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**National Identity, Partisanship and Populist Protest  
as Factors in the 1999 Australian Republic Referendum**

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## **National Identity, Partisanship and Populist Protest as Factors in the 1999 Australian Republic Referendum**

Using survey data from the Australian Constitutional Referendum Study 1999 (ACRS99), I begin by showing that the votes of direct electionists were as important as those of monarchists in the defeat of the Republic referendum. Since these votes were crucial to the outcome, I then discuss several possible explanations of what differentiated those direct electionists who voted against the referendum proposal from those who voted in favour. Explanations considered include partisan influences, populist protest, and the role of national identity and ancestry. I find that all had a part to play in distinguishing the direct electionists who supported the referendum from those who did not, with the protest aspect being related to conceptions of national identity and capable of being interpreted as a reaction against multiculturalism. I also consider future prospects and argue that eventually some sort of direct election outcome is likely.

## **National Identity, Partisanship and Populist Protest as Factors in the 1999 Australian Republic Referendum**

### **Introduction**

There was a great deal of speculative analysis and commentary immediately following the defeat of the Republic referendum of 6 November 1999, and in this paper I use data from the Australian Constitutional Referendum Study 1999 (Gow et al. 2000) to provide empirical assessments of some of the most important questions about the failure of the referendum proposal to be passed. I begin by dealing with one of the key issues identified by Irving (2000), that of whether the defeat of the referendum indicates a desire to not change the Constitution or whether it indicates a preference for a direct election method of selecting the head of state.

This obviously has implications for future developments and processes. So too does another important (and perhaps related) question, that of whether the existence of (at least) three options (the existing situation; Parliamentary appointment of a President; direct election of a President) could lead to a 'cyclical majority' outcome, where none of the options is capable of obtaining a majority because adherents of the remaining options will combine to ensure its defeat. Based on close examination of the ACRS99 responses, I argue that this is unlikely and that any future successful republican outcome is most likely to involve some form of directly-elected President.

In addition to there having been a clear overall majority in favour of having a directly-elected President, almost half of these direct electionists were not prepared to support the Parliamentary-appointment option offered in the referendum. It was essentially the votes of this subgroup (in conjunction with those preferring to retain the existing arrangements) that led to the defeat. Since this group played such a significant part in defeating the referendum proposal, it is crucial to have an understanding of the factors that differentiated them from those who preferred direct election but who nevertheless voted 'Yes'.

Most of the rest of the article is spent discussing suggested differentiating factors, including giving an especially extensive discussion of the role of national identity that builds on some of the survey work on Australian national identity that has been carried out in recent years.

### **Head of State preferences**

A starting point for much of the commentary on the outcome of the referendum has been the obvious discrepancy between its outcome and the opinion polls that consistently showed an overwhelming majority of voters (in the order of 60-70%) in support of becoming a republic. The Head of State preferences of voters are a key factor in examining this and Table 1 shows the distribution of preferences for those respondents who listed at least a first choice (which was just over 90% of all ACRS99 respondents)<sup>1</sup>.

#### TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

It is immediately clear that an overall majority (55%) favoured direct election. Moreover, a large majority of supporters of both other groups (i.e. both those favouring Parliamentary appointment and those favouring retaining the Queen as head of state) had direct election as their second preference. Overall, in fact, direct election was the third preference of less than 10% of respondents. A consequence is that there was no 'cycling' evident at the referendum. The rational choice analysis in Mitchell (2000) showing that preferences over the republic issue were single-peaked provides further support for this conclusion.

McAllister (2000) argues that it might be hard to find an accommodation between voters' preferences for direct election and those of political elites for something like parliamentary appointment, and both Higley and Evans Case (2000) and Tranter (2000) also suggest that a direct election option will continue to be unacceptable to political elites. It is true that, since direct election was not an available option in the referendum, the support for it has not been subjected to a stringent test. Also, public opinion can be modified by carefully structured, lengthy campaigns. Nevertheless, the fact that so few respondents placed direct election as their least-preferred option does quite strongly suggest to me that a successful outcome will need to involve some sort of direct election model, even if one with a tightly circumscribed role for a president.

Moving on to consider the referendum vote, as well as the majority support for a republic, 70% of ACRS99 respondents strongly agreed with the statement that “Our head of state should be an Australian” (and a further 19% agreed, with less than 3% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing). In the light of these overwhelming majorities, what was the key to obtaining the apparently unlikely ‘No’ vote in the referendum? Fundamental to this must be the association between referendum vote and head of state preference order. Other things being equal, first preferences for Parliamentary-appointment and retaining the Queen should go together with ‘Yes’ and ‘No’ votes, respectively. In the case of a first preference for direct election, we would anticipate that the second preference would usually determine the vote, although other considerations such as tactical voting or partisan influences might be important enough for some voters to lead to apparent inconsistencies between head of state preferences and vote.

#### TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

For the most part, voting actually was consistent with head of state preference for those whose first preference was either Parliamentary appointment or retention of the Queen and Governor-General (see Table 2). Particularly among the direct electionists, however, there were some apparent inconsistencies. The most notable of these is that 17% of those with the Direct election/Queen preference order nevertheless voted in favour, in spite of the fact that a successful referendum outcome would have given them neither of these preferences. Other factors such as partisan influences (examined below) are a probable explanation for this inconsistency.

In numerical terms, this group is roughly counterbalanced by the 16% of Direct election/Parliament respondents who voted against the proposal. In this case, the inconsistency might be explained by tactical voting i.e. these voters might have believed that direct election would be a future possibility as long as the 1999 proposal was defeated.

The significance of direct electionists in defeating the referendum is highlighted by the fact that just over half of the 'No' vote apparently came from this source. This clearly demonstrates the importance of tactics during the campaign in identifying this group and in persuading its members to vote against the referendum proposal. It is therefore a primary task in explaining the referendum outcome to understand what factors distinguish the group. Consequently, in the rest of this article I will focus on the direct electionists, examining what distinguished those who voted 'No' (and hence were instrumental in defeating the proposal) from those who voted 'Yes'<sup>2</sup>.

### **Partisan influences**

Both in the general area of voting behaviour and in the specific setting of Australian referendum voting, partisan influences usually play a large part. It had been ALP policy since the early 1990s to support the introduction of a republic by 2001 (the Centenary of Federation) and, although there had been some divisions within the ALP over the method of election, their leading federal politicians (including their leader Kim Beazley) supported the referendum proposal. On the other hand, Liberal federal politicians were quite divided, though in their case the main division was between those supporting the status quo (including the Prime Minister, John Howard) and those favouring the Parliamentary-appointment option (including the Liberal deputy leader, Peter Costello).

### TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE

Consequently, to the extent that partisanship influenced voting, one would expect ALP partisans would have been more likely to support the proposal than Liberal partisans. This has, in fact, been shown to be the case when one considers voters overall, whether partisanship is measured by party identification (Charnock 2000; Tranter 2000) or by leader evaluations and 1998 federal election vote (McAllister 2000). Unlike amongst the party elites, direct electionists predominate amongst voters in all parties<sup>3</sup> (ranging upwards from the 47% among National identifiers: see Table 3).

There are, though, some partisan differences amongst the electorate in head of state preferences, and it is not clear a priori that partisanship would influence referendum voting in the same way when attention is restricted to direct electionists. It would be a plausible suggestion, for example, that the factors that lead voters to be direct electionists would often be powerful enough to override partisan effects.

#### TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE

However, there are actually clear relationships between party identification and referendum vote amongst direct electionists also (see Table 4), and they are generally of the same size and direction as those observed when all voters are considered. There is only one that differs in any significant way, and that is that Liberal direct electionists were more likely to vote in favour (46%) than were Liberal identifiers generally (36%). Although I have not shown the corresponding analyses here, this is largely a reflection of the corresponding head of state preferences: the second preferences of Liberal direct electionists were more heavily weighted towards Parliamentary appointment than were the first preferences of Liberal identifiers overall.

Clearly, then, partisan influences were also quite apparent among direct electionists, with ALP identifiers being more likely than Liberal identifiers to vote in favour. The differences are significant, but they obviously do not provide a complete explanation of what distinguishes the direct electionists who voted 'No' from those who voted 'Yes', and other factors must also have been important.

#### **Populist Protest**

One of the most commonly expressed suggestions for the referendum defeat has been that it reflected a populist protest derived from mistrust of, and dissatisfaction with, politicians and the political process. In the recent general political context, this has often been linked to the economic and social impacts of globalisation and has sometimes been put in the context of an urban-rural cleavage or of a 'cosmopolitans' v 'parochials' divide involving the notion of a 'new class' composed of an educated,

mobile, urban elite (cf. Betts 1999 and several of the contributors in Abbott et al. 1998). In the specific context of the referendum, it is associated with the notion that the Republic was an elite issue (see, for example, Higley and Evans Case 2000; McAllister 2000), an argument which was used very effectively in negative portrayals of Malcolm Turnbull and the Australian Republican Movement during the referendum campaign.

If these suggestions are accurate, then there should be both socio-demographic and attitudinal differences apparent in voting at the referendum. For example, groups said to suffer from the impact of globalisation, such as rural dwellers, those on lower incomes, those with lower levels of formal education and in lower status occupations should have been less likely to vote in favour of the referendum proposal. The same should be true for those with lower levels of trust and belief in the efficacy of the political process.

#### TABLE 5 ABOUT HERE

With respect to the socio-demographic effects (see Table 5), some of these aspects do distinguish the two groups of direct electionists from each other, with rural residence, non-possession of higher educational qualifications and being in lower status occupations all increasing the chances of voting 'No'. However, many other differences are small or non-existent, and it is also noteworthy that the only differences that are larger for direct electionists than for voters as a whole are based on country of birth (specifically, those for the Australian- and Southern European-born).

#### TABLE 6 ABOUT HERE

The 'Republic as elite initiative' hypothesis is quite strongly supported by the responses to the question about the Republic debate being a distraction from real problems, with the direct electionists who voted against the referendum being much

more likely to agree that it was a distraction (see Table 6)<sup>4</sup>. Clearly, proponents of a republic will need to argue the positive merits of the proposal better in future if voters such as these are to be persuaded to support the idea.

On the other hand, although there is a tendency for the direct electionists who voted 'No' to have somewhat lower levels of efficacy and trust, the differences are generally small. Consequently, these factors are not useful for distinguishing the two groups of direct electionists from each other. This is noteworthy: although a reaction to the republic issue in particular was significant, it appears that a more generalised political dissatisfaction was not an important distinguishing factor, contrary to many previous suggestions.

In passing, I would like to note one particularly ironic feature of the referendum outcome. Compared to 'Yes' voters, among the 'No' voters there was a disproportionate number of people who said they would definitely or probably have not voted had it not been compulsory to do so. Consequently, the question would have come much closer to obtaining an overall majority if voting had not been compulsory (and may even have passed). This is rather ironic, since Senator Minchin played such a key role in the 'No' campaign, yet is also well-known for his opposition to compulsory voting<sup>5</sup>.

### **National Identity**

Given the nature of the referendum proposal and the main theme of the 'Yes' campaigners (" 'Yes' for our republic and an Australian head of state"), issues about the nature of Australian national identity are obviously likely to have been critical for some people. In some cases this would come from aspects that might be directly related to the proposal: among these would be attachments to the historic ties with Britain (including to the Queen and Royal family) and to symbols such as the national flag and national anthem<sup>6</sup>.

In addition to these aspects that were directly related to the proposal, there are more diffuse ones that form part of questions about the nature of Australian national identity. In this vein, Warhurst (1993, 100) argues that '...for Australia the question of a republic is a nationalist issue' and quotes Bob Hawke (ALP Prime Minister from 1983 to 1991) as having said during his 1979 Boyer Lectures that 'for reasons of

national identity I would prefer to break the link with the British Crown' (Warhurst 1993, 115).

More recently, Paul Keating has been seen as having driven the debate about national identity during his years as Prime Minister and this has also been argued as intimately connected with the Republic debate (e.g. Leithner 1994). Following Keating's initiatives, the range of the debate was broadened to include people's attitudes to aboriginal issues, migrants and multiculturalism. Empirical support for the existence of connections between the republic issue and these aspects amongst the Australian electorate is provided by Jackman (1998), who finds not only that questions about aboriginal and migrant issues load together on the same (racial) dimension, but also that this dimension is fairly highly correlated with a republican dimension<sup>7</sup>.

#### TABLE 7 ABOUT HERE

Several of these aspects were apparent in voting at the referendum and are reflected in Table 7. The largest differences involve those who are more conservative on constitutional ties with Britain and the Queen and on symbols such as the flag. Such people are considerably more common among the direct electionists who voted 'No' than among those who voted 'Yes', and this seems to be one of the most significant factors differentiating the two groups of direct electionists.

At first sight, this is somewhat contradictory: on the one hand, the expressed attitudes of this group are quite conservative (which helps to explain their 'No' vote), but on the other hand their preference for direct election as first choice expresses support for what would potentially be a very radical change. It could, however, be taken to support the notion of a protest vote among the members of the group; this interpretation is reinforced by the fact (noted previously) that those in the group were much more likely to think the republic debate was a distraction from real problems.

However, since the source of such a protest does not (based on the analysis above) appear to be a generalised political dissatisfaction, it is necessary to identify what the source might be. Analyses in both of Charnock (1999) and McAllister and Bean

(2000) suggest that attitudes towards migrants and aborigines played an important role in attracting voters to the One Nation Party at the 1998 federal election. Combined with Jackman's (1998) conclusions mentioned above, this suggests that at least a partial source for the protest vote is likely to be found in some of the more diffuse aspects of national identity.

As Table 7 shows quite clearly, questions about things such as attitudes towards migrants do indeed serve to differentiate direct electionists who voted against from those who voted in favour, with the former having more negative attitudes. Taken together with the significant country of birth differences noted earlier, this suggests that a more extensive examination of the role of national identity is likely to provide some valuable insights into voting behaviour at the referendum (and also possibly have some relevance for understanding the sources of recent protest voting more generally).

Phillips (1998) provides a useful review of recent quantitative survey research in the area of Australian national identity, finding just over ten studies<sup>8</sup>. Of particular interest here are some analyses of responses to people's conceptions of what aspects are important in being 'truly Australian'<sup>9</sup>. McAllister (1997) concluded that achieved rather than ascribed attributes were overall rated as more important, while Jones (1997) derived a typology of Australians based on their responses. Using factor analysis, he found that the aspects could be subdivided into three scales, one involving ascribed attributes (being Australian-born, Christian and having lived in Australia for most of one's life) and which he described as measuring an *Australian nativism* dimension, the second (based on feeling Australian and respecting Australian laws and political institutions) which he described as measuring an *affective* dimension of *civic culture* and a third (based on possessing citizenship and being able to speak English) which he found acted as a behavioural bridge between the other two dimensions and which he described as measuring an *instrumental* dimension of *civic culture*. Based on the first two of these scales he identified four main groups within the population, which he named as follows:

**Dogmatic Nativists:** (strong nativism and strong affective civic culture)

**Literal Nativists:** (strong nativism and weak to moderate affective civic culture)

**Civic Nationalists:** (weak to moderate nativism and strong affective civic culture)

**Moderate Pluralists:** (weak to moderate on both nativism and affective civic culture).

In the context of the Republic referendum, this typology<sup>10</sup> can be used to add some analytic precision to some of the previous explanations and also to add a new dimension. For example, it seems to provide a more careful empirical investigation into some important aspects of the arguments used by Betts (1999), especially of the distinction between ‘cosmopolitans’ and ‘parochials’. In this framework, one would probably associate the ‘cosmopolitans’ most closely with the ‘moderate pluralists’: if the suggestion that the republic referendum was mainly important to mobile, urban, educated elites is accurate, then this group should have been more likely to vote ‘yes’. On the other hand, at face value (based on nationalist sentiment) one would expect nativists to have been more likely to support the referendum (‘...an Australian head of state’), so failure to do so would indicate the kind of protest mentioned earlier.

#### TABLE 8 ABOUT HERE

In fact, a straightforward examination (see Table 8) makes it clear that among direct electionists (as well as among voters as a whole) the two nativist groups were considerably more likely to have voted against the referendum proposal. Perceptions of national identity are, therefore, quite effective in distinguishing the two groups of direct electionists from each other.

As the lower section of Table 8 indicates, while the nativist groups were more likely than the two other identity groups to favour retaining the status quo, a majority of both nativist groups actually selected direct election as their first choice (and, in fact, the Literal Nativists had the highest percentage of direct electionists among all of the four groups). In addition, members of both groups of nativists were extremely unlikely to select Parliamentary appointment as first preference. This again seems to support a protest vote interpretation.

Reinforcing this even more, analyses (not shown here) that also incorporate party identification show that, while ALP identifiers in the Civic Nationalist and Moderate Pluralist groups were considerably more likely than Coalition identifiers to select

Parliamentary appointment as first preference, there was no such difference among the nativist groups; this further suggests that the nativist aspect is associated with protest voting, with nativism negating the (positive) ALP partisan effect on voting 'Yes'.

#### TABLE 9 ABOUT HERE

What is the source of this protest vote? Does it derive from generalised political dissatisfaction or from something more specific, such as a reaction against the perceived special treatment of aborigines and migrants and the notion of a multicultural society? The large attitudinal variations apparent in Table 9 support the latter explanation. There are large contrasts between the groups, with the Moderate Pluralists and Dogmatic Nativists tending to be at opposite poles<sup>11</sup>. The former have a much weaker attachment to Australia than the other groups, and they are generally the least conservative. They are also more likely to have an individualistic view of society. In contrast, the Dogmatic Nativists are the most strongly attached to Australia, are the most conservative and have the most community-oriented view of society. There are also significant differences in attitudes towards migrants and aborigines.

#### TABLE 10 ABOUT HERE

The sociodemographic backgrounds of the Moderate Pluralists and Civic Nationalists are very similar to each other (see Table 10), including having the highest education levels and occupational status. One notable exception to this is in residential location, where it is the Literal Nativist and Moderate Pluralist groups that are more likely to live in large towns and cities; for direct electionists, therefore, the affective civic culture dimension seems more important than the nativism one in differentiating between areas of residence.

Some aspects of the backgrounds of the two nativist groups are quite similar, although the Dogmatic Nativists among the direct electionists have a number of indicators of

having the lowest socioeconomic status (income levels, education levels, occupational status and working class self-identification). Some of these (such as in the areas of education and income) are probably related to the older ages of the Dogmatic Nativists (half of whom were aged over 50 years). A surprising feature is that the nativist groups are more likely to be female (particularly the Literal Nativists, only 40% of whom are male).

There are some large differences in ancestry backgrounds between the identity groups, with both nativist groups being considerably more likely to be Australian-born, especially third-generation. The fact that there is little difference between first- and second-generation distributions of national identity categories suggests that having at least one overseas-born parent has a significant effect on attitudes about national identity.

Religious attachment (whether measured by religious denomination or attendance) is much more likely to be present among both nativist groups, and about a quarter of both Moderate Pluralist and Civic Nationalist groups state they have no religion. This has a parallel in partisan attachments, with some practically significant variations in levels of major party identification (around 85% in the nativist groups and 75% in the others) that mainly result from differences in levels of non-identification.

When considered in conjunction with the differences in education levels and the fact that the area of residence variations cut across the nativism dimension, this indicates that an interpretation in terms of values is more appropriate in aiding understanding of the referendum's defeat than is one based on an urban-rural divide.

All of this supports the conclusion that there was a significant element of protest among the nativist groups resulting from a reaction against the 'republic as elite initiative' perception. We have seen that these groups are disproportionately third generation Australian and appear to have a vision of society which is more assimilationist and antagonistic towards multiculturalism. Consequently, another distinguishing feature is that their discontent is expressed in more negative attitudes towards perceived special treatment of migrants and aborigines. As before, it was these specific attitudes, rather than a generalised sense of political dissatisfaction, that best helps to explain the protest vote.

### **Multivariate analyses**

Separate analyses of the different factors, then, show that partisanship, populist protest in reaction to perceptions that the issue was driven by elites, and conceptions of national identity and ancestry all help to distinguish the direct electionists who did not support the referendum from those who did. However, a generalised political dissatisfaction did not do so, and the protest vote seems to be connected to some aspects of the national identity and ancestry component.

Multivariate analysis which takes many factors simultaneously into account confirms these findings (see Table 11). The strongest effect of any single variable was that for

#### TABLE 11 ABOUT HERE

party identification, with ALP identification making direct electionists more likely to vote in favour than other direct electionists. National identity also showed a significant effect, with nativist groups among the direct electionists being less likely to support the proposal than the other identity groups. In addition to an indirect impact through these national identity perceptions, country of birth also had a direct effect, with Southern European-born direct electionists being much more likely to support the proposal than the Australian- or British-born. The significance of this 'cluster' of variables related to national identity and ancestry is emphasised by the effect of attitudes towards both migrants and retaining ties to Britain, with the former also being capable of being interpreted as forming part of the anti-elite reaction. Interestingly, attitudes towards aborigines are not significant; this is probably because negative attitudes in the area are widespread and hence do not serve to differentiate the groups as well as do those towards migrants.

When the influences of other variables are controlled for, only two of the socio-demographic variables (religious denomination and education level) were significant in distinguishing the two groups of direct electionists from each other, and both could be interpreted in terms of values. The largest effect was for possession of higher education qualifications, which made direct electionists more likely to vote 'Yes'. In

the case of religion, although having a stated affiliation with a religious denomination generally increased the chances of voting 'No' compared to secularists who rejected a religious denomination of any kind, few are by statistically significant amounts, and one is actually in the opposite direction (Orthodox, re-emphasising the significance of ethnic influences).

Although age, area of residence, self-identified social class and generalised political dissatisfaction were all significant in distinguishing 'Yes' from 'No' voters overall (Charnock 2000, Table 10), none of them were important for distinguishing among direct electionists. Furthermore, the religious denomination effects are much smaller among direct electionists. These comparisons suggest that, in interpreting the impact of social background effects on differentiating direct electionists who voted 'No', a values-based interpretation deriving from education influences is the one that is more fundamental.

### **Conclusion and prospects**

The analyses presented here of voters' preferences for Head of State selection methods clearly show that the Republic referendum was defeated only because of the votes of a large proportion (almost half) of the direct electionists. It appears, in fact, that slightly over half of the 'No' vote actually came from this source. Consequently, in terms of tactics, identification of the group of direct electionists who voted against the proposal was crucial, and an understanding of the features that distinguished this group from other direct electionists is essential to assessing future prospects.

There seem to be three main aspects that were relevant, two of which are interrelated. The strongest is the traditionally important influence of partisanship: the role of the political parties was significant, with a proportion of voters apparently following their parties or party leaders against their own expressed head of state preference. Since it seems probable that future Liberal leaders will be more likely than Mr Howard to support a republic, this factor will probably be more favourable to a republic in future.

There was another set of influences that was almost as strong as partisanship, ones that are related to conceptions of national identity and ancestry. Drawing on a typology developed by Jones (1997) that divides the population into four groups on the basis of

their perceptions of national identity, I was able to show that the association between the referendum vote and these identity groups was quite strong, being not much weaker than that between the vote and party identification. The nature of the association was that those groups that were strongly nativist were considerably more likely to vote 'No' than were the others. This suggests a protest vote, because prima facie one would have expected strong nativists to be most in support of having an Australian as head of state.

However, the source of this protest does not appear to be a sense of generalised political dissatisfaction. Rather, it seems to result from fundamental differences in social perceptions. The nativist groups are disproportionately third generation Australian and have a vision of Australian society which is assimilationist. As a result, their discontent is also expressed in negative attitudes towards perceived special treatment of migrants and aborigines and one could (at least partly) interpret their protest vote as a reaction resulting from their view of multiculturalism. It seems unlikely that these groups would change this perspective, and would certainly not do so quickly. They do, however, make up less than a quarter of the population and almost half were aged over 50 years.

Furthermore, as far as the ancestry part of the set of influences is concerned, the British-born component of the migrant intake has declined sharply since the mid-1970s. Consequently, the impact of the British-born (which is in favour of a 'No' vote) will presumably diminish over time. Overall, the changes in source countries for migrants are likely to be more favourable to a 'Yes' vote in future.

Unquestionably, the hypothesis that there was an element of protest as a reaction against a perception of the republic as an elite initiative is supported by my analyses. As already argued, this reaction was not a product of generalised political dissatisfaction (at least as far as distinguishing the direct electionists who voted against from those who voted in favour is concerned). A focus on values, both on those related to education and on those involved in the differing conceptions of national identity held by the nativist groups, gives a more accurate reflection of the causes. There is some flavour of a 'cosmopolitans'- 'parochials' distinction, but this lacks the analytical clarity and rigour of the national identity typology. A simplistic spatial distinction based on a divide between major cities and other areas is inadequate because it ignores

important associated differences in social composition: for example, migrants are disproportionately concentrated in major cities (many countries of birth have concentrations in major cities of well over 90%) while, conversely, the Australian-born are disproportionately located outside major cities.

Some of the ideas about the relationship between nativism and the protest vote could probably also be usefully applied to a more general voting context, and they do appear to help in understanding the One Nation phenomenon. However, despite the possibilities offered by preferential voting methods, voters would arguably be more likely to exercise such a protest in the setting of a referendum (especially one that appeared to have mainly symbolic effect) than they would be at a federal election.

Given the existence of this protest factor, it seems to me that the then-forthcoming Centenary of Federation and the new millennium provided a context that made the 1999 referendum a relatively easy opportunity for supporters of a republic to succeed. Having failed, future attempts will require much more careful thought, information campaigns and persuasion. The argument that an accommodation between the political elites and the electorate might be hard to find does need to be taken seriously but, on balance, I think it most likely that some kind of direct election method will eventuate in due course (with sufficiently tightly circumscribed roles and powers for the president to satisfy the political elites). Achieving the outcome would be helped by using a multistage process (such as the one currently proposed by the ALP i.e. an indicative vote for a republic, followed by discussion and selection of a model or models), which would allow different coalitions of supporters to be formed at each stage.

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## Notes

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1. The ACRS99 used a disproportionate sample design, with less populous states being over-sampled and the most populous ones being under-sampled. All results presented in this paper are weighted to adjust for this.
2. Survey-based studies of factors differentiating 'No' from 'Yes' voters overall (as compared to the direct electionists examined here) have been conducted by a number of authors (Bean 2000; Charnock 2000; McAllister 2000; Tranter 2000).
3. See Jackman (1998, 178-82) for a discussion of some partisan differences in ideological closeness between party elites and their identifiers.
4. The fact that fewer than half of enrolled voters voted in the non-compulsory ballot for the elected delegates to the 1998 Constitutional Convention could be taken as additional evidence of lack of widespread enthusiasm.
5. He was, for example, a key member of the Coalition majority on the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters that recommended the abolition of compulsory voting at federal elections and referendums following the Coalition's win at the 1996 federal election.
6. Although neither the flag nor the national anthem would have changed as a result of a successful referendum vote, there were substantial minorities (of 24% and 18%, respectively) who incorrectly thought they would change.
7. The qualitative research reported in Phillips and Smith (2000) suggests that any changes in perceptions of Australian identity over the period had been quite minor and this supports the view that the republic debate generally (not just the referendum campaign) had little effect on these perceptions.
8. In an international context, the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) tried for several years to develop suitable modules for their cross-national studies (Svallfors 1996) and eventually the 1995 round of ISSP surveys

included some relevant modules. As in previous rounds, the Australian contribution to this was provided by the National Social Science Survey (Kelley et al. 1995); several of the relevant questions from the modules were also included in the 1996 Australian Election Study (Jones et al. 1996) and some were included in ACRS99.

9. The relevant question (included in all of NSSS95, AES 96 and ACRS 99) is as follows:

*Some people say the following things are important for being truly Australian. Others say they are not important. How important do you think each thing is?*

1. *Being born in Australia*
2. *Having Australian citizenship*
3. *Living in Australia most of one's life*
4. *Being able to speak English*
5. *Being Christian*
6. *Respecting Australia's political institutions and laws*
7. *Feeling Australian*

[respondents were asked to indicate whether they considered each aspect to be very important, fairly important, not very important or not at all important].

10. In ACRS99 the respective sizes of the groups were Dogmatic Nativists (16%), Literal Nativists (6%), Civic Nationalists (39%) and Moderate Pluralists (39%). This distribution is almost identical to that found by Jones (1997) in his analysis of the NSSS95.
11. The same is also true among all respondents (Charnock 2000, Table 7).

**Table 1**  
**Preferences for Head of State method<sup>a</sup>**

<b>First and Second choices of method</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Direct election/Parliament	24
Direct election/Queen	21
Direct election only <sup>b</sup>	10
<b>Direct election first preference Total</b>	<b>55</b>
Parliament/Direct election	15
Parliament/Queen	4
Parliament only <sup>b</sup>	2
<b>Parliament first preference Total</b>	<b>21</b>
Queen/Direct election	16
Queen/Parliament	4
Queen only <sup>b</sup>	5
<b>Queen first preference Total</b>	<b>24</b>

*Note:* Total (weighted) N = 2087.

a Respondents were asked:

*If you had to choose among the following possibilities for Australia, which one would be your first choice? And which one would be your second choice?*

1. *A President directly elected by the people*
2. *A President appointed by Parliament*
3. *Retaining the Queen and the Governor-General*
4. *Don't Know*

b These respondents listed no second preference

*Source:* 1999 ACRS

**TABLE 2**  
**Referendum Vote for various Head of State preferences**

Preference order for Head of State	Referendum Vote		N (weighted)
	Yes %	No %	
Direct election / Parliament	84	16	501
Direct election / Queen	17	83	415
Direct election only	58	42	188
Parliament / Direct election	97	3	312
Parliament / Queen	74	26	74
Parliament only	93	7	37
Queen / Direct election	1	99	321
Queen / Parliament	3	97	81
Queen only	4	96	92

*Note:* **Direct election** = Directly elected President; **Parliament** = President appointed by Parliament;  
**Queen** = Retain the Queen as Head of State

*Source:* 1999 ACRS

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**TABLE 3**  
**Party Identification differences in Head of State preference**

<b>Party identification</b>	<b>Head of State first preference</b>			<b>N (weighted)</b>
	Direct Election	Parliament	Queen	
	%	%	%	
Liberal	49	17	34	731
Labor	60	25	15	807
National Party	47	10	43	73
Australian Democrats	56	34	10	80
Greens	64	32	4	45
One Nation	64	2	34	42
No party	51	22	27	274

*Source:* 1999 ACRS

**TABLE 4**  
**Party Identification impact on Referendum Vote**

<b>Party identification</b>	<b>Referendum vote (among direct electionists)</b>		<b>Referendum Vote (among all respondents)</b>	
	<b>Yes %</b>	<b>No %</b>	<b>Yes %</b>	<b>No %</b>
Liberal	46	54	36	64
Labor	66	34	63	37
National Party	30	70	23	77
Australian Democrats	66	34	70	30
Greens	62	38	63	37
One Nation	30	70	24	76
No party	41	59	41	59
<b>Overall (weighted N)</b>	54 (592)	46 (500)	48 (1052)	52 (1127)

Source: 1999 ACRS

**TABLE 5**  
**Variations in socio-demographic background according to Referendum Vote**

	Direct Electionists		All respondents		
	Voted Yes	Voted No	Voted Yes	Voted No	Overall
	%	%	%	%	%
Trade Union member	29	23	29	20	25
Working class self-identification	45	49	38	47	42
Family income more than \$40,000 per year	50	50	57	44	51
Degree or post graduate qualifications	19	11	27	11	19
Managers and Administrators	10	10	12	10	11
Professionals	19	16	24	13	19
Labourers and production workers	15	22	12	19	16
Rural / village or smaller town resident	27	39	25	38	31
Large town resident	18	16	15	19	17
Major city resident	55	45	60	44	52
Roman Catholic	30	29	27	26	27
No religion	22	17	26	14	20
Religious attendance less than yearly or never	58	58	59	54	57
Male	48	50	49	46	48
Mean age (years)	45.1	46.9	44.4	49.5	47.0
Australian-born	71	79	75	79	77
United Kingdom- and Ireland-born	8	8	7	10	9
Southern European-born	7	1	5	2	4

*Note:* entries are column percentages e.g. of those direct electionists who voted 'Yes', 45% self-identified as working class, compared to 49% of those who voted 'No'. In the full sample, 42% of respondents self-identified as working class, with 38% of the overall 'Yes' voters and 47% of the 'No' voters so identifying.

*Source:* 1999 ACRS

**TABLE 6**

**Attitude (trust, efficacy, interest) variations according to Referendum Vote**

	Direct Electionists		All respondents		Overall %
	Voted Yes %	Voted No %	Voted Yes %	Voted No %	
	Not much or no interest in politics	20	18	15	
Would probably or definitely not have voted if not compulsory	7	9	5	11	8
Not very or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in Australia	27	25	22	22	22
Not much or no interest at all in the referendum campaign	18	23	14	26	20
Did not care very much or not at all about the outcome of the referendum	31	28	27	28	28
Who you vote for can make a difference to what happens	66	59	70	61	65
People in government usually look after themselves	41	51	34	47	41
Federal politicians don't know much about what ordinary people think	59	67	53	61	57
Strongly agree or agree Republic debate a distraction from real problems	39	65	33	73	53

*Note:* as described in the note to Table 5, entries are column percentages

*Source:* 1999 ACRS

**TABLE 7**

**Attitude (national identity related) variations according to Referendum Vote**

	Direct Electionists		All Respondents		Overall %
	Voted Yes %	Voted No %	Voted Yes %	Voted No %	
Strongly favour or favour changing the Australian flag	62	25	62	15	38
Strongly agree or agree should keep constitutional ties with Britain	18	42	17	61	39
The Queen and Royal family are very or fairly important to Australia	11	40	11	56	34
Very important to make special effort to protect ethnic and racial minorities	36	23	38	23	30
Australian society should be unified body pursuing a common goal	67	76	62	78	70
Equal opportunities for migrants have gone much too far	9	15	7	17	13
Aboriginal land rights have gone much too far	23	36	18	36	28
Number of migrants allowed into Australia has gone much too far	18	28	14	29	22
Government help for aborigines has gone much too far	22	36	18	33	26

*Note:* as described in the note to Table 5, entries are column percentages

*Source:* 1999 ACRS

**TABLE 8**  
**Referendum Vote and Head of State preference of Australian identity groups**

		<b>Dogmatic nativists</b>	<b>Literal nativists</b>	<b>Civic nationalists</b>	<b>Moderate pluralists</b>	<b>Overall</b>
		<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Referendum vote</b>	Voted No (direct electionists)	58	60	43	42	46
	Voted No (all respondents)	68	64	47	47	52
<b>First preference for Head of State (all respondents)</b>	Direct election	55	59	54	56	55
	Parliament	8	7	26	23	21
	Queen	37	34	20	21	24

*Note:* as described in the note to Table 5, entries in the table are column percentages e.g. among direct electionists 58 % of the Dogmatic Nativists voted No, while among all respondents 68 % of the Dogmatic Nativists voted No.

*Source:* 1999 ACRS

**TABLE 9**  
**Attitudes of Australian identity groups among Direct Electionists**

	Australian identity group				Overall
	Dogmatic nativists	Literal nativists	Civic nationalists	Moderate pluralists	
	%	%	%	%	
Not very or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in Australia	24	27	21	33	26
Strongly agree or agree who people vote for can make a difference to what happens	59	50	68	59	62
Did not care very much or not at all about the outcome of the Republic referendum	32	29	25	36	31
Strongly agree or agree republic debate is a distraction from Australia's real problems	60	57	48	49	51
Queen and Royal family are very or fairly important to Australia	34	40	19	23	24
Strongly favour or favour changing the Australian flag	34	28	47	50	45
Strongly agree or agree should keep constitutional ties with Britain	40	35	25	26	28
Strongly agree would rather be citizen of Australia than any other country in world	93	80	76	58	72
Very proud of Australian history	55	56	41	27	38
Strongly agree that the world would be a better place if people from other countries were more like Australians	46	31	30	16	27
Strongly agree that generally speaking, Australia is a much better country than most other countries	71	60	51	32	47
Very important to make a special effort to protect ethnic and racial minorities	30	18	31	29	29
Ideally, Australian society should be a unified body pursuing a common goal	89	73	73	60	70
Equal opportunities for migrants have gone much too far	24	18	8	9	12
Aboriginal land rights have gone much too far	40	29	26	30	30
Number of migrants allowed into Australia has gone much too far	44	34	18	20	23
Government help for aborigines has gone much too far	37	29	27	27	29

*Note:* as described in the note to Table 5, entries in the table are column percentages

*Source:* 1999 ACRS

**TABLE 10**  
**Sociodemographic background of Australian identity groups**  
**among Direct Electionists**

<b>Background differences ...</b>	<b>Australian identity group</b>				<b>Overall</b>
	<b>Dogmatic nativists</b>	<b>Literal nativists</b>	<b>Civic nationalists</b>	<b>Moderate pluralists</b>	
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Male	47	40	50	50	49
Aged over 50 years	50	30	32	28	33
Family income over \$40,000 per year	34	54	55	53	51
Working class self-identification	56	43	44	45	46
Trade union member	23	38	27	25	26
Government employee	23	24	24	22	23
Left School before 16 years old	49	33	28	27	31
Bachelor or postgraduate degree	6	12	17	18	15
Managers and Administrators	7	10	15	12	12
Professionals	14	8	18	20	18
Labourers and production workers	26	17	15	14	16
Live in Rural / village or smaller town	32	21	27	21	25
Immigrant to Australia	14	13	25	25	23
2nd generation Australian	16	16	21	24	21
3rd (or higher) generation Australian	70	71	54	51	56
Adheres to one of 5 major Christian faiths	84	88	68	66	71
No Religion	7	5	25	24	20
Regular church attender (at least weekly)	20	16	10	10	12
Liberal or National identifier	37	45	36	33	35
ALP identifier	49	40	39	42	42
No party identification	6	7	14	14	13

*Note:* as described in the note to Table 5, entries in the table are column percentages

*Source:* 1999 ACRS

**TABLE 11**

**Logistic regression for Republic Referendum Vote among Direct Electionists**

EXPLANATORY VARIABLE	CATEGORIES	COEFFICIENT (S.E.)
Party Identification	ALP (base)	N/a
	Liberal	0.89 (0.14)*
	National	1.10 (0.38)*
	Australian Democrats	0.07 (0.30)
	Greens	0.31 (0.32)
	One Nation	0.88 (0.38)*
	Other party	2.71 (1.12)*
	No party	0.97 (0.18)*
Migrant attitudes	(0-1 scale: 1=high anti-migrant)	0.65 (0.33)*
Highest Qualification	No Qualifications (base)	N/a
	Bachelor or Postgraduate degree	-0.73 (0.19)*
	Diploma	-0.34 (0.21)
	Trade qualification	-0.09 (0.15)
	Non-trade qualification	-0.04 (0.17)
Religious denomination	No religion (base)	N/a
	Roman Catholic	0.16 (0.18)
	Anglican	0.44 (0.17)*
	Uniting/Methodist	0.32 (0.21)
	Orthodox	-1.22 (0.53)*
	Presbyterian	0.34 (0.30)
	Other religion	0.20 (0.23)
Australian Identity	Moderate Pluralist (base)	N/a
	Civic Nationalist	0.08 (0.12)
	Literal Nativist	0.62 (0.24)*
	Dogmatic Nativist	0.35 (0.17)*
Country of Birth	Australia (base)	N/a
	UK or Ireland	0.18 (0.21)
	S. Europe	-1.52 (0.49)*
	Elsewhere	-0.17 (0.19)
Ties to Britain and the Queen	0-1 scale: 1=highly favour retention	1.17 (0.28)*
Constant	N/a	-1.03 (0.27)*

*Note:*  $r^2 = 0.28$ ; positive coefficients indicate an increased chance of voting 'No' at the referendum;

\* indicates significant difference from 0 or base category (as appropriate) at a 5% level; other variables included in the modelling, but which were not statistically significant were scales measuring political dissatisfaction and attitudes towards treatment of aborigines, family income, self-identified social class, age, area of residence, religious attendance, employer-type, union membership, firearms ownership and sex.

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*Source:* 1999 ACRS