian models of citizenship take on a distinctly nostaligic,
even reactionary tone. An example is Amitai Etzioni in his 1993 book, The Spirit of
Community. Demaine (1996) delivers a stinging attack on the model proposed by
Etzioni, portraying his ideas as those of an embittered old man 'sinking in a sea of
crazy American teenagers' (Demaine 1996: 15). Like many analyses that lament the
passing of an age (real or imagined) when people lived more stable lives grounded
in a set of social virtues and settled values, Etzioni's prescription is ultimately
unhelpful. He may well be correct in attributing the decline in American civic society to factors such as the rapid increase in the number of single parent 'families,
or the negative effects of part-time employment in fast-food franchises such as
McDonald's. Finding probable causes is the easy part. As Demaine (1996: 15)
notes, Etzioni's communitarian solution involving greater parental supervision,
stricter moral education in school and a year of compulsory national service for
youth, fails to take adequate account of the realities of contemporary American
society. Like Etzioni, Janowitz (1983) highlights the importance of making citizens
out of students. Twenty years on, an interesting feature of his prescription is the
need to break down the dominance of economic goals in students' minds, goals that
are encouraged by parents and the school system itself. Yet, it seems difficult to
argue that much has been achieved on that front within mainstream Western
education in the past two decades. Indeed, the 1980s and 1990s witnessed growing
emphasis on the direct links between education and personal and collective
economic goals. Education as the vital ingredient in personal career success; a
blurring of the distinction between education and training; and the importance of
lifelong learning (often used as code for retaining employability) are obvious
indicators of this process. In circumstances in which post-compulsory schooling
becomes far less voluntary, and must cater to a far wider range of the adolescent population, education that seeks to project its appeal beyond the purely economic is under immediate pressure. Faced with this pressure, Australian schools have expanded their curricula to offer more courses in vocational education and training, and ‘career friendly’ subjects such as business management, information technology or media studies. At the same time, subjects with origins in 'high culture' such as history and classical languages struggle to survive.

The thrust of Gilbert’s (1996) criticism of communitarian models concerns what he calls, ‘the motivation problem’. Often carrying a tone of austerity and moralism, many strands of communitarianism, to be blunt, don’t sound like much fun. Too often, communities place notorious restrictions on personal freedom (Van Gunsteren 1994: 42). Abstract ideals of loyalty to the nation, or strength in community lack connection with the experiences of everyday life. Gilbert shifts the focus of citizenship from the abstract concept of the nation or state, and onto the personal. His view is that:

... if people are told that citizenship is unrelated to work, family and other elements of their of their everyday experience as persons, they might justifiably doubt its value. Similarly, if educators try to promote citizenship ideals and involvement without considering its personal significance for people in their everyday lives, students are unlikely to accept them. (Gilbert 1996: 51)

Here Gilbert reminds us of the importance Marshall placed on the social aspects of citizenship, albeit with a somewhat different emphasis. Salvaris (1999) remains truer to Marshall’s spirit by placing priority on all members of a community achieving social justice. He laments an increasing concern with citizenship as culture, national identity (in which Australian becomes a type of brand name), and lifestyle that has distracted attention from citizenship as democratic practice (Salvaris 2000: 81). On the other hand, Gilbert acknowledges the state of what he calls the postmodern world by implying that any appeal to active citizenship must have a ready and convincing response to the query, ‘What’s in it for me?’ In the new consumerism, citizenship becomes entitlement (Gilbert 1996: 53).
In developing his concept of ‘cultural citizenship’ Turner also recognises the tension between modern citizenship and postmodern culture. In asking just what a common or ‘national’ culture transmitted by the education system might look like, Turner, as an adherent of ‘progressive’ postmodernism, is able to draw links between broad cultural shifts and citizenship. The postmodern recognition of incommensurable difference may merely be an extreme version of the liberal citizenship ideal, and an acceptance of cultural fragmentation quite compatible with the democratic thrust of modern citizenship norms. Despite this vague optimism, Turner suggests that in the longer term, the postmodern celebration of difference may signify the demise of the modern concept of citizenship (1994: 166).

From the viewpoint of an ‘antipolitical age’, Mulgan (1994) examines the changes in understandings of citizenship in the context of the progressive de-linking of power and responsibility he detects in the more mobile and contingent contemporary society. While acknowledging that responsibility became a ‘dull and dusty’ word in the late twentieth century, and the impossibility of identifying a single moral code in modern society, Mulgan nevertheless asserts that no community can remain coherent for long that rewards the irresponsible and downgrades those who take on responsibility instead of financial reward. His nostalgic notion of responsibility is evident in his suggestion that a society cannot prosper that ‘sends signals to schoolchildren that it is better to be a commodities broker or an advertiser of sports cars than a teacher or a doctor’ (1994: 68).

4.5 Citizenship and the nation

The dubious link between citizenship and the nation is certainly a prominent aspect of citizenship theory, and has particular relevance to the revival of interest in civic and citizenship education. At a time when the relationship between citizenship and national identity is under challenge, citizenship education programs can be regarded as either implicit or explicit strategies to restore the profile of the nation-state.

In the twentieth century, the notion of world citizenship re-emerged. Heater (1990) links this to two major concerns: the desire to end wars between nation-states, and
more recently, preserving the world’s environment. The first of these was clearly the dominant international theme of the second half of the twentieth century. In the post World War Two period, nationalism took on a distinctly pejorative tone. Orwell famously describes nationalism as being inseparable from the desire for power. Gellner (1983) refers to the ‘problem’ of nationalism, while Anderson recognises its ‘near pathological character’ (1983:129). It is a ‘theory of political legitimacy, which requires that ethnic boundaries should not cut across political ones’ (1983: 1). However as Stratton (1998) notes, a new style of nationalism (also variously referred to as ‘nationality’ or ‘civic nationalism’) has also emerged since World War II. Linked to attempts to restore national pride and self-respect, it seeks to rid the nation of its triumphalist and jingoistic connotations. As such, it endeavours to re-invigorate, rather than diminish national identity. In the 1960s, Dutton noted approvingly that ‘our (Australia’s) national identity is at last emerging at full adult strength’ (1963:15).

A process of re-building faith in the nation following the intense scrutiny to which it was subjected following two world wars is a challenging task. How is it determined just what is an appropriate or ‘positive’ expression of national pride, and what is not? In 1999, the Japanese Diet voted overwhelmingly to restore official status to the Hinomauru (Rising Sun) flag, and Kimigayo anthem. Both are often regarded as symbols of the militarism and emperor worship of the 1930s and 1940s and may be linked to a resurgence of Gellner’s ‘problem’. On the other hand, they may be seen as largely benign indications of a restoration of Japanese national pride. Writing in reference to South Africa, Enslin (1994, 2000) notes that building a commitment to this shared national sentiment is deeply problematic in situations where members of the national society have very different understandings of the nation’s history. Of course, this apparent problem could be overcome if we can ‘wipe the historical slate clean’, and build the nation on newly created values and beliefs (White 1997: 17).

In its older, modernist, ideological form, nationalism assumes the world is divided into units, each possessing its own history and destiny. Citizens must recognise the nation as the source of all political power, and loyalty to the nation overrides all other loyalties. Nationalism contends that the state and the nation should coincide establishing the nation-state, in which the political and national unit is congruent.
(Gellner 1983: 1). Although a nation can exist separate from a state, to the nationalist this is an unsatisfactory, unresolved situation as the nation derives little or no political legitimacy from such an arrangement. Like Gellner, Seton-Watson (1977) sees the state and the nation as discrete entities, and agrees that a belief that every state constitutes a nation has been a source of massive confusion. His point is well made by referring to the United Nation Organisation, which in reality is made up of the governments of states, rather than nations. Seton-Watson expresses a somewhat polemic, but widely held view that the UN is in fact a ‘meeting place for the representatives of Disunited States’ (1977: 2).

There is a broad parallelism between the evolution of the nation, and systems of national education. Green (1990, 1997a, 1997b) has described the synergetic relationship in which education helps establish the concept of nation, and in turn, the nation perpetuates itself by means of education. Nations developed education systems to create disciplined workers, loyal army recruits, popularise national myths and stories, celebrate and teach national languages, disseminate laws, customs and social mores and generally explain ‘the ways of the state to the people and the duties of the people to the state’ (1997b: 134). Green’s largely positive report on the role of the education systems of the Asian tiger nations in state formation is illustrative in this regard. Walking a fine line between producing efficient and effective workers, and active citizens, nations such as Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore present as somewhat confused civil societies. Regarded as majoritarian or illiberal democracies, these nations’ state education systems seek to develop the high level technical skills needed by industry, what Giroux calls ‘the logic of capital’ (1997: 119), while also developing the attitudes and motivations in individuals which will ensure continuing effective commitment to and active participation in the goals of national development.

However, as Green suggests, there is a recognition that in recent decades, school education in the West has gradually lost the capacity to engage students in analysis of national meaning and national school systems have become uncertain as to their role in state formation and citizen creation (1997b: 143). In Australia, of most particular concern has been the decline, even the ‘end’ of Australian history in our schools. In reference to the ignorance of basic aspects of their nation’s history,
Macintyre notes, ‘After nine years at school, they [Australian school students] had yet to be introduced to basic facts about this country’s past’ (1998a). Such criticisms are neither an uncommon, nor recent development. In 1888, Henry Lawson argued that,

It is a matter of public shame that while we have commemorated our hundredth anniversary not one in ten children attending public schools throughout the colonies is acquainted with a single historical fact about Australia.

Is Macintyre’s call for greater attention on Australian history in schools related to a decline in the concept of nationhood, unease about nationalism, and an emergence of post-nationalism? In a sense, the post-nationalist project has its origins prior to the rise of modern nationalism. Voltaire and Bentham advocated versions of citizenship devoid of national boundaries. ‘My country is the world’, declared Thomas Paine on The Rights of Man (1915). Schiller boasted he had traded his fatherland for the whole world (Heater 1990: 54). Yet the appeal of the nation-state subsequently overwhelmed these declarations. Under the influence of Rousseau, the French welded citizenship to the nation and the bond has remained strong ever since. In The Social Contract, Rousseau attacked advocates of world citizenship, or ‘cosmopolitans’ whom he regarded as elitists happy to make a boast of loving the entire world, in order to enjoy the privilege of loving no one (1968: 102).

A changing understanding of what constitutes the nation provides a fundamental challenge to the orthodox view of citizenship as a form of shared identity that is equal in status. A range of approaches has been taken to address this challenge. ‘Differentiated citizenship’ (Young 1989), and ‘differential citizenship’ (Hudson 2000) recognise that a transcendent, universal understanding of citizenship is overly idealistic in that it fails to appreciate the differences between particular groups within a nation’s citizens. To expect groups that have historically been oppressed and marginalised to suppress these differences in the spirit of a unified public identity is to reinforce the interests of those privileged by its perpetuation. Yet, of course a concept of citizenship that explicitly recognises cultural plurality, and then perhaps tries to address it with differentiated citizen rights and responsibilities encounters intense criticism from advocates of more traditional views of
citizenship. Such criticism generally revolves around the divisive effects of a differentiated citizenship that incorporates aspects such as special representation rights for disadvantaged groups, rights to self-determination or multicultural rights (Young 1989). However, as Kymlinca and Norman note, such strategies are generally designed to enhance unity. ‘Groups that feel excluded want to be included in the larger society, and the recognition and accommodation of their ‘difference’ is intended to facilitate this’ (1994: 373). Despite acknowledging this argument, Kymlinca and Norman retain at least some of the reservations that are characteristic of those who detect a profound illogicality within it. This matter is one of the most commonly raised issues surrounding changing understandings of contemporary citizenship. The populist objection that a group of citizens should try to enhance its sense of belonging to the imagined community by enhancing its difference, continues to resonate within many nation-states.

This tension between a shared national culture, and plurality of cultures within a nation-state, has been effectively examined by Barry Hindess (1992). Following Young, Hindess considers why the leading Western liberal-democracies often celebrate cultural diversity, but then discovers how difficult it is to legitimately advance the recognition and interests of minority cultures within the broader polity. As Manne has noted (1999a: 17), the attitude of the Australian Howard Government has been ambivalent in this regard. As Prime Minister, John Howard found it almost impossible to utter the word ‘multiculturalism.’ In launching the major report, *Australian Multiculturalism for a New Century: Towards Inclusiveness*, in May 1999, Howard (1999) recommended the use of the word ‘Australian’ in front of the term ‘multicultural’ (as opposed to ‘multiculturalism’). In doing so, Howard desperately sought to maintain some distance from an endorsement of a public policy based on cultural plurality, while at the same time seeking to emphasis the transcendence of a set of shared Australian national values undergirding any celebration of diversity of ethnicity or culture. He expressed similar sentiments the following year when during Corroboree 2000, Howard rejected the proposal for a treaty between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians as a source of division.

In recognising such tensions, Hindess offers the concept of ‘associational pluralism’ (1992: 23). This stresses that within a large community most individuals will wish
to pursue a plurality of purposes, a view strongly endorsed by Kalantzis who maintains the more loyalties we have in one space, the better. By following a course of civic pluralism, Australia can become a nation of the future, with a post-nationalist sense of common purpose (Kalantzis 2000: 107-108). Hindess uses this idea to challenge the notion that for a clear majority of citizens, their primary citizenship role relates to membership of the imagined community of nation. Rather, most will inevitably form numerous other associations based on ethnicity, interests, lifestyles and so on.

Castles et al (1992: 137ff) highlight the contradiction between the growing integration of the world, leading to greater homogeneity on one hand, and a revived emphasis of difference and plurality on the other. In this situation, the nation-state suffers a crisis of legitimacy. This is especially so in the case of Australia as the sinews binding together our imagined community are of cotton wool rather than steel (Castles et al 1992: 142). Eureka, and the struggles of the nineteenth century democrats in Australia are not the stuff that nations are made from. Lacking an easily identifiable historical trauma such as a revolution, being unable to gain legitimacy by reference to a prehistoric time, and having no discernable responsibility to undertake some ‘chiliastic mission’, Australia cannot call upon the most commonly used methods of nation formation.

According to Castles et al, an additional problem facing the Australian nation is that its most significant sinews have now been discredited. While racial identity has drawn people together for much of Australia’s history, it no longer adequately performs this function. That is not to say that racism no longer exists in Australia, rather that it is not a viable ideology for generating national understanding. Yet Castles and his colleagues do not see multiculturalism as solely responsible for the decline of institutionalised racism in Australia, nor it is regarded as necessarily guaranteed to produce a more civil society. At best it may produce an equal chance to be unequal. More probable are outcomes in which economic, political and social inequality increase as multiculturalism entrenches separate and inferior educational and social systems for different groups (1992: 146). In this, Castles echoes Jupp who summarises an anti-multiculturalism argument:
Multiculturalism is an ideology whose function is to smooth the inevitable class and labour conflicts that arise from the process of capital accumulation. By its stress on social cohesion, multiculturalism mystifies and obscures the underlying structural features of social and economic inequality, and class exploitation. (1997: 137)

To Castles et al, for multiculturalism to operate effectively, any idea of nationalism or an imagined community needs to be transcended by, ironically a reassertion of Australia as the ‘workingman’s paradise’, minus its sexist and racist aspects. Social organisation needs to be redefined and the nation-state de-emphasised; the concept of the nation has become irrelevant, failing to embrace most of the population.

4.6 The global nation

An idealised view of world citizenship is complicated by globalisation, a process fundamentally linked to economics, rather than politics. Globalisation bears only a vague family resemblance to world citizenship (Laidi 1998: 6). A world in which products, human and physical resources, capital and information can all cross national boundaries in increasingly unrestricted ways presents a formidable challenge to the integrity of the nation-state. National borders become increasingly porous as technology shrinks the planet and penetrates international barriers. With no apparent regret, Oxley suggests:

This new global market does not recognise countries or nationalities, only products and services... Australians holiday in Bali without realising they have been in Indonesia. (1998: 1)

Free trade doctrine based on principles of competitive advantage have won more and more adherents in national governments, and the past twenty years have seen much of the rhetoric about reduced trade barriers translated into real policy responses. Competitive advantage has replaced earlier classical economic theory of comparative advantage. Rather than finding a product or service in which a nation has a comparative advantage, and specialising in its production on a long-term
basis, nations are encouraged to find an industry in which they have a competitive edge, an advantage they may hold for a relatively short period of time. Capable of exerting significant influence on the financial markets of nations by the virtually instantaneous movement of vast amounts of capital, the global corporation is the most visible sign of a system of production and marketing that regards national boundaries as a minor irritant. In the absence of any meaningful form of global government, it is obvious that it is nations themselves that have presided over the process, although as Laidi argues, the state has been unable to objectify globalisation by telling us whether it is a good or bad thing (1998: 7). Nations simultaneously fear and applaud global economic integration.

Latham (1998), while an enthusiast for the opportunities offered by global capital, acknowledges the threat it poses to the nation-state. He refers to the ability of capital in its new globalised form to set off ‘bidding wars’ (1998: 44) between nations in which capital, seeking a ‘home’, is able to extract substantial economic premiums from its hosts. The key factor in this process is the unprecedented power of technology to enhance the mobility of capital. Latham is no post-nationalist. Nor does he ignore the potential for globalisation to add to insecurity, inequality and exploitation throughout the world.

Social democracy, with its powerful interest in distributional issues, needs to engage itself more comprehensively in the raft of policy matters arising from the relationship between the nation-state and global capital. (Latham 1998: 49)

He believes there is still a crucial role for the nation-state in the fundamental changes linked to globalisation, but this needs to form a social and political consensus around a ‘new radical centre’.

In seeking to build an understanding of emerging meanings of citizenship, and how to educate for it, we need to ask whether the nation-state is an impediment or a catalyst to the further spread of democracy throughout the world. If we accept that the phenomenon of globalisation has the potential to create fundamental change in the world, this question is crucial. To its supporters, an increasingly interconnected planet allows awareness of the benefits of democracy and enhanced human rights to
spread to a greater proportion of the world’s population. While generally optimistic about the causal links between the global economy and the spread of democracy, Friedman (1999) interestingly balances his argument with some nagging, unresolved issues. Friedman’s concept of ‘globalution’ describes the process by which economic integration becomes a vehicle for the spread of democracy and enhanced awareness of, and maintenance of human rights throughout the world. More significant than democratic practice being demanded by sections within a nation’s society (as occurred in the Eastern Bloc countries in 1989), globalution will impose transparent and open practice on national governments from outside. Global currency and bond markets (the ‘electronic herd’), while not interested in democracy per se, demand a particular set of conditions in order to carry on business, and these largely coincide with open and democratic government. As Friedman notes, ‘you cannot get from Mao to Merrill Lynch without some Madison as well’ (1999:145).

However, Friedman does not neglect the issues commonly raised by the critics of globalisation. For example, he addresses the accusation that global technology is dehumanising and alienating, with the potential to ‘homogenize culture into some global mush’ (1999: 353). This response seems somewhat redundant, as the communications revolution that lies at the heart of globalisation has proceeded apace in recent decades, despite predictable warnings of the dire effects more sophisticated technology will have on societies. Friedman directs a very intense, and at times potentially damning serious of questions at the down-sides of globalisation, and rather than offering strong counter arguments, he chooses to leave most of the concerns open and unresolved. Indeed, at times he comes close to delivering a knock-out punch to globalisation, yet finally retreats to defend a somewhat equivocal position he calls ‘sustainable globalisation’ (1999: 352), which in essence, can be likened to Anthony Giddens’ Third Way (1998). Under this analysis, globalisation is democratised and humanised. The ruthlessness of the market is tempered by government policy and programs in public employment; job-retraining; lifelong learning; increased availability of investment and venture capital especially for poorer people; and promotion of democratic practice in government. ‘Our job as citizens of the world is to make certain the majority of people always feel that the advancing issues are leading the declines’, Friedman notes (1999: 347).
Friedman's confidence that globalisation can be a force for spreading democracy throughout the world is not shared by others. Former Canadian Deputy Prime Minister, Paul Hellyer is a notable critic:

It (globalisation) is an attempt on the part of the largest corporations in the world and the largest banks in the world to re-engineer the world in such a way that they won't have to pay decent wages to their employees and they won't have to pay taxes to fix potholes and to maintain parks and pay pensions to the old and the handicapped. And that is what globalisation is basically about... 100 years of social progress by legislation and unionisation down the sink by going down this globalisation route. (1999: 6)

Globalisation presents obvious threats to the concept of the nation, and these have further implications for education programs such as civics and citizenship that are, at least in some interpretations, designed to re-invigorate citizenship as membership of a national community. Given the centrality of a shared civic culture to a nation’s identity, does a more interdependent world present the possibility of a global culture with the power to overtake and finally suppress national culture, and hence threaten the existence of the nation itself? Smith (1991) remains optimistic about the possibilities of the nation. The nation performs several functions no other form of identity can provide. Being a member of a nation provides the individual with a measure of personal immortality; it offers member a dignity through appeal to a golden age; and a sense of belonging to a 'super-family' or fraternity.

Similarly, Green remains cautious about dismissing the nation too readily. He points to the process of 'glocalisation' in which homogenisation and heterogenisation increase side by side. Green points to the possible barbarism that may result from more fissiparous and individualistic societies based on global forces in economics and culture, and argues that a cohesive civic nation may be the best defence against it. More particularly, Green takes issue with, what he sees as the extreme views of Usher and Edwards, who as early as 1994 noted that under globalism, schools will lose their function as a means of social reproduction, and limit their objectives to those of fulfilling the needs of the economy (Green 1997 b: 123)
171). Yet, Green somewhat reluctantly acknowledges that national education systems are increasingly focused on the production of individuals with the competitive advantage in pursuit of inviolate national economic goals, and broader objectives of social cohesion and citizenship formation have become more confused and neglected (1997b: 184). While Green can confidently write volumes about the ways education has, and continues to play an active role in citizen and state formation in those situations in which the nation provides a focus, he becomes much more hesitant when speaking of the implications of globalisation and postmodernity for education. While he clearly wants national education systems to retain their central role in what he calls civic nation identity, he is less forthcoming as to how this might be achieved. Hindess (2000) has less hesitation in describing the limits economic globalisation has placed on a traditional understanding of the nation as a political community governed by its citizens. In a sense, Hindess reverts to a ‘realist’ model of democratic government as he argues that for citizens to expect to exercise significant control over national governments is unrealistic, given those governments’ increasing inability to exercise control over their national economies.

Hindess experiences the common danger of those who insist we confront the challenges internationalisation and globalisation presents to the nation. In talking of the limits to democratic citizenship based on the nation-state, he is obliged to acknowledge the disempowerment this necessarily implies for citizens of the nation-state. Hindess is certainly not prepared to venture into the notion of a newly empowered global citizen wielding control over immense transnational organisations via devices such as the Internet, or Morris’ vote.com referred to in Chapter Three. Nor does he express much sympathy with Stokes’ view that global citizenship comprises a political identity that puts great store by active citizenship with the potential to reinvigorate and reform national citizenship (2000: 241). However, rather than abandoning the concept of citizenship based on the nation-state altogether, Hindess rather forlornly suggests it helps us ‘maintain a measure of free and relatively informed political debate’, and is worth preserving despite its substantial limitations (2000: 73).
Democratic citizenship recognises the challenge global forces present to the role of the citizen in a nation-state. However, it does not accord with the limits to citizenship discussed by Hindess. By arguing that the view of the state, as a body of citizens managing its own affairs is 'seriously misleading', Hindess comes close to acknowledging that a civic deficit, in which a substantial proportion of Australian citizens know little, and care little for their national government and politics, is justified. The view of citizenship presented in this thesis is one that agrees with Kane that 'national government will remain for a long while yet a significant focus of citizenship' (2000: 227). Democratic citizenship cannot be reinvigorated in Australia by effectively rubbing citizens' noses in their powerlessness produced by global forces. The nation-state remains the prime site in which citizens debate and deliberate upon those matters likely to affect their societies.

Conclusion

While advocating the form of democratic citizenship described in Chapter One, this thesis acknowledges the formidable challenges it faces. This Chapter has considered several of the most important of these challenges. The diverse range of factors explaining a withdrawal by citizens from engagement with political and public affairs mean that it is easy for educators to lapse into what Wood describes as 'radical educational cynicism' (1988: 69). Indeed, in an increasingly fragmented world in which the concept of citizenship is becoming more contested, it is tempting for educators to abandon any commitment to advancing citizenship for democracy, and concentrate instead on catering for the needs and interests of private or consumer citizens. Seeking to build an understanding of, and active engagement with the polity, is replaced with an instrumentalist form of learning in which each student assumes greater responsibility for their own life chances in a direct reflection of important elements neo-liberal thinking discussed in this Chapter. Indeed such an approach may be, at least a partial explanation for the decline in Australian civics and citizenship education in recent decades as changes in education merely mirror broader changes in the dimensions of citizenship. There is little sign schools will be required to reduce their role as educators of private or consumer citizens. In such circumstances, for civics and citizenship education to be
re-introduced into the educational mix adds a somewhat perplexing dimension, and indeed draws more educators into a form of Wood's cynicism.

This Chapter advances the argument that democratic citizenship is essentially a political concept. It seeks to address the civic deficit by drawing Australia's citizens back into participation with their system of liberal-democracy. However, to be meaningful, this participation needs to be 'maximal'. This is based on a genuine sense of civic efficacy, not merely an unquestioning or compliant form of loyalty to the nation-state, or adherence to one or more prevailing orthodoxies. It must demonstrate a willingness to achieve a deeper understanding of the practice of government and power relations than that implied by calls to boost civic knowledge. Part of that process may involve citizens forming a view that under prevailing conditions, they have relatively little power to exercise influence over their society. While it can be argued that this may actually add to the existing civic deficit as citizens become even more alienated and disillusioned, a more helpful view is that a critical awareness of the shortcomings of the practice of government will lead to a desire to bring about lasting and deep-seated change in the culture shaping contemporary political practice.

Maximal citizenship is therefore critical citizenship. This is characterised not only by a willingness to participate in ways such as joining a political party or casting a valid vote in elections. Indeed, it is suggested in Chapter Five that these forms of participation are akin to the minimalist or 'prissy' citizenship rejected by this paper. Rather, critical citizenship is prepared to confront the ways in which political power is obtained and exercised in contemporary political settings. It is argued that the Australian civic deficit involves far more than a simple lack of knowledge of constitutional and political arrangements or a lack of awareness of the historical evolution of Australian democracy. It also reflects a sense of citizen powerlessness within existing political arrangements. For the Australian civic deficit to be addressed in a meaningful manner, this lack of effectiveness needs to be understood.
Chapter Five
The Knowledgeable Citizen

Introduction

The previous chapter drew attention to the increasingly contested nature of citizenship. It also clarified the concept of democratic citizenship as it is understood by this thesis. In doing so, it pointed to some of the difficulties faced by a program designed to promote civics and citizenship education in Australia. As later chapters of this thesis will make clear, is it not being proposed here that such programs cannot achieve worthwhile objectives. Rather it is argued that the difficulties facing such an education project in contemporary Australia should not be underestimated. Optimistic rhetoric uttered by politicians is one thing, meaningful implementation is another. Building on the propositions presented in Chapters Three and Four, this Chapter delves further into some of the problematic issues worthy of more detailed consideration. In doing so, it begins to focus more closely on the links between the two broad contexts of the thesis: citizenship and the civic deficit, and the role schools might play in addressing it.

When comparisons are made between what young Australians actually know about their system of government and constitutional arrangements, and what they think are important characteristics of citizenship, some interesting trends emerge. Indeed, there may be a sharp discrepancy between what a small and fairly unrepresentative group of experts consider students need to know, and what students themselves think is important. This creates immediate concern over proposals to educate in, and for citizenship. Australian and overseas evidence about the relationship between civic knowledge and active participation gives rise to similar queries. This Chapter examines the relationship between education and citizenship. It does so with the aim of raising critical awareness of the need to consider a broader sweep of factors influencing contemporary citizen behaviour than education. It also warns against investing too much hope in a form of civics and citizenship education that fails to take sufficient account of prevailing political cultures.
This Chapter argues that civics and citizenship education is inherently a political process. This may range from the deliberate instruction in a set of substantive core values, through to forms of values clarification. This presents a formidable challenge to contemporary models of citizenship education as considerable tension exists between the increasingly diverse nature of modern citizenship, and the concept of education designed to build a greater sense of commitment and engagement with the nation-state.

The discovery, protection and strengthening of Australian democracy dominates the current revival of interest in Australian civics and citizenship education and attention shifts more clearly onto democracy in the final section of Chapter Five. It throws light on the nature of contemporary democracy, and exposes some of the contradictory attitudes of those policy makers who on the rhetorical level, seek greater citizen participation, while at the same time compound a style of democracy in which citizens are marginalised. It builds the case that if Australian citizens are to become more competent, democracy itself must be taken seriously. Rather than seeking to build an edifice of civic knowledge, schools should be encouraged to produce citizens willing to interrogate their own polity to ensure it is at least making a sincere attempt to reflect basic democratic principles.

5.1 Scrutinising the Australian civic deficit

A ranking of the characteristics of a ‘good citizen’ as expressed by young Australians demonstrates startling evidence of the low priority given to aspects of national citizenship in the formal civic sense (Phillips and Beresford 1996). While gender equity and environmental protection appear in the ‘top ten’ of desirable characteristics of a good citizen, knowledge of Australian history, and understanding of the nation’s Constitution are ranked below position 20. These findings are broadly consistent with those of Print (1995b) who discovered ‘unacceptable levels of knowledge’ among surveyed students, but found more positive attitudes towards their personal participation in the Australian political system. He is clearly disturbed by the low knowledge level his work revealed, yet
does acknowledge the general disillusionment felt by many young Australians towards their politicians. He does not suggest this disillusionment is unjustified. More importantly, Print (1995b: 31-33) recognises that while many have negative feelings towards their institutional political structures and practices, they ‘demonstrate strong interest in significant issues such as racism, the environment, sexism and war, all of which contain a strong political dimension’. Mellor (1998) largely confirms the lack of interest of Victorian secondary students in formal, institutional forms of politics. This lack of interest may be linked to an alarmingly low 6% of surveyed students who agreed with the statement that ‘most people in government are honest’, while just 9% thought the government cared what ‘people like us’ think (1998: 52). These findings bring to mind the recent warning of Bernard Crick that many of the conventional and innocent-sounding points of departure for citizenship education such as ‘the constitution’ or ‘human rights’ may take students on a very short and unsatisfactory journey. We could risk heading off in the wrong direction entirely or more significantly, create a positive distaste for or resistance to the content presented to students as education for citizenship (1999: 340).

Krinks’ (1999) valuable summary of the research conducted into levels of political knowledge, interest and awareness among young Australians concludes that, even taking into account limitations in their accuracy, surveys that were conducted over a period of ten years, and commissioned by different sources, produced similar results. Krinks’ broad finding was that:

\[\ldots\text{while many young people feel alienated from the political and decision-making processes in this country, and appear to show little interest in learning about its formalities, they seem to be an informed, articulate and concerned generation with a clear agenda for change. A number of developments in recent years even indicate that, when they believe that their actions might make a real difference, many young people will participate in the formal political processes that in the traditional view are truly 'civic' arenas.}\]

Now, of course such findings can lead back to the conventional civics education ‘defence’: the state of Australian parliamentary democracy may not be perfect, but
rather than drive Australians further away from it, we need to re-establish their interest and engagement in it. Young people need to understand that a citizen concerned by sexism or racism in our society should first acknowledge the power of parliament to legislate on such matters, and then want to participate in our parliamentary democracy in an informed manner. However, State and Federal parliaments in which non-indigenous, white middle aged males make up a significant majority, and dominate the positions of genuine power such as Cabinet places, may quickly undermine the faith younger Australians hold for the likelihood that parliament will be too interested in addressing such issues in a sincere manner. If civics and citizenship education is an attempt by educators to convince young people to pick up the national citizenship ‘ball’ again, it may face a difficult task. As Phillips and Beresfords’ findings suggest, young Australians may have already concluded that, based on the way they see the world, the nation-state is becoming less relevant.

When the Liberal/National Party Coalition took office in March 1996, concerns were raised about the future of civics and citizenship education in Australia. As an initiative of his predecessor, it was felt Prime Minister Howard might see the project as tainted by partisanship, and decline further funding. Moreover Marginson (1997) suggests there was strong evidence that Howard had little empathy with the understanding of citizenship emerging from the Civics Expert Group. The emphasis on plurality and diversity evident in the Report of the Civics Expert Group was notably absent from a Prime Minister who found it difficult to use the term ‘multiculturalism, except as a term of abuse, and was slow to distance himself from the discriminatory comments of Pauline Hanson’ (Marginson 1997: 256).

However, in 1997, it was announced civics education would remain a Federal government priority, albeit one with a new emphasis. A review of the work of the previous government, concluded that the direction of the program needed to be refocused to emphasise ‘teaching students an understanding of the history and operations of Australia’s system of government and institutions, and the principles that support Australian democracy’ (Discovery Democracy 1997b: 7) although as pointed out in the previous chapter, the decline in civics and citizenship education in Australia in recent decades has been attributed to an over emphasis on civic
knowledge in earlier courses. Re-named the Civics Education Group, the
government's planning body was expanded to include Professor Greg Craven, and
as its Chair, historian Dr John Hirst. However, the new Group made up of two
historians, an academic lawyer and two education administrators retained a very
narrow focus. The absence of a political or moral philosopher, political scientist or
theorist, learning theorist, social educator, or teacher educator helps explain the
narrow conception of citizenship, and citizenship education produced by the Group
(Hogan and Fearnley-Sander 1999: 60). It quickly became apparent that under the
leadership of Hirst, more attention would be placed on the knowledge base of
civics.

5.2 Civic knowledge and ‘good citizens’

As noted in Chapter One, increased attention to civics and citizenship education can
be linked to a recognition that sections of the Australian adolescent population are
becoming increasingly alienated from their society, hence there is a need to invite
them back into the fold. This appeal is often accompanied by sometimes implicit
predictions of the consequences for society if this sense of alienation is allowed to
grow. The level of youth suicide, growing alcohol and substance abuse, increasing
crime and a sense of hopelessness are typically cited as evidence of what happens to
a society in which the sense of civic purpose has deteriorated. What is less clear
however, is the relationship between a lack of formal civic knowledge revealed by
numerous surveys, and these deleterious social phenomena. Despite these
reservations, there is little doubt the federal government's Discovering Democracy
Project sees a causal link between civic knowledge and active citizenship, in fact by
developing an identified knowledge base, one approaches effectiveness as a citizen
(Hunter and Jimenez 1999: 21).

Various studies reveal the apparent ignorance and misunderstanding among
Australians of their political systems. Vromen's (1995) study of Year 12 students
found a generally low level of political knowledge, although 'political knowledge'
is defined in a very narrow manner. Only 12% of the sample could name the leader
of the Australian Democrats. However, just what can be inferred from an inability
to provide this type of information? What is the link, if any, between civic/political knowledge, and participation?

This question is directly addressed by McAllister (1998). In an analysis of the findings of a study of Australian voters' level of political knowledge, competence and participation completed soon after the 1996 federal election, McAllister tests the contention that greater political knowledge leads to greater political participation, or as he puts it, 'Is the knowledgeable citizen, a better citizen?'. Of course this is of crucial importance to civics and citizenship education. There seems little point in an enhanced civic knowledge base that is not then reflected in more active citizens. Like Vromen, the Australian Election Survey (AES) that forms the basis of McAllister's work, is notable for the narrowness of the way politics is defined. Moreover, the way some of the data is interpreted is illustrative of McAllister's understanding of political competence and participation. Like other studies (see for instance, Vromen (1995), CEG (1994)), the AES study found Australians had limited knowledge of 'hard political facts'. When asked to provide 7 basic pieces of information, the median voter scored just 2. Only 5% of all respondents produced 7 correct answers. Respondents were not required to provide specific information, but rather to assess the veracity of statements such as: 'There are 75 members in the House of Representatives - True, False or Don't Know'. 29% of respondents thought this statement was accurate, 30% inaccurate, while the remaining 49% did not feel confident to offer an opinion at all (McAllister 1998: 12).

McAllister endeavours to investigate a possible link between this lack of knowledge and 'good' citizenship. This is taken to incorporate two elements: political competence, and political participation. In relation to political competence, the AES study asked respondents, 'And if 1 means no matter who people vote for, it won't make any difference to what happens, and 5 means that who people vote for can make a difference, where would you place your view?' (McAllister 1998: 20). The study assumes the more politically competent a voter is, the higher up the scale they will place their view. In other words, the 'competent' citizen sees voting as a powerful political tool. Yet this is a very dubious conclusion to reach and highlights a major paradox within the Australian civic deficit. According to McAllister's
interpretation, the incompetent citizen is one who does not know how to use their vote effectively, perhaps because they do not understand the operation of the Australian electoral system. On the other hand, it sees the competent citizen as one who is not alienated from the system, one who retains faith in their ability to make a difference via the electoral process. However, an alternative interpretation is that at least some quite astute and competent voters may quite deliberately place their response to the AES question at level 1 on the scale. In other words, they understand perfectly that under the full preferential system used to elect the House of Representatives, casting a first preference for a minor party or independent candidate, and deliberately placing the two major parties last on the ballot is largely a pointless exercise as the preference flow will almost inevitably result in one of the major parties’ candidates being elected. (In the 1998 general election, either the Australian Labor Party, or the Liberal/National Coalition won 147 of the 148 seats in the House of Representatives). Such a response could be based not on ignorance, but on a well-informed and reasoned view that in fact, in the Australian electoral system, casting a vote is a fairly incipient device, described by Barber as a situation in which everyone has the franchise, but are not allowed to do anything much with it (1992: 244).

I turn now to the second component of McAllister’s view of the good citizen, political participation. Here the AES study asked respondents to declare their level of participation in the previous federal election. The lowest level is ‘talking about politics to friends or associates’, while the highest level of participation mentioned is joining a political party. Once again, problems of interpretation arise. Just 2% of respondents were members of a political party. McAllister took this to indicate a low level of participation. Of course, in a formal sense it is, yet consideration should be given to what party membership often entails. Does a slavish, drone-like commitment to the ‘party line’, and an irrational hatred of opposing parties constitute a ‘high’ form of political participation? McAllister’s broad conclusion is that the relationship between political knowledge (narrowly defined), and political participation is not strong. From this he concludes that programs in civics and citizenship education provide no guarantee of producing more active and engaged citizens. Yet the narrowness of his definitions of politics, and ‘good’ citizens, together with the somewhat questionable inferences drawn from the AES study
leave matters unresolved. An inability to score well in a political trivia test may indicate little more than ignorance of a particular type of political knowledge. Moreover, a reluctance to acknowledge the power of the vote may in fact indicate a more penetrating grasp of the true nature of the Australian political system than McAllister concedes.

In his investigation of the ‘civic knowledge-action relationship’, McAllister refers in passing to the lack of evidence that the extensive civics and citizenship education program run by US schools have produced more knowledgeable citizens. In this, McAllister confirms Weissberg’s (1974) summary of an extensive series of US studies. The long-standing American practice of civics education is sometimes cited, especially at a popular or public level, as a model Australia should emulate. Several of Weissberg’s comments are of interest in this regard. He notes that rather than encouraging the concept of good citizenship in the form of increased civic participation, US civics courses ‘instead results in a greater emphasis on loyalty as the mark of a good citizen’ (1974: 162). This again highlights the confusion surrounding just what courses in Australian civics and citizenship seek to achieve. It is common for Australians to note the hand-on-heart pride with which Americans sing their national anthem. This is often compared to Australians’ mumbled, somewhat self-conscious attempts to sing *Advance Australia Fair*. But what, if anything, has this got to do with democratic citizenship? One could equally point to the pathetically low voter turn-out in US Presidential and Congressional elections as a strong indicator of a lack of civic engagement by US citizens despite the fact that most Americans have received formal education in civics.

While evidence of a direct correlation between general education and citizen participation is shown by the work of Verba *et al* (1993), conclusions of this link are clouded by the surveys reported by Emler and Frazer (1999). They find that while evidence points towards a positive relationship between educational attainment and support for democratic values as well as political engagement, ‘it is quite unclear on the face of it what aspects of education has effects on political values and identities, political knowledge and political participation’ (1999: 256). Importantly Emler and Frazer pose the question as to whether the formation of political views, and attitudes towards political engagement are affected if students
study politics, political history or political economy, as opposed to subjects like Latin, mathematics or biology? Their conclusion is that it is education as such, rather than specific curriculum content that is the crucial activator of political efficacy and participation (1999: 263).

Despite the ambiguities surrounding its effects on improved citizenship, there are obviously many contemporary advocates of expanded efforts in civics and citizenship education. A defender of an education program strongly grounded in civic knowledge narrowly defined could derive succour by suggesting the reason for the weakness of the relationship between knowledge, and attitudes and participation was the lack of success of the program itself in providing knowledge. In other words, the students involved did not gain sufficient civic knowledge to have any effect on their attitudes towards active citizenship. Such a view may be worthy of consideration as it forces us to add a further crucial consideration to the civic knowledge-participation relationship. This concerns the efficacy of courses designed to boost civic knowledge. We have to confront the question: How effective are civics and citizenship education courses in adding to civic knowledge?

As survey results mentioned throughout this Chapter amply demonstrate, the level of knowledge of basic factual material relating to government and politics within communities is notoriously low. This could be due to two factors. Firstly, citizens have not been acquainted with such material in the first place. It is unreasonable to expect citizens to relate facts and figures relating to their system of government or constitutional arrangements, if it has not been taught to them. This is the basis of much of the pressure to restore civics and citizenship education in Australia. As such, it is based on an assumption that greater exposure to civics education will lead to greater knowledge. However, as the US evidence suggests, this may be an extremely dubious assumption to make.

A second possibility is that students have been introduced to such material, but it was not retained. That is, they were 'taught', but they did not learn. This is an altogether more daunting prospect as it casts doubt over the ability of the education process to really make much difference in boosting civic knowledge. In other words, an extensive and expensive national campaign in civics and citizenship may
simply fail to produce any significant outcomes in terms of improved civic knowledge. As Crick notes, there is a danger that identification of civic deficits or similar findings risk taking us in some quite unproductive directions.

The Report of the Civics Expert Group (1994) provided further evidence of the ignorance and confusion surrounding basic civic practices and institutions within the Australian population. This should hardly come as a surprise given Macintyre's candour regarding his own study of the Australian political system in the Victorian Intermediate (Year 10) Certificate. Referring to his great enjoyment of matters such as the method of calculating a Senate quota using the Hare-Clark electoral system, he admits that 'even at the time I was conscious that this was a minority enthusiasm' (Macintyre 1995: 6). Despite this admission, it can be inferred from the Report of the Civics Expert Group that Australian democracy is endangered unless Australians, especially young Australians are taught to understand and appreciate what they have. Again adopting an anecdotal style, Macintyre laments the fact that his own children, while accepting the moral force of the Mabo decision, would be unable to name the tribunal that made it. He refers to this as a mismatch between ethical capacity and civic incapacity (1995: 11), yet is unconvincing in providing an answer to the obvious question, 'Does it matter?'

In a similar vein, Macintyre asks how citizens who are ill-informed about the powers or method of appointment of the head of state can follow 'current constitutional debate'. Evidence from the 1999 Republican referendum seems to provide a ready response. Constitutional debate on Australia's head of state is a low-priority issue to many Australian citizens whom see little relevance in such matters. Moreover, it is possible for citizens to adopt a position on an Australian constitutional issue even if they don't know what the Constitution actually is (Goot 1995: 37). The fact that surveys suggest a significant proportion of Australians is unaware of the existence of the Australian Constitution (for instance, Civics Expert Group 1994), did not prevent 91% of Australian voters approving the referendum altering constitutional references to Aborigines in 1967. Indeed, detailed analysis of all Australian referenda since 1901 indicate voting patterns that suggest Australians are more aware of the issues at stake than simplistic conclusions based on perceived voter ignorance or confusion might imply. Most notably, voters are wary of
attempts by the Commonwealth to increase its power, and proposals likely to reduce the ability of the Senate to hold the Executive accountable for its actions (Bennett and Brennan 1999).

However, in later thoughts on the matter, Macintyre seems less concerned by a lack of ‘hard’, narrowly defined civic knowledge. In a fundamental challenge to his own Group’s recommendations, he expresses concern about the wisdom of a citizenship education program endorsed by government, and that seeks to produce the compliant citizen. Noting the tradition that the civic sphere is separate from government, indeed something that protects the citizen from government, he concludes:

I think that creates real difficulties in government programs, whether through schools or other means, about the meaning of citizenship... when governments do this sort of thing, they primarily want to talk about institutions of government rather than the way in which people live out citizenship in other ways. And so it’s more a program of government I think that interests them, rather than a program about citizenship. (1998b)

Macintyre’s views here reflect those of Davidson who forcefully argues that true democratic citizenship ‘has always been won against the state’ (1997: 255).

That it is quite feasible to be a competent Australian citizen whilst lacking a detailed understanding of ‘the system’ is considered by Anderson who considers that, ‘it is not all that necessary’. He also ponders the extent of civic knowledge required. Is it good enough to know just a little about the political system, or is it necessary ‘to study the whole thing?’ (1995: 7). And what exactly does Anderson mean by the ‘whole thing’? Here the distinction between theory and practice becomes important. Does the ‘whole thing’ refer to a detailed knowledge of the mechanics of government, the nature and purpose of the Australian Constitution, the federal system and so on? Or is Anderson referring to the operation of Australian politics in the way it is practised? This distinction is important, as it will significantly affect the way citizenship is taught. The former suggests the uncritical acquisition of large slabs of lifeless knowledge in the belief that the good citizen
will necessarily be the knowledgeable (narrowly defined) citizen, while the latter implies critical inquiry, encouraging citizens to poke their noses into matters behind the intricate, but often superficial machinery of government. These matters are considered crucial to developing a firm base from which to proceed. The style of democratic citizenship privileged in this work clearly suggests citizens with the capacity and confidence to poke their noses into the government of their society in a process of deepening democracy.

In his analysis of the civic incapacity revealed by the Civics Expert Group, Colebatch (1995) criticises the Report’s conclusion that Australians are largely ignorant of their system of government. Colebatch challenges a fundamental aspect of the Report (and as a consequence, a major component of many peoples’ representation of Australian political literacy) by asking just how relevant the Constitution actually is to the lives of Australian citizens. Should the Constitution be regarded as a book of rules with which one must be familiar before it is possible to participate in the Australian citizenship game? The answer is clearly, No. The majority of Australians ‘have never seen the Constitution’ (Civics Expert Group 1994: 21), yet this obviously has not prevented many Australians leading fulfilling lives.

Moreover, as Colebatch correctly observes, of what use is knowledge of the Constitution in reaching an understanding of the practice of Australian government? In order to develop such an understanding, the Constitution is at best a confusing guide. The two most significant institutions within Australian government, the Prime Minister and Cabinet, are not mentioned, and the single reference to political parties (added to Section 15 in 1977) is quite incongruous. It is clear the CEG Report did reveal a lack of knowledge, but as mentioned earlier, ‘knowledge’ is defined in a very narrow manner. What is revealed by comments such as, ‘They yell at each other and abuse each other’, and, ‘They can’t come to a decision, they’re just like children’ (Civics Expert Group 1994: 21)? Do they display any ‘knowledge’ of the way Australian parliament operates? Colebatch effectively contends that such statements do in fact demonstrate genuine knowledge of how parliament performs its functions. However, this is not the answer the CEG wanted.
Parliament is a body worthy of respect; it is a place where laws are made. It is not a place to be ridiculed, however perceptive such ridicule may be.


Pumping [students] full of data about the system of proportional representation used to elect the Senate is not likely to have a great deal of impact unless they can see its relevance to themselves and what they do.

Clearly, problems emerge from this discussion. A civic deficit narrowly defined as a lack of civic knowledge restricts understandings of citizenship in ways that present real problems for educators. It is difficult to actually interpret just what a lack of ‘hard knowledge’ actually tells us about the level of citizen competence, and the link between such knowledge and greater civic participation is unclear. Such concerns add weight to the argument for a form of democratic citizenship based on critical inquiry, rather than the acquisition of a body of knowledge that a small and narrowly focussed group of experts considers necessary before Australians can exercise their role as citizens.

5.3 The politics of civics and citizenship education

The tension between educating for active citizenship, and using the education system as a mean of inculcating a series of national goals, is one of the crucial questions surrounding the role of schools in producing ‘good citizens’. Indeed, as the previous chapter demonstrated, citizenship education bristles with such contested matters, and the shape and content of an educational program in citizenship is ‘alarmingly fuzzy’ (Levinson 1999: 39). In addressing various citizenship models, it is necessary to confront the politics of citizenship by considering just who is advocating particular styles of citizenship, and why they are being advocated. Citizenship is not an ideologically neutral concept. While political philosophers from Aristotle to Walzer have written of citizenship as if universal principles can be reached, once the concept falls into the hands of practising politicians, Lasswell’s familiar process of ‘who gets what, when and how’ soon
takes over. In short, who gains and who loses by having a specific model of citizenship adopted? As we know, one person’s view of citizenship, or an ‘active’ or ‘good’ citizen may be different from another’s. Moreover, these different interpretations are not merely shades of grey, but often involve a polarisation of views that directly reflects the nature of politics itself. Yet, although such diversity of views exists, it is often difficult to detect them from written or verbal descriptions. It is easy win the assent of a wide range of people with statements so vague yet laudable few could possibly disagree. In many cases, the best response may be to withhold judgement and ask: ‘Just what is meant by that statement?’

To many people, for education to be used as a vehicle for building loyalty to the state, or establishing dedication to the task of economic restructuring, or even producing law-abiding members of the community is anathema to the education process itself. It denies, or diminishes the role of education in producing reflective, critical and autonomous citizens. However, this view is open to major assault on several fronts. It implies a model of education that is free from ideological manipulation. Many would agree that use of the education system to engage in an overt program of indoctrination, or ‘instruction in obedience’ (White, quoted by Stradling 1981: 81), is at odds with the spirit of a truly liberal education. Yet to then assume all ideological content can be simply removed, leaving a values-free zone seems far-fetched. Former Prime Minister Keating’s (1995: 9) observation that civics, ‘properly taught, is no more political than Maths or English or Woodwork’, is directly challenged by the consultant to the Discovering Democracy project, Kevin Donnelly (Interview 2000) who noted that by its very nature civics and citizenship is political. He added that at a deeper ideological level, all school subjects have a strong ideological aspect because they are dealing with how society structures itself in terms of power relations and the ways in which society re-invents itself through the education system. Similarly, Hirst (Interview 2000) agrees that civics and citizenship education is a values-laden business.

Put bluntly, education is an inherently political process (Frazer 1999). The act of teaching is basically political as it involves changing, or attempting to change behaviour. To think that governments, after struggling to win office, will not then exercise some influence over an education system under its control is to grossly
misunderstand the nature of the political process. As Gellner contends ‘the monopoly of legitimate education is now more important, more central than is the monopoly of legitimate violence’ (1983: 34) to governments. While the extent to which values impinge on the education process may vary from subject to subject, it is most likely to rise to prominence in courses designed to directly confront the meaning and practice of citizenship. Turner (1981: 57) calls civics education the most ‘values-laden aspect of the curriculum’. Citizenship education is necessarily a complex process that cannot be regarded as strictly neutral from an ideological point of view. It inevitably makes demands on the student's conscience.

Additionally, an educational model in which any pre-determined set of values is eschewed in favour of one in which individual students discover their own personal set of values, is itself ideological. Donnelly (1996) clearly views with suspicion teaching and learning strategies that place ‘everything on the table’ for examination by students. He regards this as merely a device employed by those members of a Left-leaning ‘Woodstock generation’, wishing to critique current practices and institutions within society. However, in the end, it is up to those such as Donnelly advocating a set of core values that lie beyond the pale of critique and questioning to nominate just what those values are, and then be prepared to defend them. Yet as we have seen, it is often difficult to achieve this. The nominated values are often vaguely expressed and deliberately subject to multiple interpretations. In addition, any process of mandating specific values invites accusations of stifling the true spirit of inquiry and curiosity. It seems that every commentator has his or her own ‘bottom-line’ interpretation of what constitutes a ‘core value’ that can be accepted with no need for further critical analysis.

Even more progressive thinkers such as Thomas and Meredyth (1995: 13), who suggest the point of civics and citizenship education is not to insist that all citizens subscribe to certain core beliefs, maintain that citizens need to act according to ‘established custom’. This includes the need to avoid racism and zealotry. The basis of their argument is the need to ‘pluralise civics’ by recognising that Australian citizens may indeed hold allegiances other than those they may hold to Australia. Yet seared deep within their cultural identity, such allegiances will sometimes
harbour intensely zealous, bigoted and racist sentiments of the type Thomas and Meredyth reject.

Hence a paradox emerges in a liberal education for democracy in which skills of critical enquiry can effectively reduce diversity and plurality of opinion. Levinson (1999) effectively demonstrates how a liberal education enhances the development of individual autonomy in students that in fact, makes it far less likely they will hold certain types of views. In effect, hateful views can be ‘educated away’. A person equipped with a capacity for autonomy is less likely to blindly follow an imposed dogma or faith. It will therefore produce people who are intolerant of intolerance. Of course, while that may be applauded as the very purpose of a liberal education, nevertheless, Levinson makes a penetrating observation that ‘liberal political education seems to make a mockery of civic pluralism and toleration’ (1999: 47), albeit one that Levinson ultimately refutes. Levinson considers the possible damage a liberal education is likely to inflict on minority cultural practices that are regarded as morally inferior. Even in cases where such education produces a critically aware, autonomous individual who begins to question such practices, Levinson believes it possible to achieve simultaneous cultural coherence in both their home culture and the broader, national civic culture.

The views of Levinson, and Thomas and Meredyth can be seen as being influenced by liberal educational theory. According to Giroux’s description, such views conform to a pedagogy of cordial relations, and child-centredness characteristic of the educational settings of many Australian schools in both the public and private sectors. The school becomes a site that seeks to protect and preserve the dominant culture as either an object of veneration or as a set of practices that embody the traditions and values of diverse groups, and as such, it effectively depoliticises culture (1997). While celebrating diversity, there is no attempt to understand the politics of culture. It is one thing to pluralise civics, it is another to politicise it. Of course, this is not sufficient for Giroux who advocates a critical pedagogy in which ‘schools need to be reconceived and reconstituted as “democratic counterculture” – as places where students learn the skills and knowledge needed to live in and fight for a viable democratic society’ (1997: 143). Burbules and Berk’s (1999) distinction between ‘critical thinking’ and ‘critical pedagogy’ is useful in this
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