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**Policy into practice: essays on multiculturalism and cultural diversity in
Australian society**

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Policy into practice: essays on multiculturalism and cultural diversity in Australian society

Abstract

The legacy of over two decades of destructive wars and of the Pol Pot regime (1975-79) forced many Cambodians to flee their homeland. Since 1975 about fifteen thousand have resettled in Australia. A substantial influx did not start until 1980. According to the 1986 census, there were 5,898 Cambodian-born people living in NSW, concentrated mainly in the western suburbs of Sydney. Among them were many adolescents who are the target of this study. Adolescents represent a big proportion of the total Cambodian population. In NSW, over a quarter (25.72%) of the Cambodian population are in the fifteen to twenty four age group. This age group was chosen because:

- they are a group at risk
- without proper settlement assistance their contribution to Australian society will be hindered.

This study will investigate the settlement process of Cambodian adolescents in NSW. First it is necessary to look briefly at their participation in education and employment, the effect the Pol Pot era had on the psychology of those who lived through it, and the identity problem that usually occurs in young people as the result of migration.

To follow are my observations combined with a survey of the literature on these issues, a profile of the Cambodian population in NSW, and some special characteristics of Cambodian refugees.

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Paper No. 20

**Policy into Practice:
Essays on Multiculturalism
and Cultural Diversity
in Australian Society**

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Essays on Multiculturalism and Cultural Diversity in Australian Society

edited by

Bill Cope

Centre for Multicultural Studies
University of Wollongong, Australia

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CHAPTER 1

CHILDREN OF THE KILLING FIELDS CAMBODIAN ADOLESCENTS IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Chanthou Boua

Introduction

The legacy of over two decades of destructive wars and of the Pol Pot regime (1975-79) forced many Cambodians to flee their homeland. Since 1975 about fifteen thousand have resettled in Australia. A substantial influx did not start until 1980. According to the 1986 census, there were 5,898 Cambodian-born people living in NSW, concentrated mainly in the western suburbs of Sydney. Among them were many adolescents who are the target of this study. Adolescents represent a big proportion of the total Cambodian population. In NSW, over a quarter (25.72%) of the Cambodian population are in the fifteen to twenty four age group. This age group was chosen because:

- they are a group at risk
- without proper settlement assistance their contribution to Australian society will be hindered.

This study will investigate the settlement process of Cambodian adolescents in NSW. First it is necessary to look briefly at their participation in education and employment, the effect the Pol Pot era had on the psychology of those who lived through it, and the identity problem that usually occurs in young people as the result of migration.

To follow are my observations combined with a survey of the literature on these issues, a profile of the Cambodian population in NSW, and some special characteristics of Cambodian refugees.

Education

When I was a teacher in High Schools and Language Centres in Melbourne (1981-86) I observed that nearly all Cambodian students at high school dropped out of school at age

sixteen to twenty years, after having been at school and other educational institutions for two to five years, but before acquiring useful qualifications. Nearly everywhere they were known as low achievers, but not because they were lazy and unmotivated. In fact the students were usually hard working and had arrived in Australia with high expectations. They wanted to succeed at school. Their parents too usually had a healthy respect for education. Having lived through four years of near total abolition of education their hunger for schooling was manifested by parents inside and outside of Cambodia. In Cambodia, in 1984, for example there were more children enrolled for the first four years of schooling than in the peace time of Sihanouk's rule in 1969 (Vickery, 1986; 155). Identifying the factors which contribute to their eventual failure in the system is one of the purposes of this study.

What Cambodian adolescents have experienced with the Australian educational system is not exceptional. In the *Report of the Greek and Italian Youth Employment Study* the authors said: 'It is generally agreed that a majority of immigrant young people from a non-English speaking background have experienced considerable difficulties in adjusting to life in Australia. These difficulties have included the acquisition of English, academic progress, satisfactory identity development and the achievement of ambitions' (Young, Cox, Daly 1983: 9). All the difficulties mentioned above are experienced by the Cambodian adolescents to a greater extent than other migrant groups, due to the traumatic experiences endured by them in their homeland prior to their departure and also to the nature of their departure, i.e. fleeing as refugees rather than migrating voluntarily. Their experiences include death in the family through assassination, starvation or disease; family separation; excessively harsh working conditions; malnutrition; lack of trust; lack of compassion; lack of health care and absence of formal education or training.

Historical events have had a great impact on the settlement process of the Cambodian adolescents. For example, it is nearly universally true that a newly-arrived fifteen year-old Cambodian person has never received any formal education in Cambodia but only haphazard courses in the refugee camp in Thailand. This is due to the fact that for the four years (1975-79) when Pol Pot was in power, almost all types of formal education were abolished. This means that the youth is illiterate or semi-literate in Khmer. He or she is not accustomed to the basic formal learning environment, such as uncomfortably sitting on a chair for a long period of time and has a short concentration span. Sometimes he/she demonstrates learning difficulties and is unable to retain information taught.

Teachers have observed that literacy and basic education in the mother tongue is an important contribution to success in learning English and for cognitive development. I have found among Cambodian adolescents that those who are more literate in Khmer become

more proficient in English and able to grasp the new concepts faster than those who are illiterate or semi-literate in Khmer. My hypothesis therefore is that the more literate they are in Khmer the faster they will become proficient in English and learn the new concepts. Research in the area of under achievement among minority children suggests that:

the level of proficiency bilingual children attain in their two languages may be an important intervening variable mediating the effects of bilingualism on children's cognitive and academic development. Specifically, it has been hypothesised that there may be a threshold level of linguistic proficiency bilingual children must attain in order to avoid cognitive deficits ... If bilingual children attain only a very low level of proficiency in one or both of their languages, their long-term interaction with their academic environment through these languages, both in terms of input and output, is likely to be impoverished. (Cummins, 1984: 107)

Most Cambodian adolescents do not reach that threshold level of proficiency in their mother-tongue, therefore it would take them a long time, if indeed they ever manage, to become proficient in English and to strive academically, i.e. to understand the content of the subject matter taught. Illiteracy in the mother-tongue is a phenomenon that the school system here has yet to come to terms with.

A study by the Victorian Ethnic Affairs Commissions, *Indo-Chinese Refugees in Victoria*, noted:

- (1) that all settlement difficulties are compounded at the secondary school level and
- (2) the Khmer group appear to be facing more problems in coping with the school curriculum. (VEAC, 1984: 74)

This is no doubt due to the disrupted or minimal schooling that the Cambodians received before their arrival in Australia. It means that they have missed out on many basic concepts on which post-primary teachers base their lessons. Their task, therefore, is not only to learn the English language but to catch up with the concepts of the subject matter that children routinely acquire at primary and post primary level.

Unlike their Australian peers, the Cambodian students cannot turn to their parents or elders for help in their school work or advice about their new society. Similarly they have no background knowledge of the language and are unfamiliar with many subjects taught in Australian schools. The amount of work they have to catch up on is insurmountable. After a few years at school it becomes obvious to the students and to some teachers that the tasks of becoming proficient in English and catching up with the concepts are completely out of their reach. The situation is extremely desperate for those who arrived in Australia at an older age, i.e. senior-level high school age of around fifteen to sixteen years. The situation, however, is only a little bit more promising for those who arrived at junior-level high school age. As a study by the Commonwealth Department of Education called *English*

Language Needs of Migrant and Refugee Youth said, 'Language learning is not a rapid process'. Hence, those students who have to learn English as well as learning content in English, having arrived as adolescents, have insufficient time to accomplish both tasks in the usual span of secondary schooling' (1986: 24).

The situation is better for those who arrived in Australia at primary-level age. My hypothesis is that the younger they are when they arrived in Australia the better their chance of success in education. This is due mainly to the fact that when they arrived at a younger age (primary-level) they have more time to learn English, have access to the concepts taught at primary level, and therefore will be able to cope with the more complicated concepts at high school.

So it is usually those who arrived at secondary-level age that pose problems. Their initial enthusiasm gradually melts. Schooling then becomes frustrating and unrewarding and it is right at that point, when they reach year 10 or 11, that they decide to leave school and look for work. They are armed with very few skills and knowledge of this new society.

Employment

The depressed economic situation Australia has experienced has been very unfortunate for the recently arrived non-English speaking migrant groups. During times of economic recession migrant workers, especially the newcomers, have been badly affected. Unemployment rates among migrant workers are usually higher than the national figure.

Recently with shrinking numbers of manufacturing jobs, many newcomers have been unable to find work. In 1981 the highest rates of unemployment were experienced by Vietnamese (24.7%) and Lebanese (15.3%) as compared with the national rates (5.3%). (DIEA statistical notes No. 23 Table 1. 1981). This disproportionate pattern continues. Migrant youth unemployment rates too have been very high and are considered 'likely to get worse in the near future' (Castles, *et al.* 1986: 67).

Non-English speaking migrant workers depend heavily on unskilled and manufacturing jobs. A study by the VEAC, *Indo-Chinese Refugees in Victoria* found that '... of both men and women who are employed, 77.5% are employed as unskilled labourers' (VEAC, 1984: 64). This phenomenon is accentuated among Cambodian adolescents who have not much skill behind them and are not proficient in English.

The Indo-Chinese refugees in Victoria have a workforce participation rate of 80% (VEAC, 1984: 95) which reflects their readiness to establish themselves in the new country. This intention, however, is not fulfilled as competition for work is so fierce, even for unskilled work. Unemployment rates are very high, according to the above study. 'Sixty five per cent of the total Cambodian male sample and eighty six per cent of the Cambodian female sample were unemployed' (VEAC, 1984: 61). The study also said that the prospect of employment improves with the length of residence.

My hypothesis is that while it is not so difficult for Cambodian adolescents who have spent the last three to four years at school in Australia to find work when they left school it is worse for those who arrived in Australia at age sixteen to twenty and want to join the workforce immediately. This perhaps is the result of personal contact and the degree of confidence in communication that the former group have been able to establish during their residence here.

The above study also found that for the Indo-Chinese refugees, friends and kin networks play an important role in job-seeking (VEAC, 1984: 97). The Cambodian population in NSW, however, is very small (5,898) compared with Vietnamese (34,000). Support from the community, therefore, is very meagre. The Cambodian community because of its small size has not been able to form a cohesive support network. Also because of the nature of their migration many Cambodian refugees are here without the kinship support that is experienced by Greeks and Italians who came to Australia as a part of chain migration.

Furthermore while many Vietnamese came with entrepreneurial skills, the Cambodians are usually of lower middle-level civil servant and peasant background. The Vietnamese success in business ventures (restaurants, grocery stores, etc.) means jobs for many Vietnamese adolescents who decide, for whatever reasons, not to go on with their schooling. This type of fallback is not available to Cambodian adolescents.

Lack of suitable work training is another factor that usually hinders their success in job seeking. They have usually arrived with few suitable skills for an industrial society. Language difficulties together with a low level of education ensure that they are at the bottom of the employment list, in many cases.

Psychological and Identity Factors

An important factor that needs investigation when studying the settlement process of Khmer refugees is the effect the Pol Pot era had on the psychology of those who lived

through it. J. D. Kinzie, a psychiatrist working with Khmer refugees in America, has suggested that Khmer refugees '... suffered from some of the same symptoms—referred to collectively as the concentration camp syndrome—as Nazi victims' (Ablin and Hood, 1987: 333). Most of the patients who sought his treatment complained of major depressive symptoms, such as sleep disorders, insomnia, poor concentration and poor appetite. He now believes that as well as suffering from depressive disorder, most victims of Pol Pot's regime suffer from post-traumatic stress syndrome (PTSS), delayed type.

Their suffering includes exaggerated startle reaction to stimuli that reminded them of events in Cambodia, difficulty relating to their spouses or children, guilt or shame for having lived, or for having left their relatives behind, poor concentration and memory and sleep disorders. These were the most universal (Ablin and Hood, 1987, pp. 334-8).

Three case studies by Kinzie were of patients fifty six, twenty seven and forty eight years old. It may be hoped, therefore, that adolescents were not so badly affected by the Pol Pot experiences which took place when they were young children.

The above study, supported by earlier studies of concentration camp victims in World War II, suggested that physical trauma, tortures and malnutrition 'contributed to the syndrome by weakening the victims and leaving them biologically vulnerable to the psychological trauma' (Ablin and Hood, 1987, p. 345). It is, therefore, advisable that even though psychological complaints among Cambodian adolescents are not, or not yet, outstanding, it is useful for teachers and social workers to watch for their development.

A doctor of psychiatry, M. Eisenbruch, in his study of Cambodian unaccompanied minors, has suggested that memories of the past '... when powerful, interfered with the youth's capacity to concentrate on homework or other activities' (Eisenbruch, 1988a).

Teachers of Cambodian adolescents are heard to complain about Cambodian students' poor concentration, inability to memorise and day dreaming. This, of course, hinders their educational progress enormously. For the Cambodian students, complaints of frequent headache are quite common and known jokingly as 'the Cambodian disease'. It is also observed that some Cambodian adolescents are unable to let themselves go with joy.

Children remember the constant hunger and how they had to roam the forest for insects or roots or steal to get additional food. They also remember the price they or some of their friends had to pay when they were caught stealing. The disciplinary measures included beating, starvation, forced labour and death. On top of that, many adolescents remember

watching their immediate family die of starvation, disease or simply being marched away never to return.

After the Pol Pot period came the refugee camps in Thailand where they lived behind barbed wire, possessed no basic human rights, and lived off handouts from international agencies. Violent crimes such as rapes, robberies, killings were common occurrences there. For many the refugee camp was a place where they and their families lingered without purpose for years, some up to five or six years.

How could anyone return to normal living after such experiences, not to mention having to adapt to a new type of environment and culture widely different from the Cambodians? This gap was expected to be bridged by the Cambodians, especially the Cambodian adolescents. Unlike their older compatriots, especially those who do not have to work (pensioners, widows with young children, the unemployed workforce) and can, to some extent live a Cambodian way of life behind closed doors, adolescents are put from the start into a situation where they must quickly adapt in order to survive. It is, as Eisenbruch says, in the midst of the maelstrom of acculturating to Western life that adolescents struggle to maintain core identity by reconnecting with the past, including both good and bad. It is known as nostalgia, which interrupts the concentration of adolescents and is annoying for teachers. In Eisenbruch's words, '... nostalgia, however distressing, can be viewed as an appropriate response to acculturation' (*ibid*).

As adolescents are submerged in a new culture (or forced to accept a new culture) there emerges an unconscious or conscious decision to look back and analyse carefully their original identity in the way that they never did before. This is done through discussion with their peers or friends and relatives, of the same nationality, about the host society's customs, values, codes of conduct, and so on. This discussion is usually in the form of comparison of the two societies. It is through this process that adolescents strengthen their core identity by asking themselves questions like 'who am I?' 'where do I come from?' 'why am I here?' 'where am I going?' 'why do those children act differently from me?' Discussion with friends and family, attending traditional festivals, etc. are important contributions to successful strengthening of core identity. It is only when they have a strong core identity that they will be able to accept the new culture at its face value, in other words, not feel alienated. Programs such as mother-tongue maintenance, a study of Cambodian history, literature, music, and so on have important roles to play in consolidating the core identity and therefore, successful acculturation, which leads to meaningful contribution to a multicultural society.

In his study of Cambodian unaccompanied minors Eisenbruch postulated that 'rapid acculturation leads to alienation because it excludes personal and cultural bereavement' (*ibid*). While traditional wisdom has suggested that migrants or refugees should acculturate as rapidly as possible in order to get on with their lives in the new country, Eisenbruch implied that time should be allowed initially for them to mourn their personal and cultural loss. Personal and cultural bereavement, he suggested, is healthier when shared collectively. These findings, he said, challenge the wisdom of some conventional approaches to refugee settlement, and suggest that ethnic enclaves may have a place in multicultural society.

This was illustrated for me in my one year experience as a bilingual teacher with a pilot program for post-primary students in Melbourne. The class consisted of six recently arrived Cambodian students, a Cambodian teacher's aide and myself. The students attended full-time intensive English classes except for the five hours per week they spent with me. For these five hours we spoke Khmer all the time, except for some translation work. The lessons included history, geography, science and maths, taught, as much as possible, in Khmer. Beside the above academic instruction we also discussed the Australian way of life, our past experiences, and what happened around us. We also read a number of works of Khmer classical literature, which allowed us to look at and analyse the structure of Cambodian society, family structure and role, women's role, history, and so on. Looking back, the classes served as therapy for collective bereavement where a group of Cambodians compared and contrasted the two societies, reminded each other of what we used to do in Cambodia and therefore consolidated our identity and at the same time learned new concepts in various subjects.

The students were mostly known to their English teachers as shy, quiet, lacking in confidence and mostly low achievers. In our class, however, as Khmer was the means of communication, the students were able to discuss subjects of substance confidently and happily as they did not have to worry whether they got the grammar right or the pronunciation correct. The bilingual class is a place where students can shed frustrations they accumulated in their English class through not being able to express themselves intellectually, explain their experiences and feelings or ask questions. Having a place where they can shed their frustrations is very important for the initial period, as learning English is a slow process and students can easily become discouraged.

A few teachers remarked that there was a lot of laughter to be heard out of the bilingual class. I congratulated myself as I believed that it is very important to keep them laughing while learning English. Unfortunately the bilingual classes ended a year later as funding under the Multicultural Education Program was cut. In conclusion, it seems that educational

programs such as mother-tongue maintenance, ethnic weekend classes, community languages and ethnic 'ghettoes' serve as a means of collective grief, and help refugee adolescents build a better sense of identity.

Profile of Cambodian Population in NSW

Since 1975, when the three Indo-Chinese countries, Cambodia, Vietnam and Laos fell into communist hands, there have been many Indo-Chinese seeking a new home in Australia. For many Australians it is very difficult to distinguish the three peoples' physical features. All of them are known as 'Vietnamese' to some Australians and teachers. There are indeed a lot more Vietnamese than Cambodians or Laotians. According to the 1986 Australian Bureau of Statistics Census there are 5,898 Cambodians in NSW, as compared with 34,000 Vietnamese and 4,600 Laotians.

The three populations include numerous adolescents, aged between fifteen and twenty four. They represent about a quarter of the Indo-Chinese population, and among Cambodians a bit higher, 25.7%; this is compared with 16% adolescents for the general population of NSW. The need for special attention to these groups of people is obvious.

Because of the nature of their migration, as political and economic refugees, the Indo-Chinese populations are very youthful. Ninety per cent of Vietnamese, 87% of Laotians and 85% of Cambodians are under the age of forty four, as compared with 69.3% for the general population. With a small community like the Cambodian one, social life has been very restricted for the few aged in the population who have little role to play and wield little influence within the community as their experience is not so relevant any more in the new setting.

One of the major legacies of Pol Pot's mass killings is the high number of lone parents among the Cambodian settlers in Australia, especially women. In NSW alone there are 289 widowed Cambodian females. This represents 12.2% of the female population over fifteen years old (i.e. one in eight females over fifteen years old is a widow) as compared with 4.6% for Vietnamese and 7% for Laotians.

According to the 1986 census the employment rate among the Cambodian population of fifteen years old and over is 59.1%. This means the Cambodian employment rate is lower than the Vietnamese (62.88%), Laotian (75.4%) and the general population's rate of 89.9%. The low employment rate among the Cambodians partly means that their skills are not compatible with Australian industrial society. This is largely due to the input of peasant

and uneducated people, in a higher proportion among Cambodians than among Vietnamese or Laotians. Cambodian women have a particularly low rate of employment. Only half of them are employed. Vietnamese, Laotians and women generally have employment rates of 56.4%, 72.97% and 89.62% respectively.

The Cambodian unemployment rate is broadly typical of newcomers. With an unemployment rate of 35.71% (in 1986), it is perhaps the highest of all the ethnic groups. The unemployment rate for Vietnamese is 32.22%, for Laotians 21.73%, for Lebanese 28.83%, as compared with the general population of 8%. For the Cambodians, the situation is quite serious when we look at unemployment rates by marital status. Single people have a lower unemployment rate (25.8%) than married people (40.49%) who have more responsibility as far as bringing up children is concerned. The fact that single people can find jobs more easily than married people, who are generally older, means that the single (and younger) people are more suitable for the Australian labour market. It is partly due to the fact that they speak more English as the result of their few years of education in Australia. For married people with four or more young children, the money earned from low paid unskilled work is usually not much more than their unemployment benefit. However it also means that they don't gain any work experience for the future.

Newcomers, however, have higher rates of labour force participation than the general population. The labour force participation rate among Cambodians is 66.56%, among Vietnamese 71.67%, among Laotians 66.95%, as compared with the general population's participation rate of 59.4%. This means that the proportion of people willing to work, actively looking for work and depending on work for a living is higher for newcomers than for the general population. This is mainly due to the youthfulness of the population.

For Cambodians, for example this means that possibly 30% of the population of fifteen years and over are still at school as there are not many Cambodians living in retirement or on unearned income. If employment opportunities do not improve we can expect an even higher rate of unemployment among the Cambodians in the near future when this group decides to join the work force.

As expected, the labour force participation rate among married people (75.60%) is higher than among the never married (58.51%). There are many young people still at school believing that this will improve their job opportunities.

Special Characteristics of Cambodian Refugees and Ethnicity

There are two types of migrants in Australia, those who migrated here voluntarily and those who fled from threatening conditions in their countries, known as refugees. The majority of migrants in Australia belong to the former group. While Australian employers rarely distinguish between the two groups, considering them merely as consumers or an additional supply of labour, several distinct features characterise the refugee group.

For most Cambodian refugees, fleeing their homeland was a necessary step for the security and well-being of their families. They had suffered under the most brutal form of inhumanity the world has seen this century. Their sufferings began in 1969 when the US started to bomb the country secretly, with the help of the US base in Pine Gap, Northern Territory. When the war stopped in 1975, the misery was to be surpassed by the atrocity of the Pol Pot regime. During its four years of power (1975-79) over one million Cambodians died of starvation, diseases or murder. The social and cultural fabric of Cambodian life—religion, traditions, family life—was also destroyed. Imperialist war together with self-destructive radical revolution and ongoing regional conflict left many scars on the general population and on those who have found refuge in Australia.

Cambodian refugees in Australia came from very diverse social backgrounds. Everyone, regardless of their social status, was affected by atrocities and war. Those who arrived in Australia in the early days between 1975 and 1978 included a few high ranking civil servants who, during the war, had connection with Australia or to the war effort, and some ethnic Chinese merchants, who managed to escape first. Admission to Australia was slow as there were strict criteria. Approximately '2,000 Khmer refugees from the Pol Pot regime had been admitted into Australia' (Kiernan, 1988) by the end of 1979. This group are the more urban and more educated members of the Khmer population in Australia now. The major influx was not until 1980, when the overthrow of the Pol Pot regime by a Vietnamese invasion had given the people more freedom to travel. Many decided to cross the border to Thailand where they could apply to go on to third countries to join relatives or to stay away from an insecure place, or simply to leave behind cruel memories.

With international pressure at the time, Australia loosened its criteria and accepted many more Khmers regardless of whether they had connections (sponsorship, relatives, etc.) in Australia, or spoke English, or had special skills. The intake increased and in 1980, thirteen hundred Cambodian settlers arrived in Australia. The annual intake rose to as high as 4,400 in 1983, but fell to eight hundred the next year. In all, about 11,800 Cambodians arrived in Australia over the 1980-85 period, and by 1986 the total Cambodian born population in Australia had reached 13,900 (Kiernan, 1988). This influx brought in

Cambodians of all social levels, with diverse social backgrounds and experiences, including middle to low level civil servants, teachers, nurses, soldiers and a number of peasants. This group generally has a low level of education. Some are completely uneducated and illiterate in Khmer. Their previous skills are usually not conducive to meeting the demands of employment in Australian industrial society. This means that most of them are employed, if at all, in unskilled or labouring jobs.

Beside the refugee there is also a small group of Cambodians (five hundred throughout Australia), who came before the social upheaval in 1975. They came as students, either private or under Colombo plan scholarships, and trainees. With the events in Cambodia in 1975 they could not return home and were compelled to take up residence in Australia. Many students and trainees managed to complete their education and some are holding professional positions.

Daniel Bell wrote in his article, *Ethnicity and Social Change* that: 'Ethnicity has become more salient (than class) because it can combine an interest with an affective tie. Ethnicity provides a tangible set of common identifications—in language, food, music, names—when other social roles become more abstract and impersonal. In the competition for the values of the society to be realised politically, ethnicity can become a means of claiming place or advantage' (Bell, 1975: 169). He argued that as the result of institutional change, the shift from manufacturing to service industries where more white collar jobs are created, for example, class 'no longer seemed to carry any strong affective tie.'

For the Khmer diverse social backgrounds mean that they have diverse social perceptions. Together with the ongoing factional and political conflict in Cambodia this ensures that the Khmer community in Australia is less than united. The divisions are along the lines of previous and present status, level of education, caste distinctions during Pol Pot's time ('base' and 'new' people) and the political factions that mark the present unresolved conflict. Given the size of the community (13,000 in Australia; 5,900 in NSW) and the divisions within it, it is nearly impossible for the Cambodians to form an influential ethnic community. There are small community support networks here and there but they could hardly serve to wield political power and be effective in claiming welfare provision for the community. While there certainly are common identifications such as food, music, religion, language, history and so on, there are limited signs of affective ties. Imperialist war, social revolution, the present political conflict, together with the past and present social positions, contribute to undermine the group's affective ties. The working class usually want to get on with building their new lives and leave the issues of politics and ethnicity to the more privileged individuals.

There are many cases of unaccompanied minors who have no close relatives in Australia to look after them. Their plight resulted from being separated from their parents to perform duties in youth brigades away from their village and family. This policy was applied in many parts of Cambodia during the Pol Pot period. When the Pol Pot period ended in 1979, they could not find their parents or relatives, either because they had died or had since had to move on to other areas. They drifted along and many arrived in Thailand. Some were adopted by foreign families (American, Swedish, Australian, French, etc.), some were adopted by Khmer families, others arrived in third countries as unaccompanied minors. In Australia they live communally under supervision until they can manage on their own (Plant, 1988).

Now, a few years later, some have received news from their parents, brothers or sisters in Cambodia or Thailand and will eventually have to consider rejoining their family in Cambodia or bring them to Australia under some sort of family reunion. In the future, when Cambodia is recognised diplomatically by Australia, there will be many requests for family reunion by Cambodian refugees living here.

Also alarming is the high number of lone parents among the Cambodian settlers in Australia. Their husbands (or wives) died or were killed during the war and the social upheaval. In Cambodia, too, this phenomenon has demanded urgent attention. There, women comprise about 65% of the adult population. Among them there are many widows. In Australia, as well as in Cambodia, many widows are raising families and in some cases orphaned relatives as well. A large number of men died, not only because they were soldiers. From various interviews with people in different parts of Cambodia, it appears that women survived the starvation in the Pol Pot period better than men, and that men were looked upon by the Pol Pot cadres as a more dangerous element to the survival of the regime. So men who used to serve in the former regimes' armies or administrations, or men who considered resistance, were subject to greater suspicion and huge numbers were eliminated.

Now, in Australia, 'in 1981, more than one in eight women aged 15 years and over were widows. Of these, 92% were unemployed or outside the work force' (Kiernan, 1988). They are struggling to bring up children, many of adolescent age, single handed. Besides recovering from the death of their husbands, they have to adjust to their new lives in Australia and at the same time ensure that their children are adequately looked after and their future is intact. The task is almost insurmountable given the unfamiliar environment.

Unlike many of their immigrant counterparts, Cambodian refugees have generally arrived in Australia empty handed. Very few manage to smuggle valuable possessions with them.

As a result, the Cambodian community is a poor one, with all members starting their lives in Australia from scratch. For most Cambodians their first encounter with 'wealth' in Australia is their Social Security cheque. While some Chinese and Vietnamese counterparts excel in business ventures, Cambodians have no capital to start such ventures except for the very few who have been here longer and managed to save up for such purposes.

Another distinction between refugees and migrants is that the refugees never consciously made up their mind to leave home. They left home out of necessity and many adult refugees hope to return when the situation at home regains 'normalcy' as they perceive it. For some, this mentality interferes gravely with their effort to acculturate. For example, some see no point in putting energy into learning English which will not be very useful on their return home. So they may not try. On the other hand, it is also arguable that some Khmer refugees in Australia have found, after a serious unsuccessful trial, that life here is so alienating that they long to return home where they can once again be in charge of their life.

Whatever the case may be, this sojourner mentality produces difficulties. Given the ongoing political conflict and uncertainty in the region it is very unlikely that most will ever return, nor be able to return as the children become older and life becomes more established. Also, there is no guarantee that modern Cambodia will develop politically, socially and economically, as they have been hoping. This would leave them high and dry, as in the case of refugees from Argentina and Uruguay who returned home after the overthrow of the military regimes to find their 'resettlement materially and socially impossible' (Morrissey, 1987: 27).

So most adult Cambodian refugees will remain in Australia permanently. Their emotional feeling will depend very much on the achievements of their children. There exists already what is known as an 'ethnic island' where the Cambodians build themselves a self-contained social and cultural world that they share with their small cohesive group. I suspect, however, that most of them, at some point in time, feel frustrated, alienated, lonely and miss home gravely.

It is expected, however, that their children will become more acculturated as they are exposed to a wider social interaction through schooling, socialisation and the work place. It is doubtful, however, that in social status they will rise above their parents, especially those who arrived here at an older adolescent age. Having been deprived of several years of schooling, during the Pol Pot period and the time they spent in refugee camps, their chances of success in education are very slim. It seems therefore, that the Cambodian

community will have to wait even longer to witness the rise in status of members of their community. In many cases, this may have to wait for those who arrived here at the age of ten or younger to achieve success and be able to benefit fully from the Australian educational system. Even then, like all Australians who come from poorer backgrounds, the competition will be very fierce indeed for them.

The Situation Before and On Arrival

The Interviewing

A sample of thirty adolescents, sixteen males and fourteen females, is the subject of this study. (See Table A.) They were introduced or made known to me by friends, relatives and their teachers. Most (twenty six) of the interviews were conducted in the interviewees' homes; four interviews were conducted at a school. Another school I approached denied me access to students on the school grounds. The school's principal and administrator were worried about researchers and journalists, as the controversial issue of the alleged 'failure' of the settlement of Indo-Chinese refugees was raging at the time. They were, however, prepared to give me the students' addresses and phone numbers.

According to the 1986 Australian Bureau of Statistics Census, in NSW there were 5,898 Cambodians, of whom 1,517 were adolescents aged between fifteen and twenty four. The sample of thirty, although small, represents nearly 2% of the Cambodian adolescent population in NSW. Each interviewee was asked the same, approximately seventy two, questions concerning the interviewee's personal information and history, his/her schooling outside Australia and in Australia, employment record and (Khmer) language ability.

Individual interviewing was the method used. Many interviews were conducted in the family living area where other members relaxed or watched TV. I was very much regarded as a guest of the house and it was therefore not considered polite for the host to leave me on my own. As the interviewing went on, most of the time, it became obvious that only the interviewee was needed and the rest could go on performing their household functions as usual. However, some parents or family members were curious and liked to know what sort of questions were being asked. Humorous interjections often took place and sometimes I could sense that I was entertaining a group of people (family members and neighbours) who were unemployed, with not much to do, and keen to meet a new person.

Parents very much welcomed my study and hoped that it would highlight the problems their children were facing and that changes would take place to help their children excel in schooling and employment.

I was frequently asked to join the family meal or have a drink or a snack as we compared notes on lives in Cambodia and Australia. I usually left the family carrying bundles of prepared food and/or vegetables (chilli, lemon grass, etc.) that they grew in their garden. We exchanged phone numbers and have remained in contact.

The questionnaires were in Khmer. The interviewing was mostly conducted in Khmer except for a few interviewees with whom I had to jump from Khmer to English to Khmer as I detected their lack of understanding in Khmer. However, sometimes their English was not much better than their poor Khmer.

Parent's Background

The sample of thirty interviewees came from twenty three different families, as it included seven pairs of brothers and sisters. (I limited myself to interviewing a maximum of two persons from a family.)

Their fathers' professions in Cambodia can be divided into three groups. Eleven of the twenty three were of middle-low level civil servant backgrounds, ranging from teacher, nurse, post office worker, customs officer, to soldier. Two were of small business background: a provincial or local rice dealer and a distributor of food and utensils. Ten families were former peasants. Six families came from the city of Phnom Penh, while the other seventeen families came from four provinces (Kompong Thom, Battambang, Kampot and Kompong Cham). Of these most were from Battambang, a province bordering Thailand.

Two families were of Chinese descent. Both interviewees spoke Chinese fluently. One of them learnt Chinese for two years when she was in a refugee camp. She also went to Chinese Saturday school for two years in Sydney's western suburbs. The other one had been attending Chinese Saturday school since he arrived in Sydney in 1982.

Age

The sample consisted of sixteen males and fourteen females. My intention was to look at the fifteen to twenty four age group. However the inclusion of two interviewees aged twenty eight and twenty nine provided an interesting study of people with longer experience in Cambodia who had started their education in Australia as mature age students. The rest of the sample was between fourteen and twenty four years of age.

All of the sample left Cambodia between the ages of six and nineteen years old. By the time they arrived in Australia they were between ten and twenty-one years old.

This is their real age as opposed to their officially stated age. (The officially stated age is the age that they adopted when they sought migration from refugee camps to a third country.) Reduction of one's age is quite widespread among Cambodian (and Vietnamese and Laotian for that matter) adolescents.

Parents and guardians responsible for this believe that it would allow their children a few more years of access to education in Australia. This is done largely to compensate for the four years absented from education during the Pol Pot time and time spent in refugee camps. It is assumed that would allow them time to catch up with language and other general knowledge of Australia. Sometimes age reduction was done mistakenly if a sponsor in Australia did not know their exact age while filling out immigration forms. My sample shows that, except for eleven people who did not adopt a new age, the rest reduced their age by between one and five years with a reduction of one or two years more common than of three, four or five years. Except for one female, who reduced her age from twenty one to sixteen, large reductions mainly occurred with the males. It is obvious that obtaining a substantial education is seen to be more important for males than females, and to achieve that goal it is necessary for some to reduce their age substantially.

They don't, however, always achieve that goal by reducing the age. One of my male sample who had his age reduced from twenty one to seventeen dropped out of school last year when he reached the end of year 11. When a job opportunity turned up during the summer holiday he decided not to return to start his year 12. This could perhaps be attributed to his strong desire to be an adult and to be independent from his family like some of his friends (of his own real age) who were then working. His desire to be economically independent at least for a while was very strong as he did intend to return to do some more study after six months. It seems to me that he just wanted to find out what it is like to be twenty one, as opposed to being a seventeen year-old schoolboy. His job as a marble cutter in a local factory serves this purpose. Perhaps he could save some money, learn to drive, buy a car—a dream for many Cambodian young men who are impatient with schooling. However, he recognised the importance of acquiring a skill for his future in Australia. He wanted to return to a technical school where he could learn motor mechanics. But that, of course, would depend on whether there was a place available for him for such training. It would also depend on whether or not his willingness to study will be superseded by his desire for more money and independence from his widowed mother. She is living in a rented, tumble down Housing Commission home with his older brother and sister who are factory workers, and a younger brother still at high school. Schooling had not been easy for him. In response to the question of why he left school, he said, 'I could not go on academically, even though I want to do more study.' It is quite possible that he will remain an unskilled worker for the rest of his life.

While the above story is not very encouraging, another case of age reduction ends on a more successful note. A twenty four year-old male, who had his age reduced to twenty one, is now attending a first year Bachelor of Science course at NSW University.

While it is impossible to speculate, two females who had their age reduced from sixteen to thirteen and twenty one to sixteen respectively are quite happily attending year 7 and year 10 at Ambarvale High School.

It is very difficult to gauge the advantages and disadvantages of age reduction. However it is certain that age reduction gives those who arrived in Australia at an older age more flexibilities and options to pursue, and allows them more time for socialisation and for schooling if that is what they wish. The twenty one year-old girl, for example, arrived in Australia over three years ago before this survey when she was eighteen. If she had not had her age reduced by five years she would have been pressured to attend Adult Migrant Education courses, or be placed at a higher level of education where she would not have coped academically, like her older sister (who we will look at later). Instead, with an official age of thirteen on arrival she was able to attend an Intensive Language Unit at Liverpool for one year before she started year 7 at Busby High School. The family moved a couple of times and in 1988 when the family settled in Campbelltown she was placed at year 10 at Ambarvale High School.

With our system of education where pupils are vertically placed according to their age it is important to know what one wants out of it. For her, on paper, at least she has received a standard education if she resolves to stick with it for a few more years, during which time her English will become more proficient. Her performance at school is not very promising, as she expressed grave concern about the progress she made. Her complaints included 'I don't understand the subjects very well'. 'I'm not familiar with the subjects'. 'I did not get good marks'. However, if nothing substantial comes out of this round of education she will, at least, acquire a knowledge of what is available to her in the future, as a mature age student or whatever. She will be better prepared, supported by a general background of education and socialisation experiences.

These options are not open to her older (by one year) sister who did not have her age reduced. Arriving in Australia (in March 1985) at nineteen years she was enrolled to study English at the hostel with the Adult Migration Education program for several weeks. In 1986 she enrolled in a course at Bankstown College where she learnt 'every subject, Science, Maths, English ...' The course frustrated her tremendously, as she 'couldn't understand the subjects and what the teacher said. It was too difficult and at the end of six months I stopped.' After living on unemployment benefits for one year she found a job as a machinist

in Cabramatta, and later on as a rag cutter with the Saint Vincent de Paul Society in Sydney, where she's now working. Since she left Bankstown College she has never done any post-school or work training despite her willingness to do so. It is very unlikely that she will receive a decent job training that will qualify her for a better position in the future as she still doesn't speak very much English and is due to marry a co-worker at the end of this year.

While it is hard to balance the advantage and disadvantage of age reduction one thing is certain: it doesn't suit everybody. Worse still, many parents reduced their children's age without knowing the exact reasons or options available. They blindly followed other people without considering their own situation. As a result many parents and adolescents now want to reverse the process.

The psychological effect on someone who has to behave and think younger than their age is indeterminable, especially after a big reduction. While some are happy with the arrangement others are frustrated and alienated by it all. During the course of my teaching it was heart-breaking to watch someone who was unhappily placed in a class with thirteen year-old pupils, while he was eighteen and wanted to work and be independent.

Once a family arrives in Australia it is nearly impossible to change an adolescent age back. A seventeen year-old girl who had her age reduced to thirteen by her adopted Cambodian parents sought to reverse her age change when she arrived in Melbourne. Never having been able to get on with her adopted parents she had been hoping that when she arrived in Australia she'd be able to go to work (any type of work), move out of home and be independent from them. However, she could not do that, as she was officially still under school leaving age. In consultation with a Cambodian social worker, she was told that to regain her original age would require medical approval. This involves medical processes such as the examination of her palm, bones, skull, etc. According to her previous experience the social worker said that this process could take up to five years. This disappointed the girl a great deal as she realised that she had to go to school for the next two to three years, whether she liked it or not, and put up with her adopted parents until she reached the school leaving age. This is a long time to wait for someone who is unhappy.

To my surprise three of my interviewees had their age augmented rather than reduced. All three attributed this to the misunderstanding of their guardians or sponsors in the process of filling out immigration application forms. Guardians and sponsors in these cases did not know their ages. As forms had to be filled out immediately to accelerate their application, there was no time to wait for the return mail from the refugee camp in Thailand. This guess work put their ages up by two, four and five years. While it doesn't worry the man who

had his age augmented by two years it upsets the two women who had their ages augmented by four and five years. However there is little they can do about this. One of them is doing third year Bachelor of Science as a mature age student; the other is doing a CES clerical training course after she dropped out of school at the end of year 11.

Education in Cambodia

As the majority (twenty three) of the sample left Cambodia in 1979-80 they did not receive any education provided by the post 1979 Heng Samrin government before they left Cambodia. In fact only five of the others received formal education, for one or two years, provided by the Heng Samrin government soon after Pol Pot was ousted. There are another two who did not leave Cambodia until 1981, but did not go to school. One was of Chinese background and her family probably did not value Khmer education much. When she arrived in Thailand she studied Chinese for two years before she came to Australia. However, there are other reasons for some people not having received any education under the Heng Samrin government. First, schooling was not compulsory; secondly, there was no school in their area yet; and thirdly, they were planning on leaving and saw no point in studying.

According to their age, about fourteen of the sample were old enough to have received some education before the Pol Pot time (before 1975). However only nine did. Seven out of the nine were from urban backgrounds, with parents working as civil servants. Five of those who did not receive any education and two who did, were of peasant background. Even though education was nearly free, it is obvious that either schooling was not available in their rural area or that the need to cultivate the land over-rode the desire for educational benefits. Among the nine who received some education before the Pol Pot time, the two adults received ten and twelve years respectively, while the other seven received only between one and four years each.

Only two of the sample studied English in Cambodia, for one year each. One went to the only English school in Cambodia, while the other studied English as part of the Foreign Language program at school.

Education in the Refugee Camps

Immediately before their arrival in Australia all of the sample (except for the two who went via Vietnam) had spent between several months and six years in refugee camps in Thailand, mostly in Khao-I-Dang. As the refugee population initially increased in the camps along the Thai border, schools were set up by UNICEF and other humanitarian agencies to provide education in Khmer for all school age children. Teachers and administrators were drawn from the human resources available in the camp.

Schooling in the camp was free and many parents sent their children to school. Out of the twenty eight of my sample who went to Thailand all but six of them went to school in the camp. The two adults found education in the camp at the time below their capacity, while the other four did not stay in the camp long enough to make schooling worthwhile.

The twenty two interviewees of my sample who went to school in the camps received between one and five years of schooling. For most of them the skills of reading and writing Khmer were largely obtained in the camp. While schooling in the camp was essential socially and educationally, especially for those who stayed a long time, it was not possible to provide quality education under the circumstances. Not only were there shortages of trained teachers but teaching and reading materials and equipment for teachers and students were also in short supply. Classroom populations were unstable as some moved in and some out all the time as they arrived from Cambodia or left to go to third countries. Intermittent fighting along the Thai-Cambodian border also disrupted the classes, sometimes for a long time until order was re-established. The prison-like situation in the camps, with soldiers and machine guns present everywhere, hindered the students' learning and exploring experiences.

The two of my sample who went to Vietnam went to school there for five or six years. They now read, write and, perhaps, speak Vietnamese better than Khmer. In fact the boy who is now in year 11 at Marrickville High School goes to Saturday school where students are helped in maths and sciences by Vietnamese teachers. There are no such classes offered in Khmer, and so his knowledge of Vietnamese has indeed been very useful.

To learn English in the refugee camps, one needed to pay. English classes were offered privately by the few refugees who taught as a way of earning some money. Only four of my sample could afford to learn English and for only several months to two years (for one hour per day).

Their total education on arrival, therefore, can be described as follows:

1. All but six of my sample had no knowledge of English when they arrived in Australia. The six who attended some English classes in the camp or in Cambodia did so for only a short time. Their English was barely useable.
2. Education in Cambodia, before Pol Pot's time or later during the Heng Samrin time, which I regard as adequate education, was experienced by only half of the sample. However, except for the two adults who received ten and twelve years each, the rest (thirteen) received only between one and four years of schooling.
3. While education in the camp was disruptive and academically ineffective, it provided the only education for twelve of the sample. Those who stayed in the camp for a long

time (four to six years) became quite literate in Khmer. However even for those who only stayed one or two years, the introduction to Khmer literacy had a significant impact on their lives.

4. Three of the sample missed out on education altogether (in Cambodia and in the camp). They missed out on education in Cambodia either because they were too young to go to school before 1975 (two of the sample) or their parents couldn't afford to send them to school (one of peasant background). None of the three stayed in Cambodia (after Pol Pot was ousted) or in the camps, long enough to take advantage of the education provided. Two of the sample however stayed in the camps for one-and-a-half and two years, but did not get around to going to school. This is not unusual as refugees were moved from place to place as directed by the Thai authorities and the Cambodian factional leaders. They did not have time to settle down to education.
5. Even though only three of the sample had missed out on education completely before they arrived in Australia, I found that at the time of interview seven of the thirty were illiterate in Khmer. This was due to the fact that since they had arrived in Australia there had been no systematic reinforcement to maintain their knowledge of Khmer. The situation was particularly problematic for those who received only a little education in Cambodia or Thailand. None of my sample had received any substantial mother-tongue maintenance at school (Community Language program) or at Saturday school since they arrived in Australia. Obviously there is a danger that more will become illiterate in Khmer the longer they stay in Australia.
6. Thirteen of the sample could be classified as semi-literate. I include in this category those people who can read (some quite well, others not so well) but can not write. It includes people who said: 'I can't write', 'I can't write letters to my relatives', or 'I can't make up sentences'. This means that while they know the Khmer alphabet and how the letters are put together and can read moderately well, their knowledge of the Khmer written language is not useable.
7. Therefore twenty (seven + thirteen) of the sample (70%) are illiterate or semi-literate in Khmer. For this group the prospect is very depressing as I detected that some are losing their speaking skills as well. They could not understand some simple words and could hardly answer the questions in full sentences. For some of them I had to conduct the interview going back and forth in English and Khmer, as sometimes their English was no better than their poor Khmer. Even more depressing, I could not get through in either or both languages in some cases. These people are really trapped between the two languages. They are not proficient in any language.
8. Only ten of the sample therefore are literate in Khmer.

The Settlement Process

The sample arrived in Australia between 1980 and 1987 when they were between ten and twenty one years old. One thing all the sample had in common as they arrived in Australia was that they all wanted to do some more study. How they went about it and where they started depended very much on their ages and on their educational, emotional and financial capacity.

Schooling

Except for three older people, interviewees 1, 6 and 25, whom I will discuss later (in special cases), the rest of the sample went to primary school if they were of primary school age, or went to an Intensive Language Unit (ILU) or High School if they were of high school age. As many of them had their age reduced, eleven of the sample whose official ages were between eight and thirteen went to primary school. Some of them started as low as year 4, and worked their way through the primary system and then went on to high school. (See Table B: *Schooling*.)

Very few primary schools in Sydney provide an English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher to help migrant children with their English. Only five of the sample who went to primary school were fortunate enough to be placed in such schools, where they were given English lessons separately from other children for four to six months. It is hard to imagine what it was like for the other six who did not speak any English (or little English) to be placed in a class full of strangers.

Learning English

The other sixteen of the sample all went to an Intensive Language Unit (ILU). There are about twelve ILUs and Intensive Language Centres (ILC) throughout Sydney. These are places where newly-arrived migrants of high school age are taught English before they move to high school. Other subjects are also taught such as Maths, Science, History, Geography, Chemistry, Music and so on. This is an effective way of learning English—that is applied English. It is also an effective way of preparing students for high school. It also provides a slow and quiet transition to high school as the class size is small (ten to twelve students) and students can become quite intimate with their teachers and are more inclined to ask questions. It is particularly useful for students who need to build up their confidence, to learn about new customs and ways of life.

Overall, it's a time for newly arrived students slowly to get to know things around them, such as the schooling system, socialisation, shopping, banking, etc.

In many ILUs, students are at the beginning placed according to their knowledge of English. They are then moved up the grades according to the progress they make. The teachers at ILUs together with high school teachers decide when the students are ready to start high school and at what level.

The time each student spends at an ILU depends very much on the progress he/she makes. A teacher at Cabramatta ILU said that migrant students spent an average of three terms (there are four terms in a school year) before they moved to high school. Cambodian students, however, usually have to stay longer, he said.

Of my sample, among the sixteen (only five had previous knowledge of English) who went to an ILU, the majority (twelve) spent one to one and a half years there. Three spent less than one year while one had to spend two years. That the Cambodian students need more time at ILU is not surprising. Over and above their weak knowledge of English, which is shared in some cases by students of other nationalities, the Cambodian students have other problems such as learning difficulties, inability to retain information and a weak conceptual understanding of subject matter as the result of disrupted, brief, or no schooling, an experience we examined earlier.

Teachers at ILUs also attribute this slow acquisition of English to the fact that some Cambodian students are illiterate in Khmer. Literacy in the mother tongue, they think, is very important in learning another language. The mere fact that students can write down the meaning of each word in their own language helps them a great deal in memorising the words.

Other skills associated with learning the mother tongue also help. One ESL teacher said:

Skills such as being able to use the dictionary, take notes and running translations in their language certainly help them with comprehension. The kids who are illiterate rely totally on their memories and understanding at the time. Things are harder to measure whether the development and literacy skills in your own language have some flowing effect on the development and literacy in the second language. I suspect it does.

For those fortunate enough to have been exposed to the Khmer written language, the experiences gained from learning the dynamics (sound, the art of putting pen on paper ...) of the thirty three consonants and twenty one vowels that constitute the Khmer alphabet, must provide an impetus for learning English.

My sample shows that a substantial prior knowledge of English has speeded up the progress of two students who spent respectively only two months and three terms at the

ILU. They also received respectively four, and six and a half, years of education in Khmer, and are literate in Khmer. Another student who also spent three terms at ILU did not have any knowledge of English to start with, but was backed up by six years of education in Khmer in Cambodia and refugee camps and is literate in Khmer. The other three students who had a previous knowledge of English but only had two to three years of education in Khmer, and are illiterate or semi-literate in Khmer, had to spend one year or more at the ILU. This means that a concrete knowledge of Khmer has a great influence on the learning of English regardless of previous knowledge of English.

It is interesting to note that students who spent more than one year at ILU are mostly characterised by their low level of education in Khmer. They had received only between one and three years of education in Cambodia and mostly in a refugee camp. Except for one, they are either illiterate or semi-literate in Khmer. A student who was illiterate in Khmer spent two years at the ILU. This shows that while a previous knowledge of English does not necessarily mean a short stay at ILU, the low level of education in Khmer certainly slows down progress at the ILU.

All sixteen of the interviewees who went to ILU thought that the time they spent there was useful at least for the improvement of their English. Given that only five of them had any knowledge of English before they started at ILU, their progress was good. At the end of the course they 'could understand English', 'could and dared to speak to the teachers', 'could speak, read and write English'. A then fourteen year-old son of a peasant from Battambang province said: 'I didn't know a word of English to start with but one and a half years later I could write and speak'.

English was not the only subject from which the students benefited at the ILU. Some students found that they improved their knowledge of maths, science, history, geography, chemistry, etc. during their stay there. While learning to read, write and speak English grammatically was their main aim, ILU students also mentioned the learning of Australian customs and way of life. For many students, the ILU was the first place they learnt about Australia and Australian history.

Compared with high school to which they later moved, some students reminisced about the ILU's slow pace of learning. As a place where students are prepared for high school, learning 'without pressure' at the ILU is perhaps not so successful. It is, however, complemented by the fact that 'everything was explained properly', said a then twelve year old boy of peasant background who had no English to start with and at the end of one year was given an award for English, and was even asked to tell a joke.

While nine students said that the time they spent at ILU was too long, five said 'enough' and two said 'too short'. However only one said: 'it was a waste of time'. Other criticisms included: '... too much emphasis on writing, not enough on speaking', 'the subjects taught were easy, I had done them before', and '... the rest of the students don't speak English correctly', which gave him no ground to practice or improve his English.

High School

The twenty seven interviewees who went to primary school or ILU to start with all went, or intended to go on to, high school. At the time of interview—in the first half of 1988—three were still at ILU. They all intended to go on to high school later in the year. Nineteen interviewees were high school students ranging from year 7 to year 12. Two were university students—first year science and third year medicine. Three left high school, two at the end of year 11, one at the end of year 8 (and is now married with one child). There were altogether twenty four interviewees who have been or are going through high school.

The twenty four students are going or went to eleven different high schools in Sydney's western suburbs from Marrickville to Cabramatta and Campbelltown. The majority of the students (eighteen) liked their school. Only one disliked it. The rest preferred to say: 'it's alright' or 'not much'. More than anything else students and teachers were the determining factors of how one feels about school. The interviewees like school because 'the teachers are kind and explain things clearly', 'people are friendly' and so on.

While having 'many good friends' was an important factor, their ethnic composition didn't seem to matter. A sixteen year-old girl liked her school because 'I have many nice Cambodian friends' at school while a nineteen year-old boy liked his school even though there were only two Cambodian students in the whole school. However, students who went to schools where there were many Cambodians seem to feel more secure (happier, more outgoing, not worrying so much about doing the wrong thing, more relaxed) than those who went to schools with few Cambodians. The former group felt that they belong to a group of people to whom they can turn for support, or when they are in trouble.

Liking school did not necessarily mean that they achieved well at school. Two interviewees had left school at the end of year 11 because 'I can't cope', and 'school work is too difficult'. However, they still liked their schools and thought they were good schools.

One student did not like his school because he did not like his chances of getting into university. The school had a reputation of being unable to deliver the goods: 'not many students have been accepted to go to university', said the twenty year-old son (in year 11) of a former civil servant in Cambodia (now a bus conductor). This problem is typical of an

ambitious student with more privileged background being brought up in an Australian working class setting. The rosy expectations of life in Australia slowly disappeared as he realised that there were many odds against him. This disappointed and angered him as the issues of class and ethnicity, which were not his problems in Cambodia, become the main barrier to his success. He was not the only one in this bind.

Problems at High School

In response to the question 'what are/were your main problems at school', the students mentioned subject matter twenty three times, racial attitudes seven times, students three times, and a teacher once. As subject matter was frequently seen as a problem it is obvious that the students were concerned with their progress at school.

Racial Attitudes

Five boys and two girls mentioned racial attitudes as a significant problem for them at school. Perhaps it is true that men are more racially vulnerable or are subject to more racial attacks than women. For most of these schools, Asian faces are a new phenomenon that students and teachers are still adjusting to. The situation has improved as more and more Asians arrive. An eighteen year old boy, who is now in year 12 and has been attending his high school since year 7, said: 'There were racist attitudes in the early days, but now with so many Asians ...' It could be that a racist attitude is still there but now with many Asians around he feels more confident in ignoring them than before, when all the racist remarks were aimed at the very few Asians present.

It seems that students who go to schools where there are many Asians become more capable of coping with racial remarks than those who go to schools where not many Asians are present.

Interviewees who went to schools where there weren't many Cambodians described racial attitudes rather bitterly. A year 12, nineteen year old, good natured boy, who goes to a school where there is only one other Cambodian boy (and not many other Asians), said: 'They don't want to make friends with people with black hair, ... they don't ask us to join a sports team or ... we won't get in unless we know somebody'. Obviously he had been rejected by 'the gang' and was hurt by it.

Students who went to a school where there are many Cambodians around seem to be able to ignore or disregard racial remarks, such as 'go back to your home' or jokes at their expense.

Not only students display racial attitudes, teachers too were mentioned by one interviewee as 'disliking Asian students'.

Students and Teachers

Fellow students were mentioned as a problem at school by two male and one female interviewees. They complained about it being 'hard to make sense' of the students or that 'I dislike their vulgar behaviour; ... they stamp on the table and I can't study'. Cultural misunderstanding exists between fellow students of different racial backgrounds.

Teachers were mentioned as a problem once by an interviewee who was doing year 12. He said 'some teachers are inexperienced, ... can't teach and don't know their subjects very well'. This comment is rather out of place as teachers are traditionally seen as unquestionable by Cambodian students and parents.

Subject Matter

Twenty students out of twenty four mentioned subject matter as their main problem at school. Sixteen cited English as the most difficult subject. In NSW migrant students are doing the same English syllabus as the rest of the students throughout high school and for the Higher School Certificate. In some high schools there are provisions for English-as-a-Second-Language teachers to help migrant students with the subject but at the end they are faced with the same exam paper as the rest of the students.

The problem is that their difficulty with English does not diminish the longer they stay in Australia. Complaints about English as a difficult subject come from those who have been here recently (one year) as well as those who have been here for a long time (eight years). It is obvious that eight years in Australia is not a long enough time to become proficient in English.

The degree of difficulty varies from student to student. A nineteen year old girl who came to Australia eight years ago is now in the top class of year 12. Having arrived in Australia quite young (eleven years old) she went to year 4 (primary school) and conscientiously worked her way through primary school and high school. Family background, encouragement and support formed the foundation of her success. Although only semiliterate in Khmer she was certain of passing her HSC, but at the same time she mentioned English, and among other subjects, Chemistry and Economics, as the most difficult subjects. Her older brother, who is literate in Khmer and is now a third-year medical student, said that when he was at high school English was his only difficult subject.

At the other end of the spectrum there is a twenty year old girl, who had difficulties with 'every subject including English'. She had been in Australia for five years (this was her HSC year), and her teacher said: 'she won't pass; she'll get 20%'. The student knew this

but what could she do? She was a serious person who had been trying very hard for the last five years but things didn't improve for her. There was nothing for her to do at home; there was no job available; and her older brother who had failed the HSC last year was still looking for work. Her older unmarried sister was working in a clothing factory. There did not seem to be any eligible men around, so the only respectable place for her at the moment was school. When I saw her she was happy enough and enjoying her time at school with friends even though she realised that the future was less than bright. In fact she had already set her hopes on the clothing factory at the end of the year.

While it is hard to assess how they're going at school generally now and will in the future, interviewees who have been here for four, five or six years and are doing year 9, 10 or 11, are worrying about their progress, or lack of it, in English. Many are cruising along waiting for a miracle.

While it is not so hard to make themselves understood through oral communication the students find it extremely difficult to put pen to paper. Worrying about sentence structure and grammar can sometimes retard their thinking as they know what to say but can not formally put it on paper. Perhaps it will come with practice but it takes such a long time that, for many, their time at high school will pass unsuccessfully because of their inability to get on top of English.

In addition to the writing and comprehension difficulties are cultural differences. A student who is doing year 12 and has been here for eight years said: 'while I like reading (English) novels there are parts which I understand and parts which I don't'. This is not so much because of unknown words but rather his preconception is different from the novelist's. Writers usually assume certain knowledge, cultural or social, on the part of their readers—knowledge that teenage Cambodian students do not possess. Every piece of writing is loaded with cultural values and assumptions which are accepted as aspects of reality by the writers who have grown up in that culture. Thinking back to my time at the only English high school in Cambodia when I forced myself to stumble through Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, I feel extremely sorry for the Cambodian students who have to try to make sense out of David Williamson's *The Club* or worse still, Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. There is nothing that a peasant boy or girl from Battambang can identify with in those novels.

Not that they will never understand western or Australian culture and its sense of humour, but time—a long time—is needed to capture them. I remember, for example, my parents' generation who could enjoy Voltaire's satirical works and could retell La Fontaine's folk tales to their children, even though it was rather out of place, but that was after over twenty years of exposure to French culture and at a time when Khmer literature was

suppressed. If that is the duration needed, it will be too late for the Cambodian adolescents in Australia who have to face their exams, HSC or whatever, in the next few years.

Other difficult subjects mentioned by the students are Maths (ten times), Science (three times), Chemistry (five times) and Physics (three times). Subjects such as Geography, Ancient History and Japanese are also mentioned sporadically as difficult subjects.

A twenty-one year old girl told me that she finds Science very hard to understand because: 'I haven't learnt about it before'. This was not exactly the only reason as she later mentioned pollution as a science topic which is hard to understand. Coming from a peasant background there is no wonder that she is not familiar with industrial pollution.

There is also a problem associated with language. Subjects such as maths, science, biology, chemistry are made difficult because 'it contains so many difficult, unfamiliar, and long words', 'I don't understand the questions asked in maths, history and science'. Also writing up Chemistry experimental reports, for example, can be quite difficult for those without mastery of writing skills.

Assistance with School Work

Most of the thirty interviewees at one stage or another, had problems with their school work. When asked to whom did they refer the problems, 'teachers' scored twenty five times, 'friends' scored eleven times and 'relatives' scored six times.

Only six interviewees had parents, or an older brother, sister or uncle to whom they could turn when they needed help with their school work. This placed Cambodian students in a very disadvantaged position. It is, however, very difficult to assess the degree of disability as compared with their Australian counterparts because many Australian working class children suffered more or less the same disadvantage.

Given, however, that most parents of Cambodian students don't speak English and the subject matter taught is culturally unfamiliar to them, it is almost impossible for the students to bring the subject matter taught at school home to be discussed or expanded.

Teachers and friends are the only available people who can help the Cambodian students with their academic work. However, as many interviewees mentioned later, 'teachers are very busy' and 'it is not easy to get hold of them'. This leaves many students frustrated as they cannot turn to anybody for a quick or an extended consultation. In the course of my interviewing work I found myself helping the students with maths, answering social studies questions and helping with other school problems.

Very little 'special attention' is given by the school to migrant students. It is either because the school does not realise the need of these students or the school does not have adequate resources for that purpose. Only six out of the thirty interviewees mentioned the formal special arrangement where they were given extra tuition in maths or physics or English at lunch time or before school for half an hour or so. It is not known whether teachers do this as part of their duty allocation or over and above it. Some other interviewees mention the informal help they receive from teachers out of their good will or personal sacrifice, such as encouraging the students to come and see them if they had any problem with their work. All this help is very much appreciated.

In response to a question: 'are/were you ever elected or given a representative role at school', twenty five said 'No', one was elected as a prefect for two consecutive years, one was a candidate for Student Council, one was a Public Relation Officer, two were elected Captain of Softball.

'Representative role' at school as we all know is usually held by those with outstanding academic record or those who are good at sport and popular with their peers. It seems that most Cambodian students haven't got those qualifications, as they are of a new and small ethnic group in the school, struggling with their academic work.

However there are some who, I think, are capable of representative roles but are shy, saying that these roles are not for them but for Australian students instead. It is rather revealing that intercultural dynamics work in such a way that they keep each person in his or her own place. It is obvious that there is a feeling of animosity about this, but the Cambodian students and many other migrant students have learnt to live with it.

The Financial Factor

One incentive to keep many of my interviewees at school is AUSTUDY. Visiting from house to house, I seldom encountered high school age adolescents not attending school, or living off their parents, or on unemployment benefits. While other factors such as their 'thirst' for education after the Pol Pot time and their parents' belief in education as a vehicle to success are important, AUSTUDY is undoubtedly the most practical means of keeping them at school. Whether they will complete high school successfully or unsuccessfully, they are, at least, given a one-and-only opportunity with financial backing. Also, if their schooling is unsuccessful this time, it will at least provide them with confidence and a socialising experience, and acquaint them with other educational courses available later on in their life.

AUSTUDY takes away the financial pressure on parents and the students. Given the Cambodian tradition of children, especially girls, living with their parents until they get married, there is little urge for the children to live independently. So AUSTUDY provides an extra income for the family and it meets the educational and personal needs of the students, such as books, sports uniform, outings, clothes, and so on. Even though it is not much, AUSTUDY helps the students to be not so totally dependent on their parents financially a common reason for friction within the family. It provides both parents and students with financial room for manoeuvre.

As it is now, many Cambodian students are facing financial problems. In response to the question 'do/did you ever have any money problems in meeting school requirements', nineteen said 'yes' and eleven said 'no'. While some cannot afford to buy or pay for the most basic school requirements such as textbooks, school uniforms, or school fees, others have to decline very important social activities, such as excursions or camping, which can cost quite a lot of money. (Camping, for example, could cost up to \$30 a night for each student.) Some students said that they are exempted from paying certain fees but they have to live with that stigma which is not easy.

Interestingly, of the four students who had discontinued their study, all said 'yes' to the above question. A seventeen year-old girl said that it was financial problems that forced her to get a job as a machinist. It was at a time when her parents, who had five unmarried children including a young baby, had to struggle to meet high rent two years after their arrival in Australia.

Not only do students with unemployed parents have problems with money; those whose parents are working do too. An eighteen year-old boy, whose father is a bus conductor and whose mother is a cleaner, with five children and two dependent relatives living with them, had financial problems, because 'I'm not entitled to AUSTUDY as both my parents are working.'

Mother-Tongue Maintenance

All of the sample were born in Cambodia before the Pol Pot time (1975) and experienced life right through the Pol Pot period.

They were between ten and twenty one years old when they arrived in Australia. They were the first generation immigrants who have been here for between one and eight years.

On arriving in Australia three of the sample were illiterate in Khmer as they had missed out on education completely in Cambodia or in Thailand. At the time of interview,

however, I found that seven of them were illiterate. This is because there had been no systematic reinforcement to maintain their mother-tongue since they had arrived in Australia. Only two of the interviewees received one year of a Khmer literacy course provided by the Cambodian community on the weekends in Cabramatta. A few more went for several months and discontinued, for various reasons.

When asked if they would like to be able to read or write more Khmer the answers were all positive. There is no lack of interest in learning Khmer. However, there has been very little encouragement. So far there has been only one weekend school operating in Cabramatta for the whole Cambodian community of Sydney. The school is run by two volunteer teachers with very limited funding. Early this year when another school was established in Rosemeadow for the expanding number of Cambodian residents in the Campbelltown area, fifty to sixty students were enrolled. The school, unfortunately, had to be closed down after two weekends of teaching because of an unresolved dispute with the school administrator over classroom maintenance.

Since they've been in Australia their knowledge of Khmer literacy has receded. There is very limited use for it. They seldom write Khmer—perhaps once a month or twice a year to write letters to their friends and relatives in Cambodia and the rest of the world.

Reading, too, has been limited to the letters they received or a few books they have in their possession. It is not easy to get hold of Khmer books. They are rarely found in local libraries or bookshops. There is no popular Khmer newspaper. The two monthly newspapers operating in Sydney are seen as serving one or another political ideology. Very few households, therefore, subscribe to them, especially among the peasant group who traditionally leave the issue of politics to the urban and 'educated' dwellers.

All of the interviewees speak Khmer (except for one who speaks Chinese) at home. Some, however, said that they speak English to their brothers and sisters who are at school. While some older interviewees who received many years of education in Cambodia can confidently speak or discuss various social or political topics, some young interviewees are running out of simple vocabulary. For them their knowledge of spoken Khmer is limited to the household usage only.

Special Cases

Three interviewees did not fit in with the rest of the sample as they did not go to a primary school, an ILU or a high school. Arriving in Australia in 1981, 1985 and 1980 with official ages of twenty six, nineteen and twenty three respectively they were classified as adults (interviewees 1, 25 and 6 respectively).

Special Case One:

The first girl was sponsored by an unrelated Cambodian, resident in Sydney, who mistakenly augmented her age by five years. Having lost contact with the rest of her family during the Pol Pot time, she arrived in Australia alone. Her intention to do more studying in Australia was not welcomed by her sponsor. A week after her arrival she was landed with a full-time job as housekeeper in a hospital. Realising the differences of interest between her and her sponsor she gradually moved away from the family. She continued to work for three years before she could save enough money to enable her to go back to school full-time. However, in 1984, she started a part-time evening course at Sydney Technical School doing year 11 while working full-time during the day. In 1985, when she could afford to go to school full-time, she was accepted to do her Higher School Certificate at Randwick Technical School, as a mature age student. She passed HSC with four unit Maths and was accepted in a Bachelor of Science course at Macquarie University. She is now in her third year. Given this achievement, it is useful to look at her background.

The daughter of a Post Office worker in Phnom Penh, she received a solid ten years of education in Cambodia before Pol Pot came to power. During the Pol Pot time her father disappeared, and her mother and some of her nine brothers and sisters died of starvation and diseases. Most of the time she was sent to work, away from her family. In 1979 when Vietnam ousted Pol Pot from power, the chaotic situation brought her to the Thai border. Not knowing what had happened to the rest of her family, she made herself available to be sponsored to a third country. Australia became her destination.

With a very limited knowledge of English to start with, her academic achievement in Australia was certainly enhanced by her education in Khmer. Her literacy in Khmer has no doubt helped to speed up her acquisition of English. Moreover, it was obvious that she could apply the knowledge that she had acquired in Khmer into English and she did well in other subjects, such as Maths, Science, and so on. Here is another example of the usefulness of literacy and a general education in the mother tongue. In the HSC year, however, while other subjects were 'alright', English was her most difficult subject.

Special Case Two:

This case is quite a common one of someone who arrives in Australia too old to pursue an education through normal channels—that is an Intensive Language Centre, then high school or other institutions—but not old enough to confidently start working in a new environment where the language, the people and the work ethic are so strange. It is made worse by the fact that he or she has been living in a refugee camp, has never worked before, and therefore possesses no skills whatsoever. When I was a teacher in Melbourne I again and again met people who were aged between seventeen and twenty two on arrival and who

were undecided whether to join classes with the Adult Migrant Education Services (AMES) or Child Migrant Education Services (CMES) to learn English. Enrolment with AMES means that you are an adult and on unemployment benefit while doing the course, and intend to join the workforce at the end of the ten-week course. Enrolment with CMES or ILU in Sydney means that you are your parent's dependent and therefore not eligible for unemployment benefits, and intend to continue study at high school or other institutions. It's a difficult decision to make as one arrives in a new society. Factors such as previous education, personal views about schooling, relationship with parents or guardians, proficiency in English, skills, etc. must be taken into consideration in order to make a successful decision.

This young woman arrived in Australia in March 1985 when she was 19 years old. Coming from a peasant background, her parents could not provide much valuable input into the decision-making process, and there was nobody in the Cambodian community or welfare services to whom she could turn for career or educational advice. She enrolled, reluctantly, to do an English course at the hostel with other adults. Looking back she said she did not know exactly what she wanted and was not told what the outcome would be when she finished the course. Obviously it was a confusing time for her and her parents, who, then, had seven other unmarried children to worry about.

When the English course finished three months later there was no job she could begin. While pondering what to do next, she was told of a course at Bankstown College. The Access Course was set up to prepare young adult migrants like her for further education at TAFE or other similar institutions. For six months she was taught English, Science, Maths, History, and so on. The course was 'far, far too difficult, I could not cope'. Subject matter was her main problem, as 'I could not understand what the teachers were saying'. English and Science were her most difficult subjects. When the course ended after six months she realised that further education was not for her. So she went on unemployment benefits for one year before she could get a job as a machinist in Cabramatta.

She was born in 1966 to a peasant family in Battambang, a wealthy province of Cambodia, generally known as the country's 'rice barn'. When Pol Pot came to power in 1975 she was nine years old but had never been to school. Obviously the educational expansion of the Sihanouk and Lon Nol eras did not reach some peasant families either due to lack of interest or lack of resources. During the Pol Pot time she was placed in a Mobile Youth Working Brigade which was sent from place to place to fulfil particular projects, such as harvesting or building dams and reservoirs. None of her family members was killed or died during the Pol Pot time, but by the end of 1979 her family was in a shambles with no home, draught animals or agricultural instruments. When all members of the family (parents and

eight children) were reunited, they left Cambodia and arrived in a refugee camp in Thailand in 1980. (Again she missed out on an education in Heng Samrin's Cambodia.) Without enough money to buy their way around, they were shuffled from one camp to another for two years before they could settle permanently in one camp where the children could go to school. So despite the fact that the family spent five years in Thailand she only received two to three years of haphazard education in the camp.

Obviously her educational background was very weak. She could read and write Khmer reasonably but her knowledge of History, Science or Maths was minimal. Her parents were prepared to support her and wanted her to go on with study, but she said, 'I wanted to stop because I knew that I could not go on academically'.

She is now working as a rag cutter with Saint Vincent de Paul and is living with her parents in a three bedroom house with fifteen other members of the family, including two married sisters and their husbands and children.

Special Case Three:

This man was born in 1959 to a family whose father was a Customs Officer in Phnom Penh. When Pol Pot came to power he was sixteen years old and had done nearly twelve solid years of education in Phnom Penh. His academic knowledge was of no use to the Pol Pot regime; instead he was sent off to the countryside where he toiled the ricefields for four years. 'It was hard work', he said; he was not willing to elaborate any further and relive the bad memories. His father was killed in 1978, only a few months before the Vietnamese arrived to rescue him and the rest of his family.

Impressed with the idea of living in a Western country, he left his mother and younger brother and sister in the provincial town of Kompong Cham and headed off for Thailand with an uncle and his family in 1979, soon after Pol Pot was toppled. He lived in a refugee camp for eighteen months, working as a medical assistant to the Red Cross team in the camp. He did not go to school there as it was below his level. He arrived in Australia in October 1980, sponsored by a relative already in Sydney. His age was augmented by two years (to twenty-three) as the relative did not know his exact age.

He had 'hardly any' English when he arrived in Australia and immediately enrolled to do an English course with adults for ten weeks at Cabramatta Hostel. When the course finished he was on the street for a while not knowing what to do next, work or study. Then he was told of an English language course at NSW University which catered for students who intended to do further education. The course was for three months and he undertook it in 1981. He was out in the cold for a while and was on unemployment benefits for a few

months, before he was accepted to do matriculation at Sydney Technical School in 1982, which he completed successfully.

Money, then, became a problem as he intended to do a Computer Science course at the then NSW Institute of Technology. He took 1983 off to work and saved some money and started the course in 1984. He finished the course four years later, in 1987, gaining a degree from the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS). Throughout his study in Australia he had 'no problems, except financial ones'. Here is another example of how a solid education in Khmer helped to enhance education in English.

He is now working as a computer programmer in Sydney and is sending money regularly to his mother, brother and sister in Cambodia. He is yearning to visit them.

Employment

Only five of my sample of thirty were in the labour force—left school or had finished their education and working or in search for work. They were:

1. A twenty-nine year-old male who completed his computer science course last year and is now working as a computer programmer. He has been here for eight years. (Interviewee 6)
2. A twenty year-old female who left school over three years ago at the end of Year 8, after she had been in Australia for two years. Since then she has been working as a machinist and is now married with one child. (Interviewee 28)
3. A twenty-two year-old female who decided not to continue her studies after she unsuccessfully finished a TAFE course in 1986, when she had been here for one year. She is now working as a rag cutter for St Vincent de Paul. (Interviewee 25)
4. A seventeen year-old female who left school, at the end of Year 11 after having been here for six years. When I spoke to her she was doing a three-month clerical training course with the Commonwealth Employment Services. She was hoping to get a job as a clerical assistant when she finished, or to do child care training at Bankstown College of TAFE. (Interviewee 15)
5. A twenty-one year-old male who left school, at the end of Year 11, after having been here for four years. He now works as a marble cutter for the local factory and is hoping to return to Technical School to learn mechanics. (Interviewee 11)

The main reason for the last four persons' discontinuing their studies was their inability to cope academically. Financial, family and school problems were mentioned by one interviewee only.

While there is no foreseeable problem for the first person, as he possesses a highly marketable skill, the situation for the other four is far from satisfactory. It is true that

three of them are employed but they do not have any particular skill. Their chance of getting a better job is very slim given their situation, unless some sort of work training is made available to them.

All four of them want to do further work training, for example as a mechanic, in child care or in hairdressing. Since they left school only two (second and fourth persons) have received further training: a CES clerical course for three months, and sewing at a Technical College for six months. They received unemployment benefits and AUSTUDY while they did these courses.

Except for the computer programmer (the first person) who found his job through advertisement and 'rang the head of the department and asked for an interview', the other three found their jobs through friends and relatives who worked there or 'just followed everybody else.' Only one of them (the third person) had ever been out of work for a lengthy period, and was on unemployment benefits for one year before she found her first job; the others seem to have been able to find work easily enough. A possible reason why it was harder for the third person to find a job was that she, at the time, had not been in Australia for very long (one year) and therefore had not made the necessary contacts or learnt the art of job-seeking.

School leavers who have been in Australia for a few years have found it easier to find a job than those who want to join the work force on arrival. This is because, firstly, the former group speak better English; and secondly, their time in Australia has allowed them to learn about the labour market and to make the necessary contacts that lead to employment.

All said they liked their jobs. However, except for the first person who thought his future prospects looked good and that he'd 'stick to it', the other three did not think that they had a promising future with their present job and were looking for better ones. They are doing now whatever is available to save the money to build a house or get married.

The Overall Situation

As we know, over a quarter of the Cambodian population in NSW is in the fifteen to twenty four age group. Most of the school-age adolescents are still at school, and few older ones are attending tertiary institutions or are doing work training courses of some sort. When they finish their courses or leave school either at the end of year 12 or earlier, they will fall into one of these four categories:

1. Those who successfully complete their tertiary or work training courses and look for employment.
2. Those who successfully pass HSC and will continue with their tertiary education.
3. Those who discontinue their schooling after HSC or before, for employment, usually in unskilled work.
4. Those who discontinue their schooling after HSC or before, to join the unemployed, unskilled workforce.

As long as prejudice does not interfere with their employment opportunities, and their skill is marketable at a given time, there does not seem to be any problem associated with those in the first category. The situation is not so urgent for the second category as they will spend some years in tertiary institutions.

Most Cambodian adolescents, however, will fall into the third and fourth categories—they are employed in unskilled jobs or are unskilled and unemployed. Given that they are still very young, it is unlikely that they will spend the rest of their lives being unable to contribute fully to Australian society. It is very important, therefore, that some sort of work training programs be made available for these school leavers to acquire some sort of trade or skill which will give them wider prospects in the labour market.

Conclusion

The Cambodian social fabric was turned upside down as a result of western colonisation, domination and intervention, followed by a national radical revolution that took place between 1975 and 1979. When Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge were routed in 1979 by the Vietnamese, much of Cambodia was on the brink of starvation. Cambodians left their country in numbers never seen before in history as their farmlands were bombed out, their families broken up and their homes destroyed. Under a humanitarian banner, hundreds of thousands of Cambodians have resettled in the western countries in the 1980s. Australia accepted its share of international responsibility and has allowed, (according to the 1986 census) over thirteen thousand Cambodians to build their new life here.

In NSW, for example, there are about six thousand Cambodians. Their settlement, if evaluated in terms of employment, has been rather unsuccessful. Their unemployment rate of 35.71% (according to the 1986 census) is one of the highest among all the ethnic groups in NSW. This is due to the fact that many of them are uneducated and came from a peasant background which is not conducive to successful resettlement in the Australian industrial society.

Over a quarter of the Cambodian population in Australia is adolescent, aged between fifteen and twenty four. This is a first generation, young Australians on whom their parents and community look as vehicles for social mobility. My study has found, however, that it is not going to be easy. Only a select group has managed to succeed educationally. Among other things, their success depends on their educational background, motivation, family support and expectations.

It must be noted, however, that the general lack of achievement in education of Cambodian adolescents is not unique. The phenomenon is in fact quite widespread among young non-English speaking immigrants. Cambodian adolescents, however, possess a unique history in their homeland prior to their departure. The traumatic experiences they went through before they left Cambodia, especially during the Pol Pot time, accentuates this problem.

My survey found that among the thirty adolescents who arrived in Australia when they were between ten and twenty-one years old, only ten are now literate in Khmer. The other twenty are illiterate or semi-literate in their mother-tongue. This must have great implications for their educational achievement or lack of it in Australia.

The education of all Cambodian adolescents was disrupted for at least four years (the Pol Pot period), and my interviewees' experiences were no exception. The abolition of schooling between 1975 and 1979 meant that some adolescents did not even have the opportunity to begin an education in Cambodia. This disruption of schooling has resulted in some adolescents being illiterate or semi-literate in Khmer when they arrived in Australia. It has also resulted in adolescents having low-level conceptual development as they have missed out on many basic concepts that children normally acquire at primary and junior level secondary schooling. This means that Cambodian adolescents have a lot of catching up to do. Sometimes, this prevents or delays them from acquiring further, deeper concepts.

Illiteracy in Khmer also seems to slow down their acquisition of English. Out of the twenty interviewees who are illiterate or semi-literate in Khmer only two or three are said to be doing quite well at school. The rest are struggling along, citing English together with other subjects as their main problems at school. Among the ten interviewees who are literate in Khmer, three are attending university courses, one has finished a university course while the other six are also struggling at secondary level.

It seems that among those who are illiterate or semi-literate in Khmer, there is a better chance of success for those who arrived in Australia at a younger age, around ten years old or less, than for those who arrived older.

While it is possible for those who are literate in Khmer to excel in their education in a short time (interviewees 1, 3, 6 and 13), there is virtually no such possibility for those who are illiterate or semi-literate in Khmer. Among the later group only those who arrived in Australia at a young age have the time to start and catch up with the new concepts, and therefore reach senior secondary level with confidence (interviewees 2, 8 and 14).

The adolescents' inability to master the English language while at high school or during secondary education has had profound effects. The low language ceiling and the limited vocabulary they possess means that they have limited ability to put into words the various concepts. This inability to communicate at more than a basic level limits their thinking process and hinders their social and educational development. Very few adolescents manage to break that language ceiling and excel while at school. It seems that those who were literate in Khmer and who had received a substantial education in Khmer were able to do that more often than those who were illiterate in Khmer and did not receive much education in Khmer before their arrival in Australia.

My study has also found that in NSW there has been no systematic program to maintain adolescents' knowledge of Khmer. As a result, even though only three of the interviewees missed out altogether on their education in Cambodia and Thailand, at the time of interview I found that seven of them were illiterate. This regression means that the adolescents' ability to communicate in Khmer had diminished. I observed that some of my sample and other adolescents in the Cambodian community had difficulties in communicating with their parents. In some families, except for the everyday household exchanges, there was hardly any in-depth conversation as there is no language provision for such discussion. As the range of home language became smaller and smaller, parents were unable to pass on their values and cultural heritage. Lack of proficiency in Khmer, therefore, means that the adolescents can not understand their parents' culture. They find themselves trapped between the two cultures as their lack of English makes access to Australian culture difficult. This means that they are unable to identify with any cultural group. This difficulty is usually unperceived by the parents but it results in a serious lack of understanding which frequently creates friction or tensions in the family. These adolescents are unable to identify even with their parents whom they perceive as belonging to another culture while they themselves are pulled towards the mainstream Australian culture.

Without systematic reinforcement to maintain these adolescents' knowledge of Khmer language and culture they will never be able to confidently accept a new culture. Lack of confidence and self-identification leads to insecurity and inability to cope socially. I observed the tensions and signs of the beginning of these social problems.

Given the importance of literacy in Khmer for general education and acculturation it is to be hoped that more can be done to maintain and improve their literacy in Khmer and reinforce their cultural heritage. Perhaps it would not be inappropriate to give Cambodian adolescents a few years of general education in Khmer as this would expand their linguistic ability and build up their confidence. A surer knowledge of their own language and culture would improve their educational prospects generally.

As far as employment for these adolescents is concerned, there are grounds for concern. Most of the school age adolescents are still studying but they will be soon joining the workforce. Having followed their trail of education, I think that only a few will be able to begin and successfully complete tertiary or higher education, while the majority will leave school armed with very few skills because of their inability to master the English language.

While many have not found it difficult to find an unskilled job, provided that they have built up the right contacts, it is going to be very difficult for them to move away from such jobs if opportunities for work training are not easy to come by. This means that the forthcoming Cambodian generation will not be able to contribute to Australia to their full potential. This will also be a great disappointment to their parents.

My research found that adolescents who arrived here recently have more difficulty in finding jobs than those who have been here for several years. This is because the latter group had built up contacts and spoke more English as a result of having been here longer. Skills seem to be the stumbling block for employment. It is hoped that more work training type courses will become available for those who intend to join the workforce whether they have been here for a long time or not.

Because of the nature and reasons for their migration, I have come upon many cases of lone adolescents—adolescents who have no close relatives, no guardians in Australia to look after them. These lone adolescents have had to battle through life on their own without much financial or emotional support. Their future depends very much on their individual determination. It is hoped that more can be done to provide them with some sort of support system that they can turn to when in need.

During my research I did not encounter any adolescent with serious social problems. There are, of course, some adolescents who dress or behave in a way considered socially unsuitable in the eyes of Cambodian elders. However, there has been very little serious delinquent behaviour and very few adolescents who roam the street aimlessly.

Their settlement on a whole has been a success even though not many excel with their education or win high places. It seems that the Cambodian community will have to wait for a while, for the maturity of those who arrived here at a young age (ten years old or younger), to witness social mobility. Even then, having come from a working class background, their achievement will be limited as the competition will be very fierce indeed.

At present there are about 250,000 Cambodian refugees living along the Thai-Cambodian border. Most of them are under the control of the three political factions which oppose the Vietnamese-backed Heng Samrin government in Phnom Penh. These refugees have been living in camps for many years, some as long as ten years or more. They live on handouts of international agencies behind barbed wire and are banned from earning a living in Thailand. When I visited one of these camps in 1987, I met many children; the young ones were born and brought up in the camp. They have been living in such an abnormal environment that many of them don't even know what a banana or a mango tree looks like.

Many of these refugees are seeking a new home. Given the reasonable success of their settlement, Australia should help and can help to take them away from the plight they are in now. Help should be given soon as the longer they stay in the camps the more difficult it will be for them to resettle in Australia. The sooner those children and adolescents receive proper education and are allowed to live a normal life, the better.

Another way Australia can help the refugees is to be actively involved in ensuring a political solution for Cambodia. During my visit to the camp, dozens of refugees told me of their preference to return to their villages in Cambodia, to be reunited with their friends and relatives. This can only happen when a political solution is proven to be working.

TABLE A: PROFILE OF THE SAMPLE

Interviewees	Sex		Age		Parent's Employ- ment in Cambodia	Time Spent In Refugee Camp	Date Of Arrival In Australia	Literacy In Khmer Now	Time Spent Learning English
	M	F	Real	Unreal					
1		x	28	33	Post Office Worker	3 years	08-10-81	literate	1 year in Cambodia
2		x	19	18	Teacher	5 months	27-09-80	semi-lit.	none
3	x		23	22	Teacher	5 months	27-09-80	literate	1 year in Cambodia
4		x	19	18	Foreign Affairs Officer	6 yrs in Vietnam	27-11-86	semi-lit.	none
5	x		21	19	Foreign Affairs Officer	6 years in Vietnam	27-11-86	semi-lit.	none
6	x		29	31	Custom Officer	1.5 years	-10-80	literate	none
7		x	20	17	Small Business	2 years	25-03-83	illiterate	1 year in refugee camp
8	x		18	17	Teacher	1.5 years	27-07-82	semi-lit.	1 year in refugee camp
9		x	14	14	Teacher	6 years	-06-87	literate	none
10		x	15	15	Soldier	5-6 years	10-03-87	literate	none
11	x		21	17	Soldier	7 months	25-11-83	illiterate	none
12	x		16	15	Soldier	7 months	25-11-83	illiterate	none
13	x		24	21	Peasants	1 year	10-12-80	literate	none
14	x		18	18	Peasants	1 year	10-12-80	illiterate	none
15		x	17	21	Peasants	1.5 years	-08-81	illiterate	none
16		x	17	17	Peasants	4.5 years	-12-84	semi-lit.	none
17		x	15	15	Small Business	4 years	26-04-83	semi-lit.	none
18	x		18	17	Small Business	4 years	26-04-83	semi-lit.	none
19	x		16	16	Peasants	3.5 years	03-03-83	literate	none
20	x		19	19	Peasants	5 years	25-11-83	literate	none
21	x		17	17	Peasants	4.5 years	07-06-83	literate	none
22		x	16	13	Nurse	4 years	-04-83	semi-lit.	none
23	x		21	20	Transport Department	2.5 years	10-01-83	literate	2 years in refugee camp
24		x	21	16	Peasants	5 years	05-03-85	semi-lit.	none
25		x	22	22	Peasants	5 years	05-03-85	literate	none
26	x		16	15	Civil Servant	1 year	25-08-83	semi-lit.	none
27	x		18	18	Civil Servant	1 year	25-08-83	semi-lit.	7 months in refugee camp
28		x	20	20	Peasants	2.5 years	-11-82	semi-lit.	none
29	x		19	17	Peasants	1.5 years	-08-81	illiterate	none
30		x	18	18	Peasants	4 years	24-06-83	semi-lit.	none

TABLE B: SCHOOLING

Interviewees	Time Spent Learning English in Australia	Level of Education Reached	Difficult Subject
1	None. Started part-time Year 11 at Sydney Tech	3rd year Bachelor of Science	English
2	Started at Primary School	Year 12	Chemistry, English, Economics
3	Two months at ILU	3rd year Medical Course	English
4	One and a half years at ILU	Wilkins ILU	Science, Geography, English
5	One year at ILU	Year 11	English, Chemistry
6	Six months at NSW University and with Adult Migrant Education	Completed Computer Science Course in 1987	No problem
7	One and a half years at ILU	Year 12	Everything
8	One and a half years at ILU	Year 11	English, Physics
9	Three terms at ILU	ILU	Social Science
10	One year at ILU	ILU	English, Maths, Science
11	Two years at ILU	Left school at the end of Year 11 in 1987. Now is a marble cutter	English, Maths
12	Started at Primary School	Year 9	English
13	Started at Primary school	1st year Bachelor of Science	English, Physics
14	Started at Primary School	Year 12	Physics, Chemistry, English
15	Started at Primary School	Left school at the end of Year 11 in 1987. Now doing clerical training with CES	Economics, Maths, Geography
16	One and a half years at ILU	Year 10	Everything
17	Started at Primary School	Year 10	English, Maths
18	Started at Primary School	Year 10	Maths, English
19	Started at Primary School	Year 9	Japanese, Commerce
20	One and half years at ILU	Year 12	English, Chemistry, Biology, Ancient History
21	One year at ILU	Year 11	Japanese
22	Started at Primary School	Year 7	Science
23	Three terms at ILU	Year 12	Chemistry, English, Maths
24	One year at ILU	Year 10	Science, Maths, Geography
25	Three months (with Adult Migrant Education)	Left Bankstown TAFE. Now is a rag cutter	Science, English
26	One and a half years at ILU	Year 10	Science, English
27	One and a half years at ILU	Year 12	English
28	One and a half years at ILU	Left school at the end of Year 8. Now is a machinist.	Maths, Science
29	Started at Primary School	Year 11	None
30	Started at Primary School	Year 10	Maths

Ch.1. References

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CHAPTER 2

IMMIGRANT WOMEN IN MANUFACTURING WORK

Ruth Fincher, Michael Webber
and Iain Campbell

A substantial literature documents the difficult circumstances of immigrant women from non-English speaking backgrounds in urban Australia. This group has had considerable research attention since the 1970s, as Alcorso (1989) notes in her excellent review, resulting in distinct bodies of inquiry about immigrants in general and also about immigrant women. Our paper diverges somewhat from the starting point of most of this literature and considers the circumstances of immigrant women by explicitly comparing them with those of immigrant men.

We seek to establish differences and similarities in the experiences of immigrant women and immigrant men, as they work in manufacturing industry and negotiate other of their life circumstances around it. Data are presented so as to show aspects of people's daily lives in manufacturing work in which being a woman or a man seems to make a difference—that is, to indicate aspects of manufacturing workers' experience that are gendered.

The paper relies upon two central data sources developed in research funded by the Office of Multicultural Affairs in 1988. These data sources are: 1) census data from 1971 to 1986 about the different gender and birthplace groups that make up the manufacturing workforce and 2) responses from a 1988 survey of 272 immigrants of Yugoslav, Greek and Vietnamese birthplaces, each of whom had spent at least one year in manufacturing industry since 1970. The survey was conducted in Melbourne. The census data indicate in cross sectional fashion the segmented nature of the manufacturing labour force, and the relative place of immigrant women and men in that labour force over the last twenty five years. The data also point to considerable diversity over that time and in different mainland Australian cities, in the workforce experience of different gender and birthplace groups. (Inter-urban variations will not be addressed in this paper.) The interview data provide a rare longitudinal perspective on the job mobility of immigrant women and men once in manufacturing work, and the degree to which their prior qualifications and work experience were related to manufacturing occupations. The interview data also provide

information on acquisition of workplace-related skills and use of support services to allow labour force participation.

After a brief account of recent changes in Australian manufacturing industry, the paper describes the gendered nature of Australian manufacturing work for immigrants. First, data are presented about the relative position of immigrant women in the manufacturing workplace: this highlights the levels of segregation of manufacturing workers of different gender and birthplace groups, and the industrial and occupational mobility of immigrant workers after arrival in Australia. Second, gender differences in the acquisition of skills (language, qualifications, training) of use in manufacturing (and other) workplaces are considered. Third, data are presented about the use of support services by men and women immigrants—here the focus is on use of child care services permitting parents to engage in paid work outside the home. A final section suggests avenues for explaining these differences in the immigrant experience of manufacturing work that are associated with gender.

Recent Changes in Australian Manufacturing Industry

Since the early 1970s Australian manufacturing industries have declined (for a fuller treatment of this, see Webber, Campbell and Fincher, 1990). The loss of competitive advantage for these industries has been accompanied by changes in the number of manufacturing jobs and in their occupational type and industrial position. Between 1972 and 1984 jobs in Australian manufacturing declined about 13%, employing 1,300,000 workers in 1972 and 1,130,000 in 1984. A slight rise in manufacturing employment has been recorded since then. The figures also show that males and females have been affected differently within this period by the loss of manufacturing employment. Females lost jobs more in the 1970s, but males have lost jobs faster in the 1980s. It must be kept in mind, also, that women are increasingly working fewer hours than men—that the jobs they now occupy in manufacturing, as in other employment sectors, are very often part-time jobs.

There have been shifts over the last two decades in the relative significance of different occupations within manufacturing industry. The proportion of people employed in trades, crafts and labouring jobs has declined, but the number in professional and sales jobs has increased. Accordingly, the 'feminisation' of manufacturing employment in the 1970s and later in the 1980s (that is, the relative decline in male employment) has not been due to an increase in traditionally 'female' occupations, for example, clerical jobs, because the expanding occupations have been in male-dominated work areas. Rather, it is due to women

entering professional, clerical and (especially) sales occupations (Webber, Campbell and Fincher, 1990).

As well, different manufacturing industries have undergone employment change to different degrees, in the period. For example, clothing and footwear, textiles and other machinery and equipment are categories of industry that have lost employment. The birthplace and gender groups employed in particular industries, then, will be vulnerable in different ways to processes of industrial restructuring.

A literature on labour market segmentation has emerged in Australia which classifies gender and birthplace groups, in the Australian labour force as a whole, according to the sorts of occupations they generally hold (see the review in Webber, Campbell and Fincher, 1989: ch. 2.). Within Australia, the employment of Australian and overseas born people shows clear differences, and men and women have had different experiences. Migrants suffer higher rates of unemployment than the Australian-born and are over-represented in blue collar occupations (BLMR, 1986)—especially production jobs in manufacturing and construction (Stricker and Sheehan, 1981). Women experience more unemployment, lower labour force participation rates and higher part-time employment than men (Eccles, 1984: 2; Whitfield, 1987: 106). Gender segregation is high by international standards (OECD, 1980), though declining (Lewis, 1981): 60% of female employment is in industries in which more than half the workforce is female (Moir and Selby-Smith, 1979).

According to Collins (1978, 1988), the migrant labour force in Australia has the following characteristics. Migrants of English-speaking background have a labour market distribution similar to that of the Australian born. They are concentrated in white collar service sector jobs—or skilled manufacturing jobs. Men hold better quality jobs than women in these sectors—their occupations are more career oriented, permanent and better paid. Migrants from non-English speaking countries are concentrated in semi-skilled and unskilled production line and labouring jobs, especially in manufacturing and construction. Again, women have the worst of these jobs, with poor working conditions and pay and limited prospects for occupational mobility.

With regard to the industrial position of the migrant labour force, it is clear that since 1971, manufacturing industry has persistently employed a larger proportion of people born overseas than have other industrial sectors. Whereas in all industries, about 75% of the employed were born in Australia, and 85% in an English-speaking country, in manufacturing industry the Australian born make up only 58% of employed women and 63% of employed men. (People born in an English speaking country make up 70% of employed women and 76%

of employed men.) The loss of jobs in manufacturing since 1974 has therefore had a severe impact on the economic prospects of immigrant men and women.

The proportions of overseas born people differ widely, of course, between the different manufacturing industries. Textiles, clothing and footwear industries have a high proportion, as does the transport equipment industry (for men). By contrast, the food, beverages and tobacco, wood, wood products and furniture, and paper and paper products industries have more limited reliance on overseas born labour; in Australian terms these industries have a relatively high proportion of their labour forces in non metropolitan areas.

Immigrant Women and Men in the Manufacturing Workplace

Segregation in Manufacturing Industry

Taking first the matter of industrial affiliation, immigrant women have been persistently over-represented in manufacturing industries in the last twenty-five years, compared to immigrant men. This is measured by analysis of their levels of segregation in manufacturing industries.

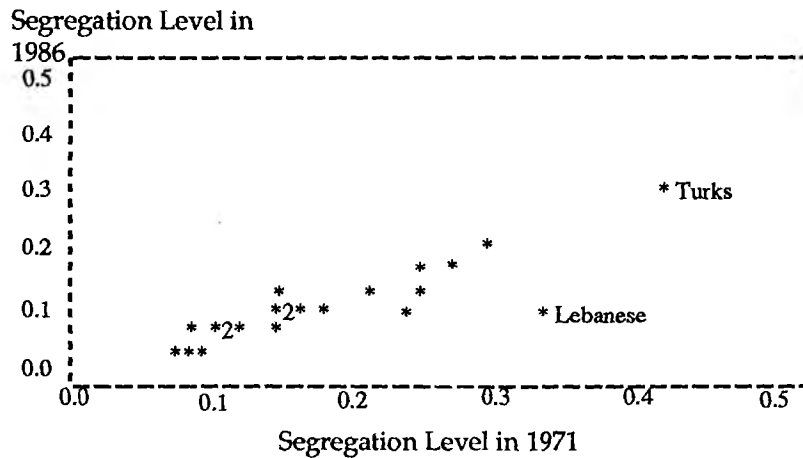
FIGURE 1: OCCUPATIONAL MOBILITY WITHIN AUSTRALIA

Occupation	Females			Males		
	1st	Main	Current	1st	Main	Current
	(Numbers of Persons)					
A, B	0	0	5	0	4	15
C	0	3	4	22	28	30
D	1	1	7	1	1	2
E	93	90	39	155	145	85
Unemployed	-	-	37	-	-	46
TOTAL	94	94	92	178	178	178

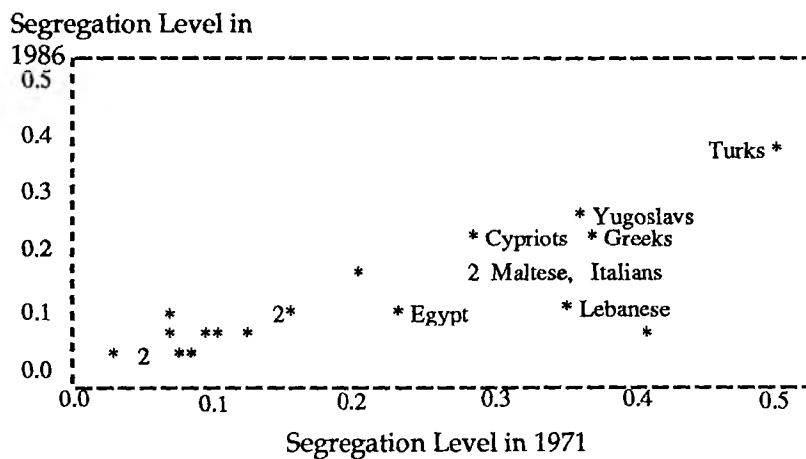
Statistical tests:

- (i) Occupational group by first/main: Chi-square = 5.875, df = 2, p= 0.053;
- (ii) Occupational group first/main by gender: Chi-square = 32.22, df = 7, p= <0.001;
- (iii) Occupational group by main/current: Chi-square = 25.160, df = 2, p= <0.001.

GRAPH 1: SEGREGATION INDICES FOR MEN, 1971 AND 1986



GRAPH 2: SEGREGATION INDICES FOR WOMEN, 1971 AND 1986



These graphs show the proportion of different birthplace/gender groups that would have to be redistributed amongst individual industries in manufacturing if their distribution amongst those industries were to be the same as that for the population as a whole. Though the absolute levels of segregation are declining somewhat, there has been little variation in the relative segregation of immigrant men and women (and indeed of Australian born men and women). But the experience of ethnicity in manufacturing shows itself to be gender specific - whether or not a birthplace group is highly segregated depends on whether it is the men or women of the birthplace groups that are considered.

Accordingly, those birthplace groups most segregated in manufacturing industry, those who depend on manufacturing industry as a whole for more than 30% of their employment, are different according to whether men or women are considered. They are:

Females
 Greece
 Yugoslavia
 Cyprus
 Turkey (45%)
 Vietnam (50%)

Males
 Malta
 Poland
 Yugoslavia
 Turkey (45%)
 Vietnam (53%)

These birthplace groups are especially vulnerable to the effects of manufacturing restructuring. Which birthplace groups have the highest segregation is a matter of gender.

Rates of Job Loss

There have been changes between 1971 and 1986 in the employment of different gender/birthplace groups, due to job reductions in particular manufacturing industries, and in part to declines in the total employment of gender/birthplace groups as their immigrant cohort ages. The situation differentiates the industrial structure of the gender groups interestingly. In the early 1970s, immigrant women were losing manufacturing jobs faster than men, but that situation has now been reversed. This is because females in the 1970s were working more in declining industries; in the 1980s men have had that experience. It is also because overseas born persons have been replaced in certain industries by Australian born persons. For both men and women manufacturing job losses have accrued more to the overseas born than to the Australian born, then, and immigrants in manufacturing have suffered under the dual disadvantage of working within those industries that have declined the fastest and are being replaced, within individual industries, by the Australian born. The table below shows how the larger birthplace groups have been affected in the period 1981-86.

TABLE 1: DISPLACEMENT AND REPLACEMENT OF BIRTHPLACE GROUPS IN MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY, 1981 - 1986

Table 1, Part 1.

Males Born in:	1981 Employment	Losses Caused by:	
		Replacement	Declining Industries
UK & Ireland	99,283	-7,316	-14,364
Germany	12,732	-458	-1,903
Greece	19,486	-3,528	-2,562
Italy	32,995	4,612	4,658
Malta	10,045	-1,206	-1,374
Netherlands	9,282	-1,055	-1,264
Poland	7,964	-958	-1,235
Yugoslavia	25,832	-1,492	-3,991
Lebanon	5,536	-1,196	-1,905
Vietnam	5,453	+5,720	883
New Zealand	10,492	+2,404	-1,234
Australia	525,190	+35	-65,631

Table 1, Part 2.

Females Born in:	1981 Employment	Losses Caused by:	
		Replacement	Declining Industries
UK & Ireland	29,720	-1,393	-3,435
Germany	4,133	-213	-511
Greece	12,838	-2,554	-1,304
Italy	15,604	-3,468	-1,490
Yugoslavia	13,836	-1,498	-1,606
Vietnam	3,277	+2,429	-359
New Zealand	4,103	+1,290	-386
Australia	164,264	+9,055	-15,906

For example, in the section of the table about females, 164,264 Australian-born were employed in 1981. By 1986, 15,906 of these jobs had been lost due to employment reductions in declining industries, but 9,055 had been taken by Australian-born workers. New Zealand- and Vietnam-born women had been taking up jobs and replacing other birthplace groups also. Those from birthplaces listed higher up had been replaced. In the men's section of the table, Australian-born workers (and New Zealand and Vietnam-born) had been holding their number of jobs or replacing others, compared to the other overseas born men listed. What the table does not indicate explicitly is the replacement of men due to the movement of women into a wider range of manufacturing occupations.

Industrial and Occupational Allocation and Mobility

If we move now to Melbourne, to consider data collected in the 1988 survey of Greek-, Yugoslav- and Vietnamese-born men and women, information about the allocation of newly arrived men and women to particular industrial sectors and occupations is of interest. Were the differences between their employment situation before migrating and their first manufacturing job in Australia similar? Having discovered this, the nature of their later job mobility must be established. To what degree have immigrant women, compared to immigrant men, been able to improve their employment characteristics by moving between occupations and industries? Is industrial and occupational mobility gender neutral? It is important to note, first, that prior to their arrival in Australia, the proportion of women employed was far lower than that of the immigrant men in the sample. Thirty three per cent of females as compared to 72% of males were employed. By contrast, there is no significant difference between the occupational distribution of males and females before arrival in Australia.

TABLE 2: OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF MIGRANTS PRIOR TO ARRIVAL IN AUSTRALIA, PER CENT

Occupational Group	Females	Males
A	16	19
B	10	8
C	19	32
D	16	7
E	39	34
Total Number Employed	31	129
Proportion Employed	33	72
Total Number	94	178

Statistical tests:

(i) Occupation by gender: Chi-square = 4.113, df = 4, p = 0.390;

(ii) Employed/not employed by gender: Chi-square = 39.612, df = 1, p < 0.001.

Note: Occupations are classified according to the 1986 ASCO:

A—managers and administrators;

B—professionals and paraprofessionals (groups 2 and 3 of ASCO);

C—tradespersons;

D—clerks and salespersons (groups 5 and 6 of ASCO);

E—plant and machine operators and drivers, and labourers (groups 7 and 8 of ASCO).

The data on industrial allocation and mobility are presented in the table below. This table describes the industries in which interviewees worked prior to emigrating, in their first manufacturing job here, in their main manufacturing job and in their current job. It indicates that migrants changed their industries when they moved to Melbourne. But once they started working in a particular industry, the distribution of jobs between industries remained stable over time. There has been little industrial mobility for either the men or women, then. In first, in main or in current manufacturing job, a half of the women interviewed worked in the textiles, clothing or footwear industries, a quarter in the metals industries and many of the rest in food, beverages and tobacco; a half of the men worked in the metals industries, but the rest were spread across a variety of industries. The industrial distribution of males and females is very different. Because the women are more segregated in a few industries, they are more susceptible to any industrial change that occurs in those few industries. Men, on the other hand, being spread more through the range of manufacturing industries in Melbourne, are less vulnerable to particular industries' restructuring. This situation has characterised the working lives of the interviewees.

Comparing the industrial affiliation of the men and women before coming to Australia and in their first job in manufacturing here, it is clear that women underwent a far more dramatic change in their working life than did the men. (Note that the mean time between arrival in Australia and taking up the first job in manufacturing here was 0.96 years for males and 1.64 for females; but 51% of the women in the sample and 67% of the men had obtained their first manufacturing job within six months of arrival.) This was due primarily to the fact that two thirds of the women had not worked in paid employment

before arrival in Melbourne, and now found themselves in manufacturing industry. The figures also show, however, that only about 26% of the male immigrants had been employed in manufacturing industry before arrival, so the dramatic switch for them in industrial affiliation is important as well.

TABLE 3: INDUSTRIAL DISTRIBUTION OF MIGRANTS WITHIN MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES

Industry	Before Migrating			First Job in Manufacturing			Main Job in Manufacturing			Current Job in Manufacturing		
	F	M	All	F	M	All	F	M	All	F	M	All
	Number			Number			Number			Number		
21	1	9	18	14	22	13	9	24	12	6	10	11
23, 24	6	4	18	47	19	24	46	19	24	22	11	22
25, 26	0	10	18	2	16	7	4	24	10	3	18	14
27, 28	2	4	11	0	10	4	0	8	3	0	7	5
29 - 33	0	15	27	20	93	42	24	87	41	12	53	43
20, 34	0	4	7	11	17	10	11	16	10	1	5	5
Persons	9	46		96	178		96	178		44	106	

Statistical tests:

(i) Industry before industry first: Chi-square = 16.33, df = 5, p = 0.006;

(ii) Industry first by industry main: Chi-square = 4.89, df = 5, p = 0.43;

(iii) Industry main by gender (main job): Chi-square = 56.444, df = 5, p < 0.001.

Note: Industries are:

21—food, beverages and tobacco; 23—textiles; 24—clothing and footwear; 25—pulp, paper and paper products; 26—wood and wood products; 27—chemicals; 28—non metallic mineral products; 29—basic metal products; 31—fabricated metal products; 32—transport equipment; 33—other machinery and equipment; 2—inadequately described; 34—miscellaneous.

Turning now to occupational questions, the literature on labour market segmentation discusses principally the occupations of different birthplace and gender groups. We have shown that *industrial* segregation of those groups occurs, and must contribute to the particular vulnerability of immigrant manufacturing workers to job losses. However, the occupations of immigrant women (and men) within manufacturing industry are very significant determinants of job quality, and also of vulnerability to industry restructuring of different types (for example, removal of jobs of particular types due to mechanisation).

The survey data reveal that the first job in manufacturing in Australia for both males and females in the sample was primarily in the semi and low skilled occupations of plant and machine operators and drivers, and labourers (see table below). No one was employed as a manager, professional or paraprofessional and only two people were employed as clerks or sales persons. However, there is a major difference in the occupational structure of the two genders: 12% of males had been able to obtain skilled jobs in manufacturing; no females had.

Indeed, there is a highly significant difference between the occupational distributions of the migrants before and after their migration. Both males and females are much more

highly concentrated in clerical, sales, operating and labouring occupations than they had been in their home country. This difference means that for individual migrants migration involved downward occupational mobility. Furthermore, this reduction in occupational status affects the genders differently: women lost status to a greater extent than men.

TABLE 4: OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF MIGRANTS BEFORE MIGRATING AND FIRST JOB IN MANUFACTURING IN AUSTRALIA, PER CENT

Occupational Group	Females		Males		All	
	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After
A, B	26	0	27	0	27	0
C	19	0	32	12	29	8
D, E	55	100	41	88	44	92
Total Number	31	94	129	178	160	272

Statistical tests:

(i) Occupational group by before/after: Chi-square = 133.226, df = 2, p < 0.001;

(ii) Occupational group by before/after gender: Chi-square = 166.54, df = 7, p < 0.001.

Note: Occupational groups are:

A—managers and administrators; B—professionals and paraprofessionals; C—tradespersons; D—clerks and salespersons; E—plant and machine operators and drivers, and labourers.

If we consider the combined effects of industrial and occupational allocation of immigrant men and women to positions in manufacturing industry shortly after their arrival in Australia, it is clear that for women the contrast with their circumstances prior to migration was most dramatic. They arrived with the least experience of low skilled manufacturing jobs (only one in ten had experience in manufacturing work and only one in twenty specifically as labourers or operators) and were more concentrated within such occupations upon arrival. The concentration, and the difference it marks to previous circumstances, is most pronounced for the Vietnamese-born women in the sample.

The following table introduces the issue of mobility between jobs in Australia. It compares the occupational distribution of migrants in their first and main jobs in manufacturing in Australia. (This main job may in fact have also been their first job.) Both women and men remain highly concentrated in the semi and lower skilled occupations of operators and labourers, though some men have moved into managerial and professional occupations and 16 % are tradespersons.

There has, then, been a slight improvement in the occupational distribution of the migrants (see the table below). Four males have moved into managerial or professional occupations and another thirty one persons have entered skilled trades occupations. However, this change in the distribution of occupations is not significant. And, importantly, the change in occupations is largely concentrated among the males: only three females have moved out of

the operators and labourers categories. Again, though, this difference is not significant. There was little mobility from time of first job to time of main job.

TABLE 5: OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF MIGRANTS' FIRST AND MAIN JOBS IN MANUFACTURING IN AUSTRALIA, PER CENT

Occupational Group	Females		Males		All	
	Before	Main	Before	Main	Before	Main
A, B	0	0	0	2	0	1
C	0	3	12	16	8	11
D, E	100	97	88	82	92	87
Total Number	94	94	178	178	272	272

Statistical tests:

(i) Occupational group by before/main: Chi-square = 5.875, df = 2, p = 0.053;

(ii) Occupational group by before/main gender: Chi-square = 32.22, df = 7, p < 0.001.

Note: Occupational groups are:

A—managers and administrators; B—professionals and paraprofessionals; C—tradespersons; D—clerks and salespersons; E—plant and machine operators and drivers, and labourers.

The main difference between the two occupational distributions is that women continue to be over-represented in clerical, sales, operating and labouring occupations, whereas males are over-represented in trades occupations. Thus, the differences between the occupational distributions of males and females that appeared in the first job have continued to the present.

TABLE 6: OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF MIGRANTS' CURRENT JOB IN AUSTRALIA, PER CENT

Occupational Group	Females	Males
A	7	8
B	2	3
C	7	23
D	11	2
E	73	66
Total Number Employed	55	132
Proportion Employed	59	74
Total Number	94	178

Statistical tests:

(i) Occupation by gender: Chi-square = 11.87, df = 4, p = 0.018;

(ii) Employed/not employed by gender: Chi-square = 7.010, df = 1, p = 0.008.

Note: Occupational groups are:

A—managers and administrators; B—professionals and paraprofessionals; C—tradespersons; D—clerks and salespersons; E—plant and machine operators and drivers, and labourers.

There does *appear* to have been substantial occupational mobility between the main job in manufacturing and the current job (see table below). Whereas for 87% of the migrants their main job had been in a clerical, sales, operating or labouring occupation, that proportion has now fallen to 71%. Furthermore, the 1% who had been managers or professionals has risen

to 11%. This apparent upward occupational mobility contrasts with the downward or static pictures derived from earlier time slices.

TABLE 7: OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF MIGRANTS' CURRENT JOB IN AUSTRALIA, PER CENT

Occupational Group	Females		Males		All	
	Main	Current	Main	Current	Main	Current
A, B	0	9	2	11	1	11
C	3	7	16	23	11	18
D, E	97	84	82	66	87	71
Total Number	94	55	178	132	272	187

Statistical tests:

(i) Occupational group by before/main: Chi-square = 25.160, df = 2, p < 0.001;

Note: occupational groups are:

A—managers and administrators; B—professionals and paraprofessionals; C—tradespersons; D—clerks and salespersons; E—plant and machine operators and drivers, and labourers.

However, it is necessary to examine these data a little more carefully before accepting this conclusion. First, consider the females. Of the ninety four women who started their careers in manufacturing in Australia as clerks, salespersons, operators or labourers, only four had become tradespersons and only five had become managers or professionals. Of the managers, three operated corner stores—hardly evidence of upward occupational mobility. All the remaining apparent rise in occupational status among the females is due to the fact that thirty nine operators and labourers had left the labour force.

Similarly, amongst males. The single largest change has been caused by those who left the labour force: forty three of the operators and labourers and three of the tradespersons. It is largely for this reason that the apparent significance of operating and labouring occupations has declined. The second most significant change has been the emergence of a group of managers (now numbering eleven), of whom nine are small shopkeepers. The remaining upward occupational mobility is limited: of the one hundred and fifty six male clerks, salespersons, operators and labourers in the first job, twelve have become tradespersons (though one has fallen in status since the first job), fifteen have become managers or professionals (nine shopkeepers) and forty three have left the labour market. That leaves eighteen cases of unambiguous upward mobility from the original one hundred and fifty six.

As far as occupation is concerned, migration is associated with a loss of occupational status, particularly for women, whose occupational mobility in our sample is utterly negligible. Some retrieve the lost status during their careers in Australia, but most of the upward mobility of migrants that is described in the literature arises from the twin facts that (i)

those in the operating and labouring occupations have a high propensity to leave the labour force and (ii) a high proportion of the managers are small shopkeepers. Most migrants never retrieve the occupational status they had prior to arrival. Especially, most women never do. Mobility diagrams indicate this clearly.

TABLE 8: OCCUPATIONAL MOBILITY, MALES

Occupations	First Job	Main Job	Current Job
A, B	0	4	15
C	22	28	30
D, E	156	146	87
Number of Persons	178	178	132

TABLE 8A: OCCUPATIONAL MOBILITY, FEMALES

Occupations	First Job	Main Job	Current Job
A, B	0	0	5
C	0	3	4
D, E	94	91	46
Number of Persons	94	94	55

Note: Occupational groups are:

A—managers and administrators; B—professionals and paraprofessionals; C—tradespersons; D—clerks and salespersons; E—plant and machine operators and drivers, and labourers.

In summary, the industrial and occupational allocation and mobility of the immigrant women surveyed reveals their situation to be more limiting than that of the immigrant men, though that of the men is limiting enough. Change in work characteristics pre and post migration to Australia has been more dramatic for the group of women, and the loss of occupational status greater. Occupational mobility has been non-existent for the women, though slightly better for the men. This has meant that retrieval of occupational status, and the lifestyle associated with it, has been impossible for the immigrant women in the study, and scarcely possible for the men. And this is largely regardless of the qualifications, skills and experience brought by immigrant women to Australia, as the next section attests.

The Acquisition of Workplace Skills (Language, Qualifications, Training)

Differences in the experience of the manufacturing workplaces according to gender, documented in the previous section, have largely indicated that women have been worse off than men, that the magnitude of their transition upon arrival in Australia and the loss of occupational status in their manufacturing work here has been greater than that of migrant

men. In this section, we consider the degree to which the acquisition of the workplace relevant skills is different in the groups of immigrant men and women. The differences of interest here are both the amount and the forms of skills acquisition.

Qualifications

The following table indicates the qualifications that the migrants had obtained overseas after leaving school. A quarter of the females and a third of the males had obtained such qualifications. Thirteen of the sample had degrees (4% of females and 6% of males). There are significant differences in the qualifications of males and females: first, a smaller proportion of females than of males had obtained any post-school qualifications at all, and secondly, whereas a quarter of males had trade certificates, only 9% of females had similar certificates. The women's qualifications were more often in non-trade areas.

TABLE 9: NATURE OF POST-SCHOOL QUALIFICATIONS OBTAINED OVERSEAS

Qualifications	Females (No.)	Males (No.)
Post Graduate	0	2
Bachelor Degree	3	8
Total Degrees	3	10
Diploma	1	1
Trade Certificate		
Construction	0	2
Agriculture	0	1
Electrical	0	5
Metals	0	9
Automobiles	0	7
Furniture	0	5
Clothing and Footwear	6	4
Other	1	6
Total Trade Certificates	7	39
Non-Trade Qualifications		
Construction	0	1
Home Economics	4	0
Nursing, Education	3	0
Metals, Automobile	0	2
Other	0	4
Total Non-Trade Qualifications	7	7
Total Post-School Qualifications	18	57
No Post-School Qualifications	61	103

Note: 15 females and 18 males had not completed schooling at time of migration.

Significance tests: Degree/dipl/trade/non-trade/none by gender: Chi-square = 10.546, df = 4, p = 0.032.

Though most women and men had no post-school qualifications, then, a good number did. This had little effect, in the case of the women most particularly, on their allocation to occupations in manufacturing industry. A skills wastage is surely evident here. Noteworthy as well is the tendency for male migrants to have been more aggressive than female migrants in seeking to have their overseas qualifications recognised in Australia. Half the

qualified male migrants had tried to have their overseas qualifications recognised, compared to only 10% of the qualified females.

Some 9% of the sample had obtained post-school qualifications since arriving in Australia—11% of males and 5% of females. The table below summarises the extent to which the members of the sample had obtained post-school qualifications. Males are much more highly qualified than females—in terms of both overseas and Australian qualifications.

TABLE 10: POST-SCHOOL QUALIFICATIONS: SUMMARY, PER CENT

Qualifications Obtained	Females	Males
Overseas	19	32
In Australia	5	11
None	76	57
Total Persons	94	178

Significance tests: Qualifications by gender: Chi-squared = 9.475, df = 2, p = 0.009.

The type of qualifications obtained by the migrants in Australia have exacerbated the differences observed in the overseas qualifications. Two thirds of the qualified males have trade certificates, but only one third of the qualified females. By contrast, females are more likely than males to have non-trade certificates of qualifications that are not classifiable by level.

TABLE 11: NATURE OF POST-SCHOOL QUALIFICATIONS OBTAINED IN AUSTRALIA

Qualifications	Females (No.)	Males (No.)
Post Graduate	0	3
Bachelor degree	4	8
Total Degrees	4	11
Diploma	2	3
Trade Certificate		
Construction	0	3
Agriculture	0	1
Electrical	0	6
Metals	0	16
Automobiles	0	8
Furniture	0	5
Clothing and Footwear	6	5
Other	1	7
Total Trade Certificates	7	51
Non-Trade Qualifications		
Construction	0	1
Home Economics	4	0
Nursing, Education	4	0
Metals, Automobile	0	4
Other	1	5
Total Non-Trade Qualifications	9	10
Total Post-School Qualifications	22	75
No Post-School Qualifications	72	103

Significance tests: Degree/dipl/trade/non-trade/none by gender: Chi-square = 18.183, df = 4, p = 0.001.

Summarising the qualifications situation, the women had fewer post-school qualifications on arrival than had the men, and fewer proportionally of those trade skills which might have benefited them immediately in manufacturing work. Importantly, the form and amount of qualifications acquired since arrival in Australia have only served to confirm this difference. Women have acquired fewer skills since arrival, and have tended to gain non-trade skills. Women, too, were less aggressive in trying to have overseas qualifications recognised in Australia. There is some basis, then, to expect the occupational status of immigrant women in manufacturing work to be lower than that of immigrant men and their prospects for mobility to be fewer. But in a context in which the allocation of people in this sample to occupations in manufacturing industry has proceeded despite qualifications and previous experience, and in which occupational and industrial mobility has been low for everyone, initial and subsequent qualifications may not have made much difference.

Language Skills

A variety of means have been used to learn English. One fifth of the respondents had first learnt English in high school overseas—a rather higher proportion of males than females (and almost all Vietnamese-born). Another two fifths (including nearly half the women) learnt English at work. And 15% (mostly men) learnt English through general listening, or in conversation with family or friends—there is some evidence here of the social isolation of migrant women from Australian culture. Thus 75% of the respondents learnt English by some means other than courses in Australia offered by the Australian government. Of the formal courses in Australia, women mostly used pre-arrival courses, hostel courses or other courses (including high school). By contrast, the most common courses used by men were night classes. Males and females use quite different means of learning English—which seems to indicate that some care must be taken in designing gender-neutral (or even, given the evidence about language ability, affirmative) improvements to the accessibility of English language courses to migrants.

TABLE 12: METHODS USED TO FIRST LEARN ENGLISH, PER CENT

Method	Females	Males	Total
High School Overseas	16	23	21
Course pre Arrival	8	7	8
Hostel	9	3	5
At Work	47	34	39
General Listening, Friends etc	10	18	15
Other Course, High School Here	9	5	6
Night School, Language Centre	2	9	6
Number of Respondents	92	174	266

Significance tests: Method by gender: Chi-squared = 15.272, df = 6, p = 0.018.

Even though migrants may first learn English by some other means, they may nevertheless take courses later. The following table indicates that less than half the migrants did take any kind of English language course in Australia and only a third of the women.

TABLE 13: USE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE COURSES IN AUSTRALIA, PER CENT

Use	Females	Males
No	64	55
Yes	36	45
Number (%)	94	176

Significance tests: Use by gender: Chi-squared = 1.913, df = 1, p = 0.167.

A clear majority of those who had taken a course took one of those offered in the English for New Arrivals programme of the Adult Migrant Education Service. High school or TAFE courses accounted for another third. Although the differences between the genders are not statistically significant, two features of this table deserve further investigation. First, females are more likely than males to take the courses offered at hostels (English for New Arrivals) or in correspondence—courses that involve relatively little contact with the wider Australian world. By contrast, males seem to rely more heavily on more public courses offered in schools, AMES or other courses. If such a difference is real—rather than simply the result of sampling fluctuations—then it has important implications for language and other cultural policies.

TABLE 14: TYPE OF LANGUAGE COURSE USED IN AUSTRALIA, PER CENT

Type	Females	Males
English for New Arrivals	50	44
High School, TAFE	26	32
Adult Migrant Education Service	6	15
Correspondence	12	1
Other	6	8
Number Taking a Course	34	79

Significance tests: Type by gender (the last two categories are combined to avoid problems caused by low frequencies): Chi-squared = 3.636, df = 3, p = 0.304.

In sum, there is evidence that the women in the sample have taken fewer English language courses than have the men after arrival in Australia. Those courses women have taken seem to have required less contact with the wider community—they have been correspondence and new arrivals courses. The means by which women and men are acquiring English language skills, then, seem to differ. This requires further study, if policies are to take it into account in improving access to English language skills for men and women of non English-speaking background.

Training

When they began their first job in Australian manufacturing industry, 11% of women and 19% of men had no training at all. Most training, when it was given, was informal (see table below). Of those trained, proportionately more women report their training to have been informal. What formal and safety training was received was more likely to have been received by men. The length of time over which any training was given varied little between the men and women. About 40% of those trained, both men and women, received between 2 and 5 days of training, and about equal numbers of the rest of those trained had more or less instruction than this. Over 90% of both men and women received no ongoing training; slightly more women reported ongoing training, but this was probably of an informal sort.

TABLE 15: TRAINING RECEIVED AT START OF FIRST JOB IN MANUFACTURING, PER CENT

Training Type	Females	Males	Total
None	11	19	16
Instruction by Supervisor	26	16	19
Informal	42	35	37
Other Workers	19	25	23
Safety/Formal	2	6	4
Number of Persons	93	178	271

Significance tests: Training type by gender: Chi-squared = 0.062, df = 4, p = 0.062.

At the start of the main job in manufacturing, no differences were recorded in the type or length of training received by the women and men. But the numbers of people in the group receiving training of any sort declined in comparison to the numbers receiving training at the start of the first job. Men still reported receiving less training than did women. And over 50% of the men and women receiving training then termed it 'informal' (54% of women and 50% of men). One stage later, of those now remaining in the labour force, few reported receiving training at the start of their current job. This is not surprising, given the low occupational mobility described earlier.

More women (46%) than men (38%) felt they had benefited from their training in Australian manufacturing industry, though the difference between the sexes in this was not significant. And overall, more women and men felt they had not benefited from the training. Of those who had benefited, the women's descriptions of the form of this gain are quite different to those of the men. The table below shows this. What the women feel to have been of benefit is primarily just the general experience gained in working, an 'informal' sort of benefit we might term it. A good proportion of the men say this too, but others designate specific benefits: their training gave them experience in a specific trade, in quality circles, or gained them qualifications.

TABLE 16: BENEFITS FROM TRAINING IN AUSTRALIAN MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY

Benefit Type	Females (No.)	Males (No.)	Females (per cent)	Males (per cent)
None	51	111	56	63
Job Experience	35	43	38	24
Trade Experience, Quality Circles, Qualifications	5	22	5	13
Number of Persons	91	176		

Significance tests: Benefit type by gender: Chi-squared = .441, df = 2, p = 0.024.

The workers' descriptions of their major skills relevant to employment fall into this formal/informal, specific/general dichotomy also, when they are disaggregated by gender. Far more women indicate their major skills to be general work experience, or a wide range of skills gained through work experience; more men indicate their skills are from study, or related to training received, as well as that they have the ability to be a 'good' efficient worker.

TABLE 17: MAJOR SKILLS RELEVANT TO EMPLOYMENT, PER CENT

Type of Skill	Females	Males
None/Don't Know	22	22
Wide Range	30	15
Good Worker	10	16
Study/Training Qualifications	12	20
Experience	24	13
Management	1	3
Number of Persons	87	175

Significance tests: Chi-squared = 20.863, df = 5, p = 0.001.

A highly significant difference existed between the additional training or skills the women thought would be useful and those the men cited. Though a majority of both men and women felt that no skills or training would be valuable, men said this more than women. Furthermore, women specified that English skills would be of benefit, and computer training. Men emphasised mechanical skills, presumably to further their capacity as tradesmen.

TABLE 18: ADDITIONAL SKILLS/TRAINING FELT TO BE USEFUL, PER CENT

Skill Type	Female	Male
None	56	61
English	20	10
Don't Know	4	3
Mechanical	0	16
Computer	16	7
Specialist	3	4
Number of Persons	94	178

Significance tests: Skill type by gender: Chi-squared = 25.335, df = 5, p = 0.000.

Various barriers were identified, by the men and women interviewed, as likely to prevent their engaging in additional training or skills enhancement. The barriers identified differed between men and women: women stressed family commitments, whilst men stressed age, injury and health as reasons preventing further training. Both feel lack of time to be a problem, and the timing of shifts. Men more often identify language inadequacies as a reason why training would be ineffective; women more often express lack of interest in undertaking further training, or fail to see it as necessary. While there are a range of issues underlying these feelings, the women's commitment to family is consistent with their attempting to gain skills in a more informal fashion, from within the home.

TABLE 19: BARRIERS TO ADDITIONAL TRAINING, PER CENT

Barrier	Females	Males	Average
Family	14	5	8
Time/Shifts	22	20	21
Age/Injury/Health	27	41	36
Lack Resources	8	7	7
Transport	2	0	1
Tired	0	0	1
Language	8	12	10
Unnecessary	20	13	15
Number of Persons	94	178	272

Significance test: Barrier by gender: Chi-squared = 16.904, df = 7, p = 1.018.

In sum, there is considerable difference between the experience of training, and the views of the likelihood and desirability of different types of further training, expressed by the immigrant women and men. Skills gained, or perceptions of them, differ, men citing specific skills and women general work experience. The training gained by women is described as informal, the men's more formal (though neither group received much training at all). Barriers to further training for men are age and injury and for women family commitments.

Use of Community Support Services

If people are to work outside the home, and to have any prospect of long-term, career-oriented employment, they must have access to satisfactory care for their dependants. Community support services in child care were most relevant to the immigrant men and women interviewed, as children were the dependants most mentioned. None, for example, described a need for support for dependant elderly relatives during working hours. The figures describing the use made by the men and women of child care arrangements of different sorts show differences in the forms of child care used, and imply differences in the stress that must have been placed on the men and women as they sought to work in the paid

labour force and to care properly for their children as well. Many of those interviewed had small children when they arrived in Australia; this was a time when they needed the support of social networks, especially when the economic necessity to establish themselves meant a high level of participation in the paid labour force for many households. So, what did these men and women do? Slightly more than half the sample had dependent children at the time they started their first job. Sixty four % of women and 52 % of men had children when they began to work in manufacturing in Australia. One in seven of the women had at least three dependent children when they started to work in manufacturing here.

TABLE 20: DEPENDENT CHILDREN WHEN FIRST JOB STARTED IN MANUFACTURING IN AUSTRALIA, PER CENT

Number of Dependent Children	Females	Males
0	36	48
1	22	15
2	28	25
3	14	11
Number	94	178

Significance tests: Children/no children by gender: Chi-squared = 3.353, df = 1, p = 0.067.

The people in our sample engaged in a variety of means of caring for their children. The table below indicates the degree to which different means were used. Nearly one third of the respondents had a spouse at home who looked after the children—9% of the female respondents and 49% of the male respondents. A variety of formal care arrangements were used—school, day care or some combination of these. Nineteen per cent of the respondents' children were in school (24% of the women's but only 15% of the men's); only a small proportion were in formal day care—6%. Another 10% of respondents' children were cared for by paid persons (17% of the female respondents, but only 5% of the male respondents). Relatives and friends were used to care for children more frequently than paid persons—by 19% of the women and 6% of the men. A good idea of the stress that is imposed on migrant families by the need to care for dependent children is provided by the facts that, first, three respondents indicated that the children had to look after themselves and secondly that 17% of respondents split shifts with their spouse in order to care for children.

The form of care of the dependent children of these workers is a gender-dependent process. Nearly a half of the males had a spouse at home looking after children, but only 9% of the females. Female workers were more likely to rely on relatives and friends, paid persons and split shifts than were male workers. The children of women workers were also more likely to be at school than were the children of male workers.

TABLE 21: MEANS OF CARING FOR DEPENDENT CHILDREN AT START OF FIRST JOB IN MANUFACTURING, PER CENT

Care Type	Females	Males
Spouse at Home	9	49
School	24	15
Day Care	5	6
Relatives, Friends	19	6
Paid Persons	17	5
Nobody	1	2
Split Shifts	19	16
Self	6	1
Number of Persons (%)	59	87

Significance tests: Care type by gender (to reduce the problems caused by small frequency cells, the last two care categories were combined): Chi-squared = 30.115, df = 6, p < 0.001.

By the time the main job in manufacturing started, the sizes of families had increased—both for men and women. Furthermore, the gender differences in the likelihood that workers would have children that were previously observed no longer appear: men and women working in manufacturing are equally likely to have children and have the same number of children on average.

TABLE 22: DEPENDENT CHILDREN WHEN MAIN JOB STARTED IN MANUFACTURING IN AUSTRALIA, PER CENT

Number of Dependent Children	Females	Males
0	29	34
1	16	15
2	38	34
Greater than or Equal to 3	17	17
Number	94	178

Significance tests: Children/no children by gender: Chi-squared = 1.237, df = 1, p = 0.266.

Methods of caring for dependent children have altered in relative importance too (see table below). Presumably reflecting the ageing of the sample, school accounts for a larger share of the task of looking after children than it did during the first job, while relatives, friends and paid persons have declined in significance. Fewer males have spouses at home to look after children than in the first job—either because children have become older and less dependent or because more spouses have entered the labour market. However, despite greater familiarity with Australia, day care was not used more in the main job than in the first. Split shifts continue to be used by nearly 20% of the sample as a means of caring for dependent children.

TABLE 23: MEANS OF CARING FOR DEPENDENT CHILDREN AT START OF MAIN JOB IN MANUFACTURING, PER CENT

Care Type	Females	Males
Spouse at Home	6	40
School	37	27
Day Care	5	6
Relatives, Friends	12	4
Paid Persons	9	4
Nobody	3	3
Split Shifts	20	17
Self	8	1
Number of Persons	66	114

Significance tests: Care type by gender (to reduce the problems caused by small frequency cells, the last two care categories were combined): Chi-squared = 28.029, df = 6, $p < 0.001$.

A simplified view of this table is revealing. One quarter of all respondents who had dependent children not in school relied on split shifts to care for those children.

Total number of respondents:	272	100%
(Of whom, 94 are female 35%)		
With dependent children	180	66%
(Of whom, 66 are female 37%)		
With dependent children not in school	125	46%
(Of whom, 41 are female 33%)		
(Of which, methods of caring	—spouse 50/40%	
	—split shifts 32/26%	
	—all other 43/34%)	

There is evidence, then, that forms of child care differ for the immigrant men and women in the sample. The range of arrangements for child care is large, the combinations of arrangements complex. Women seem to have had the more stressful arrangements at the time of first manufacturing job, when the pressures of new country, new job and young dependants must have been profound. Across the jobs for which arrangements for dependants have been described, men have been more likely than women, of course, to have a spouse at home engaging in caring. Split shifts have been used by a significant proportion of both men and women, though somewhat more by women than by men. What is very clear is that formal municipal child care services have been used very little by both men and women in the sample, and that the use of formal services has not increased by the time arrangements for main job are made. This is consistent with claims in some of the literature on child care use that immigrants use formal services less than the employed Australian-born population as a whole (Singer, 1983; Sweeney and Jamrozik, 1984). It is also indicative of the scarcity of child care places relative to need in a labour market with a high proportion of women in

paid employment, and of a lack of affirmative action for immigrants to enable them to have rapid access to appropriate child care services.

Conclusion

Manufacturing work in Australia has aspects that are experienced differently by immigrant men and immigrant women. Levels of industrial segregation and occupational immobility are higher for women. And the forms of training, both language and specifically job related training and qualifications, that women and men undertake after arrival in Australia, vary also by gender. Those taken by the men seem to be more formal and specific, more likely to be a basis for occupational improvement. There is some evidence, also, that child care has been a more stressful issue for immigrant women in the paid labour force, than it has been for men. There is need to explain these differences of gender in the immigrant experience of manufacturing work and the social supports this work requires. As well, any policy responses purporting to change the lot of immigrants must be sensitive to the effects of gender in the ways work, training and child care are experienced. For example, it would make little sense, given our findings, to introduce a wider range of night school English language courses and expect them to be accessible equally to men and women.

There are various levels at which the experience of immigrant women working in Australian manufacturing industry are being explained. One valuable approach has to do with the restructuring of the manufacturing sector and its roots in global economic change (Tait and Gibson, 1987). This has affected immigrant workers, either men or women, in different ways in particular Australian urban labour markets, according to the precise manufacturing industries dominating those labour markets. Accordingly, research is now linking phenomena like the rise in numbers of women outworkers in the manufacturing of clothing, textiles and footwear to changes in the global, national and local operating contexts of those industries, in which firms are cutting costs due to overseas competition. Research is also beginning to indicate that small business is the destination of some immigrants who are retrenched from manufacturing work and consider themselves (probably realistically) unlikely to find the extra training needed to give them other salaried employment (see again Castles *et al.* 1989; Castles and Collins, 1989). Much work remains to be done to document the precise forms of manufacturing reorganisation occurring in Australia's urban labour markets, and the particular occupational, birthplace and gender groups being affected by these.

But the fact remains that manufacturing industry is the workplace in which many newly arriving migrants find themselves, despite manufacturing jobs overall being in decline. It is also the industry in which many remain, to whose requirements child care supports must be organised and around whose hours language training and acquisition of skills and qualifications must largely be accomplished. Immigrant men and women differ from each other in negotiating their life paths around manufacturing employment. We suggest that a range of institutional factors construct the experience of migrant women (as opposed to migrant men) in manufacturing work in particular urban labour markets, and that investigation of these must complement the broader economic explanations of the world of immigrant workers.

A primary focus of explanation for the gendered experience of manufacturing work for immigrants must be the policies and practices of the state, at the various levels of its apparatus. (The practices of the state, of course, are not independent of the broader economic changes affecting Australia.) We have seen in the data the inadequacies of child care provision for a newly arrived (and later even not so newly arrived) immigrant population characterised by high female labour force participation. We have seen inadequate use of/access to language training. We have seen the allocation of these immigrant men and women to manufacturing work despite this being inconsistent with their previous work experience (for those who had been previously employed) and qualifications; this suggests (amongst other things) insufficient government attention to employment counselling and appropriate job placement for these people. (Indeed, other data in the study show the complete reliance of both the immigrant men and women on relatives and friends for information about employment possibilities.) That these forms of assistance have been inadequate for immigrants, in part channelling them to manufacturing jobs and in part setting them up in working lives of industrial and occupational immobility, is clear; there have not been meaningful, appropriately subsidised, orientation programs for immigrants. But overlain on the overall inadequacy of government settlement policies for immigrants are the reasons for women's generally less favourable experiences in manufacturing work and its training and community service supports. Here, the broader influence of the Australian state is part of the explanation. Many immigrant women arrived in Australia under a government immigration policy which viewed them, and has continued to view them, primarily as the dependents of male wage earners and carers of their nuclear family households (Martin, 1984). This picture is contradicted by the reality of their daily lives, in which they are more often full-time participants in the paid labour force than Australian born women. For the women in manufacturing work in our sample, this is clearly the case: they are employed, without much access to formal child care, and without access to ongoing training at work or to many means of acquiring formal job or language skills. Perhaps many women, who had not been employed before arrival in

Australia, did not expect to have to take up paid work here. In this event, the government's and their expectation of their daily lives may have coincided, but both expectations have been contradicted by the economic reality with which the women and their households were faced upon arrival. It is also true of our sample that the women are less qualified than the men (unlike the Australian-born population in which this assumption cannot be made (see Curthoys, 1986) and their employment prospects have no doubt suffered somewhat because of this. Whatever the precise facts of the matter, there has been little attempt to rectify the precise difficulties of employed immigrant women: after over a decade's documentation of their circumstances (e.g. Centre for Urban Research and Action, 1976) are still being recommended for special government attention (ACMA, 1988). The practices of the state bear some responsibility for the continued contradiction of immigrant women's lives and the daily difficulties this causes. The degree to which the expectations of the sexual division of labour in Australia diverge from those of the immigrants' country of origin, are also important subjects for further study.

When explaining the circumstances of immigrant women in the paid labour force, then, the pressures of their lives outside the workplace must be stressed; the home and the community, in which places they search for work, try to equip themselves for work, and take up their considerable domestic responsibilities, set an important context for their ability to take up paid work of a particular kind, and sustain their participation in it. Any list of explanatory factors that stresses broad scale economic restructuring and the changing demands of employers as the reason for their particular difficulties must include as well an account of the patriarchal nature of government policy on the provision of support services for labour force participants, itself partly, but not entirely, structured by changing economic fortunes in Australia.

Ch.2. References

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CHAPTER 3

RESTRUCTURING, MIGRANT LABOUR MARKETS AND SMALL BUSINESS

Stephen Castles and Jock Collins

This article is based on research carried out by Stephen Castles (Centre for Multicultural Studies, University of Wollongong), Jock Collins (University of Technology, Sydney), Katherine Gibson (Department of Geography, University of Sydney), David Tait (Social Facts Pty. Ltd.) and Caroline Alcorso (Centre for Multicultural Studies, University of Wollongong). Funding and other support was provided by the Office of Multicultural Affairs, the Australian Research Grants Scheme and its successor, the Australian Research Council, Kuring-gai CAE and the University of Sydney. The findings are reported in full in Castles *et al.* (1989).

Abstract

Changes in global economic patterns have led to major shifts in both international migratory flows and labour market structures in Australia. This causes a reshaping of the process whereby migrant labour is incorporated, leading to unemployment among existing migrant groups, and restriction of labour market entry points for new arrivals. Another result of restructuring is the growth of small entrepreneurship. Qualitative research in inner Sydney explores the characteristics of migrant small businesses, showing types of enterprises, conditions for establishment, motivations of the entrepreneurs, use of family labour power, and chains of interdependence with larger firms. The analysis points to the need for re-examination of theories of migration and class.

Introduction

An interdisciplinary research project was carried out in Sydney from 1987 to 1989 with the aim of examining economic restructuring in Australia, its effect on regional and local economic and social structures, the consequences for migrant workers of different

backgrounds, and the trend towards selfemployment and small business activity. Very little research has been done so far in Australia on migrant small business, so that research questions were derived from a review of international literature, particularly from the USA and UK.

Since industrialisation, the proportion of the workforce who are selfemployed or employers has tended to decline. This trend has recently been reversed, and small entrepreneurs are becoming increasingly significant in Western Europe (Boissevain, 1984), the USA (New York Time, 17 April 1988) and Australia (Strahan and Williams, 1989). Ethnic minorities are playing a major role in this revival, which indicates a shift in economic role compared with periods of mass labour migration up to the early 1970s. To explain this, it is necessary to combine a 'macro approach', which examines the structural reasons for growing small business opportunities, with a 'micro approach', which looks at individual reasons for moving from wage-labour to selfemployment, and examines the living and working conditions of those concerned.

Another issue concerns the specific character of businesses run by migrants. Do certain groups have a cultural propensity to pursue certain activities, or to become 'middleman minorities' (Bonacich, 1973 and 1980)? Do 'ethnic niches' arise through structural change and the unwillingness of local people to provide certain types of service (Waldinger, 1986)? Can enclave economies be found in Australia, like the Cuban economy in Miami (Wilson and Martin, 1982)? What is the relationship between cultural, structural and situational factors (Bonacich and Modell, 1980) in the decision of members of ethnic minorities to enter small business? Our hypothesis is that the growth of migrant small business is due primarily to processes of global and local economic restructuring, which is changing labour market opportunity structures in a different way for migrants and locals.

It is important to examine the relationship of small business and large-scale capital, to discover whether small business independence is a reality, or simply a veil for forms of dependence—such as sub-contracting, outwork or franchising—which safeguard profits for large operators, while passing on the risk to small entrepreneurs. It is also of sociological interest to examine the class position of small entrepreneurs of migrant origin, firstly as part of the debate on the nature of the new middle classes (Wright, 1985), secondly to elucidate the relationship between ethnicity, gender and economic position in the process of class formation. Here our hypothesis is that global changes in the division of labour affect both the role of small business, and patterns of labour migration and of employment of ethnic minorities. Our analysis moves from the International to the National level, and then to State (New South Wales), Regional and Local Government level.

A variety of data-sets and types of analysis was used:

- A survey of one hundred and sixty five non-English speaking background small business owners in Marrickville, Leichhardt and Western Sydney, using in depth qualitative interviews.
- Analysis of official statistics, particularly Censuses and Labour Force Surveys.
- The Marrickville Industry Survey, conducted by Marrickville Council in 1965.
- A census of retail establishments in Marrickville, conducted for the project by geography students from Sydney University.

Global Restructuring and Migrant Labour

From 1945 to the early 1970s, large-scale utilisation of relatively low-skilled migrant or ethnic minority labour in virtually all advanced industrial countries led to marked ethnic or racial (as well as gender) segmentation, with concentrations of minority workers in low-skilled manufacturing jobs and certain service occupations (Castles and Kosack, 1973; Piore, 1979; Briggs, 1984; Lever-Tracy and Quinlan, 1988). The recruitment methods, institutional structures and informal practices which combined to produce this segmentation varied, but the result was the same: a labour force in which many local workers were able to obtain upward occupational mobility, while the majority of certain immigrant groups (or of 'native blacks' in the USA) remained in subordinate positions. This corresponded with an accumulation strategy based on developing manufacturing industries in the 'old' industrial centres, and using increased division of labour, deskilling and intensification of work to increase productivity and control the labour force (Castles 1984: Chapter 5).

Absolute barriers to mobility (e.g. through legal restrictions) were rare and short-lived, but the character of migration from underdeveloped peripheral areas to the industrial centres made it possible to maintain a 'helot' labour force (Cohen, 1987) for over thirty years. In Australia mobility was regulated mainly through emphasis on language proficiency and educational credentials. These mechanisms made a shift out of low-skilled manufacturing jobs difficult, though not impossible: a minority of Southern Europeans did become white-collar workers, or set up their own businesses. However, as Lever-Tracy and Quinlan (1988, Chapter 3) show through a cohort analysis, the proportion moving out of manufacturing declined in the 1960s and early 1970s.

Since the mid 1970s there have been major shifts in accumulation strategies both at the international and local levels. These include the decline in manufacturing employment in 'old' industrial areas, the rise of the 'newly industrialising countries' (NICs), the reorganisation of production and distribution within transnational corporations, more

emphasis on control and communication using new technologies, the increased role of globally mobile finance capital, and the enhanced role of 'global cities' as centres of corporate control, finance, marketing and design. All these trends have affected patterns of labour migration, and the position of minority workers within advanced industrial countries.

Patterns of migration have become complex and volatile: they now take place in both directions between the advanced industrial countries and the underdeveloped periphery, as well as within each group of countries. Often political factors are as important as (or indistinguishable from) economic motivations, so that many migrants come as refugees. Some countries (like Italy and Greece) have become countries of immigration after a century or more of mass departures. New destinations for migrant workers burgeon, and sometimes decline as rapidly, like the oil states of the Persian Gulf and West Africa. Labour migration to Western Europe has almost stopped, although the influx of Third World refugees continues to provide a cheap and exploitable labour force. Migration to the USA, on the other hand, is booming, with nearly one million newcomers per year, mostly from Asia and Latin America, many of the latter coming illegally. Now Japan is beginning to experience temporary labour migration.

The growth of manufacturing in NICs generally does not lead to reduced overseas emigration. Rural-urban migration in countries of Latin America and South-East Asia is bound up with the capitalist revolution in agriculture. The transformation of rainforests into woodchips and of arable land into hamburger ranches liberates more peasants than can be absorbed by the new world market factories. So for many the exploding cities of Brazil, Mexico, Korea or India are mere staging posts on the way to Europe, North America, Australia or the Gulf states.

The global cities pull in highly-qualified personnel from all over the world. But they also attract large numbers of low-skilled migrants to service the needs of the new international corporate elite (Sassen-Koob, 1985). This new role for migrant labour corresponds with an emerging polarisation in the labour markets of the developed countries. As manufacturing employment declines, the large blue-collar working class is squeezed from both sides. While demand for highly-trained specialists increases, there are also growing numbers of low-skilled jobs in unregulated and non-unionised branches, such as catering, the retail trades and light manufacturing. The relatively favourable and protected wages and employment conditions achieved by generations of blue-collar trade unionism are being eroded. Those entrants into the labour market who lack the required educational credentials, particularly migrants, members of ethnic minorities and women, find they have to enter low-skilled non-unionised jobs where they have little bargaining power or

security of employment. Typical workplaces are ethnic restaurants, fast-food chains, retailing, garment outwork and sub-contracting in the construction area.

Migrant workers who became concentrated in the manual manufacturing occupations between 1945 and the mid 1970s have borne the brunt of displacement and unemployment. The new migrants of the 1970s and the 1980s have been channelled into the unregulated sectors. The revival of the garment industry in Western Europe, the USA and Australia, after it seemed set to move off-shore, is due to the exploitation of migrant women, whose wages have been forced almost as low as those of their counterparts in Asia and Latin America (Waldinger, 1986; Phizacklea, 1987). The services and public utilities of the great financial centres like New York, Los Angeles, Paris, Frankfurt and Sydney are run by Black, Hispanic, Asian, North African, Turkish and Southern European workers.

New migrations and new patterns of ethnic segmentation are an integral part of the emerging accumulation strategy. For many migrant workers restructuring means insecurity and exploitation, but the volatility and diversity of the economic situation makes upward mobility possible for some. The move into small business—a main theme of this article—is one form which this takes.

Restructuring and Migrant Labour in Australia

For the three decades of the 'long boom' from the Second World War to the mid 1970s, the Australian economy experienced sustained economic growth, full employment and price stability. The 1950s and 1960s saw considerable foreign investment in manufacturing industry and, in the mid 1960s, in the mining industry and services sectors. Such was the insertion of Australia into the increasingly global capitalist network that, of the major industrial countries, only Canada had a greater degree of foreign ownership and control of its resources (Wheelwright, 1974). Immigration was crucial in supplying the labour for this period of economic expansion, providing 60 per cent of the extra workers added to the Australian economy. Moreover, immigration helped sustain domestic demand, especially for consumer durables (Collins, 1975).

Different migrant groups moved into different segments of the labour market. The first large non-British intake—the Eastern European refugees—took jobs deserted by the Australian-born and unwanted by British migrants. This set a trend which was followed in subsequent decades: non-English speaking background (NESB) immigrants provided a source of labour for the unskilled and semi-skilled jobs in this period of manufacturing expansion,

but English speaking background (ESB) migrants were employed in jobs across the occupational and industrial spectrum.

The increasing internationalisation of trade, investment and other financial activities since 1945 has integrated Australia into a global system of trade and finance. However, the very processes which lay behind the economic expansion during the Long Boom became hindrances during the 1970s and 1980s: international crises had severe local consequences in Australia. The 1974-75 and 1981-82 recessions reverberated on the small Australian economy, triggering domestic recession and increases in unemployment. Meanwhile, the structural problems of the economy were exacerbated by foreign ownership and control of Australia's resources.

The 1975 *Jackson Report* into Australian manufacturing reported that there was 'a deep-seated structural malaise' in the manufacturing industry. The Jackson Committee laid much of the blame at the feet of declining foreign investment, suggesting that there had been little net new investment in Australian manufacturing since the mid 1960s (Jackson Report, 1975; Collins and Brezniak, 1977). Since then Australian manufacturing industry has continued to decline, with some two hundred thousand jobs lost in the last decade. Today manufacturing industry employs less than 17% of the Australian workforce (Ewer, Higgins and Stephens, 1987).

These structural problems and the resulting restructuring of the Australian economy have a direct impact on Australia's current and future immigrants. Manufacturing's decline is one of the major reasons behind the persistently high unemployment rates for NESB men and women, especially immigrants from countries such as Vietnam and Lebanon. Moreover, there is a regional dimension to these problems. For instance the Illawarra region has suffered particularly: one estimate suggested that for every job lost in the Port Kembla steel industry 3.81 jobs throughout the Illawarra region would be lost (Mangan and Guest, 1983: 34). NES immigrants have borne the brunt of the unemployment in the Illawarra region, as they have in other regions. It is notable that the overseas-born population in the Illawarra region actually declined by 2.4 % in the inter-censal period 1981-86.

In the clothing, footwear and textiles industry, where 80 per cent of employees are NESB immigrants—mostly women—structural change is also eroding the employment base. The Federal Government is committed to reducing the high tariff protection in these industries. This will not only lead to many NESB migrant women losing their jobs, but have an adverse impact on those regions and country towns dependent on the clothing or textile factory as the major employer. Increasing unemployment, and increase in part-time work, sub-contracting, out-work seems to be the inevitable consequence.

These structural changes not only affect newly arrived NESB immigrants, who find it hard to get work in declining industries, but also immigrants who have been in Australia for decades, especially older migrants. As the *ROMAMPAS Report* (1986: 51) put it:

Changes in the economy and the manufacturing sector in particular, are disproportionately affecting immigrants who have been in Australia for a long period of time—some twenty years and longer. These middle aged and older immigrants are facing, and have experienced, retrenchment at a time when they are least able to adapt to or acquire new employment or ... have had no occasion to acquire greater proficiency in English or new skills.

Sustained youth unemployment is another feature of the restructuring Australian economy. Migrant youth bear a disproportionate burden. In 1984, for example, the rate of unemployment of overseas-born youth aged fifteen to nineteen years was 25% higher than for the Australian-born, while for overseas born people for between twenty to twenty five years of age unemployment was 50% higher than the Australian-born (Castles *et al.*, 1986).

These problems of structural change have implications for all Australians. However NESB migrants are over-represented among the unemployed and under-represented among the new job takers, as the next section will demonstrate. In other words, the underlying structural change in the economy threatens the jobs of many existing immigrants, and erodes the employment base into which many future immigrants would be expected to be employed. While in the long-term the Australian economy may be more efficient after structural change has occurred, in the short-term increased NES migrant unemployment is likely. Even if the very recent injection of investment into Australia's manufacturing sector continues, the trend to increasing casualisation, sub-contracting, part-time and out-work will probably be increased.

Migrant Employment and Unemployment—Recent Trends

► In the post-war period, migrant labour filled more than five out of every ten jobs created in Australia. Today foreign-born men and women comprise one quarter of the Australian workforce, significantly greater than in any major industrial society other than Israel and Switzerland (Collins 1988: 5). Moreover, second and later generation migrants add to the labour force impact of migrant labour in Australia.

The Australian labour market is highly segmented by area of origin and gender. Collins (1978) identifies four main segments: men born in Australia or ESB countries, who mainly have white-collar, skilled or supervisory jobs; men from NESB backgrounds who are highly concentrated in manual manufacturing jobs; Australian-born and ESB women, disproportionately in sales and services; and NESB women who tend to get the worst jobs

with the poorest conditions. A detailed analysis of the Melbourne labour market by Lever-Tracy and Quinlan (1988) shows extremely high concentration of Southern European workers in manual manufacturing jobs, leading the authors to speak of a 'South European occupational ghetto'.

The 1986 Census gives evidence of continuing segmentation. For instance taking the figure 100 as the base for the average representation of women in the manufacturing industry, high degrees of over representation are found for those born in Vietnam (494), Turkey (437), Yugoslavia (358) and Greece (315). On the other hand women born in the USA (63), Malaysia (64), Canada (68) and Australia (79) are under-represented. In the clothing industry, women born in Vietnam, Turkey, Cyprus and Greece are over represented by a factor of between eight and twelve times. Turks, Greeks and Vietnamese are under-represented in service industries. The 1986 Census also confirms a high degree of occupational and industrial segmentation for male NESB workers (Collins, 1988: 82-85).

Segmentation is even more pronounced in regions such as Sydney, which are receiving a disproportionately large share of newly-arrived NESB migrants. Migrants born in Southern Europe, West Asia, Other Asia and South America are even more likely to be employed in the labourers, plant and machine and trades occupations in Sydney than they are in NSW as a whole. The 1986 data shows that similar patterns of labour market segmentation are evident for the Hunter and Illawarra regions of New South Wales (Collins, 1989).

However, there are important exceptions to these patterns of labour market segmentation in Australia. For example, for the Hunter and Illawarra regions of NSW in 1986, migrants born in West Asia had a high representation in the Managerial and Administrative and the Professional occupations showing the complex and often contradictory nature of the incorporation of migrant labour in Australia (Collins, 1989).

One of the sites of incorporation of migrant labour into the Australian labour market which many migrants did not anticipate was the unemployment queues. Australia-wide unemployment rates for the overseas-born and the Australian-born were fairly similar for the 1970s. In the early 1980s, when unemployment exceeded 10% for the first time in fifty years, the rate for the overseas-born tended to be two percentage points higher than the Australian-born (Collins, 1988: 163).

Table 1 shows unemployment rates in NSW for the years 1984-87 by birthplace and gender. The most striking feature is the disproportionately high rates of unemployment for newly-arrived NES migrants. While Greek, Italian and British-born migrants suffer unemployment to a similar extent to the Australian-born, other NESB migrants exhibit

much higher rates. This is particularly the case of the Lebanese-born and the Vietnamese-born migrants. In 1987, 36.8% of Vietnamese-born males, and 32.3% of females, were unemployed. The unemployment rates for the Lebanese born are even higher, with the 1987 figure 36.9% for males and 44.4% for females. The Australian-born rates were 8.1% and 8.2% respectively. In other words, NSW unemployment rates for Lebanese and Vietnamese-born migrants are four times or more that of the Australian born.

Females in NSW generally have higher rates of unemployment than males, irrespective of birthplace. The exceptions to this rule in 1987 were New Zealanders, Vietnamese and Yugoslavs.

TABLE 1: NSW UNEMPLOYMENT RATES BY BIRTHPLACE AND GENDER, 1984-87.

Country of Birth	Males				Females			
	1984	1985	1986	1987	1984	1985	1986	1987
Australia	13.3	8.7	7.7	8.1	9.0	8.6	8.3	8.2
Greece	10.4	8.5	11.4	7.6	13.2	9.2	12.1	10.1
Italy	9.1	5.9	7.5	2.4	6.6	3.9	5.5	13.9
Lebanon	33.8	26.9	21.8	36.8	38.9	42.9	33.3	44.4
New Zealand	10.2	11.7	13.5	13.6	6.1	14.1	9.4	12.2
UK	7.9	6.9	6.3	3.7	7.4	4.8	5.6	8.5
Vietnam	39.0	25.0	11.1	36.8	39.0	34.3	16.7	32.3
Yugoslavia	16.5	10.7	10.5	13.2	19.2	16.8	4.3	11.4

Source: Collins (1989).

It is important to note that official figures seriously underestimate the real extent of unemployment. According to various studies, the number of people who wish to work, but who are not officially registered as unemployed is between 50 and 100 per cent of the volume of official unemployment. (Whitfield, 1987). Economists Paul Stricker and Paul Sheehan suggested in 1981 that the rate of hidden unemployment is approximately two to three times greater for migrants (especially NESB migrants) than for the Australian-born (Stricker and Sheehan, 1981: 71).

It is also important to disaggregate NSW migrant unemployment statistics by period of arrival. The conventional wisdom is that higher rates of unemployment for some migrants is a problem only in the first few years of settlement (BLMR, 1986). However, analysis of NSW unemployment by period-of-arrival cohorts shows that in 1987 unemployment rates were higher for those who arrived in NSW in the period 1971-75 than for those who arrived in the later period 1976-80. Moreover, the unemployment rate of ES migrants who arrived during the period 1971-75 was twice as high as the unemployment rate for ES migrants who arrived in the period since 1981. NESB migrants who arrived in the years 1971-75 had only a slightly lower unemployment rate than did those NESB migrants who arrived after 1981 (Collins, 1989).

The evidence suggests that migrant labour is incorporated into the Australian labour market in a complex and contradictory way as cyclical recovery intersects with fundamental structural change in the Australian economy in the 1980s. Persistent patterns of labour market segmentation, whereby NESB migrant men and women are disproportionately concentrated in the manual unskilled and semi-skilled jobs of the declining manufacturing sector, has meant that NESB unemployment rates are disproportionately high. This is despite a recent period of over five years of economic and employment growth in Australia, suggesting that restructuring has eroded fundamentally the sites of incorporation of NESB migrant labour in Australia, while expanding employment opportunities for the Australian-born and ESB migrant workers who are more concentrated in the growing services sector.

Migrant Women: Outwork and Marginalisation

In the post-war period women have increasingly entered the workforce. In 1988 for the first time the labour force participation rate for women aged 15-60 exceeded 50%. In New South Wales this trend is also evident. In August 1976 females accounted for 35.2% of the NSW labour force. By August 1986 this had increased to 39.1%. Over this decade, the female labour force increased by nearly one third while the male workforce increased by one tenth. Women have higher rates of unemployment, greater presence among part-time workers and earn lower wages than males in NSW (Women's Directorate, 1987).

Most of the growth in employment has been for part-time jobs, a trend noticeable in all capitalist countries as economies are restructured. In NSW about one third of the female workforce is made up of part-time workers, while the male workforce is predominantly (90%) composed of full-time workers. Over half of female workers born in Greece and Italy were part-timers in 1987, as were over one third of those born in Britain and Australia. However, only one fifth of Vietnamese-born women, and just over one tenth of Lebanese-born women, were part-timers in 1987. Over the period 1984-87, the number of Italian-born women in part-time work increased by 70%, Vietnamese-born by 44% and that of Greek-born women by 35%. Increases for New Zealand and UK born women were also notable, with increases of 18% and 10% respectively. On the other hand, the proportion of Yugoslavian-born women who were part-timers fell by 30% and Lebanese-born women by 20% (Collins, 1989).

One problem facing NESB immigrant women in Australia relates to their growing presence in outwork. While it is impossible to know the exact incidence, it has been estimated that there are between 30-40,000 outworkers in the clothing industry alone. Studies point to the

concentration of NESB women in outwork in industries such as textiles, footwear, electronics, packing and food and groceries (Nord, 1983, Centre for Working Women Co-Operative Limited, 1986). Outworkers work in the home, are generally not unionised or covered by award conditions. They are perhaps the most exploited of all sections of the Australian workforce.

For migrant women, the growth of outwork is often related to the problem of inadequate childcare facilities. But the main reason for the growth of outwork and of part-time work is economic restructuring. In industries such as clothing, footwear and textiles, outwork expands as a result of tariff reductions and new computer-based technologies which align production closer to demand trends. Outwork is not the sole preserve of women. In the services sector, computer workstations, linked via modems to the national and international economies, open up opportunities for greater home-based employment of both sexes. In other sectors of the economy, such as the predominantly male construction and transport industries, sub-contracting has increased significantly. The movement of an increasing number of workers out of wage labour into 'outwork', 'self-employment' or 'sub contracting' masks the increasing marginalisation and exploitation of these workers resulting from global economic restructuring.

Small Business and Economic Restructuring

The small business sector of the Australian economy has been generally ignored in the discussions of economic restructuring yet it accounts for nearly half of all employment in the private sector. According to the definition of the Australian Bureau of Statistics, small businesses are those enterprises which employ less than twenty employees. Small business comprise 83% of all enterprises in Australia. In 1986-87, there were 580,900 small businesses in Australia: 95% of all Australian private non-agricultural enterprises and 83% of all enterprises in Australia. These small enterprises employed 44% of private sector wage and salary workers. The small business sector embraces the majority of those classified as self-employed and employers (ABS, 1988).

Taken by industry, the construction and retail trade industries have the highest proportion of small businesses. Together with the finance, property and business services industry, and the agricultural sector, these industries account for two thirds of small businesses in Australia. More than 70% of persons employed in the construction industry were employed in small businesses, as were over 50% of those employed in the retail trade, transport and storage and recreation industries. The mining industry had the lowest proportion of workers.

employed in small businesses (10%), with the manufacturing industry the next lowest (22%).

There has been a noticeable growth in both the number of small enterprises in Australia and the persons employed by them over the last few years. The ABS (1988) estimates that for the period 1983-84 to 1986-87 there was an increase of 15% in the number of all enterprises in Australia and a 13% increase in the persons employed by them. There was an equivalent growth in the number of small enterprises. In many cases, self-employment is a euphemism for sub-contracting or outworking, a more marginal form of wage-labour encouraged by economic restructuring.

Over the period 1983-84 to 1986-87, the number of self employed in Australia grew by 81,900 or 12% to 792,300. The greatest growth in the number of self-employed was in the finance, property and business services industry (25% growth) and the recreation, personal and other services industries (19%). The construction, transport and storage and community services industries exceeded the national average. Self employment in the manufacturing industry grew by 10%, while it declined in the retail trade and wholesale trade industries.

Ethnic Small Business

What has been the impact of immigration on small businesses in Australia? In 1947, immediately prior to the great waves of post-war immigration, more than one half of the workforce of migrants born in Greece, Poland and Italy were self-employed or employers. Similarly, more than one-third of the German-born, Maltese-born and Yugoslav-born in the workforce were either employers or self-employed. Only one fifth of the Australian-born workforce were classified in this way (Collins 1988:93). The waves of post-war migrant intake were, of course, mainly destined to become wage-labourers. In 1981 16.4% of the Australian-born male workforce were self-employed or employers, a decline of one fifth on 1947. Overall, the overseas-born average was very similar, with 15.8% self-employed or employers.

Data from the 1986 Census for NSW enables a greater appreciation of recent changes to the migrant small business sector. As Table 2 shows, there is considerable variation by birthplace. The benchmark is the proportion of the Australian-born workforce in NSW that are self-employed (10.9% of males and 7.1% of females) or employers (6.9% of males and 4.5% of females). Those born in countries in West Asia appear to have the highest proportional representation: 15.5% of males in self-employment and 13.3% of females. Next highest are Other Europe (14.7% and 10.4% respectively), Southern Europe (13.9% and 10.4%) and East Asia (11.2% and 9.8%). Migrants born in East Asia have the highest

representation as employers of all NSW birthplace groups, with 12.6% of East Asian males and 8.3% of East Asian females in the NSW workforce employers. They are followed by migrants from Other Europe (9.3% and 6.8% respectively), West Asia (9.3% and 6.4%) and Southern Europe (8.1% and 5.8%).

TABLE 2: PERCENTAGE OF WORKFORCE SELF-EMPLOYED AND EMPLOYER, MALE AND FEMALE, NEW SOUTH WALES, 1986, BY CONTINENTAL BIRTHPLACE

Birthplace	Self Employed		Employer	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Australia	10.9	7.1	6.9	4.5
UK and Eire	9.6	6.0	5.3	3.7
Oceania	10.9	7.0	6.8	4.8
Southern Europe	13.9	10.4	8.1	5.8
Other Europe	14.7	10.4	9.3	6.8
Total Europe	12.2	8.2	7.2	5.0
East Asia	11.2	9.8	12.6	8.3
South East Asia	5.1	4.4	5.0	2.8
South Asia	6.8	5.0	7.7	4.5
West Asia	15.5	13.3	9.3	6.4
Total Asia	9.7	7.5	8.3	5.0
South America	7.4	4.7	3.1	2.2
Other America	10.2	7.1	6.8	4.5
Total America	8.7	5.8	4.7	3.3
Africa	7.7	5.8	8.8	3.9
TOTAL	11.0	7.2	7.0	4.5

Source: 1986 Census.

The birthplace group with by far the highest proportional representation among the self-employed in NSW, as Table 3 shows, was the Koreans: 22.3% of males were self-employed as were 19.6% of females. This is more than twice the average of the Australian-born. Other birthplaces with a high presence of self-employed are Greece (18.7% and 15.7%), Israel (17.2% and 15.8%), the Netherlands (17.0% and 11.1%), Italy (16.9% and 13.0%), Hungary (16.5% and 14.5%) and Cyprus (15.8% for males and 13.7% for females). All these birthplace groups have at least 50% more self-employed males, and nearly 100% more females, than the Australian-born. Other birthplaces with high representation are Syria, USA, Estonia, Germany, China and New Zealand.

Many birthplace groups had a much higher proportional representation as employers in NSW. China is the birthplace with most employers: 17.3% of males and 11.2% of females. This is approximately three times the Australian-born figure. Other birthplace groups with approximately twice the Australian-born workforce presence as employers are the Hungarians (17.3% and 11.2%), Israelis (14.0% and 10.7%) and Greeks (13.0% and 10.1% respectively). Among the other birthplace groups, Italians, Dutch, South Africans and Syrians have at least fifty per cent more employers than the Australian-born.

TABLE 3: PERCENTAGE OF WORKFORCE SELF-EMPLOYED AND EMPLOYER, MALE AND FEMALE, NEW SOUTH WALES, 1986, BY SELECTED BIRTHPLACE

Birthplace	Self Employed		Employer	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Australia	10.9	7.1	6.9	4.5
China	12.3	10.7	17.3	11.2
Cyprus	15.8	13.7	11.8	9.5
Estonia	14.8	10.1	8.4	4.3
Germany	14.2	10.2	8.4	6.5
Greece	18.7	15.7	13.0	10.1
Hungary	16.5	14.5	14.0	10.7
Israel	17.2	15.8	14.0	7.9
Italy	16.9	13.0	10.5	7.2
Korea	22.3	19.6	8.5	6.1
Lebanon	17.8	15.6	9.3	8.3
Netherlands	17.0	11.4	10.0	7.8
New Zealand	11.2	5.3	6.4	3.0
Poland	9.4	7.3	6.0	4.1
South Africa	8.8	6.5	11.8	3.9
Syria	4.4	14.2	11.6	10.9
Turkey	8.7	8.4	5.9	3.5
UK & Eire	9.9	6.0	5.6	3.7
USA	11.3	7.9	6.6	4.7
Vietnam	4.3	5.6	2.8	3.3
Yugoslavia	9.1	4.6	4.3	2.4
TOTAL	11.0	7.2	7.0	4.5

Source: 1986 Census

Considerable details on the ethnic make-up of small businesses in Australia is lost in aggregation of statistics. Take the retail industry. Fruit and vegetable stores are by far the greatest area of concentration for Italians, who account for nearly one third of all self-employed and employers in fruit and vegetable shops. Shoe repairers have the next highest concentration of Italians (19.7% of the self-employed and 14% of employers), followed by liquor stores (15.7% of the self-employed and 12.2% of employers), and menswear shops (12.1% of the self-employed and 4.4% of employers). In other areas of retail, Italians exceed 5% of the small businesses. These include butchers, smash repairers, service stations, clothing, fabric and furniture stores (Collins, 1988).

The Ethnic Small Business Study

Qualitative interviews with migrant entrepreneurs in the retail, manufacturing and services sectors were carried out by bilingual interviewers in Marrickville—Sydney's most multicultural suburb with half its 82,000 people born overseas—and other inner western suburbs. The one hundred and sixty five small business owners included older migrant groups—thirty Greeks and forty six Italians—and more recent arrivals—thirty five Lebanese, eighteen Latin Americans and thirty six Indochinese. Respondents were asked

about their work history (both before and since migration), the ethnic composition of their clientele and suppliers, the independence of their firms, working conditions, problems of setting up and running a business, family involvement, geographical and social mobility (including intergenerational mobility), and the impact of their work on other aspects of their lives.

The questionnaires provide individual and family histories of small entrepreneurs. These show a great variety of backgrounds and experiences, which make generalisations difficult. Pre-migration occupations included farming, manual workers, government employment (including police and army) as well as small business. Lack of English, local knowledge and recognised qualifications forced most new migrants into factory work—which often represented considerable downward mobility. The enormous sacrifices needed to save enough starting capital while doing a low-paid job, and the continued hard work and long hours once the business was started, appeared to be an acceptable price to get out of the factory and to give better opportunities to the next generation. Sometimes it was retrenchment which forced people to set up a business as the only alternative to the dole. About a fifth of our sample had experienced unemployment. This varied according to time of arrival: about one in ten of those who had arrived during the long boom had been unemployed at some stage, compared with one in six of those who arrived in the 1970s, and one in three of those coming in the 1980s. Experience of unemployment was lowest for the Italians (early arrivals) and Latin Americans (more recent arrivals) and highest for Lebanese and Vietnamese (recent arrivals), so time of arrival is not the only factor.

Our study showed that migrant entrepreneurs in Sydney do not create an 'ethnic enclave'. Neither are there areas dominated by one single immigrant group, nor are there many businesses whose suppliers and/or customers are mainly co-ethnics. The principle exception is the small-scale retail sector, where a number of food shops do cater mainly for the needs of particular groups (e.g. Asian food). On the other hand, there do appear to be 'ethnic niches', i.e. areas where opportunity structures favour high participation of migrants. These are of two kinds: firstly services catering for the general public, but where products are linked to ethnic cultures (Asian restaurants, Greek delis); secondly economic branches where entry conditions are favourable to newcomers (hot bread shops, coffee shops, hairdressers, petrol stations). This may be because little start-up capital is required, there is no need for licensing or recognition of qualifications, because the nature of the business does not provide significant economies of scale (compare Waldinger, 1986). Of course, the very ease of access to a sector is also a disadvantage: it makes for tough competition with hungry newcomers, leading to low returns and the need for long working hours and reliance on family labour power.

Competition was a major business problem: new supermarkets were a nightmare for small groceries, although some responded by specialising in certain products, or offering services such as credit, delivery or late opening. Turnover was often low, though about three quarters of the firms had made a profit in the previous year. Business hazards experienced by respondents included fires, complaints from neighbours (in the case of restaurants) and financial difficulties. One in ten of our respondents had previously gone out of business. Migrants often said they had found it hard to get credit for starting capital, due to lack of local knowledge, lack of collateral and sometimes discrimination. Rotating credit associations, based on solidarity within the ethnic community (such as the Cantonese 'Hui') were sometimes a source of capital. Most respondents had obtained their initial capital through hard work at low wages, combined with frugal living. Some respondents reported difficulties in getting bank loans, or having to get credit in the form of a second mortgage on their homes, rather than as a business loan. Difficulties in getting capital are one reason why ethnic small businesses are generally labour-intensive, and in areas requiring relatively small investments.

Many immigrant entrepreneurs saw starting a business as a way to become independent: 60% of our sample gave this as a motivation for setting up. This independence was often more apparent than real: in a complex modern economy, the petite bourgeoisie is part of complex chain of interaction with large-scale industry, both in Australia and overseas. The isolation and weakness of the individual small business means that business decisions such as product design, pricing and marketing are often dictated by large customers or suppliers—the risk is borne by the small business, while most of the profit goes to the large one. The small business can only survive by cutting profit margins, by demanding long hours of work from proprietor and workers, and sometimes by passing on work to even more dependent people, namely outworkers. This applies most in the clothing industry, where prices are set by the large retail chains, and where the isolation of outworkers and strong competition between small subcontractors makes the small business highly vulnerable (TNC, 1985). Delays in payment were often a serious problem in this area. The main form of 'freedom' permitted within this net of financial dependence was, as several of the respondents pointed out, to work late into the night finishing orders. The retail stores on the other hand appeared to be more similar to the traditional petit-bourgeois form. They were owner-operated, prices were determined by the storekeeper, there was some choice of suppliers, and no single predominant customer. Other businesses were partially dependent on other firms: service stations were in franchise relationships with petrol suppliers, a Vietnamese bookshop ran a franchised photo-processing machine. But other parts of the business (auto-repairs and sale of drinks and food at the garage, books in the bookshop) were run in an autonomous way.

The price of freedom (whether illusory or real) is high: long working hours, few holidays, the need for unpaid work by the whole family. Hardly any of the people interviewed worked less than forty five hours per week, and forty per cent worked over sixty hours per week. Some respondents had another full-time job in addition to the business. Nor was it the recent arrivals who were constrained to work longest: Greeks were most highly represented among the 'over 60 hours' group, with Italians and Latin Americans least likely to work so long, and the Vietnamese and Lebanese in between. One man worked from 3 am. to 7 pm. six days a week and only slightly less on Sundays. Holidays were rare, with about 11% saying they 'never' took holidays. Only about one third of respondents had a holiday in the previous two years. One Italian shopkeeper said that the only time she took holidays was when she was giving birth to children.

About seventy five per cent of the businesses in our sample were 'family businesses' in that they had at least two family members working there, while one in seven had four or more family members involved. In shops or restaurants the labour of the whole family is often utilised, with husband and wife working long hours and the children helping out after school or in the holidays. Most of the businesses employed exclusively family members, including members of the extended family. A few had other employees, generally non-unionised and employed on a casual basis. Members of the nuclear family generally receive no individual payment. Work by members of the extended family may be paid, though not at very high rates; sometimes the return on labour is perceived in the on-the job training gained, which may be used in setting up an independent business (compare Lovell-Troy, 1980).

Our findings correspond with those of Strahan and Williams (1989) on the importance of family support in running small enterprises. But then the predominant motivation of the owners is to provide a better future for their children, so to expect the child to participate in the work does not seem unfair. The immigrant entrepreneurs are very realistic about the selfexploitation involved in their work: very few want their children to follow in their footsteps. The aim is tertiary education and then a shift into professional or executive employment. This aim is not unrealistic and seems, for those who are successful, to justify the sacrifices. Their economic perspective is not an individualistic one, but rather an intergenerational one. Many small entrepreneurs fail, so the risk and the hard work do not always pay off. But the alternative—remaining in blue collar work—is not very attractive either.

This finding corresponds with research results in the USA and Western Europe: many descendants of the small business groups of earlier immigrations have achieved a transition to white-collar employment. In Australia, second generation Greek and Polish migrants do

have about the same rate of professional employment as the Australian-born population, although Italians and Maltese have less intergenerational mobility into the professions (Collins, 1988: 190). This success is a powerful argument against cultural explanations of immigrant small business. If there were a cultural predisposition towards business involvement, it would persist over generations. Yet this is clearly not the case. It seems rather that the migration process itself often results in downward social mobility: former small business owners, government officials, white collar workers have to work in factories in Australia, either due to lack of language proficiency, lack of local knowledge, non-recognition of qualifications or discrimination. One way of overcoming this 'blocked mobility' is setting up a small business. But the human cost is high and the strategy may not pay off until the next generation. The grain of truth in the cultural argument may lie in the claim that migrants with small business experience in their families may be better at setting up businesses, or have better contacts to get started. Once started, as Strahan and Williams (1989) point out, those with experience tend to be more successful.

In sum, we found little evidence for cultural explanations of small business activity. 'Ethnic predilections' may affect the choice of business activity to some extent, and 'ethnic solidarity' may play a part in providing capital or establishing business networks, but the crucial factor seems to be the opportunity structures provided by the economy at a specific point in time. Small business activity in general is increasing at the moment for reasons explored above. Immigrants participate in this trend, and, indeed, are often over represented, but this is because their opportunities of mobility through other channels are blocked. Small business, on the other hand, is a possible way out of factory work. The choice of type or business venture may have an ethnic dimension, but it is more strongly influenced by other factors: capital required, absence of barriers (such as licensing requirements), market opportunities, possession of necessary skills and the like. Our evidence leads us to support a combination of structural and situational approaches: changing economic structures provide new niches for small business; the situation of particular immigrant groups makes them able and willing to fill them.

Conclusions

The analysis presented in this article demonstrates the complexity of the process through which migrant labour is incorporated in the Australian economy. The changes in global economic patterns in the last two decades have led to major shifts in industrial siting, technology, organisation, capital flows and labour migrations. The direction of migratory flows has changed, and so have the characteristics of migrants, in terms of areas of origin, previous experience, motivations for migration and possession of human capital. At the

same time, there is a trend towards polarisation in the labour markets of developed countries, with the blue-collar working class being squeezed from both sides: the number of highly-trained specialised personnel increases, but so does the number of workers in unregulated, non-unionised, casualised workplaces. Migrant workers are being incorporated in both these sectors, according to their legal and social status, and their possession of credentials.

The main site of incorporation for migrants between 1945 and the early 1970— manual jobs in manufacturing—has been eroded through restructuring. Older migrants have been displaced, becoming unemployed or leaving the workforce, while new migrants and young people have not been able to find work in the traditional entry sectors. The result is high rates of unemployment for new arrivals from some areas, and proliferation of casual or informal sector-type unemployment. NESB migrant women have been particularly affected, often being compelled to take insecure part-time jobs or to do outwork.

Economic restructuring leads to a growth of self-employment and small business. Members of certain ethnic groups are over-represented as small entrepreneurs. On the basis of our research in inner Sydney, we argue that this is partly because of the desire for independence and social mobility, but that this should not be seen as a cultural characteristic of specific ethnic groups. Rather, small enterprise is often a response to blocked mobility or indeed a strategy of desperation in response to lack of alternative opportunities.

The evidence presented here is relevant to a number of intersecting theoretical debates: on changing global political economy, and its effects on work and social structure; on changes in migratory patterns and forms of structural incorporation in developed countries; on the resurgence of small entrepreneurship and the special role of ethnic minorities in this trend. There is no space for the necessary detailed discussion here, but the sort of changes described above reinforce the need for a reworking of class analysis. Marxist theories which have traditionally ignored the petite bourgeoisie as a conservative remnant of pre-capitalist social relations need to be re-examined (Mandel, 1968; Poulantzas, 1975), but so do approaches which concentrate on manufacturing workers as 'productive labour' with a unique position in class structure (Lever-Tracy and Quinlan, 1988). Wright's approach seems more useful: he views classes as 'rooted in the complex intersection of three forms of exploitation: exploitation based on the ownership of capital assets, the control of organisation assets and the possession of skill or credential assets' (Wright, 1985: 283). Using this approach it becomes clear that many people are in what Wright refers to as 'contradictory class locations', which has important consequences for consciousness, behaviour and political mobilisation.

The next step would be to apply such criteria to the empirical evidence on small business in general (see Sutcliffe and Kitay, 1988 for a very useful discussion) and migrant small business in particular. What is likely to emerge is the understanding that there are no rigid economic divisions between small and large enterprises: rather there are complex chains of interdependence and dominance. In the same way there are no rigid sociological divisions between migrant wage workers and small entrepreneurs. Migrants become entrepreneurs because changing economic structures make this the only viable strategy. They often find that the freedom they seek is illusory, and that their economic situation is no less marginal than before. Further research is needed to examine the consequence of this for political attitudes and behaviour.

Note: We use the terms 'ethnic', 'migrant' and 'minority' small business interchangeably in this paper.

Ch.3. References

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CHAPTER 4

MINIMISING DIVERSITY EMPLOYER'S ATTITUDES AND PRACTISES TOWARDS OVERSEAS TRAINED PROFESSIONALS, MANAGERS AND TECHNICIANS *

Robyn R. Iredale

Introduction

Australian Government Policy on Selecting Skilled Immigrants

The Government's emphasis in its immigration policy, until the changes announced in May 1992, on obtaining skilled labour from overseas is not a new previous policy but rather a continuation of past policies, albeit with greater zest. From the 1950s, Australia has been attempting to attract skilled migrants from overseas. The growth of the manufacturing sector meant that skilled workers were needed, along with unskilled workers. Shortages of skilled labour continued into the 1960s, due to inadequate domestic training programs and high rates of return migration of immigrants. In 1968 Thomas commented that 'immigration policy has come to resemble tariffs as a flexible instrument for maximising national advantage' (1968: 4).

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s the importation of skills continued and escalated as progressively more refined means of selecting skilled workers were introduced. Analysis of the Department of Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs (DILGEA) statistics on skill categories of settler arrivals for three years, shown in Table 1, confirms this trend.

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TABLE 1: LEVEL OF SKILL OF SETTLER ARRIVALS, 1987-88, 1989-90 AND 1990-91

Level of Skill	1987-88		1989-90		1990-91	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Professional & Technical	18,292	12.7	18,791	15.5	19,393	15.9
Skilled Trades	9,345	6.5	10,613	8.8	10,348	8.5
Clerical & Administrative	14,333	10.0	9,857	8.1	11,960	9.8
Semi-Skilled	19,348	13.5	11,658	9.6	5,226	4.3
Unskilled	5,109	3.6	3,880	3.2	3,192	2.6
N. S. /Not Employed	1,550	1.1	2,731	2.3	2,230	1.8
Sub-Total Workers	67,977	47.4	57,530	47.5	63,106	51.9
Not in Work Force	75,513	52.6	63,697	52.5	58,582	48.1
Total	143,490	100.0	121,227	100.0	121,688	100.0

Source: Bureau of Immigration Research 1991 *Australia's Population Trends and Prospects 1990*, p. 41.

The proportion of the workforce intake that was in the Professional and Technical skilled category rose steadily from 12.7% in 1987-88 to 15.5% in 1989-90 and 15.9% in 1990-91. The overall numbers did not change very much but the total intake fell during this three year period thereby enabling a proportionate increase in this category of skilled labour. Compared with the early 1980s, when for example 8,190 people entered in the Professional and Technical skilled category in 1982 representing 9% of the intake, the proportion is now higher. According to the Bureau of Immigration Research (1992: 3), 15,577 Professionals arrived as settlers during 1990-91: 52% in the Independent category, 21% in the Concessional category, 13% in the Preferential category and 4% from New Zealand.

The categories of the actual immigration intake for 1990-91 and the projected outcome for 1991-92 are shown in Table 2. Skilled migrants come into Australia in two main categories: Skilled Migration and Concessional. Within the Skilled Migration category the Independent is the largest and consists of people who are points tested. Concessional family applicants are also points tested.

TABLE 2: MIGRATION OUTCOMES 1990-91, PROJECTED PROGRAMS 1991-92 AND 1992-93

Eligibility Category	1990-91	1991-92	
Family Migration	53,934	56,000	45.0
Preferential Family	31,412	37,000	39.0
Concessional Family	22,522	19,000	6.0
Skilled Migration	48,882	42,500	23.8
Employer Nominations	6,651	7,000	5.2
Business Migration	8,118	5,000	5.0
Special Talents	461	500	0.2
Independents	33,652	30,000	13.4
Humanitarian Component	7,745	12,000	10.0
Special Eligibility	2,274	5,000	1.2
Total	112,835	111,000	80.0

Note: New Zealand citizens who do not need visas are excluded from the table though 8,338 arrived in 1990-91.

Table 2 shows that in 1990-91, approximately 56,000 people migrated to Australia in the Independent and Concessional categories, out of a total intake of 112,835. In 1991-92, the planned figure for these two categories is 49,000 out of a planned total intake of 111,000. The planned intake for 1991-92 is not expected to be reached, according to the Minister for Immigration, the Hon. Gerry Hand (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 March 1992: 3), so it reasonable to assume less than 49,000 will enter in these two categories.

There has been strong pressure on the Keating Labor Government to lower the intake in the Independent category, in particular. The ACTU pressed for a reduction of eight thousand in this category with a complementary increase of five thousand for occupations in demand or for people with guaranteed employment (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 March 1992: 3). A recent report prepared for the Parliamentary Research Service by Birrell, Healy and Smith (1992: 35), *Migration Selection During the Recession* argues for the abolition of the points tested Independent and Concessional categories as they enable the entry of 'non-targeted additions to the skilled workforce'.

The success of the government's immigration program depends not just on numbers but also on whether the people selected integrate appropriately into the labour market. This is a function of a number of factors: first, the economic conditions, second, the degree of regulation of the labour market and third, how employers view imported skilled labour vis a vis locally trained skilled workers. This paper is concerned with the latter but before describing the research method and the results of this project, it is important to describe the processes that skilled workers from overseas may need to go through before they can enter the Australian labour market.

Regulation and Recognition

Australia has one of the most highly regulated labour markets in the world. Entry to many occupations is formally controlled by the need for an accredited training program and/or the need for membership of a professional or trade union. Moreover, legislation exists in some occupations to enable entry only of those who are registered or licensed.

Where registration exists, 'formal' recognition of an overseas qualification is required: either by automatic recognition of that training, by a test or by some period of supervised work or practice. Entry into twelve professional occupations is controlled by the requirement of some legal form of registration or licensing. Registration with the appropriate authority, either Commonwealth or State Government, must be achieved before employment can be obtained.

Most technical or para-professional occupations do not have formal entry requirements: registration boards for dental technicians, radiographers and occupational therapists are exceptions. Licensing is most common in trade occupations, such as in the electrical wiring or contracting and the plumbing trades.

Where there is no requirement for formal registration or licensing, the achievement of employment constitutes 'informal' recognition of prior training and/or experience. This is mostly in the hands of the employer. The employer may require proof of certification, such as a certificate stipulating a particular degree or diploma or membership of a professional or other body.

The subject of this paper is this second issue: employers' attitudes to overseas trained professionals, managers and technicians, where formal recognition is not mandatory. The common perception of highly skilled workers from overseas is that employers discriminate against them because of their ethnicity or race. A brief statistical profile of highly skilled immigrants in the Australian labour market will be presented first as a background to this study.

Employment Outcomes for Highly Skilled Workers

The 1990 figures for professionals and para-professionals confirm a high degree of downward occupational mobility after arrival in Australia. The situation is of course aggravated by the economic circumstances but the level of downward mobility is not just due to short term economic conditions. The real downturn in the economy occurred in 1991 and at the time of the ABS survey in September 1990 the most serious consequences had not been felt. At that time the national unemployment rate was 6.8% compared to 9.4% in mid 1991 and 10.5% in 1992.

(1) Employment and Unemployment

The September 1990 *Labour Force Status and Other Characteristics of Migrants* survey, conducted by the ABS, contains recent information on the labour force status of immigrants who arrived in Australia after 1970 aged eighteen and over (ABS, 1991: 12). Table 3 provides details on labour force status by level of educational attainment on arrival for two groups relevant to this study: those with a degree and those with a certificate or diploma. The latter category is broad as it may include those with technical qualifications as well as those with lower level certificates and diplomas.

The table shows that out of 91,000 males who arrived with a degree, 84,800 (93%) were in the labour force. The unemployment rate for males who held a degree on arrival was 9.5%.

For the 55,000 females who arrived with a degree, 40,500 (73%) were in the labour force. The unemployment rate for females who held a degree on arrival was 6.5%.

TABLE 3: MIGRANTS WHO ARRIVED IN AUSTRALIA AFTER 1970 AGED 18 AND OVER: EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT ON ARRIVAL AND LABOUR FORCE STATUS ('000)

Educational Attainment on Arrival	Labour Force Status						Total
	Employed Full Time	Employed Part Time	Total	Unemp-loyed	Labour Force	Not in Labour Force	
MALES							
Degree	73.3	3.5	76.7	8.0	84.8	6.2	91.0
Certificate or Diploma	66.6	6.2	72.8	6.2	78.9	7.6	86.5
FEMALES							
Degree	29.0	8.9	37.9	* 2.6	40.5	15.4	55.9
Certificate or Diploma	73.6	30.3	103.9	7.9	111.8	46.9	158.8
PERSONS							
Degree	102.3	12.4	114.7	10.7	125.3	21.5	146.8
Certificate or Diploma	140.2	36.5	176.7	14.1	190.8	54.5	245.3

Note: * subject to sampling variability too high for most practical purposes.

Source: ABS 1991, *Labour Force Status and Other Characteristics of Migrants Australia*, Table 8, page 12.

In relation to the 86,500 males who arrived with a certificate or diploma, the unemployment rate was 7.8%. For the 158,800 females in this category, the unemployment rate was 7.1%.

Therefore, males with a degree from overseas had the highest unemployment rate out of the four groups. They were followed by males with certificates and diplomas and females with certificates and diplomas. The lowest unemployment rate was experienced by females who arrived with an overseas degree.

Jones and McAllister (1991: 6) found from the *Issues in Multicultural Australia 1988-89* survey conducted for the Office of Multicultural Affairs that, in general, possession of educational qualifications reduced the possibility of unemployment as well as the length of time in unemployment. But they found that Australian qualifications were most likely to reduce the probability of unemployment, followed by a mixture of Australian and overseas qualifications with overseas qualifications having the least effect.

The difference between the effect of overseas versus Australian qualifications is clear in the following table. Table 4 shows the unemployment rates for immigrants with various levels of qualifications compared to the Australian-born.

**TABLE 4: UNEMPLOYMENT RATES AND MIGRANT CHARACTERISTICS, 1986
(PER CENT)**

Period of Arrival	Less Than 2 years	2 to 4 Years	5 to 9 Years	10 or More Years	All Migrant	Born in Aust.
Good English Speaking Ability:						
Degree	15.0	7.5	4.8	2.9	4.3	2.4
Technical Qualification	16.8	9.5	7.7	6.0	6.9	5.0
No Qualification	25.1	16.6	14.3	9.9	11.2	11.5
Total	20.6	12.8	11.0	8.0	9.1	8.8
Poor English Speaking Ability:						
Degree	45.7	26.7	20.2	5.3	22.1	
Technical Qualification	48.3	26.8	19.5	10.4	20.6	
No Qualification	53.3	39.5	27.9	12.1	23.1	
Total	52.1	37.0	26.6	11.8	22.7	
Total Migrants	27.3	17.5	13.0	8.3	10.3	

Source: Department of Employment, Education and Training 1991, *Australia's Workforce in the Year 2001*, Table 8.3, p.92.

The table shows that immigrant unemployment rates at all levels of qualifications decreased over time. Second, the unemployment rates for immigrants with good English speaking ability with qualifications were lower for all lengths of residence than comparable immigrants with poor English speaking ability, with the relative disadvantage diminishing over time. Third, after ten years of residence immigrants had higher rates of unemployment than the comparably qualified Australian-born.

But these figures do not indicate the occupational level of the employment, simply labour force status. Occupational level, or status, will be dealt with next.

(2) Occupational Status

The ABS September 1990 Labour Force survey also provides information on occupation just before migration and occupation at September 1990.

TABLE 5: MIGRANTS WHO ARRIVED IN AUSTRALIA AFTER 1970 AGED 18 AND OVER: OCCUPATION AT SEPTEMBER 1990 AND OCCUPATION JUST BEFORE MIGRATION ('000)

Occupation in Australia	Pre-Migration Occupation		
	Managers & Administrators	Professional	Para-Professional
	('000)	('000)	('000)
Employed	46.4	112.1	49.7
Managers and Administrators	19.3	7.4	*2.9
Professionals	4.8	73.1	5.8
Para-Professionals	*1.3	4.5	22.4
Tradespersons	3.9	*3.3	3.6
Clerks	*3.3	6.0	*3.0
Salespersons & Personal Service Work	4.9	7.9	*3.0
Plant & Machine Operators & Drivers	*2.2	*3.3	*3.0
Labourers and Related Workers	6.8	6.6	6.0
Unemployed	5.0	7.5	4.0
Not in the Labour Force	14.4	22.8	11.9
Total	65.9	142.4	65.5

Note: * subject to sampling variability too high for most practical purposes

Source: ABS 1991, *Labour Force Status and Other Characteristics of Migrants Australia*, Table 7, p 11.

Table 5, column 2, shows that of the 142,400 people who were employed in professional occupations just before migration, 112,100 (79%) were employed in Australia in September 1990. The remaining 30,300 were either not in the labour force (22,800) for various reasons or were unemployed (7,500). The unemployment rate for people who were in professional occupations prior to migration to Australia was 6.3%. Of the 119,600 in the labour force in Australia, 73,100 (61%) were in professional occupations. Of those pre-migration professionals who were employed in 1990, 65% were in professional occupations.

The figures for para-professionals show greater downward occupational mobility than those for professionals. Of the 65,500 pre-migration para-professionals, 76% (49,700) were employed in Australia in 1990. The remaining 15,900 were either not in the labour force (11,900) for various reasons or were unemployed (4,000). The proportion of the 65,500 who were in para-professional occupations just before migration and who were so employed in Australia in 1990 was 34%. Of those pre-migration para-professionals who were employed in 1990, 45% were in para-professional occupations.

Overall, of the 568,500 persons who had a job just before migration and were employed at September 1990, some 300,800 (53%) returned to the same occupation. The proportion of immigrants whose occupation at September 1990 was the same as before migration, varies across occupation groups as follows:

- * 42% for managers and administrators
- * 65% for professionals
- * 45% for para-professionals
- * 62% for tradespersons

Whereas all the occupations above 'salespersons and personal service operators' indicate a lower proportion in these occupations in Australia than overseas, 'plant machine operators and drivers' and 'labourers' were the reverse.

(3) Earnings

A number of studies have now been conducted which have looked at the earnings of immigrants with various level of formal schooling. For example, Beggs and Chapman (1988), Chiswick and Miller (1986) and Wooden and Robertson (1989) have all shown that as immigrants' total level of schooling increases their labour market position deteriorates, relative to the Australian-born. Beggs and Chapman (1988) suggested that employers rank Australian qualifications more highly than those gained overseas.

On the other hand, Evans and Kelley (1986) concluded from their econometric analysis of the 1981 Census data on educational levels and occupational attainment that immigrants did not suffer in terms of their wages or returns to human capital. They found that only one group—highly educated Mediterranean immigrants who were educated overseas—suffered from reduced returns to their education. From this study they concluded that immigrants were not discriminated against.

Using the large survey for the Office of Multicultural Affairs referred to above, Chapman and Iredale (1990) investigated the earnings of immigrants with various levels of formal education. The wage data that were available from this survey were better than had previously been used as they included a number of additional variables, such as size of firm and union membership. Information was also available as to where schooling was obtained.

The sample was divided into three broad categories: those who had undertaken all their schooling in a non-English speaking country, those who had only been educated in Australia and those who had combined education overseas in a NESB country with further or additional education in Australia. The numbers for ESB educated migrants were too small for analysis. Using regression analyses for these three groups, earnings profiles were developed for hypothetical individuals with ten, twelve, fourteen and sixteen years of schooling, respectively.

The results revealed that increased years of overseas non-English speaking background education did not result in significant increments in earnings. That is, the wages of non-English speaking background immigrants were much the same, regardless of their level of formal education. Chapman and Iredale (1990: 40) concluded that 'in essence immigrants of this type are apparently treated very homogeneously in the Australian labour market'. In the middle, were the wages of those with a combined overseas and Australian education.

That is, 'given the acquisition of some formal Australian skills, immigrant wage outcomes differ more from each other ... immigrants receive much larger wage returns from Australian than overseas qualifications' (Chapman and Iredale, 1990: 41).

On the other hand, those who were born in Australia and who had gained all of their education in Australia had a significant increase in wages for each year of additional schooling. Chapman and Iredale (1990: 38) concluded that 'this group is treated with relatively great discernment with respect to returns to skills'.

Jones and McAllister (1991: 6) also found that qualifications gained overseas as well as effecting the level of employment also produced lower socioeconomic returns than qualifications gained in Australia.

Overall, the evidence tends to support the view that highly educated non-English speaking background immigrant workers seem to suffer from disadvantage and discrimination in terms of finding appropriate employment and therefore in terms of earnings. Jones and McAllister suggested that this was because of the length of time taken and the difficulty in getting qualifications, especially those from non-English speaking background countries, accredited. This is one possible explanation but other elements need to be fully investigated to understand the full picture of what is happening.

Aim of this Project

The data presented in this chapter add weight to the perception of overseas trained skilled workers that they are disadvantaged in the labour market. The aim of this research is to investigate the attitudes and practices of employers, both private and public, towards overseas trained professionals, managers and technicians and to evaluate what part these factors play in the disadvantage experienced by this group.

From the beginning it was realised that this was a difficult exercise as employers would not reveal attitudes that would reflect negatively on them. Therefore, the investigations had to be undertaken sensitively and in a manner that would emphasise the difficulties that had been or could be encountered in relation to the employment of overseas trained professionals, managers and technicians. It was also made more difficult by the lack of organisational data that was known to exist.

Before outlining the research method, previous work that has been done on theories of discrimination and employer attitudes, will be briefly described.

Previous Research and Research Method for this Study

Theories of Discrimination and Previous Research Work

Research into immigrant labour market success in Australia has tended to be guided by two divergent theoretical underpinnings, roughly equivalent to the right and the left. The first group is guided by human capital theory which is based on neo-classical economics. According to this theory, differences in earnings, occupational status, probability of employment and unemployment and so on are reflections of different capacities for production as determined by factors such as education, training, language skills and previous work experience.

The second group posit that the labour market position of individuals or groups is not just a function of their personal characteristics and endowments. They maintain that characteristics that are attributed, rightly or wrongly, to a group are also very important. This group hold that immigrants are discriminated against within the labour market for either of two reasons: first individual employers favour locally born to overseas born applicants or second the socioeconomic position of immigrants within the labour market is one of marginalisation and they only get menial jobs in boom times.

Econometric analysis of earnings and unemployment rates has found no clear explanation for differences between ethnic groups. Researchers attribute their findings, therefore, to differing levels of English language proficiency, different human capital endowments of particular birthplace groups, adaptability to the labour market and discrimination by employers. In 1985 Shergold (p. 88) wrote:

Historical, sociological and economic studies of migration to Australia have frequently presented evidence of ethnic prejudice, and have often implied that racial hostility has resulted in discrimination against, and exploitation of various groups. Unfortunately even those governmental investigations directly entrusted with the task of examining the socio-economic status of migrants have failed to test such assertions.

Shergold is referring to the 1973 Immigration Survey conducted by the Australian Population and Immigration Council, the inquiry by the Committee on Community Relations, established by the Immigrant Advisory Council and the NSW Anti-Discrimination Board report of 1978. They all maintained that discrimination in regard to employment was subtle and hard to pin down. As a result of statistical analysis of male incomes, Shergold (1985: 89) concluded that:

... even after standardising for such factors [ability to speak English, qualifications, age, location and employment sector] discrimination remains an important determinant ...

The ability to speak English may be required for jobs in which such skill is not necessary. The NSW Anti-Discrimination Board found that some public service officers were 'blatantly racist when employing staff', insofar as applicants with heavy accents were excluded from jobs in which 'correctly' pronounced English was non-essential.

Overall, the question of overt or covert racial discrimination, in particular by employers, has received little attention. The literature that does exist covers workers in general not professional and technical workers in particular. For example, in *Migrant Hands in a Distant Land* Collins (1988: 207) described the effect of the institutionalisation of racism in Australia. The effectiveness of the 'White Australia' policy had been such that:

The Eastern, Northern and Southern European who led the non-British migrant intake in the later 1940s and 1950s—and their counterparts from the Middle East, Indo-China and Latin and Central America in subsequent decades—entered a society with a clear and persistent history of racism and xenophobia.

This racial prejudice was endemic to all the major institutions affecting the employment of migrants: employers and trade unions. Collins devoted little attention to employers' attitudes but he documented the role of the trade union movement in opposing the immigration of non-whites.

When the Australian Labor Party was formed in 1891 it was on a platform of restricted immigration. Gradually the union movement has moved from a position of opposing non-white immigration but it has been a slow and uneven process. When the first large group of non-white immigrants, the Displaced Persons, were brought to Australia after the Second World War it was only when the Government had agreed to 'institutionalise the inferiority of the East Europeans in the workforce' (Collins, 1988: 208). Regardless of their qualifications, they were required to complete two years of indentured labour in unskilled positions and in occupations where Australian workers were unavailable. Industrial militancy by the refugees was outlawed and 'trouble makers' were threatened with deportation.

Over time, union attitudes to immigrant workers have gradually softened, often being led by the peak body, the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU). The trade union movement supported the total abolition of the 'White Australia Policy' but its support for non-discriminatory immigration, according to Collins (1988: 141) 'has not been matched by a general recognition that trade unions need to do something *for* migrants, even though in many cases migrants were a majority of their members'.

In spite of this increase in activity, there remains a long way to go. The number of immigrant union officials has increased but it still falls significantly below the proportion

of immigrants who are trade union members: the majority of officials are still Australian-born males. They are often insensitive to the issues facing immigrant workers, especially women workers. Issues of lack of childcare, sexual harassment and poor working conditions, for example, are frequently ignored. On the other hand, many immigrant workers are unaware of their rights and of the nature of the union movement. A number of studies have shown that immigrant workers do not know the name of their union, let alone that of their union official.

An analysis of attitudes of employers and progress in employer organisations is more difficult to present. One of the few people to research employers' attitudes was Ruth Johnson who undertook a survey of thirty six Australian-born employers in the building industry in Perth, Western Australia. The survey which was carried out in 1973 revealed (1974:60) that:

Out of the 36 employers, 20 expressed a definite preference for 'only Australian workers'.

The true attitude of the Australian employers to immigrant workers is mirrored in their actual behaviour, showing that ten of the firms employ an exclusive group of Australian-born workers ...

Some verbatim answers illustrate the attitude of employers prejudiced against immigrants:

I have no migrants working for me now and I never had any. I don't like foreigners and they don't like me.

Some employers shifted the emphasis from the personal to the national level of ingroup self-interest and two remarked:

As Australians we should look after our own first

and

The bulk of my employees have been handpicked Australians. I prefer them because this is Australia.

Johnson concluded that many of the employers in her sample were not in favour of hiring immigrant workers. The question of skills was not raised. It was simply a matter of building industry employers preferring Australian-born workers and feeling a loyalty towards these workers.

In 1984, Kelley and McAllister produced the results of regression analysis of a survey of 25,000 men aged twenty five to sixty four who were in full-time employment: 7,500 of the sample were immigrants, including 2,200 from Mediterranean countries. While no disadvantage in terms of types of jobs was found to occur for those with medium or low levels of education, those with above average education were in worse jobs than their

Australian-born peers with equivalent training. Kelley and McAllister (1984: 405) concluded:

We do not contest the existence of prejudice, we contest the claim that prejudice leads to discrimination in the Australian labour market. We show that only one subgroup—highly educated Mediterraneans who were educated overseas—suffers from reduced occupational ‘payoff’ in their education. All other immigrants, including those from Asia, north-western Europe and eastern Europe as well as those from Anglophone countries, do as well as native Australians.

The 1984-85 National Social Science Survey (NSSS) of 3,012 urban and rural respondents was analysed by Evans, Jones and Kelley (1988), to determine the attitudes of Australians, including employers, to immigrants. Using the information from two questions ‘Do you think that employers ought to discriminate against migrants?’ and ‘If a migrant and someone born in Australia both apply for a job, the Australian should be given preferential treatment’, Evans and Kelley (1986: 2-3) concluded that the vast majority of Australians, 68%, would give immigrants an equal chance.

The problem with this research is that it is based on an attitude survey which is, of course, hypothetical. According to the researchers, the answer to the question in a face-to-face interview about how many employers are willing to discriminate is that a large majority of employers *say* that they would not discriminate against immigrants. The emphasis is on the word *say* as it is unlikely that many employers would openly admit their prejudicial views. Surprisingly, 30% did say that they would favour an Australian-born applicant.

Evans *et al.* attribute the fact that more non-English speaking immigrants are in lower status jobs to their lower level of education and their poor English skills. They argue (1988: 30) that employers differentiate on the basis of these factors only and that a ‘theory of discrimination based on prejudice is clearly implausible in Australia’. They go on to say that ‘nor is employers’ support for equal opportunity empty rhetoric. ... all Australians—immigrants, second generation, and native stock [sic]—can expect equally good jobs if they are equally qualified. Taken together, these results are very strong evidence against the theory that ethnic prejudice leads to discrimination in the Australian labour market’.

On the other hand, Niland and Champion (1990: 10) state that:

It is likely that given the choice and a strong supply of labour, employers will prefer to hire those who are similar to themselves. When the supply of labour is less abundant they will be less inclined to pick and choose and will take whoever is willing to work for them.

Evans *et al.*’s work describing progress in equal employment opportunity with regard to NESB workers contrasts markedly with the situation described by Niland and Champion

(1990: 4). After preliminary investigations of the equal employment opportunity (EEO) programs and policies of a small number of large, specially selected organisations, the latter reached the following conclusions:

while there has been considerable progress in the public sector in implementing EEO programs for immigrant workers, there was not a substantial record of achievement to provide many models of good practice. And secondly, there has been next to nothing done in the private sector.

As opposed to asking employers how they behave in relation to hiring, Riach and Rich (1991: 245) used an experimental technique called 'correspondence testing' to see how employers actually behave when they short list applicants for interview. The experiment was conducted in 1984-88 in Victoria across three occupations: secretary for women and sales representative and clerk for men. Riach and Rich sent sets of almost identical applications, except for name (race) for three groups, in response to advertisements in newspapers: Anglo-Celts, Greeks and Vietnamese. The results, that is whether the applicant was called for interview or not, showed that applicants with Vietnamese names encountered discrimination almost six times more frequently than applicants with Anglo-Celtic names while those with Greek names encountered discrimination 'but at a lesser rate than the Vietnamese-named applicants'. The researchers concluded that 'discrimination derives from adherence to social custom and/or the application of statistical screening criteria'. Statistical screening criteria refers to where an employer has incomplete information about the productivity of individual workers and resorts to generalisations about the labour force characteristics of a group to minimise the costs of finding out. That is, the employer uses race (the person's name) or gender as a proxy 'for relevant data not sampled' (Phelps, 1972: 659).

The existence of systemic factors that operate to exclude immigrants was proposed by the NSW Committee of Inquiry, Fry Report (1989: 68) which stated that:

It is accepted personnel management practice that a person's qualifications ... include not only the paper proof of basic training but also personal abilities and achievements, experience, advanced training and skills.

However, for the overseas-trained, 'qualifications' is regrettably often used to mean only the degrees, diplomas or certificates gained as a result of successfully completing a formal course of training. This use of the word often signifies an emphasis on formal qualifications and a neglect of experience and other types of qualifications. These other factors are either not considered at all or only after the first round of exclusions on the basis of formal qualifications and examinations has occurred.

This brief review demonstrates that up till now no research has been carried out specifically on the issue of employer attitudes to overseas trained highly skilled workers.

Researchers have generally used large data sets to try to investigate whether employers discriminate against immigrants. Such methods are not refined enough as they do not have the capacity to delve into employment practices.

Research Method for this Study

Data on the employment experience of people with overseas qualifications are very inadequate. Both the public and private sectors have very little information on recruitment and selection in relation to this group. This situation means that the material collected in this study is unique and represents the first attempt to describe the policies and attitudes of employers towards the recruitment of overseas trained professionals, managers and technicians. This study used three approaches to fulfil its aims:

- (1) questionnaire mailed out to a sample of employing organisations with more than five hundred employees;
- (2) discursive interviews with a much smaller sample of organisations in Sydney and Melbourne;
- (3) interviews with key organisations involved with overseas qualified professionals, managers and technicians.

(1) A questionnaire was mailed out to a sample of employing organisations with more than five hundred employees. The questionnaire was divided into two parts. Part A of the questionnaire asked for information about the organisation's structure, employees, recruitment and selection practices, training and skills surveys. Part B attempted to address opinions and preferences about overseas training and overseas trained applicants and employees.

Initially a sample of one hundred private organisations was drawn by random selection from a list of all companies with more than five hundred employees that was supplied by Census Applications Pty Ltd. Because of the relatively large number of manufacturing companies and the need to restrict the sample of private companies to about one hundred, a disproportionate stratified sample was used. The sample included employers (numbers in brackets) in five major areas: Mining and Oil (10), Construction and Engineering consultancy companies (20), Manufacturing (30), Retailing and Services (20) and Finance (20).

The questionnaire was mailed to eighty eight organisations, the remaining twelve were to be interviewed. The response rate to the questionnaire mailout was very low. As a result, a reminder letter was sent to sixty eight organisations. The number was lower than the

original sample of eighty eight as twenty organisations had replied: nine positively and eleven negatively. The overall response rate of sixteen out of the original sample of eighty eight organisations that had the questionnaire mailed them was 18%. This sample size was insufficient for the purposes of this research and so a second sample was selected from the original list of organisations.

The second sample was selected less randomly. Organisations were phoned and asked whether they would be prepared to spend one hour completing the questionnaire. Those that agreed were then mailed a questionnaire. In all forty three out of eighty one organisations called agreed to complete the questionnaire. Of this forty three, fourteen returned the completed questionnaire. From the first and second mailout, questionnaires from thirty private companies were received.

To these thirty private companies were added twenty selected Government departments: seven State Government Departments or Statutory Authorities; five Commonwealth Government Departments or their agents; five Local Governments, and three Universities. Of these, fourteen were sent questionnaires by mail, resulting in seven responses. The remainder were to be interviewed. These government organisations were selected in order to cover a variety of government levels and functions. The total number of questionnaires completed from the mailout was thirty seven.

(2) Discussive interviews were held with a much smaller sample of organisations in Sydney and Melbourne. Twelve companies from the list of the original one hundred private organisations were sought by personal approach for interviewing as well as completion of the questionnaire. Assurance of complete confidentiality and anonymity was given in the covering letter and to interview subjects. The twelve private companies were from the following sectors: Mining (1); Construction and Engineering (3); Manufacturing (4); Retailing and Services (2) and Finance (2). Three of the companies employed more than 4,000 people, eight employed between 1,000 and 2,500 people and one employed 850. Only one company refused to be interviewed and a replacement was selected from the list of organisations.

Six public organisations were selected for interview, three State organisations and three Commonwealth. Public organisations were assured anonymity of individuals interviewed. The government bodies covered were: State Rail Authority (NSW); Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works (Victoria); Department of Planning and Housing (Victoria); Australian International Development Assistance Bureau (AIDAB) in Canberra; Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) in Canberra and Sydney, and the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) in Canberra. The composition of the final sample is shown in Table 3.

TABLE 3: COMPOSITION OF THE SAMPLE

Organisation	Number
Private Companies	42
Mining and Oil	6
Construction and Engineering	6
Manufacturing	15
Retailing and Service	9
Finance	6
Public organisations	13
Commonwealth Government	3
State Government	4
Local Government	4
Tertiary Institutions	2
Total	55

In depth interviews were mainly with human resource managers or administrative managers whose functions covered personnel relations. Also present at some interviews of public organisations were the EEO coordinators or recruitment officers. In the case of private companies and the CSIRO, line managers, project managers or managers of functional areas were sometimes also interviewed, either separately or jointly with human relations/personnel managers. This arose due to the fact that the selection of employees and the appraisal of their work often almost entirely relied on the judgement of these managers.

Interviews ranged from one and a half to two hours and were conducted in an informal manner. Tape recording was not used as it was objected to by piloted companies. Notes made at interviews were written up in detail as soon as possible after the interview. Further telephone interviews were used to check the accuracy of information and data on the numbers and types of employees often had to be supplied later.

Overall, two organisations had more than 10,000 employees; eight had 5,000 to 9,999; twenty one had 1,000 to 4,999; twelve had 500 to 999 and twelve had less than 500. With respect to the distribution of offices, twenty seven organisations had less than ten locations whereas twenty three had between ten and forty nine, one had between fifty and ninety nine locations and four had more than one hundred office locations. Some of the firms were part of multinational organisations: three had more than ten offices off-shore. The head office of forty four organisations was in Australia while eleven had their head office overseas.

(3) Interviews were held with key organisations involved with overseas qualified professionals, managers and technicians. Interviews were held with the following individuals and organisations:

- (a) Placement officer located in the Institution of Engineers, Australia (Sydney office);
- (b) Two Special Migrant Placement Officers located in Bankstown and Marrickville, Sydney;
- (c) Women's Directorate Officer (Wollongong) and Wollongong Migrant Resource Centre workers;
- (d) Professional Employment Services (PES) in Sydney and Melbourne—they are part of the Commonwealth Employment Service (CES);
- (e) Confederation of Australian Industry (CAI) Policy Officer and Training Manager in Melbourne;
- (f) Training Managers of the Victorian and NSW Employers' Federations (VEF and EF of NSW);
- (g) Ethnic Liaison Officer of the Australian Council of Trade Unions, Melbourne;
- (h) President of the National Association of Overseas Professionals (NAOP), Melbourne;
- (i) Australian Chamber of Manufactures Office, Melbourne—'Professional Interlink Program';
- (j) President of the B'nai Brith in Melbourne.

The purpose of these interviews was to try and elicit more 'behind the scenes' type of information about what is actually going on with the employment of overseas qualified people. Agencies such as the PES offices and the IEA have had very close involvement with large numbers of immigrants seeking highly skilled work and the personnel in such agencies have built up a perspective on the way that employers operate.

The results of the research will be presented in the next section. The following section will describe data collection, recruitment and selection practices and attitudes to and experiences with overseas qualified employees.

Results on Data Collection, Recruitment and Selection Practices, Attitudes to and Experiences with Overseas Qualified Employees

Data Collection, the Overseas Qualified and Persons of Non-English Speaking Background Organisations did not find it easy to provide the numbers of persons employed who could be classified as managers, professionals or technicians. Seventeen of the fifty five organisations said that it was too difficult to provide this information. It was also generally impossible to obtain precise numbers of those with overseas qualifications, unless the numbers were very small and known personally to the informants. While, with some delay, the totals of all managers, professionals and technicians were in most cases provided, it was usually only possible to get an estimate of the proportion of each category

with overseas qualifications. Eight of those who were not prepared to provide the total number of the types of employees were prepared to make estimates of the proportion of them with overseas qualifications.

Table 4 provides information on the total number of people employed in each in particular occupations.

TABLE 4: NUMBER OF PROFESSIONAL, TECHNICAL AND MANAGERIAL EMPLOYEES

Occupation	Size of occupational category				None
	100+	50 - 99	10 - 49	<10	
Engineers	11	2	9	10	6
Computer Personnel	5	4	8	18	3
Scientists	2	3	7	8	18
Accountants	5	2	13	12	6
Managers	12	8	9	2	7*
Technicians	7	4	7	6	14
Other	6	1	5	2	24

Note: Number of organisations (N = 55 - including 17 'not answered')

* It is likely this item was overlooked by these 7 owing to an irregularity in format.

The largest groups of professionals of over one hundred in organisations were in managerial and engineering occupations whereas accountants and computer professionals tended to be employed in smaller numbers by organisations. A reasonably large number of technicians were employed with seven organisations employing more than one hundred. Scientists were the least represented group.

Table 5 shows the proportion of people in these occupations with overseas qualifications. The scarcity of organisations with all or most of their professionals with overseas qualifications is obvious. Moreover, most of the organisations estimating that all or most of an occupational category were overseas trained employed less than ten persons in that category. The majority of organisations employed very few or no overseas qualified professionals, managers and technicians. Table 5 shows that overseas qualified computing professionals had the best employment picture followed by overseas trained engineers and managers.

TABLE 5: ESTIMATED PROPORTIONS OF OVERSEAS QUALIFIED PROFESSIONALS, MANAGERS AND TECHNICIANS (N = 55)

Occupation	Proportion Overseas Qualified				
	All	Most	Some	Very few	None
Engineers	1	1	14	13	7
Computing*	3	2	9	10	15
Scientists	1	1	4	6	8
Accountants	1	1	5	20	11
Economists & Statisticians	1	-	3	1	11
Managers (above supervisor)	1	-	11	20	5
Technicians	-	1	8	10	7
Others	-	-	3	5	2

Note: Nine respondents did not answer this question but the rows do not equal the same number as organisations only responded for the occupations that they had.

* Programmers, analysts and scientists

Employers found it less difficult to specify the three countries or regions from which most of their qualified professional, managerial and technical staff came. By far the most often mentioned country after Australia was the UK, followed by the USA and New Zealand and fourthly various Asian countries. Although Asian countries in aggregate were mentioned more often than New Zealand and the USA, the interviews and responses to the question on sources of qualifications suggested that whereas twenty five organisations had many staff from English speaking countries, a lower proportion of employees were from Asian and Middle Eastern countries.

Recruitment Practices

Differences in recruitment practices, more than any other practice, were a reflection of an organisations' structure, type of product, history and traditions. The overall pattern of recruitment practices is given in Table 6. All fifty five organisations attempted this question but where lines do not add up to fifty five it is because some items were not ticked.

TABLE 6: RECRUITMENT PRACTICES OF ORGANISATIONS (N = 55)

Recruitment Practice	Frequency of Use		
	(i) Always	(ii) Sometimes/ Often	(iii) Never/Rarely
Advertisements in Australia	24	29	2
Word of Mouth/Other Informal	1	36	13
Within Australian Group of Companies	4	28	21
Unsolicited Applications	5	27	21
Recruitment Drives in Aust.	10	18	22
Agencies in Australia	1	28	19
Within International Group of Companies	-	13	34
Advertisements Overseas	-	11	43
Recruitment Drives Overseas	2	4	39
Overseas Agencies	-	3	45

From the interviews and the questionnaires it appears that organisations are of three main types. The first group, the mining, construction and engineering companies all employed a high proportion of professional engineers. Recruitment in these companies tended to be characterised by:

- a reliance on recruitment drives at Australian universities and a high profile among Australian graduates and universities;
- a tradition of 'growing your own managers' from those who had entered the company as recent graduates;
- devolution of recruitment and selection to managers at site or project level;
- a tradition of informal modes of recruitment such as 'word of mouth' introduction, direct approaches, and local, family and other ties; and,
- traditional connections with the UK which expressed itself in a respect for British training and methods.

The combined effect of these recruitment traditions was to virtually close the companies to overseas qualified applicants already living in Australia.

The second group, most of the manufacturing companies, the retailers and finance/insurance companies, all had large unskilled or clerical generalist workforces and needed only a few professionally qualified persons—accountants, computer programmers and a few lawyers. Their recruitment practices were characterised by:

- a 'grow your own' approach to the recruitment of managers, involving either their own employees or young school leavers with the Higher School Certificate or equivalent;
- by recruitment through advertisement or through agencies; and,
- networks or internal recruitment strategies that excluded outsiders from consideration were important in several companies.

For this group, recruitment practices tended to restrict entry to managerial opportunities by older immigrants with overseas management training and experience. Opportunities for experienced managers from overseas, therefore, were available if they were willing to spend some time starting at the bottom again.

The third group, government departments and organisations, did not follow uniform recruitment practices. Many of their practices reflected the nature of their operations and history in much the same way as those of the private companies. They did all, however, have clearly defined recruitment policies which required that all positions be advertised and conform with equal employment opportunity principles.

Selection and Evaluation Practices

The specification of non-discriminatory selection practices is an important part of equal employment opportunity principles. Table 7 shows the selection practices used by the sample of private and public organisations. Multiple answers were given so that numbers do not total fifty five. Selection by one single-person interview, selection by persons untrained in non-discriminatory interviewing and interviewing that is unstructured by any specified and agreed criteria are all held to be vulnerable to intended or unintended bias. Furthermore, the inclusion of both males and females and where possible a person of non-English speaking background upon the selection panel is considered essential to non-discriminatory practice.

TABLE 7: SELECTION PRACTICES USED (N = 55)

Selection Practice	Type of Organisation	
	Private (N = 42)	Public (N = 13)
Panel of 3+ Persons	25	12
Panel of 2 Persons	10	10
One Person	35	2
Number of People on Separate Occasions	41	2
By an Agent	33	1
No Interview	2	5

The most frequently used forms of selection by the private companies were one to one interviews (thirty five companies) and a series of interviews (forty one companies), both of which were used 'almost always' or 'frequently'. By contrast, only two public authorities 'rarely' used one to one interviewing. For example, when CSIRO scientists took the opportunity to interview a prospective employee while overseas. Agents were used only for first stage selection by thirty three private companies and then mostly only 'rarely'. No-interview situations in both sectors were associated with occasional direct approaches to fill temporary casual requirements.

On the other hand, twenty five out of the forty two private companies 'sometimes' used a three person panel for selection whereas twelve out of the thirteen public organisations 'often' did. Table 7 shows that private companies had a much more diverse pattern of selection than the public organisations.

The Overseas Qualified Applicant

Only thirteen organisations said they received no or very few applications, both unsolicited and in response to advertisements, from people with overseas professional, technical or managerial qualifications. The main reasons given in the eighteen interviews as to why overseas graduate applicants failed to achieve appointment are shown in Table 8.

TABLE 8: REASONS FOR FAILURE OF OVERSEAS GRADUATE APPLICANTS IN INTERVIEWED ORGANISATIONS (N = 18)

Reason for Failure	No. of Responses
Unsuitable Training/Experience	4
Language Inadequate	3
Poor Presentation of Record	3
Too Old for Entry	2
Insufficient Local Knowledge	1
Bias in the Company	1

Note: Fourteen out of the eighteen organisations interviewed responded to this question.

Unsuitability of training was given by four organisations as the major problem of overseas trained applicants. Language difficulties and poor presentation were next. Examples of poor presentation included bad translations, resumes too short and inadequate descriptions of courses taken. Some of the opinions that were expressed were:

With Asians their training and experience tends to be very narrow. They are very good at the slice but couldn't go outside it (Manufacturing company).

There are many applications from the overseas qualified and non-English speaking background in accounting but there is a problem with communication. They often have excellent qualifications but they do not get employed because we need good communications. They get assessed out often by their telephone enquiry and their written application (Manufacturing company).

The main reasons are:

1. They can't clarify their qualifications sufficiently, maybe because they can't afford to pay the fee,
2. Their English isn't good enough, and
3. They do not yet have sufficient knowledge of Australian society and economy. The successful have been here a while. For doing surveys it's necessary to understand the society somewhat (ABS).

Most companies offered structural and historical reasons based on the years of migrant influx and their own recruitment policies as reasons for the disparity in the proportion of non-English speaking background managers compared to workers.

Evaluation of Overseas Qualified Applicants

Table 9 is based on replies given by fifty two organisations in respect of assessment of overseas qualifications in seven specified occupational categories (engineers, scientists, computer scientists, accountants, economists and statisticians, technicians, managers) and one general category. The total number of possible responses for each method of assessment is 416. Multiple responses were allowed for.

The responses for all occupations have been aggregated as the methods of evaluation favoured did not vary by occupation. An exception to this is that references were relatively

more important to professional bodies for evaluating engineers and accountants than for other occupations.

TABLE 9: METHODS USED TO ASSESS APPLICANTS AND OVERSEAS QUALIFICATIONS/ EXPERIENCE (N = 55)

Method of Assessing o/s Qualifications	No. of Responses
Refer to Professional Body	87
Refer to NOOSR and COPQ Compendium	61
By Skill or Knowledge Test	74
By Interview	219
From References	195
Trial Period of Employment	51
Other (Mostly Referrals to Educational Bodies)	17

Note: There were three missing responses to this question.

The table shows that the most usual and important form of evaluation was by interview followed closely by the use of references. Private companies mostly operated this way and since, as was shown earlier, there was often a single or a series of one to one interviews, which are considered to be the least desirable form of selection, the situation possibly disadvantaged many of the overseas qualified applicants. Moreover immigrants often lack references or their referees are not known to the employer.

Multinationals and the CSIRO said they drew on their own international connections and knowledge to evaluate overseas 'paper' qualifications. Many private companies explained that they did not place much importance on the formal qualifications anyway and regarded them mostly as general education. Construction companies were more interested in the particular skills and experience relevant to their operations or else they took on young graduate engineers and were prepared to put money into their training.

Reference to professional bodies was made only when organisations felt unable to assess a candidate through their own resources. No company required accreditation by professional bodies, except in the case of senior accountants. Clients of construction companies, however, sometimes preferred it and it was for this reason an advantage for an overseas candidate to be a member of the Institution of Engineers, Australia (IEA). Very few private companies checked qualifications with the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (NOOSR) that was established in 1989 in the Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET). Interview discussions revealed that all but one of the interviewed private companies had never heard of NOOSR or its predecessor, the Council on Overseas Professional Qualifications (COPQ).

The questionnaire asked organisations to identify overseas higher education institutions which they held in high esteem in respect of fields most relevant to their organisation and

those which as a result of experience they viewed with caution. Informants were asked to specify reasons for their opinions. While in the interviews frank opinions were expressed, only a few organisations returning written questionnaires by mail chose to answer these questions. Only English, American, Canadian, New Zealand and German institutions or qualifications were deemed worthy of high esteem. In most cases the organisations in fact employed graduates from these countries. Countries in which some institutions are viewed with caution were the USA, Asia and Eastern European countries. It appears that there are two problems: uncertainty about the bona fide of a degree and low opinions based on experience. Some informants viewed all degrees, apart from those from a few English speaking countries, with suspicion.

Employer Expectations and Experiences of the Overseas-Qualified

Communication skills were considered 'important' or 'very important' employee attributes by 86% of the sampled organisations. Expectations that communication skills in English would be lower in comparison to Australian-born applicants applied to applicants from India, Egypt, the Argentine and the Philippines by 35% of the sample. The inclusion of India in this list is interesting, given that most tertiary education in India takes place in English, and it suggests that accent and other factors are of equal importance. Applicants from Hong Kong were expected to have slightly better English communication skills than applicants from these four countries.

The importance of good English skills, and the type of skills, varied with the area of work within an organisation. Computing science and technology were seen as areas where good English was not so important, although this was not so for senior research scientists in information technology. In construction and manufacturing industries, English was only important at management levels but in retailing and finance, communication with customers was more important. In one finance department, for example, most of the work by accountants was done over the telephone.

Overall, verbal communication was the most important source of difficulty and this was as a result of difficulty to understand accents (twenty eight organisations) and problems with daily English usage (nineteen organisations). Interestingly, the difficulty of understanding Scottish, Geordie and other British Isles accents was mentioned in a joking manner while difficulty with accented English from other countries was seen as a job performance problem.

While many companies dealt with communication problems by excluding those with imperfect skills from employment, it was apparent that others valued the expertise of overseas qualified personnel. It is surprising, therefore, that so little effort had been made

to sponsor training in English communication, particularly in the area of verbal communication.

Quality of overseas training—although not many organisations were prepared to give ‘paper’ qualifications the highest importance and 20% of the respondents said they were not so important, the majority thought they were of some importance. In areas where companies did not rely on ‘paper’ qualifications, such as management, they felt that difficulties arising from professional quality would be the result of poor choices on their part. For the most part these companies said they had no problems because their interviewing and selection processes and systems of in-house training ensured that only competent people were appointed. Of course, they said, there were occasionally poor choices made but this did not apply to the overseas trained any more than to the Australian trained.

Even in those departments of organisations that relied on formal qualifications or for those managers taken in at above graduate level, there was little evidence of problems arising from an employee’s professional expertise. Only sixteen organisations had actually experienced difficulties from expertise, turning out to be lower than expected. Ninety-one per cent of organisations provided either in-house or external training for employees and felt that most deficiencies of appointed professionals could be addressed by these.

Professional quality is undoubtedly an important factor but it is difficult to assess how the low opinion of most overseas qualifications, and consequently their exclusion at the pre-employment level, is arrived at. Possible factors are past experience, though this seems to have been limited. The absence of thorough and fair investigation of skills at selection interviews or unreasonable bias in favour of the familiar suggest that ‘statistical discrimination’ predominates. In times of shortage of specific skills in Australia, many organisations appointed people with overseas qualifications and for these companies, difficulties arose not so much from quality of performance but from language and cultural differences, which were often surmounted or were ‘lived with’.

Local experience—interviews with key persons involved with assisting the overseas-qualified and evidence from research into the difficulties faced by them have all indicated that lack of local experience, especially in engineering, was the main reason given to applicants for failure to secure jobs. Twenty per cent of employers said local experience was a very important attribute and a further 35% said it was important although only seven organisations volunteered lack of local experience as a disadvantage. Almost half (46%) of the organisations said they had experienced some difficulties from lack of local experience. However, neither construction nor mining companies, which employ more engineers than

other types of professionals, saw local experience as more important or more of a problem to any greater extent than other organisations. In fact, it appeared that by lack of local experience, employers of engineers were often referring to possible cultural difficulties with other employees, government officials and working conditions, rather than to lack of technical knowledge. Lack of knowledge of local codes and government regulations was also seen as an issue.

Inter-cultural relations were described more than problems with expertise. About one third of organisations (36%) had experienced difficulties of this nature. Twenty per cent of respondents volunteered difficulties of cultural adaptation as disadvantages of employing overseas qualified people and 75% rated the ability to get on with future work colleagues as 'important' or 'very important'. Many problems were in fact problems of inter-cultural understanding. Cultural difficulties most often mentioned, however, concerned relations with subordinates. Interviewed organisations mainly complained about 'too authoritarian' managerial styles: South Africans and Indians were seen to have a problem in this respect. The other difficulty was that some Asians put in positions of authority had 'too soft and gentle a manner'. Their physical size was mentioned in three cases. There were also some generalisations formed from experiences with French, Polish and Turkish people.

Of the interviewed organisations, only one comment concerned relationships with customers and only two about relationships with colleagues. It should be appreciated that most of the difficulties mentioned did not occur frequently and many of them were about an experience with one employee. However, only four interviewed employers said they had never experienced any difficulties of this nature.

Conclusion

The research showed that data collection on personnel practices is minimal. Most numbers of overseas trained professionals, managers and technicians were estimates. These estimates showed low representation of NESB overseas qualified, while main English speaking country qualified were slightly more prevalent. The tendency to 'grow their own managers' and select Australian trained graduates for professional and technical positions was evident.

While the majority of employers had limited experience with overseas qualified skilled staff, most of their experience with the quality of overseas training had been positive. Nevertheless, employers were uncertain about the bona fides of qualifications and where a choice existed they would chose the familiar person.

People were mainly selected in private organisations by one person or a series of one person interviews with heavy reliance on references. Overseas qualified applicants are disadvantaged by both of these factors. On the other hand, public organisations have a wide variation in practices but they generally adhere to the principles of equal employment opportunity in recruitment and selection.

Most negative experience with overseas qualified professionals, managers and technicians appears to have been with intercultural or communication aspects or lack of knowledge of local conditions. This appears to have made employers reluctant to choose overseas applicants when there was a suitable Australian available.

Discussion of the Results

The selection and evaluation practices of private companies interviewed leave too much room for the intervention of individual bias. Very few measured up to EEO standards and the possibility of a certain amount of bias exists. Public organisations' procedures while on the whole exemplary in their selection practices have to rely on evaluations of equivalence which are in fact declared by the bodies who intend them to be only advisory. The effect of this is modified sometimes by the reduction in the requirement of mandatory formal qualifications, by taking experience into account and by the provision of second chance promotion opportunities to those qualified persons employed at sub-professional levels.

Decentralisation of recruitment and selection to line managers, site managers and branch managers and immediate specialist team leaders seems to have entrenched the one to one interview in the private sector. Public organisations varied in their degree of decentralisation: for example, the SRA said it had devolved selection to the lowest level possible but there was considerable input by the EEO unit into training in criteria specification, interviewing and selection. ABS and AIDAB both received details of those applicants who had already been evaluated, culled and scored by the Commonwealth recruitment service. The CSIRO differed from other public organisations in that it had a system of selection that was devolved to division heads who then gave most weight to the expert opinion of the head of the exact scientific field in question. Personnel staff said there was no formal selection training but they were 'trying to train scientists in selection and criteria setting' and 'what not to ask in interviews'.

Training in interviewing and selection for managers was provided by 73% of the total sample but the interviews showed that experience with such training was not always satisfactory. Not all companies used the advertised job criteria or developed selection

criteria in a systematic way for selection. One insurance company's manager told us he had found it was hard to train managers to look only at the specific job criteria and ignore others but they were trying through their courses.

The employment situation is exaggerated because of the recession but the long term key to the employment of overseas trained people lies in the training of both employers and overseas-trained professionals and para-professionals. This research shows that the estimated proportions of overseas trained people in professional, managerial and technical positions in large private enterprises and a selected number of public organisations is low. A number of issues have emerged that need to be addressed.

As well as the possibility of overt discrimination, systemic or indirect discrimination is built into many of the recruitment and selection practices of both private and public organisations. Recruitment practices which are almost exclusively internal and which rely mainly on new graduates for replenishment effectively shut out the slightly older resident with overseas qualifications. While such practices have some advantages for employers, they neglect the advantages of bringing in 'outside' people.

Selection practices which rely almost entirely on one to one personal interviews or informal word of mouth methods of hiring contravene EEO principles. Any tendency for bias which may exist is able to flourish in this context. There is some evidence of stereotyping and bias against some qualifications. Some of this is based on uncertainty about the value or bona fides of various overseas qualifications. The tendency to 'play it safe' is amplified in the recession. Improved information about overseas qualifications could assist some employers to make fairer hiring decisions and NOOSR's revised compendium on overseas training institutions should be computerised and dispersed widely to all employers to improve their access to information. This would enable more informed decisions to be made and reduce the level of 'statistical discrimination'.

At the same time, over-reliance on the 'assessments' of NOOSR or other bodies should be discouraged. Such assessments are intended to be *advisory only* and employers need to make decisions on the basis of experience and actual ability to perform the job, as well as qualifications. The proposed move to competency-based skills assessment or skills audits should assist skilled immigrants but it will only do so if employers are encouraged and trained to properly assess job applicants on this basis.

Employers also fail to hire overseas-trained professionals, managers and technicians because of their fears of communication difficulties arising. English is best learned on the job and employers need to understand this and provide English in the Workplace training.

Lack of local experience does not appear to be lack of local professional or technical experience. Rather the term seems to be used by employers to refer to a lack of knowledge of local codes, government regulations and ways of operating generally. Large, especially government, employers can accommodate someone unfamiliar with these aspects but most private employers seem to be unwilling to do so, except in times of labour shortage. Efforts should be made to encourage employers to see the long term advantages of hiring people with other skills, such as other languages, new technologies and the ability to function well in another cultural context.

To this end, the Government should develop and contribute to structured 3-6 months professional work-experience programs to enable employers to get to know potential employees and help break down many of the stereotypes that still exist about immigrants. Such programs would also provide an opportunity for overseas trained professionals to learn local conditions.

The better collection of data on birthplace of employees and country of training would also enable better monitoring of equal opportunity within an organisation. Training in data bases and the proper collection of information, including ethnicity-related data, is needed. The OMA's *Guidelines for the Collection of Ethnicity Data* (OMA, 1989) need to be more widely used.

For employers, training in selection and recruitment techniques and in managing a diverse workforce is warranted. At the moment, whether because of ignorance, prejudice or ill-advised views about many overseas trained skilled workers, employers tend to 'play it safe'. If they have a choice, they mostly choose the applicant who is 'best known' to them, in terms of being most like them.

At the same time, more training programs are needed to help overseas-trained professionals, managers and technicians overcome some of the barriers to employment that are cited by employers. The most common problems are inadequate English language ability and communication skills, outdated professional training, inappropriate experience for the specific job and lack of managerial skill in relating to the Australian workforce. These problems could be overcome by appropriate and adequate English courses, courses in Australian industrial relations and workplace practices and upgrading and bridging courses in colleges and universities.

An equivalent scheme to the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS), whereby skilled immigrants other than refugees pay for their training once they are employed,

should be developed to enable unemployed skilled immigrants to participate in such programs.

In addition, the job-seeking skills of many immigrants are not honed to suit the Australian environment. More courses on how to apply and present oneself, as well as on interview techniques, are needed. Courses on rights and EEO principles should also be available so that immigrants better know how to achieve the employment options that they are qualified for. Such courses should be ongoing. Immigrants need to be able to turn to someone for advice in relation to specific positions. Networks, such as MEMONET and the Professional Interlink Program, both in Victoria, are ideal means of providing this type of ongoing assistance.

In the long run, this will be much more effective than legislation. Legal compliance for the private sector was introduced in relation to women with the Affirmative Action Act in 1986. The creation of similar legislation to assist with the employment of people who are born overseas and of non-English-speaking background (NESB1) or born in Australia but with at least one parent born in a non-English speaking country (NESB2) has been mooted. Affirmative action legislation in the United States has embodied the concept of quotas and while it has been criticised it has been relatively successful in getting minorities into the workforce. The problem has been with keeping them there and ensuring that they are promoted.

Affirmative Action and anti-discrimination legislation in Australia does not establish quotas or goals but operates to set the 'climate'. Targets are often set but they are self-determined by individual organisations and failure to meet the targets has no serious consequences. Most equal employment opportunity and anti-discrimination legislation contains the facility for complaints to be laid against an offending organisation but very few immigrants have the knowledge or the courage to use such legislation. Moreover, most of the legislation does not cover the pre-employment and recruitment phase.

Conclusion

A legal approach to equal employment opportunity for highly skilled immigrant workers would not appear to be the best way to go. The legislation exists as a backdrop and given the nature of the problem and of Australian society, attempts to tighten or toughen up the legislation, would probably not be very productive.

In the immediate future it would be much more appropriate for the government, through the Office of Multicultural Affairs and the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition, to initiate a four-pronged program to improve the employment possibilities for overseas trained professionals and technicians. Such an approach incorporates what Jenkins (1989:

111) in his article on equal opportunity in the private sector in the United Kingdom describes as the *administrative* and *voluntarist* approaches. The administrative approach involves central government using its power to ensure that equal employment opportunity principles are followed while the voluntarist approach refers to employing organisations 'taking steps themselves to reform their own institutional procedures and policies'.

The Commonwealth Government's *Access and Equity Strategy* which is currently being evaluated should:

1. Promote a concerted media campaign, not through advertisements but rather through articles in selected journals and magazines, to convince employers that a diversity of skills is good for business and could lead to greater efficiency and competitiveness.
2. Promote the establishment of a chain of schemes/networks that put immigrant professionals in touch with others who have been in the same situation and who can assist them to find a job.
3. Provide greater opportunities for immigrant professionals and technicians to participate in bridging courses, specialised English courses and courses to improve their job-seeking chances.
4. Develop and contribute to a structured 3-6 months professional work-experience program to enable employers to get to know potential employees and help break down many of the stereotypes that still exist about immigrants and to provide local experience for overseas trained professionals.

Conclusion

A survey conducted by the National Association of Overseas Professionals (NAOP) in 1989/90 found a total of 4,982 immigrant professionals in Victoria and of these, only 219 had found employment, even though they all had their qualifications recognised. They were computer scientists, engineers, financiers or traders, scientists, social scientists, managers and others.

In September 1990 the number of unemployed migrant engineers in Victoria, NSW and South Australia from the Association of Professional Engineers Australia's records was 621. An article in the Business Section of the *Financial Review* on 22 March 1990 (Lynch, 1990), said that this unemployment existed at a time when the Institution of Engineers, Australia 'said the skills shortage was so acute that no engineer need be out of work'.

While the current employment situation is more serious because of the recession, the long term key to the employment of overseas trained people lies in training of both employers

and overseas professionals and para-professionals. For employers training in selection and recruitment techniques and in managing a diverse workforce is warranted and for the immigrant professionals and technicians, training in English and job-seeking skills and bridging courses need to be boosted.

A 1989 survey conducted by the Confederation of Australian Industry (CAI) of over 4,000 managers, on their beliefs, opinions, experience and attitudes towards industrial relations training, found that only a minority of respondents (41%) had conducted in-house industrial relations training courses during the twelve month period immediately prior to the survey (CAI, 1990). Industries in which most training had occurred were Community Services, Mining, Communication and Chemical, Petroleum and Coal products. The least amount of training had taken place in the Finance, Property and Business Services, Transport and Storage and Wholesale and Retail sectors. Only 30% of courses involved all levels of management and the majority were focussed on middle managers and supervisors. The survey which was discussed in *The Training Needs of Managers* found (CAI, 1990: 7) for Chief Executive Officers that:

Overall, the responses of CEO's indicate that the perceived relevance of industrial relations, and hence of industrial relations training and the need for such training, appears to be low. The challenge obviously is to upgrade this functional area to equal status with other areas of the management discipline.

Day-to-day issues such as grievance handling, occupational health and safety and equal employment opportunity were the most common issues covered in the training courses. Recruitment procedures were only covered in 55% of courses, just ahead of 'external' areas such as tribunals, unions and the general industrial relations system. Many survey respondents indicated a preference for more information and training in issues that were related to wider industrial relations developments.

In the introduction, the Chief Executive of the CAI, Ian Spicer, says (CAI, 1990: ii):

the future training of all levels of management should place greater emphasis on industrial relations as a core strategic element of business planning which—in its broadest sense—should be seen as conferring a competitive advantage, as distinct from 'avoiding trouble'. That is to say, businesses which are most likely to survive and succeed in the future are those which have an Industrial Relations strategy which encourages skill development and maximises employee commitment.

The emphasis on skills development cannot be overemphasised. But it *must also include* the acquisition of skills from outside the organisation as well as the maximisation of all skills within the organisation. These skills must be as flexible and diverse as possible. Training, by both formal training courses and other means, will enable managers to better select and develop the most skilled workforce, without the interference of other factors such as the level of covert racism that has been at work in the past.

Employers must move away from hiring a monocultural workforce if they are going to be able to develop and compete in new markets in Asia. Whereas the suppression of diversity and the encouragement of monolingualism may have helped to make profits in the past, this will not pertain in the future.

Government and industry must work together to overcome the problems of overseas trained professional and technicians finding work in Australia, especially in times of high unemployment. The importance of the Government in terms of providing the right political environment cannot be overemphasised.

This research has shown the predominance of Angloceltic Australians in the management of large organisations. This, together with the fact that Angloceltic Australians also predominate in the public service and the government, means that the enthusiasm for ensuring that equal employment opportunity prevails is not always as great as it could be. In order to keep attracting skilled immigrants to Australia we must ensure that once they arrive here they are given equality of opportunity. Otherwise potential skilled immigrants will chose to go elsewhere or those who do still come will continue to be unemployed or underemployed in significant numbers. Their skills will atrophy and the reason for which they were selected to come to Australia will be the very reason for their unsuccessful employment integration. Some will emigrate from Australia.

In the current economic recession, the Government seems to have taken the easy way out by severely cutting the number of skilled immigrants who will be selected to enter Australia in 1992-93, with the exception of those entering in the Employer Nomination and Business Skills categories of the immigration program. As Table 2 showed, the number of migrants who will be able to enter in the two categories that have accounted for most skilled entry in recent years, the Independent and the Concessional categories, will drop from 30,000 to 13,400 and 19,000 to 6,000 respectively in 1992-93. In 1990-91, these two categories accounted for 72% of all professionals who arrived in Australia.

By drastically cutting these two points tested categories, the potential unemployment and underemployment of overseas trained professional will be reduced in the next few years but it is a short term solution that will not necessarily benefit Australia in the long run. In the long term, attitudes and practices must be altered to ensure that Australia has the skills, including language and intercultural skills, that will enable it to be competitive in the international scene. Rather than minimising diversity as they have done in the past, employers must be encouraged to diversify their workforces and then maximise on that diversity.

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