

## RESTRICTING IMMIGRANTS, COLONIAL INHERITANCE AND POLITICAL INTERESTS: AUSTRALIA'S CITIZENSHIP TEST UNDER THE HOWARD GOVERNMENT

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### *Abstract*

*In 2006, Australia under the Howard government proposed a citizenship test aimed at restricting immigration and toughening citizenship requirements. To understand this proposed citizenship, this essay attempts to analyse the basic ideas of the test by explaining its possible relationship with the Australia's past history and Australia's dependence on the 'superpower' countries in the issue. It explains that the proposed citizenship test reflected John Howard's political brands and manifested his wonderful skills in understanding and exploiting the living fears of 'the other' among Australian people for political gain in the his second term. The huge support for the proposed citizenship test indicated that the fear of 'the other' and 'potential enemies' was still evident among Australian. It also served as evident that multiculturalism was under threat because people considered it as a policy that undermines dominant culture. The article argues that Australia's colonial past still plays a role in people's attitudes and government policies. "The chains of colonial inheritance" has not disappeared in contemporary Australia.*

**Keyword:** Citizenship Test, colonial inheritance, White Australia Policy, the Howard government

### INTRODUCTION

In the last three months of 2006, the media in Australia gave a wide coverage on a compulsory citizenship test as part of the Howard government reforms of citizenship law and its policy of restricting immigration and toughening citizenship requirements. Undoubtedly, the proposal generated support, criticisms and concern from various groups of Australian society. To understand the proposed citizenship, based on content analysis of two Australian print media reports of the issue, *The Australian* and *Sydney Morning Herald*, this essay attempts to analyse the basic ideas of the test by explaining its possible relationship with the Australia's past history and Australia's dependence on the 'superpower' countries in the issue. It argues that the citizenship test reflects the colonial inheritance that is still evident in the attitudes of Australian society and the Howard government's wonderful exploitation of the fear of 'the other' for political advantage.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In this paper, my analysis of the issue of citizenship test was confined to the information provided by two print media, *The Australian* and *Sydney Morning Herald* in

## **GOVERNMENT POLICY ON IMMIGRATION**

Since the establishment of Federation in 1901, immigration has been an important, but contested issue in public sphere and political life in Australia. In its early years, the new nation was focused to a great extent on the objective 'to preserve the British and, above all, *white* composition of the population'. This 'national inversion and hostility towards invaders' was supported by cultural arguments, 'scientific' evidence, and prejudice, and reinforced by legislation in the *Commonwealth Immigration Restriction Act of 1901*, which is well known as White Australia Policy. It is clear that the policy was aimed at the preservation of 'pure white' and British and prevention of the 'whiteness' and 'britishness' from being contaminated by other races and cultures. David Dutton (as cited in Jamrozik 2004, p. 104) explained that the policy was "intended to prevent the contamination of the nation's stock, or blood, or racial health, with inferior blood, since that would lead to deterioration of the quality of the nation's citizens and civilization. Such concern with the nation's stock extended to non-racial dimensions of immigration policy, particularly where matters of health and fitness were involved".

The White Australia Policy was not only advocated by public opinion makers or populists, but also by well-educated statesman Alfred Deakin, a progressive and enlightened liberal. It was not only sponsored by the conservative party, but was most actively promoted by the Australian Labour Party and was supported by the largest trade union, the Australian Workers' Union (PalFREEMAN 1967; Price 1974; Yarwood 1964 as cited in Jupp 1995, p. 207-8).

This reflected in the government policy as well as public attitude towards immigrants of people other than British. Due to the needs of industry for labours, the government began immigration program after World War II. Except those coming from Britain, immigrants were allowed only two occupational opportunities: labourer for men and domestic work for women. In the name of assimilation, a 'cultural cleansing' was implemented; the immigrants were not only forced to speak English in public places, but also encouraged to speak English to their children at home. Psychologists and educationists tried to support the program of 'anglicising' the immigrants by saying that based on 'scientific' evidence, bilingualism or having good commands in English as well as their own languages was an important factor in the intellectual development of immigrants' children (Jamrozik 2004, p. 105-6).

It is clear that the objective of the racial supremacy-based White Australia Policy was creating an ethnically homogenous society by 'forcing' the assimilation of the non-European immigrants into the majority of population and letting the Aboriginal people to die out. This was manifested, among others, in

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September, October and November 2006, when the issue received a heated debate. It was not aimed as a comprehensive study of media coverage of the issue, but rather as a way of understanding the issue in its broader context.

the regulations that non-European immigrants were prohibited to acquire citizenship without which they were prevented from getting certain occupations and property ownership, and the Aborigines were denied of their citizenship and restricted in the reservation camps (Jupp 1995, p. 208).

The exclusion of non-European immigrants, particularly Chinese, was the most systematic aspect of the White Australia policy. The Commonwealth Immigration Restriction Act of 1901 gave the authorities the right to prevent and prohibit undesirable immigrants, without explaining detailed basis and criteria of undesirable immigrants. Following one introduced in Natal, South Africa in 1897, this regulation was implemented in a dictation test and fines on shipping companies that carried the undesirable immigrants. The dictation test was not aimed as a literary test and it was given in a language, normally European, which was not understood by the potential immigrants (Jupp 1995, p. 208).

After the launch of mass immigration program in 1947, the White Australia Policy faced serious challenges. It was considered as to have limited the scope of immigration to European people, restricted the thinking of Australians as they focused so much on Britain, and to have been based on unfashionable theories and attitudes. The criticisms against the policy came largely from universities starting with the establishment of the Immigration Reform Group at Melbourne University 1959 (Jupp 1995). In addition, the mass migration programs launched in 1947 failed to meet the prescribed objective, 'to sustain White Australia by supplementing the British immigration from non-English speaking European countries'. They were in fact different from the British in many cultural aspects. Therefore, the governments changed its policy from assimilation to multiculturalism (Jupp 1995).

### **Criticisms of Immigration**

It is generally acknowledged that immigrants have given a great contribution to Australia's economic development since the immigration began after the World War II. However, in the 1980s, attitudes towards immigration changed significantly. The government restricted the immigration intake with priority given to occupational skills (Jamrozik 2004, p.105). Immigrants were no more regarded as to have good value to Australia, but described as a threat to national identity and social cohesion, and being responsible to unemployment, urban overcrowding, environmental problems, and cultural conflicts (Jamrozik 2004, p. 106). Immigration program began to be viewed as disadvantageous to Australia interests and its future.

Some well-known academics such as the historian Geoffrey Blainey and the sociologist Katharine Betts were among those who promoted negative attitude toward immigration (Jamrozik 2004, p. 108). In his book published in 1984, *All for Australia*, Blainey viewed the immigration policy as "a divisive measure that served the interests of bureaucratic elite and the trendy new middle class, while ignoring the views of the broad section of the population of 'ordinary' Australians". He saw that initially the immigration policy was setup to serve the

nation, but now the nation serves the immigrants. Furthermore, Blainey regarded the immigration policy as favouring the immigrants from Asia, and multiculturalism as anti-British so that the department of immigration and ethnic affairs could be called the department of immigration and anti-British affairs (Jamrozik 2004, p. 109).

Claiming that her views were not racist, Katharine Betts in her book *The Great Divide: Immigration Politics in Australia* wrote that immigration has encouraged the population explosion, environmental damage and social problems. She argued that immigration-fuelled population 'growth would have negative effects on the Australian standard of living which relied heavily on the export of natural resources. The more people (immigrants) live in the country, the less the production from natural resource, but more demands for imports" (Jamrozik 2004, p. 111). According to Betts, the failure of multiculturalism resulted from the fact that it had "less resonance with the Australian mainstream" and those who promoted the policy, including the Australian Labour Party, attempted to "refashion Australia's image" and "implicitly devalue the existing Australian nation and even, in some cases, erode its sense of having a distinctive and honourable identity of its own" (Jamrozik 2004, p. 93).

Another negative response to immigration was expressed by Tim Flannery in his essay "Beautiful Lies" in which he particularly refused the significant contribution of the immigration on Australian culinary habits (as cited in Jamrozik 2004). He regarded this as "the most delicious lie of all, that by bringing a global cuisine to Australia, immigration rescued us from cultural death by British stodge". He argued that "globalization would have changed Australia's eating habits regardless of the level of migration, or where the migrants were drawn here" (Jamrozik 2004, p. 111).

Among politicians, it was John Howard, the leader of the opposition at that time, who spoke about 'One Australia' and the need to reconsider the policy on immigration from Asian countries (Grattan 1993, p. 153). He believed that Australia has Anglo-Celtic past that needs to be preserved and regarded multiculturalism as a distortion of such valuable past. He said that "...the Anglo-Celtic cultural influence is still the most dominant because we speak English and our institutions... attracted a lot people to this country....Some people felt that multiculturalism meant that we had to in some way disown our past ... It did sort of sound ... like that." (Mansouri 2005).

Tony Abbot, now Howard's minister in the Coalition government, wrote about 'immigration backlash' on Australia:

Immigration risks backlash because in some suburbs of Sydney and Melbourne it is hard to hear an Australian accent...The change is that today's immigrants look as well as sound different from most Australians...The issue is the sort of Australia we want our children and grandchildren to inherit. Will it be a relatively cohesive society that studies Shakespeare, follows cricket and honours the Anzacs; or will it be a

pastische of cultures with only a geographic home in common...Race matters – but only because it usually signifies different values, attitudes and beliefs. The real problem is not race, but culture (Jamrozik 2004, p. 112).

The negative attitudes towards immigration are closely related to the criticisms of multiculturalism. The policy of multiculturalism was introduced in Australia in the early 1970s by the Labor Government and endorsed by the Coalition government. Then, the Labor government led by Bob Hawke and Paul Keating continued this policy (Jamrozik 2004). For the opponents of multiculturalism, the policy has been described as the socially divisive and as a threat to Australian 'heritage' and integrity of Australian society, and denial of any superior legitimacy to the host culture. John Hirst (as cited in Jamrozik 2004) wrote:

From being a respectful critique of Australian society, multiculturalism became an indictment of Australian society and ultimately a denial of its very existence... Mainstream of Australian society was reduced to an ethnic group and given an ethnic name, Anglo-Celtics; its right to primary was denied; indeed it became the most suspect of all ethnic given its atrocious past; its desire to perpetuate itself was denounced as Anglo-conformism in contrast to the migrants' virtuous wish to preserve their cultural identity; at best the Anglo-Celts were offered the chance to be one of the contributors to an entirely new body multicultural Australia.

Pauline Hanson later took these ideas and expressed them in a direct language such as "Australia is being swamped by Asians" that gained popularity in some sections of Australian society. Hanson with her One Nation party brought White Australia Policy back to life. Cavan Hogue, a former Australian diplomat said that "One Nation has resurrected the ghost of the White Australia Policy ...I think that before this we had just about laid the ghost. A generation was growing up that had never heard of the White Australia Policy... (Brawley 2003, p. 97).

In their negative and antagonistic views of immigration and multiculturalism, the critics, opinion makers and politicians claimed that they represent the view of the 'mainstream Australia' or 'ordinary Australians'. But, it is difficult how to locate 'mainstream Australia' and who they are. It can be said that they actually present their own views and interests in the name of the views and interests of 'mainstream' people of Australia. The abovementioned responses suggest that opposition against immigration, particularly from Asian countries, and multiculturalism does not come originally from 'ordinary or mainstream Australia', but from certain academics, opinion makers in media, and politicians.

## **The Effects of the Negative Attitudes towards Immigration**

The propagation of such negative views and attitudes towards immigration and immigrants brings about the long term implications. They include the fact, as Jamrozik asserts, that Australia is losing opportunities to develop a unity in a culturally diverse nation and to enrich the culture of its societies. It continues to maintain a monocultural system in a multicultural nation and deny the possible contribution of the multicultural system to its national development. The actions taken that disfavoured multiculturalism by the conservative coalition government led by John Howard in the late 1990s caused "a regression to an earlier period, in some ways to the late 1940s or beyond the colonial period" (Jamrozik 2004).

In addition, the negative attitudes towards immigration become an effective way in insulating and isolating Australia and its people from its neighbouring countries (Jupp 1995, p. 208). It seems that the opponents of multiculturalism and immigration are trying to "create, or recreate, a new Australian legend by denying the social and cultural reality of contemporary Australia" (Jamrozik 2004, p. 101-2).

### **CITIZENSHIP TEST**

According to a new citizenship law proposed by the Howard government, people who want to become Australian citizens will have to pass a test of the command of English and 30 question quiz about Australian history, culture and values. It also will test the aspiring Australians about Australian judicial system, indigenous people and some basic knowledge about cricket (*Sydney Morning Herald [SMH]*, 16 September 2006). Andrew Robb, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Immigration and Multicultural Affairs Minister, said that although it is not designed to test would-be citizens about the last 10 captains of the Australian cricket, "it will be designed for them to know that cricket is something important in Australia... that makes up this society ...a way of life that makes Australia tick" (*The Australian*, 19 September 2006). Potential citizens will also be asked to sign a pledge of commitment as an expression of loyalty to Australia, its laws and system of government (*SMH*, 18 September 2006; *The Australian* 20 September 2006). In addition, under the proposed action, immigrants would have to wait four years instead of two before they are eligible to apply for Australian citizenship (*SMH*, 16 September 2006). "Our judgment is," argued Robb, "for most people two years is not sufficient to have in their DNA what it is that makes Australia tick" (*The Australian*, 19 September 2006). The citizenship test will be in the form of an interview and a written, with separate components on listening and reading (*SMH*, 18 September 2006).

Kim Beazley, the Opposition leader, even went further when he said that not only immigrants, but also tourists could be asked to sign a pledge on their visas to respect Australian law, institutions, and values (*SMH*, 14 September 2006, *The Australian*, 16 September 2006). He was criticized by his Labor counterparts, but backed by senior Labor figures such as the New South Wales

premier Morris Iemma, Labor's deputy leader Jenny Macklin, and John Shorten (*SMH*, 14 September 2006).

Officially, it is said that the new Australian citizenship test would apply for aspiring citizens (*SMH*, 14 September 2006). Those under 18 and over 60 years, people with disabilities, and who are illiterate would be exempted from the English test (*SMH*, 18 September 2006; *The Australian*, 28 September 2006).

### **Objectives of the Test**

The compulsory citizenship test was introduced as part of the Howard government actions in restricting and toughening immigration and citizenship requirement. Andrew Robb said that citizenship is "a privilege that gives us our identity. It tells us who we are and where we fit in the world. It is a unifying force in Australia and if we give it away like confetti it is not valued". The government officially denied that the test was introduced as a racist or anti-terrorism measure (*SMH*, 18 September 2006). But, Andrew Robb said that "anything that leads to a better integrated society will reduce the opportunity of terrorism" (*The Australian*, 20 September 2006).

According to the Howard government, the test was aimed as a "real incentive to learn English and to understand the Australian way of life" (*SMH*, 18 September 2006). The Prime Minister John Howard said that it was purported to provide "a sensible balance between the old cultural cringe and more recent zealous multiculturalism 'where people are welcome from any part of the world providing they become part of Australia'" (*SMH*, 16 September 2006). He expected through the test those who want to live in Australia would embrace Australian values. "We are all in favour of people who settle in this country embracing Australian values," he asserted (*SMH*, 14 September 2006).

The test was also necessary to preserve national identity and shared values. Howard argued that "Australia's cultural diversity must not come at the expense of its national identity. Our commitment to shared values is our social cement; without it, we risk becoming a society governed by coercion, not consent" (*SMH*, 15 September 2006). He emphasized that "the key thing is that people should integrate into the mainstream of Australian life" (*The Australian*, 16 September 2006). "The objective has to be the full integration into the Australian community of people who come here and the full embrace of Australian values", he added (*The Australian*).

### **UNDERSTANDING THE CITIZENSHIP TEST**

Indeed, Australia was not the first country that made citizenship test as a policy to restrict unexpected immigrants. In fact, it lagged behind the US, Britain, Canada, Germany, and the Netherlands in the introduction of citizenship test. Being driven by the home-grown terrorism which caused backlashes in Europe, some interior ministers from Britain, France, Italy, Spain, Germany and Poland introduced a regulation that prospective migrants should sign an "integration contract" to respect the values of free speech, democracy and freedom of faith

(*The Australian*, 16 September 2006). In Britain, for example, those who wanted to take out British citizenship had to take a test about knowledge of Britishness ranging from 'what are the two emergency numbers to call' to 'when is Welsh National Day'. The test emerged from the fear that the increasing segregated schools and suburbs among immigrants would prevent them from integrate into 'mainstream' British society (*SMH*, 23 September 2006).

By contrast, in the Netherlands and Germany, the citizenship tests dealt with social attitudes and values. In the Netherlands, the applicant would be asked about nude bathing, homosexuality, abortion and euthanasia, and presented a video showing a topless woman on the beach and two men kissing. In Germany, the state of Baden-Wuttenberg issued a test in January which asked potential citizens, among others, about their attitudes towards homosexuality, forced marriage, women's rights, holocaust, and sport as part of school curriculum (*SMH*, 23 September 2006).

It is evident that the shift in the citizenship requirements in these European countries resulted from the fear of the increasing number of Muslims in both countries as well as home-grown terror movements. In Germany, this was proven clearly by the name of the test: the Muslim test. It is difficult not to say that the tests were discriminatory and racist: they applied only to would-be immigrants from 'non-Western countries', meaning Muslims (*SMH*, 23 September 2006).

The same policy emerged in Australia where the Howard government flagged a new citizenship law requiring prospective immigrants and aspiring citizens of English capability and knowledge of Australian history, culture and values. The new citizenship test, likely based on the British model, could be much harder and tougher for it tests non only command of English but also knowledge of Australian history, values and institutions. This appeared as a manifestation of the Howard government policy on immigration. In the 2001 election, Howard told voters "We will decide who comes to this country and the circumstances in which they come" (*The Australian*, 23 September 2006).

Just like the one in the abovementioned European countries, it was likely that the launch of the test by the Howard government emerged as a sort of anxiety of threatening alarm over issues of globalisation, national identity, mass immigration and terrorism. Andrew Robb, the parliamentary secretary for immigration, said: "The whole issue of terrorism ... in combination with globalisation has created a sort of general anxiety amongst not only the Australian community but other communities, and a threat to their identity" (*SMH*, 23 September 2006). He added that "people understand that globalisation is irreversible and has got a lot benefits. But, the downside is that they feel their sense of identity is threatened." The proposed citizenship test reflected a wider truth of the world today that "the more we become global, the more we become tribal", he argued (*The Australian*, 23 September 2006).



The proposed citizenship test could be the latest evidence of the Howard government's use of public fear of 'the other' for political interest. John Howard was a politician who could see that there are elements of racism and xenophobia among Australian people which can be used for political advantage. When he came to power in 1996, he cut budget for Aboriginal programs, stopped advocacy of multiculturalism, and 'supported' Geoffrey Blainey's anti-immigrant sentiment (Jones 2003, p. 117). Even, when he was the Federal Opposition Leader in 1988, Howard said about the necessity of reducing the number of immigrants and openly rejected the multiculturalism program as it divided Australian society. He offered the idea of "One Australia, in which loyalty to Australia, our institutions and our values transcends loyalty to any other sets of values anywhere in the world" (Grattan 1993, p. 153). The Howard government's refusal in 2001 to allow Tampa, a Norwegian cargo vessel, to unload its 433 asylum seekers represented such political attitude, which brought them back to power in the 2001 election. All this appeals to "the growing anti-immigrant and anti-multicultural sentiment of contemporary Australia, to historical Australian phobias about invasion from the seas and loss of border control, an even to ancient Christian fear about the threat to civilization posed by Islam" (Manne 2003, p. 174).

### **Public Support**

It appeared that 'mainstream' Australia support the proposed citizenship test. Based on a Newspoll survey undertaken 22-24 September 2006 (*The Australian*, 26 September 2006), more than 77% of respondents agreed that it should be such a formal test for those who want to become Australian citizens and only 19% were against the test. It also revealed that the highest levels of support came from the oldest voters and Coalition supporters, in which nine out of ten backed the test and only 7 percent disagreed. Those aged 18-34 and Labor voters, both 70%, were at the lowest levels of support. Those who live in regions have the higher support of the test than those who live in capital cities, 80 per cent and 75 percent respectively.

In addition, the survey showed that the proposal of the new citizenship test had increased people support for political leaders; the satisfaction to John Howard rose from 45% to 47%, and that to Kim Beazley also went up from 31% to 32%.

### **Criticisms of the Citizenship Test**

It is obvious that the citizenship test proposed by the Coalition government led by Howard enjoyed support from the Labor Opposition and a large number of Australian societies. However, the proposed citizenship test also generated criticism from various elements of Australian society. The Ethnic Communities Council of New South Wales believed that the test would not give anything to encourage migrants to embrace Australian values because it would be "more form than substance". Its vice chairman, Justin Li, said, "We don't disagree that

migrants should embrace Australian values, but values and beliefs cannot simply be instilled into people by making them sit through an exam" (*SMH*, 16 September 2006).

Several Islamic leaders described the new citizenship test as "the new Tampa", a case of boat people that was used by Howard for political interests in the 2001 election. Hass Dellal, the executive director of the Australian Multicultural Foundation, believed that the test could promote better understanding of Australia and provide migrants more time to learn English before they apply for Australian citizenship. But, he warned it should be clear that the test was applied for all migrants, not just Muslim migrants (*SMH*, 18 September 2006).

The proposed citizenship test also provoked disagreement from the politicians of the ruling party. The federal Liberal MP Petro Georgiou regarded that the Government's proposed citizenship test as unjustified and as the result of a growing dominance by conservatives in the Liberal Party. He considered the test an attack on civil liberty for the sake of war on terrorism. "Our traditions of civil liberty have been curtailed, and in some cases overturned, in pursuit of a war on terrorism," he said. According to Georgiou, the government failed to explain why the test was needed. "I can find no detailed, robust analysis of a problem, I've found no evidence of how the new measures would resolve a problem that has not been demonstrated," he said. He further argued that past immigrants could give a substantial contribution to the country although many of them had poor English and those who spoke English, from English-speaking countries such as Britain, the US, New Zealand, had the lowest rate in taking up Australian citizenship (*SMH*, 5 October 2006).

Gerard Henderson, the executive director of the Sydney Institute, regarded the test as useless measures as it focused on English language skills and cultural knowledge of Australia and, at the same time, avoided the real concerns and facts of the country. He argued that few would disagree that good command of English would make life easier for immigrants to settle in Australia. However, the problem facing the country was not the fact that those who become citizens do not know about Australian history, cultures and values or do not speak Australian accent. Rather, the issue is the fact that some people who have taken out citizenship in Australia, he referred to minority of radical Muslims, do not accept and embrace democratic values and the legal system of the country they live. The test will be useless if the real aim is to prevent terrorists who want to destroy Australia from entering the country. There was no evidence that those who enter Australia lawfully with little knowledge of Australian history and culture or very limited English capabilities are dangerous to national security. There was also no evidence that terrorists have tried to enter the country as the asylum seekers or immigrants (*SMH*, 24 October 2006).

The test also sparked concerns among Labor politicians. NSW Labor's Daryl Melham said,

It is quite wrong to hold [the English] language up [as a test] to get better citizens. What we are going to do is disqualify a whole class of people whose forebears made great contribution to this country. You spit in their face. It is lack of respect and a lack of recognition of diversity. It is narrowness... the government ... are entering into a dark chapter in our history" (*SMH*, 4 November 2006).

Julie Owens was of the opinion that by introducing the issue of citizenship, the government was raising again the fear among Australian society, the new arrivals as a threat. She said,

The early Chinese caused fear. We were afraid of the Greeks and Italians... we were afraid of the Greek neighbours because they painted their homes blue and concreted their backyards. We were terrified house prices would drop...and Italian mafia. It was similar with Vietnamese. There has always been a section of the Australian people which has responded to changes within us with fear (*SMH*, 4 November 2006).

Therefore, she concluded that the Howard government were exploiting and manipulating the fear for political purposes. She said,

The effects of these dog-whistle politics –the effects of legislation designed to tell Australian people that we should be afraid of the new - is already being felt in the fabric of our community. It is already tearing us apart. We do not make the world safer by rejecting people we fear. We do make the world into the place we fear if we push people away in the way we are doing now..." (*SMH*, 4 November 2006).

Anna Burke opined that the proposed test was a card that the Howard government was going to play in the next election by raising the notion of 'other', anti-Muslim hysteria and sentiment. "We had the asylum seeker issue [in 2001], we have had the interest rate issue [in 2004], [the government] is going to whip up the notion of 'other' [in the next election]" (*SMH*, 4 November 2006).

## CONCLUSION

It can be said that proposed citizenship test reflects John Howard's political brands that have defined his prime ministership for a decade: loyalty to nation, social cohesion, social obligation, cultural unity, and individual responsibility as instruments of liberal democracy. These ideas gain support because they meet what Australian people expect and protect them from what they fear in this changing world. Globalisation, rapid economic change, people movements across countries, and Islamic terrorism demand people to affirm their national identity, values and traditions. Australian people want governments who can protect their nations, safeguard their borders, and preserve their cultural identity. The ability to meeting their expectation as well as exploiting their fear is the best way to gain people support for political purposes. The citizenship test, like other issues, was a manifestation of Howard's wonderful skills in

understanding and exploiting the living fears of 'the other' among Australian people for political gain in the next election.

The fact that Australia lagged behind the US, British and other European countries in the conducts of citizenship test last years suggests that the country was always in line in its policies with the 'super power' countries who have cultural commonalities in the name of national interest and defence. Following Jamrozik (2004), Australia is a country struggling to be an independent nation or "subservient" to the interests of the US and UK.

In addition, the huge support for the proposed citizenship test indicated that the fear of 'the other' and 'potential enemies' was still evident among Australian. It also served as evident that multiculturalism was under threat because people considered it as a policy that undermines the dominant culture.

All this suggests that Australia's colonial past still plays a role in people's attitudes and government policies. "The chains of colonial inheritance" has not disappeared in contemporary Australia.

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