

# **PROTEST FROM THE FRINGE:**

Overseas Students and their Influence on Australia's Export of  
Education Services Policy 1983-1996

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree  
of Doctor of Philosophy  
Discipline of Government and International Relations  
Faculty of Economics and Business  
University of Sydney  
June 2009

## **STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY**

*This is to certify that to the best of my knowledge, the content of this thesis is my own work. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or other purposes.*

*I certify that the intellectual content of this thesis is the product of my own work and that all the assistance received in preparing this thesis and sources have been acknowledged.*

**Eugene Francis Sebastian**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The thesis investigates the motivations behind, the methods used in, and the results of the overseas students' collective action contesting the measures, which the Australian government introduced from 1983 to 1996. As a group of temporary residents located outside the boundaries of domestic political systems, yet within the core of Australia's revenue earnings, overseas students independently mobilised in an attempt to influence the Australian Government policy on education from a position of limited political, social and legal rights. As temporary residents on short-term permits fully regulated under prescribed immigration rules, overseas students employed conventional repertoires of contention— they established formal structures, adopted action tools, framed their claims, internationalised their protest, formed alliances — in an attempt to mobilise resources and access existing avenues to influence government's export of education services policy. Their mobilisation response and campaign strategy achieved modest success in securing some policy concessions, particularly during the early stages of education aid reform. Their strategy, however had to evolve as the fledgling export of education services expanded and eventually they shifted their position to fully embrace and reinterpret the government's own 'language of liberalisation', which they used to greater effectiveness in making subsequent claims. Overseas students ability to procure concessions is derived not from their political or universal rights to education, but from their ability to influence policy changes based on their importance and strategic location in the Australian economy. In other words, government, universities and industry stakeholders have increasingly become dependent on substantial revenue earnings derived from overseas students and have become susceptible to potential chaos that may be precipitated if current students withdrew from the economy, or potential students choosing alternative education service destinations.

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| ADAB   | Australian Development Aid Bureau  |
| ADAA   | Australian Development Assistance Agency   |
| AOCCOS | Australian Co-ordinating Committee for Overseas Students   |
| ASEAN  | Association of South East Asian Nations  |
| AUS    | Australian Union of Students   |
| AUSCOS | Australian Council for Overseas Students   |
| COE    | Commonwealth Office of Education   |
| CISSA  | Confederation of International Students Association of South Australia                                 |
| DEA    | Department of External Affairs   |
| DEET   | Department of Education, Employment and Training   |
| DIEA   | Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs   |
| EFTISU | Effective Full Time International Students Units   |
| ELICOS | English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students   |
| ESOS   | Education Services for Overseas Students (Registration of Providers and Financial Regulation) Act 1991 |
| HREOC  | Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission  |
| IDC    | Inter-departmental Committee   |
| IDP    | International Development Programme  |
| MCA    | Malaysian Chinese Association  |
| MIC    | Malaysian Indian Congress  |
| NLC    | National Liaison Committee for Overseas Students in Australia  |
| NOSD   | National Overseas Students Department  |
| NOSS   | National Overseas Students Services  |

|         |  |
|---------|--|
| NSWOSC  | New South Wales Overseas Students Collective                     |
| NUAUS   | National Union of Australian Students                            |
| NUS     | National Union of Students                                       |
| NUSWest | National Union of Students Western Australia branch              |
| NZUSA   | New Zealand University Students Association                      |
| OSC     | Overseas Students Charge   |
| OSP     | Overseas Students Program  |
| OSS     | Overseas Students Services                                       |
| OSAWA   | Overseas Students Association of Western Australia               |
| OSCAFF  | Overseas Students Collective Action Against Full Fees            |
| PAC     | Policy Advisory Council  |
| RMIT    | Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology                          |
| SEAMEO  | South East Asian Ministers of Education Organisation             |
| SMC     | Social Movement Communities                                      |
| SMO     | Social Movement Organisations                                    |
| SRC     | Students Representative Council                                  |
| STA     | Student Travel Australia   |
| TAFE    | Colleges of Technical and Further Education                      |
| UNAA    | United Nations Association of Australia                          |
| UNESCO  | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation |
| UNSW    | University of New South Wales                                    |
| UTS     | University of Technology Sydney                                  |

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis has taken just over six years part-time to complete. Over the course of researching and writing I have accumulated considerable debts of gratitude, far too many to mention.

I would like to express my sincerest appreciation to my supervisor, Rodney Smith, for his kind guidance, support and invaluable comments over the duration of my thesis candidature. It is tough to undertake part-time studies and full-time work. It can be tougher if nearly half of the candidature is undertaken in external mode. Rodney's incredible generosity and encouragement is very much appreciated.

On a personal note, I would like to thank Leslie Williams for encouraging me to pursue this path, and Stephanie Fahey for supporting my endeavour and giving me generous time off from employment at key points of my writing.

My friends, too many to mention, who always wondered if it was ever going to end: Rodney, Maya, Tony and Karen, Justin, Nadine, Vincent and Karen, Catherine, Ashley, Joe and Van Anh.

My parents, Richard and Rosalind; my family, Ian and Imelda, Sharon and Sean.

Juliet and Gabriel, the loves of my life. Thank you for your constant encouragement, patience and distraction. And thank you for putting up with the regular exaggerated importance I placed on this thesis.

*This thesis is dedicated to my parents Richard and Rosalind, my wife, Juliet and son, Gabriel.*

# One

## INTRODUCTION

### INTRODUCTION

In May 1986, a group of overseas students from student organisations across Australia gathered at Monash University in Melbourne to discuss a crisis that would have deep and far-reaching impact on the present and future education opportunities for overseas students in Australia.<sup>1</sup> A looming problem had emerged a year before with the Hawke Labor government deciding to introduce a new policy to increase overseas students' visa charges. This, together with its subsequent decision to completely overhaul its longstanding and highly successful international education aid scheme, the *Overseas Students Program* (OSP), had now precipitated into a serious crisis for the student leaders. Following recommendations by the Jackson Committee<sup>2</sup>, established to review the aid program, the government resolved to allow Australian education institutions to market their courses and degree programs abroad. This recommendation threatened to unleash a deregulated and competitive, demand-driven model of full fees for recruitment of foreign students in the higher education sector.<sup>3</sup>

For several days the student leaders debated intensely in an attempt to formulate a national response to a common concern. It had only been a year previously that the

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<sup>1</sup> National Overseas Students Association, 1986, The 2<sup>nd</sup> National Overseas Students Conference, Monash University, May, Melbourne (unpublished)

<sup>2</sup> Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence, 1985, The Jackson Report on Australia's Overseas Aid Program, The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra

<sup>3</sup> Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs, 2000, The Emergence of Entrepreneurial Public Universities in Australia, IMHE General Conference of the OECD Paris, September

same students had failed to coalesce around a similar plan of action in response to the initial fee increase. However, at that time contrasting policy positions had stood in the path of compromise, while the disparate geographical locations of overseas student organisations posed an impediment to forming a concerted national response to a common challenge. This time, the students were determined to avoid another failure to mobilise against the government. In an attempt to secure an agreed outcome and make some headway in the policy debates, the students finally formed a national coordinating body, the *National Liaison Committee for Overseas Students in Australia* (NLC)<sup>4</sup> as a vehicle to represent their concerns and conduct actions against the government.

## **REFORM OF EDUCATION AID IN THE 1980S**

The policy decision to accept full fee paying students seemed inescapable. In the period between 1985 and 1994, the share of world trade in the international economy rose three times faster than between 1975 and 1985. During the same period global direct investment had trebled and the economies of East Asia, growing at over 8 percent, were lowering trade barriers and transforming themselves into key global players and ‘miracle economies’.<sup>5</sup> Australia’s economy, largely a product of protectionist policies of past decades, was in serious trouble from the mid to late seventies onwards and beginning to take its toll on domestic politics. In 1975 for example, Gough Whitlam lost the subsequent election for mismanaging the economy and creating unprecedented rates of unemployment and inflation. In 1983, Whitlam’s successor, Malcolm Fraser was not returned to power, largely due to his ongoing policy straggling in response to a fast paced changing global economic environment.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> The National Liaison Committee for Overseas Students in Australia frequently referred to the acronym NLC rather than the NLCOSA.

<sup>5</sup> Amsden, A.H, 1993, *Asia’s Industrial Revolution*, *Dissent*, 40 (Summer), pp. 324 – 332; World Bank, *The East Asian Miracle: Economic Growth and Public Policy*, Oxford University Press, New York; and Nasbitt, J., 1995, *Megatrends Asia: The Eight Asian Megatrends That are Changing the World*, Nicholas Braeley Publishing, London

<sup>6</sup> Jennett, C., & Stewart, R.G, (eds.), 1990, *Hawke and Australian public policy: Consensus and restructuring*, Macmillan, Melbourne; and Head, B.W., & Patience, A., 1989, *From Fraser to Hawke*, Longman Cheshire, Melbourne

The need to reform Australia's economic structures while responding to the imperatives and associated vulnerabilities of a swiftly transforming global economy had never been more pressing. Heeding past lessons, the Hawke Labor government sought an antithetical policy approach to its prevailing economic predicament. Hawke attempted to combine 'caution with an innovative search for greater economic efficiency and political control.'<sup>7</sup> In response to a deteriorating economy and increasing pressures of globalisation, Hawke and his treasurer, Paul Keating, prosecuted bold reforms to deregulate the currency and financial markets, and dismantle the 'schizophrenic pattern of industry assistance' that had emerged in the mid-1970s.<sup>8</sup>

Education aid presented a policy area that not only required drastic revamping, it also represented a soft target for deep reform with little political or community backlash. Australia's education aid program was formulated and implemented in 1950 under a Commonwealth countries joint initiative, *The Colombo Plan*. Involving nations such as Britain, Canada and Australia, a Commonwealth scholarships and fellowships plan was created to help facilitate education and training opportunities for developing countries in South and South East Asia. From 1951, the technical cooperation scheme within the Colombo Plan became the most favoured part of the broader initiative because it generated more 'economic and social impact' through training of scholarships students at universities, and it created good publicity for sponsoring governments. Under the Hawke Government's rubric of 'structural efficiency', 'public sector reform' and 'deregulation', underscored by 'bipartisan political consensus without any electorally effective opposition', the government restructured key parts of this successful overseas students program in an attempt to transform it into a lucrative revenue generating industry.

The move to sell university courses abroad not only marked the entry of Australian institutions into the global market as suppliers of education services, but also produced four significant developments. Firstly it unleashed a deregulated, competitive, market-

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<sup>7</sup> Castles, F., 1988, *Australian public policy and economic vulnerability*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, p.27;  
Kelly, P., 1992, *The end of certainty: The story of the 1980s*, Allen & Unwin, St. Leonards

<sup>8</sup> Kelly, P., 1992, *The end of certainty: The story of the 1980s*, Allen & Unwin, St. Leonards

driven model of full fees for foreign student recruitment in the education sector<sup>9</sup>; secondly, tertiary institutions with limited public funding were forced to reform and restructure themselves to take up the entrepreneurial challenge of attracting new ‘consumers’ of education services<sup>10</sup>; thirdly, it introduced a new commercial vernacular into the higher education sector where notions of ‘value for money’ and ‘consumer—supplier’ contractual relationships between foreign students and educational institutions gained credence and normalcy; and finally, it became a precursor to a total overhaul of Australia’s higher education sector under Minister John Dawkin’s education reform agenda in 1988.<sup>11</sup>

In 1986, the Australian Government subsidised 20 000 foreign students, with only 2000 paying full fees. Within five years only 6000 students were subsidised while 48 000 paid full fees for their degrees.<sup>12</sup> In 1988, Australia’s export of education added \$100 million<sup>13</sup> to the economy. In less than four years, its contribution grew to over \$1 billion<sup>14</sup>. By 1991, six higher education institutions were listed amongst Australia’s top 500 exporters and in 1992 Monash University earned \$40 million from international students.<sup>15</sup> It would take less than two decades for Australia’s education sector to reach \$10 billion with over 344 000 overseas students emerging as the second largest services

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<sup>9</sup> Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs, 2000, *The Emergence of Entrepreneurial Public Universities in Australia*, IMHE General Conference of the OECD Paris, September; Department of Employment, Education and Training

<sup>10</sup> Smart, D. & Ang, G., 1993, *Exporting Education: From Aid to Trade to Internationalisation?* IPA Review, Melbourne; Bannikoff, A., 1994, “Exporting Education – The challenge of marketing education: the Australian experience”, paper presented to the International Education Conference, Kuala Lumpur, 21 – 22 June; Harold, R., 1990, *Marketing the academy: Aspects of exporting higher education courses*, A report prepared for the Industry Commission; Hudson, H., 1990, *Overseas student policy in Australia 1980 – 1990*, A report prepared for the Industry Commission, Industry Commission, Canberra; Jarrett Committee, 1985, *Report of the Steering Committee for Efficiency Studies in Universities*, Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals, London; Massaro, V., 1994, “New universities and new concepts – planning for the future”, paper presented to the International Education Conference, Kuala Lumpur, 21 – 22 June

<sup>11</sup> Dawkins, J.S., 1988, *Higher Education: A Policy Statement*, AGPS, Canberra; Smart, D., & Dudley, J., 1990, *Education policy*, Ch. 10, in Jennett, C., & Stewart, R.G., (eds.), 1990, *Hawke and Australian public policy: Consensus and restructuring*, Macmillan, Melbourne

<sup>12</sup> Beasley, K.C., 1992, *International education in Australia through the 1990s*, Ministerial Statement, September, AGPS, Canberra

<sup>13</sup> Marginson, S., 1993, *From cloister to market: the new era in higher education*, *Journal of Tertiary Education Administration*, May, Vol. 15, No. 1

<sup>14</sup> Smart, D. & Ang, G., *Exporting education: from aid to trade to internationalisation?* op.cit. p. 1

<sup>15</sup> Marginson, S., *From cloister to market: the new era in higher education*, op.cit.

sector and the fourth largest export sector.<sup>16</sup> The contribution of education services exports to Australia’s export growth has risen markedly over recent decades. According to the Reserve Bank of Australia, since 1982, education services exports have grown at an average annual rate of 14 percent per annum in volume terms, compared with growth of around 6 percent both in total services and in total exports over this period. (See Figure 1.1)<sup>17</sup>

**Figure 1.1**



Over this period, education exports have increased markedly as a share of Australia’s total services exports, rising from less than 4 percent in 1982 to 25 percent in 2007, when education services displaced ‘other personal travel’ – a subcategory that captures

<sup>16</sup> Austrade, 2007, Education overview, Market Information - <http://www.austrade.gov.au/Education/default.aspx> and Dr Brendan Nelson, \$113 million to strengthen international education, Media Release, 13 May 2003 - [http://www.dest.gov.au/ministers/nelson/budget03/bud24\\_130503.htm](http://www.dest.gov.au/ministers/nelson/budget03/bud24_130503.htm)

<sup>17</sup> 2008, Australia’s export education services, Reserve Bank Bulletin, June - [http://www.rba.gov.au/PublicationsAndResearch/Bulletin/bu\\_jun08/aus\\_exports\\_education\\_services.html](http://www.rba.gov.au/PublicationsAndResearch/Bulletin/bu_jun08/aus_exports_education_services.html)

travel services provided to leisure tourists – to become Australia’s largest service export. Education services exports now rank as one of Australia’s major exports behind coal and iron ore (Table 1.2).<sup>18</sup> Moreover, within Australia’s education exports, higher education has grown most and makes the largest contribution to exports of education services. It represented around 60 percent of the value of education services exports in 2007 (Figure 1.2).<sup>19</sup> In Victoria, export education services is the state’s largest export. In New South Wales, education was second to coal. The reform of education aid was an important catalyst in the development and successful expansion of an education services export sector. In 2009, with the collapse of the global financial markets and depressed resource prices, the relative importance of export education services is expected to grow.

**Table 1.2: Australia’s Major Exports as a percentage share of total exports, 2007(a)**

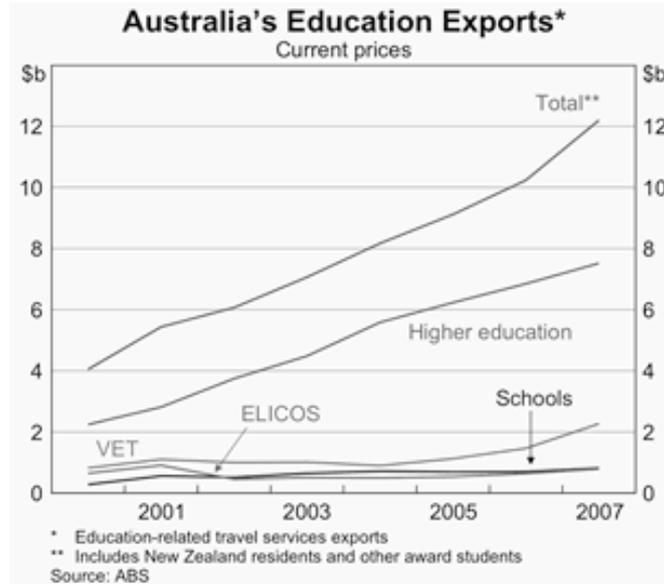
|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Coal   | 9.5 |
| Iron ore   | 7.5 |
| Education exports(b)                                 | 5.6 |
| Other personal travel                                | 5.4 |
| Gold, non-monetary                                   | 5.2 |
| <i>a) Current prices</i>                             |     |
| <i>(b) Education-related travel services exports</i> |     |
| <i>Source: ABS</i>                                   |     |

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

Figure 1.2



## OVERSEAS STUDENTS AND REFORM OF EDUCATION AID

One little known and less understood consequence of the Hawke Government's education aid reform is that it galvanised strong public expression of opposition and mobilisation of overseas students vigorously opposed to its reform. Primarily from developing countries in the Asia Pacific region and principal beneficiaries of Australia's most successful component of its international development assistance, the *Overseas Students Program*, these students managed to independently organise protest against what they viewed as the commercialisation and increasing exploitation of higher education as an export commodity. They subsequently employed conventional repertoires of contention, for example, establishing formal organisational structures, using public action campaign tools and finding ways to gain local and international support, they sought to represent their claims at multi-government levels, build local community alliances and frame their arguments in an attempt to access prevailing avenues for influencing developments in government policy. As a group located outside the boundaries of domestic national political system, they sought to participate in public policy-making from a position of little political, social and legal rights.

In this thesis I ask the question: How did overseas students, located outside the boundaries of domestic politics and framework of citizenship and in a position of relatively limited, and in some instances absence of, political, social and legal rights, seek to influence the development of Australia's export of education services policy that directly impacted on them? In answering this question, I will focus on the motivations behind, the methods used in, and the results of the overseas students collective action and their influence on Australia's export of education services. In examining protest mobilisation, organisational formation and policy outcomes, I will consider four main questions: Why did overseas student collective action form? How did they respond to government policy and the development of Australia's export education services sector? What strategies did they employ to address issues and grievances that directly affected them? How effective were they in extracting, agitating or procuring noticeable policy change?

Identifying and tracing the processes that link overseas students' activism with developments in Australia's export of education services policy is the major methodological strategy of this thesis. Placing this process in a more general framework of contentious collective action and social movement process is my ultimate goal. The major question raised is whether temporary residents can indeed mobilise to influence domestic policy changes from a position of political dislocation.

Here I lay out the thesis premises:

First, as a group of temporary residents located outside the boundaries of domestic political system, overseas students mobilised in an attempt to influence Australian Government policy on education from a position of limited political, social and legal rights. Some observations can be made about the formation of overseas students collective protest:

i) The mobilisation of overseas students in response to the Jackson Committee Report was 'bottom-up' driven. The existence of a loose network of overseas student organisations, formed under the Colombo Plan to create an informal protective support network, was an essential element in underpinning the formation of students' mobilisation against education aid reforms in the eighties.

ii) The formation of overseas students collective action against fees in Australia was distinct compared to overseas students grouping in the United States of America (US), United Kingdom (UK) and New Zealand. When full fees were introduced in the US, UK and New Zealand, overseas students did mobilise against government policy change, but none went to the extent of forming a national body to represent their concerns. In the US, for example, overseas students submerged themselves within campus student clubs and societies, organising social events and promoting cultural understanding. In New Zealand and the UK, the existence of a strong national student representation and their strong advocacy on behalf of overseas students made it unnecessary for overseas students to form their own independent national structure. Overseas student representation in both these countries is advocated through respective overseas students' departments within the national student unions. Unlike Australia, where the decline of National Overseas Students Services and the subsequent implosion of the Australian Union of Students in the early 1980s left a vacuum in student representation in general and overseas students in particular.

Second, overseas students employed conventional repertoires of contention used by social movements – they established formal structures, adopted action tools, framed their claims, internationalised their protest, formed alliances – in an attempt to mobilise resources and access existing avenues to influence government's export of education services policy.

Third, their mobilisation response and campaign strategy achieved modest success in securing some policy concessions, particularly during the early stages of education aid reform. Their strategy, however, had to evolve as the fledgling export of education services sector expanded, and eventually they shifted their position to fully embrace and reinterpret the government's own 'language of liberalisation', which they used to greater effectiveness in making subsequent claims.

Fourth, overseas students' subsequent ability to procure concessions is derived not from their political or universal rights to education services, but from their ability to influence policy changes based on their importance and strategic location in the Australian economy. In other words, government, universities and industry stakeholders have grown increasingly dependent on substantial revenue earnings derived from overseas

students and have become susceptible to potential chaos that may be precipitated if current students withdrew from the economy, or potential students chose alternative education service destinations such as the US, UK, Canada or New Zealand. However, the likelihood of current overseas students withdrawing from further participation in Australia's education services is arguable due to considerable costs and resources required to participate in Australian higher education in the first place. But the capacity for overseas student leadership to potentially exercise influence on future students' choice of study destination by generating bad publicity, for example, by questioning the inadequacies of quality education and support services offered by Australian institutions, or raising issues such as prevalent racism, cannot be underestimated. These substantive issues have broader implications on the role and relations between state, public policy and non-citizenship.

This study will focus on the formal sector, the higher education sector. It will examine specifically the peak body representing the grievances of overseas students, the *National Liaison Committee for Overseas Students in Australia* (NLC). As this thesis will argue, the NLC characterises and symbolises the formation and mobilisation of this 'concern-specific' voluntary group as it seeks to pressure and influence government policy on education services. This thesis will cover the period from 1985, when the government first introduced a range of policies and regulations to allow institutions to market their full fee programs overseas, to the early 1990s, when the export education services sector began to take a firmer root and underwent phenomenal rates of expansion.

## **DEFINITIONS AND TERMS USED**

In developing a background understanding of this area of study it is important to define a number of key terms that will be used throughout the thesis and outline the scope and parameters of the study.

Firstly, *overseas students*, *foreign students* and *international students* will be used interchangeably in this thesis.

Secondly, *export of education services* is most commonly associated with students coming to Australia to study but they can also include correspondence courses for overseas students, the electronic transmission of lectures and courses overseas, and Australians travelling overseas personally to provide various forms of education.<sup>20</sup>

Thirdly, Australia's *export of education services sector* is subdivided into two sectors: formal sector and non-formal sector. The formal sector comprises public and private secondary schools and universities and Colleges of Technical and Further Education (TAFE). The non-formal sector is made up of private colleges and institutes, which in the main, provide courses in commerce and related subjects and English language but also offer a wide range of other subjects from tourism management to legal studies.

Fourthly, the OSP covers three categories of students:

- Sponsored students
- Subsidised students
- Students paying the full cost of education or training

The first two categories fall within Australia's aid policy. Sponsored students receive scholarship assistance to assist them to live in Australia, and the Government pays the associated overseas student visa charges. They are selected under the bilateral aid programs negotiated between the Australian Government and the governments of other countries. The whole cost of the sponsored student program is part of Australia's aid expenditure.<sup>21</sup>

Subsidised students are selected by institutions on the basis of their academic qualifications, with quotas governing the number from any particular country and the number to be admitted to any specific institution or course. Such students receive no scholarship assistance from the Australian Government, and must pay the overseas student charges, between 32 to 45 percent of the average full cost of a place. TAFE and secondary students also pay fee charges. The balance is met by the Australian

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<sup>20</sup> Industry Commission, 1991, *Export of Education Services*, Canberra, p.13

<sup>21</sup> Goldring, J., 1987, *The Overseas Student program in perspective*, National Liaison Committee for Overseas Students in Australia (NLC) Seminar, Melbourne, 22 May, p.2

Government, and is regarded as part of the cost of Australia's aid program. This is justified because of the overwhelming proportion of subsidised students who come from developing countries.<sup>22</sup>

Overseas students who pay the full cost of their education or training in Australia have no relation to the aid program. Such students have been coming to Australia for many years. Until the abolition of tertiary fees in 1974, most overseas students fell into this category, and since then many students from overseas have studied in Australia at full cost, but in specialist training programs outside Universities and Colleges of Advanced Education, including trade and technical training courses and English Language courses.<sup>23</sup>

## **METHODS AND SOURCES**

This thesis was originally conceived in 1995, after my four and a half years (1991-95) of involvement as an overseas students representative at campus, state and national levels. Participation can affect historical accuracy and integrity of an area of research; however, it can also give insights and an advantage in discerning the topography of the areas of research focus. In 1991, I began my involvement as president of a campus overseas students association. For the next three years, my involvement expanded to include national office bearer positions (National General Secretary and National Education Officer) in the national overseas students body, the *National Liaison Committee for Overseas Students in Australia* (NLC), and national executive and national office bearer positions in the national tertiary student body, the *National Union of Students* (NUS). In my representative capacity in the NLC and NUS, I met hundreds of participants, read numerous publications on Australia's international education, and directed activities of my own. My personal experience within the overseas students collective action in particular, and active involvement in larger student movements has given me the research and 'insider' advantages of accessing participants and documents which tend to be noticeably missing or ignored within the context of international education.

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid. p.2

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, p.2

In this thesis I adopt a case study method used extensively in examining social movements and movement-related processes. Case study is generally defined as a study that focuses empirically and analytically on a case of ‘something’, that is, on a single instance or variant of some empirical phenomenon rather than on multiple instances of that phenomenon.<sup>24</sup> David A. Snow and Danny Trom argue, however, that this conceptualisation is narrow, simplistic and textbook fashion. They proffer instead a more meaningful and holistic definition by expanding and specifying its defining characteristics to include three components: (a) investigation and analysis of an instance or variant of some bounded social phenomenon that (b) seeks to generate richly detailed and “thick” elaboration of the phenomenon studied through (c) the use and triangulation of multiple methods or procedures that include, but are not limited to, qualitative techniques.<sup>25</sup>

These points are expanded below:

a) Investigation and analysis of an instance or variant of some bounded social phenomenon – seeks to answer the question of when is a case study a case study. A case study in the broad sense is defined by one or more of at least four considerations: (1) it is bounded in time and place, thus making the results of any study temporally and spatially contingent; (2) the primary phenomenon investigated in most studies can be classified as ‘a member of a larger set of broadly defined objects’; (3) the object of the study is ‘an instance of an important theoretical concept or process’; and (4) sometimes the focus of inquiry is ‘an intrinsically interesting historical or cultural entity in its own right’.<sup>26</sup>

b) Richly detailed and “thick” elaboration of the phenomenon studied – in addition to the first defining characteristic, the second defining feature is the generation of a richly detailed, “thick” elaboration of the phenomenon under study and the context in which it is embedded.<sup>27</sup> This involves highly focused and ‘microscopic’ analysis at a ‘meso’ or

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<sup>24</sup> Snow, D.A. & Trom, D., 2002, The case study and the study of social movements, pp.146-172, in Bert Klandermans., & Suzanne Staggenborg, (eds.), *Methods of social movement research: Social movements, protest and contention*, volume 16, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, p.147

<sup>26</sup> Ragin, C. C., 1992, “Introduction: Cases of ‘what is a case?’” in *What is a case: exploring the foundations of social inquiry*, edited by Charles C. Ragin and Howard S. Becker, Cambridge University Press, New York

<sup>27</sup> Snow, D.A. & Trom, D., 2002, *The case study and the study of social movements*, op.cit., p.148

organisation level; for example, examining at a ‘microscopic’ level, the recruitment activities and processes of a movement, and its interactions with networks of actors, or at a broader and ‘macroscopic’ level the protest cycle or the nature of movement activity within a city or society over a period of time.<sup>28</sup> The objective of this characteristic feature is to produce a thick, detailed, holistic understanding, or in Snow and Anderson’s perspective, to ‘understand and illuminate how the focal actions, events, and/or processes are produced and reproduced or changed by examining their ongoing interaction with other elements within the particular context.’<sup>29</sup>

c) Use and triangulation of multiple models – the third characteristic featured in case study method suggests developing a ‘multilayered and nuanced’ understanding of the case study through the triangulation of multiple methods or procedures that include, but are not limited to, qualitative techniques.<sup>30</sup> The mix of methods of qualitative procedures, according to Snow and Trom, may include ethnography and participant observation, varying forms of qualitative interviewing and the use of various documents and archives, particularly those that are indigenously generated, such as social movement fliers, pamphlets and newspapers. Snow and Trom argue that the relevance of such qualitative procedures to the case study is they are grounded in real-life situations and settings, and are therefore more likely to generate the kinds of data that allow for the development of richly detailed and holistic understanding of the phenomenon of interest.<sup>31</sup>

What do these three elements together offer in analysing overseas students collective action? First, they capture a descriptive story of the formation, development and mobilisation of a group of disenfranchised individuals affected by changes in government policy, bounded in a particular period in time and place in history. Second, they present a particular ‘analytic type or representative of a genre movement’; in the case of this thesis, they focuses on a case study of a collective action by overseas students represented in a single national-level group and as a subset of a larger student

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid p.149

<sup>29</sup> Snow, D.A., & Anderson, L., 1991, “Researching the homeless: The characteristics and virtues of the case study.” In *A Case for the case study*, edited by Joe R. Feagin, Anthony M. Orum and Gideon Sjoberg, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, pp. 148-73

<sup>30</sup> Snow, D.A. & Trom, D., 2002, *The case study and the study of social movements*, op.cit. p.149

<sup>31</sup> Ibid pp.150-151

movement. Third, in focusing on the meso level analysis, they seek to understand organisational fields and dynamics such as acquiring resources, establishing structures and processes, deploying tactical actions, and framing issues through regular interactions with government and industry stakeholders. Finally, they distinguish this case study from other case studies in the area of international education, mobilisation of temporary residents or social movements. And through their descriptive rather than analytic approach, they seek to refine or extend movement-related theoretical arguments or conceptualisations.<sup>32</sup>

The thesis draws from several sources. It uses existing research that highlights developments in Australia's OSP, from aid since the early fifties to trade from mid eighties onwards. Understanding the historical development and evolution of the program places the formation of an overseas students coalition in perspective. Data and references on the micro and macro political economic environment are also used and examined. Materials such as Parliamentary Hansard, policy statements, Senate Committee reviews and communications between Government departments and the NLC are used to focus specifically on policy at three levels: (1) factors influencing policy implementation and change; (2) the policy process and shift; (3) the policy's impact on overseas student numbers.

I also draw from primary source documents available from overseas students organisations at campus, state and national levels. With the influx of overseas students into Australia under the Colombo Plan and opening up of the education services sector, leading to a proliferation of overseas student organisations. Materials from these student bodies, such as executive minutes, policy and conference documents, campaign materials and media releases are used to provide the foundation and insight into the mobilisation of the national organisation. The main sources of primary data are archives and documents from the NLC and NUS offices located in Melbourne and NLC state offices and campus overseas student organisations. Organisations, according to Clemens and Hughes, provide a useful starting point because they tend to produce documents.<sup>33</sup> However organisational documents may omit or distort crucial

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid p.161

<sup>33</sup> Clemens, E.S., & Hughes, M.D., 2002, Recovering past protest: Historical research on social movements, p.203, in Bert Klandermans., & Suzanne Staggenborg, (eds.), Methods of social movement

information in order to present the organisation more favourably, for the sake of present legitimacy or future legacy.<sup>34</sup> To balance the use of organisational documents, I also drew on sources of information from newspapers and government documents. Newspapers, ‘whether a local sheet or a newspaper of record, are a staple for research on past protest.’<sup>35</sup>

## OUTLINE

To situate the inquiry intellectually, Chapter two presents a conceptual framework drawn selectively from fields of social movements, protest and collective action. In this chapter, I base the context of overseas students collective action on three broad sets of factors used in analysing the prevailing explanation of contentious politics processes: political opportunities, mobilising structures and framing processes. I will use the three factors to analyse the timing and form of the overseas students collective action against reforms in education aid and its transition to education trade. By applying these three factors, I seek to explain the dynamics of collective action development, but specifically reflect them against how politically disenfranchised groups located outside the boundaries of citizenship seek to influence policies that directly affect them.

Chapter three will provide a historical backdrop against which Australia’s *Overseas Students Program* (OSP) evolved. I will explore the evolution of the program from its inception in 1950 with the creation of the Colombo Plan, until 1985 when sweeping reforms were introduced to radically transform the program into a lucrative export education services sector. The program’s development will be examined in four distinctive parts: education aid, education expansion, education subsidy and education trade.

Chapter four examines the formation of overseas student groups across Australia in response to developments in the education aid program. Evolution in education aid can be viewed in two sections: (i) the initial growth in overseas students’ social clubs during

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research: Social movements, protest and contention, volume 16, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis

<sup>34</sup> Ibid p.203

<sup>35</sup> Ibid p.203

the Colombo Plan, primarily prompted by community perceptions and curiosity on the one hand, and considerable demands on universities' welfare support capacity to accommodate increasing numbers on the other; (ii) the second part involves overseas students' response to government reforms of education aid, which subsequently sparked the mobilisation of overseas students strongly opposed to its policy recommendations. In this part, I explore in particular, government policy changes introduced in 1985 and its implications on overseas students' mobilisation.

In Chapter five, I delve deeper into the development of a national coordinating body, the *National Liaison Committee for Overseas Students in Australia* (NLC). The first attempt at national mobilisation failed. As the months went on, overseas student leaders recognised that their disparate campaigns against government policy were having little impact. The need to coordinate a national response, share limited resources and establish an information dissemination network eventually led to the establishment of the NLC. Different views amongst overseas student leaders on how to respond to government policy changes however remained, and continued to be an impediment towards forming a coherent national policy response. Such diverging views would, however, fracture the unity of the fledgling group and even threaten to prematurely end an attempt at establishing a national body. In this chapter I will describe the students' second attempt at forming a national body; discuss the emergence of a three-tiered structure of campus, state and national representation; and examine its transformation in response to macro changes taking place in the export of education services sector.

In Chapter six, I explore the NLC's push to embed its legitimacy as the sole national overseas students representative and acquire resources to sustain its long-term viability. In this chapter, I focus on the NLC's negotiations with the peak tertiary student body, the *National Union of Students* (NUS), to administer the new overseas students department within the Union. As a department of the NUS, it not only gave the NLC the added credibility of being part of a larger student movement, it also gave them direct access to funding and resources critical in ensuring its survival. Its involvement in the Union however gradually forced the NLC student leadership to participate actively in NUS politics in order to maintain access to financial resources and avoid political marginalisation. Though the NLC's participation in the Union structure may have provided much needed access to resources, it did not necessarily resolve its financial

difficulties in the longer term. The ongoing political contestation for limited resources led to increasing strain in the NUS-NLC relationship, which ultimately led to a near-breakdown in relations.

In Chapters seven and eight, I shift my focus away from ‘meso’ organisational level to concentrate on the NLC’s response to government policy. The important question I address in both chapters is how did the NLC frame their claims on issues affecting them? I seek to demonstrate a contrasting approach to the NLC’s claims making, largely influenced by a shifting international education landscape and changes in overseas students’ demographic profile.

In Chapter seven, I reflect specifically on the first segment, the NLC’s response to policy changes from early 1985 until 1991. This period considers the government’s gradual phasing-out of the subsidised fee program to complete implementation of full fees by 1991. Despite previous attempts at lobbying the government for a freeze in fees, the NLC realised that they had to rethink their campaign approach in light of changing economic and policy circumstances. The rethink would involve reframing and shifting the debate about education aid away from economic ‘cause’ to social impact arguments.

In Chapter eight, I explore the evolution in the NLC’s campaign rhetoric. I will examine three campaigns that capture the development and transformation of the NLC’s claims making in response to changes in the export of education services sector. The first campaign sought to raise the public profile of government policy changes and its implications on overseas students. The second focused on efforts to stop the government extending its full fee program to include dependants of overseas students studying in elementary and primary schools. The third examines the way the NLC fully embraced and used the government’s ‘language of liberalisation’ towards reframing overseas students’ relationships with universities based on ‘consumer rights’ and ‘value for money’ rhetoric.

Chapter nine is my concluding chapter. In this chapter I review key findings from my case study in light of the conceptual framework, and discuss potential future research agendas of relevance to the overseas students program in particular, and collective action of temporary residents broadly.

# Two

## FRAMEWORK FOR OVERSEAS STUDENTS COLLECTIVE ACTION

### INTRODUCTION

Can temporary residents located outside the boundaries of domestic politics and framework of citizenship, and in a position of relatively limited, and in some instances absence of, political, social and legal rights, influence public policy decisions that directly impact on them? My purpose in this chapter is to review theoretical approaches that shed light on this central research question. I draw selectively and critically from fields of social movements, protest and collective action to examine the emergence and development of collective action of temporary residents. I argue that disempowered and politically dislocated temporary residents can, under certain and specific conditions, attempt to influence public policy that directly affects them.

The foundation of active citizenship is participation, and within the framework of citizenship individuals have the right to participate in regular voting rituals or form collective action groups to intervene in the political process in pursuit of their particular interest. Within this context, contemporary contentious politics theorists<sup>36</sup> posit that when actions are based on dense social networks and connective structures and draw on consensual and action-oriented cultural frames, organised citizen groups can sustain

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<sup>36</sup> della Porta, D. & Diani, M., 2006, *Social Movements: An Introduction – Second Edition*, Blackwell Publishing, UK; Crossley, Nick 2002: *Making Sense of Social Movements*. Buckingham: Open University Press; Tarrow, S., 1998, *Power in movement*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge; McAdam, D., McCarthy, J.D. and Zald, M.N, 1996, *Comparative perspectives on social movements: political opportunities, mobilising structure and cultural framings*, Cambridge University Press, USA

their actions in conflict with powerful opponents.<sup>37</sup> My argument is that even without the presence of these instrumentalities to sustain collective action, those outside the framework of citizenship, non-citizens broadly and temporary residents specifically, can deploy similar action repertoires and depend on limited resources to take action like citizens. However, in absence of these instrumentalities, their actions tend to be sporadic and temporary due to: lack of economic and social security<sup>38</sup>; the language, ethnic and nationality divide among non-citizens; and the transitory nature of their legal status.

My case study will focus on the development and mobilisation of overseas students' collective action. I examine the context in which an overseas students' collective action emerged; their attempts at mobilising limited resources and funding to support their claims-making; and the method and success in the way they framed their claims. In this chapter, I argue the formation and sustainability of disempowered groups' actions are based on three broad sets of factors used in analysing the prevailing explanation of contentious politics processes. The three factors are: (1) the structure of political opportunities and constraints confronting the movement; (2) the forms of organisation (informal as well as formal) available to insurgents; and (3) the collective processes of interpretation, attribution, and social construction that mediate between opportunity and action.<sup>39</sup> In this chapter these three factors will be referred to as: political opportunities, mobilising structures and framing processes. These will be used to analyse the timing and form of the overseas students' collective action against the reform of education aid and the sector's transition to education trade. By applying these three elements, I seek to explain broadly the dynamics of collective action development, but particularly reflect them against how politically disenfranchised groups located outside the boundaries of citizenship respond and attempt to alter policy norms that directly affect them.

Before proceeding to describe and apply these concepts, it is important however to first locate overseas students within the context of citizenry and non-citizenry. I will then

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<sup>37</sup> Tarrow, S. 1998, *ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> Deumert, A., Marginson, S., Nyland, C., Ramia, G., & Sawir, E., 2005, Global migration and social protection rights: The social and economic security of cross-border students in Australia, *Global Social Policy*, Vol.5, No.3, pp. 329-352

<sup>39</sup> Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald, 1996, *Comparative perspectives on social movements: political opportunities, mobilising structure and cultural framings*, Cambridge University Press, USA

briefly review current research that examines the political participation of temporary residents. Following the review of temporary residents' participation, I will consider, broadly, temporary residents' action within the context of social movements and collective action. I will consider in particular on foreign guestworkers, which has been a focus of previous theorising on political participation and status of non-citizens. Overseas students, as another group of temporary residents share several similarities with guestworkers, for example, overseas students' entry into a country is fully regulated; their presence in a country is also determined for short periods and may be prolonged; and their mobility is largely driven by their economic aspirations. Moreover, since the expansion of the export of education services sector, overseas students have been allowed to be employed for twenty hours per week during semester and an unlimited number of hours at other times, making them a new and rapidly growing vulnerable sector of the workforce in Australia.<sup>40</sup>

In this chapter I do not attempt a history of social movements or collective action. Nor do I present a particular theoretical perspective. Instead, my goal is to specify a framework that can be used to address actions of temporary residents as well as the main research agenda. By 'framework' I mean a coherent presentation of key intellectual concepts along with an argument as to how such concepts relate to one another.<sup>41</sup> I offer a broad conceptual framework based on contentious politics and policy-making processes for understanding and analysing how a particular cohort of temporary residents independently organised to mount a contentious form of collective action against state policies that directly affected them. As Tarrow reminds us, collective action can take many forms—brief or sustained, institutionalised or disruptive, humdrum or dramatic. 'Collective action becomes contentious when it is used by people who lack regular access to institutions, who act in the name of new or unaccepted claims, and who behave in ways that fundamentally challenge others or authorities.'<sup>42</sup> Overseas students, I argue in this thesis, formed a collective action in reaction to the government's education aid reform. They subsequently institutionalised

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<sup>40</sup> Nyland, C., Forbes-Mewett, H., Marginson, S., Ramia, G., Sawir, E., & Smith, S., 2009, International student-workers in Australia: a new vulnerable workforce, *Journal of Education and Work*, Vol.22, Issue 1, February, pp. 1-14

<sup>41</sup> Schlager, E., 1999, A comparison of frameworks, theories and models of policy processes, in Paul, A. Sabatier (Ed.), *Theories of the Policy Process*, Westview Press, Colorado, pp. 233-260

<sup>42</sup> Tarrow, S., *Power in movement*, Cambridge University Press, op.cit. p.3

their claims, sought to mobilise financial resources, and attempted to establish domestic and international networks to help sustain their opposition towards government policy. Their limited success in forcing significant policy changes led them to seek instead avenues in which they could participate and contribute to the development of the export of education services sector.

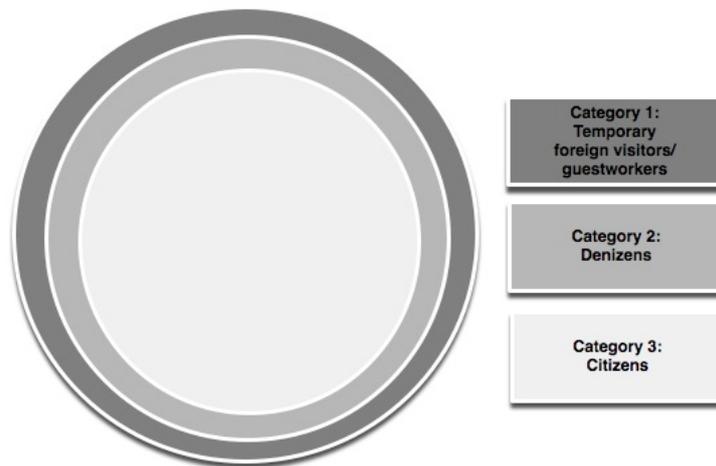
## **CITIZENRY AND NON-CITIZENRY**

Thomas Hammar, in his book *Democracy and the Nation-State*, studies the increasing movement of people across national boundaries and its political implications for nation-states. Hammar describes three categories that distinguish citizenry from non-citizenry—foreign citizens, denizens and citizens.<sup>43</sup> Illustrated in three concentric circles (See Figure 2.1), Category 1, the outer circle, represents foreign citizens who are given short-term or temporary permits to visit, work or study in the country. These temporary residents are an intermediate category located somewhere along the line between illegal immigrants at one end and permanent residents at the other. Temporary residents' entry into a country is fully regulated under prescribed immigration regulations with little social and legal, and no political rights. Temporary foreign workers, refugees, overseas students, foreign diplomats and tourists are examples of temporary residents.

### **Figure 2.1: Hammar's Three Categories**

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<sup>43</sup> Hammar, T., 1990, *Democracy and the Nation-State: Aliens, denizens and citizens in a world of international migration*, Avebury, Great Britain, p. 17 & 18



Temporary foreign workers, for example, are authorised to perform non-permanent, fixed term services of labour.<sup>44</sup> One group of foreign workers comprises highly skilled, highly qualified, well-paid professionals: executives, teachers and civil servants sent overseas by multinational companies or organizations for reasons that may include capital investment flows, international trade, military intervention, diplomacy or cultural interaction. Skilled personnel may include temporary residents visiting over a fixed period (usually two years) with an option for extension, or short-term business visits. Another group is the large group of blue-collar, manual or service workers who may in fact be highly skilled and educated, but who take non-managerial jobs in industries like childcare and domestic service, labour-intensive agriculture, garments, mining, construction and manufacturing.<sup>45</sup> Commonly referred to as guestworkers, they are constrained in their employment in the host country in two specific ways: duration of stay and restriction to a particular sector, industry or employer.<sup>46</sup> Their presence is driven largely by the economic imperative. Their work and residency are regulated for short periods and may be prolonged, but if so this also brings a risk of deportation, for instance due to unemployment.<sup>47</sup> Temporary foreign workers or transnational migrants

<sup>44</sup> Miller, M.J., 1986, Special Issue: Temporary worker programs: Mechanisms, conditions, consequences, *International Migration Review*, Vol. 20, No.4, p.740

<sup>45</sup> Castles, S., & Miller, M.J., 1998, *Age of migration: International population movements in the modern world*, Macmillan Palgrave, UK

<sup>46</sup> Daniel Attas, 2000, The case of guest workers: exploitation, citizenship and economic rights, *Res Publica*, No. 6; Miller, M.J., 1986, Special Issue: Temporary worker programs: Mechanisms, conditions, consequences, *International Migration Review*, vol.20, no.4, pp. 740-757

<sup>47</sup> Hammar, T., *Democracy and the Nation State: Aliens, denizens and citizens in a world of international migration*, op.cit. p.21; Hong, N.S and Rowley, C., 2000, Globalization and Hong Kong's labour market: the deregulation paradox, *Asia Pacific Business Review*, vol.6, no.3, pp.174-192

are not only important contributors to the economies of the countries that receive them, but their remittances home (estimated by the World Bank to be approximately US\$73 billion annually) represent the second largest international monetary trade flow (exceeded only by petroleum exports) in the global economy.<sup>48</sup>

Another major form of temporary movement of people is student mobility, in which students move from one country to another seeking opportunities in education services. Student mobility is a worldwide phenomenon. In 1980 there were more than a million overseas students studying in foreign education institutions,<sup>49</sup> compared to 250 000 students twenty years before.<sup>50</sup> In 2008 there were more than 2.5 million university students estimated to be studying outside their own countries.<sup>51</sup> By 2025, global demand for international higher education is forecast to grow to over 7 million places.<sup>52</sup>

The next group comprising Category 2—the middle circle—is denizens. Denizens, or permanent residents, are granted permanent work and residence permits without time limits or need for prolongation, and they are conferred full social and legal rights, but usually not full political rights.<sup>53</sup> ‘Denizens’, as Hammar describes it, is an old English word that up to the 1840s was used for ‘an alien to whom the sovereign has by letters of patent under the prerogative granted the status of a British subject’ but who was not allowed to ‘hold public office or obtain a grant of land from the Crown.’ Before 1844, full naturalisation required a decision by Parliament, a private act. This old usage of the term denizen as privileged aliens, who were not full citizens, seems, according to Hammar, to parallel the term proposed in his thesis about denizens of today. Hammar acknowledges that the term is used less today and is free from misleading connotations

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<sup>48</sup> Yeoh, B.S.A, Huang, S., and Devasahayam, T.W., 2004, Diasporic subject in the nation: foreign domestic workers, the reach of law and civil society in Singapore, *Asian Studies Review*, Vol. 28, March, pp. 7-23; Stahl, C.W., 1986, Overseas workers remittances in Asian development, *International Migration Review*, vol.20, no.4, pp. 899-925 for a study on the development impact of remittances

<sup>49</sup> The Economist, 1981, The Economist discusses the prospects for overseas students in the light of "The overseas student question", produced by the Overseas Students Trust. , 24 May, The Economist Newspaper Limited, London, p.36

<sup>50</sup> Department of Education, Susan Ryan, 1986, Ministerial Statement at the Inaugural Meeting of the Australian Council on Overseas Students (AUSCOS)

<sup>51</sup> Maslen, G. & Marshall, J, 2008, Global: Vast rise in student mobility, *University World News*, 6 January: cited on 6 January 2009 - <http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20081010092653268>

<sup>52</sup> IDP, 2003, *Global student mobility 2025: The supply challenge*, IDP Education Australia Limited, cited 6 January 2008 - [www.aiec.idp.com/PDF/Bohm\\_2025Media\\_p.pdf](http://www.aiec.idp.com/PDF/Bohm_2025Media_p.pdf)

<sup>53</sup> Hammar, T., op.cit. p.21

or political values. He is quite clear however that the term is not used in the historic sense but is applied in a strictly technical manner for his exploration of domiciled individuals with residential status.<sup>54</sup>

At the core, Category 3 represents all the citizens residing at home that were either born or have been naturalised into full citizenship. Naturalisation means the granting of full citizenship. Within this category, citizens have full access to what Antoine Dumont refers to as the ‘citizenship regime’ (legal status, voting rights).<sup>55</sup>

Some observations need to be made about the non-citizens grouping. First, denizens together with temporary residents make up the ‘non-citizen’ community, comprising approximately 175 million individuals worldwide – or three percent of the world’s population.<sup>56</sup> Their significance has attracted the interest of researchers interested in the increasing transient movement of people and its implications on nation-states and transnational space.<sup>57</sup> Joppke points out two very different and potentially polarised positions and their implications. One perspective emphasises the enduring power of the nation-state, manifest in its capacity for control over entry and rights and through the continuing symbolic and material significance of national citizenship.<sup>58</sup> The other view sees migration, and more specifically migrant rights, as the manifestation of an emergent ‘post-national’ society in which migrants can increasingly draw on

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<sup>54</sup> Hammar, T., *ibid.* p. 14

<sup>55</sup> Dumont, A., 2008, Representing voiceless migrants: Moroccan political transnationalism and Moroccan migrants’ organisation in France, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 31, No.4, May, pp.792-811

<sup>56</sup> This figure of 175 million is indicative of the number of individuals who currently reside in a country other than the one where they were born. It may include persons who have become naturalized citizens of their new countries, but may not include individuals whose nationalities have not been recognized in their countries of origin. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner of Human Rights, 2006, *The rights of non-citizens*, United Nations publication, p.6

<sup>57</sup> Baubock, R. (ed.), 2006, *Migration and citizenship: Legal status, rights and political participation*, Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam; Goodman, R., Peach, C., Takenaka, A. & White, P., 2003, *Global Japan: The experience of Japan’s new immigrant and overseas communities*, RoutledgeCurzon, London; Basch, L., Schiller, N.G. & Blanc, C.S., 1994, *Nations unbound: Transnational projects, postcolonial predicaments, and deterritorialized nation-states*, Gordon and Breach, Amsterdam; Faist, T. and Ozveren, E., (eds.), *Transnational social space: agents, networks and institutions*, Ashgate, Burlington

<sup>58</sup> Quoted in Morris, L., 2003, *Managing contradiction: Civics stratification and migrants’ rights*, *International Migration Review*, vol.37, no.1, Spring, pp.74-100 – Joppke, C., 1999, *Immigration and the Nation State*, Oxford University Press, Oxford; Brubaker, W.R., (ed.), 1992, *Immigration and the politics of citizenship in Europe and North America*, University Press of America, Lanham, MD

transnational rights located outside of the nation-state, rendering national citizenship redundant.<sup>59</sup>

Second, non-citizens (denizens and temporary residents) are not a homogeneous group. They may be subdivided in a variety of ways, such as between those passing through (visitors), living in (residents) or living outside (non-residents) a particular state.<sup>60</sup> Third, despite their status and location outside the boundaries of citizenship, under certain conditions or upon fulfilment of state legal requirements, denizens may have the option to naturalise. Temporary residents on the other hand may become denizens and even naturalise in some instances; the hallmark of temporary worker policy however is the expectation of repatriation or return, whether administratively or economically induced or due to the volition of the migrants themselves.<sup>61</sup>

Finally, since the 1970s, immigrants have increasingly articulated political concerns, participated in politics and sought representation. Their political mobilisation and claims making, Koopmans and Statham argue, is strongly focused on, and shaped by, the context of the receiving nation-states and is not significantly oriented toward, and influenced by supranational institutions, or transnational discourses and identities.<sup>62</sup> Castles and Miller provide examples in which immigrant protest movements have attempted to affect policies through a range of actions, such as persistent hunger strikes by immigrants and their supporters that brought pressure to bear on French and Dutch authorities to liberalise rules regarding legalisation.<sup>63</sup>

## **POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF NON-CITIZENS**

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<sup>59</sup> Soysal, Y., 1995, *Limits of citizenship: Migrants and post-national membership in Europe*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago

<sup>60</sup> Gibney, M.J., 2006, Who should be included? Non-citizens, conflict and the constitution of the citizenry, CRISW Working Paper, No. 17, September, p.2

<sup>61</sup> Miller, M.J., 1986, Special Issue: Temporary worker programs: Mechanisms, conditions, consequences, *International Migration Review*, Vol. 20, No.4, pp.740-757

<sup>62</sup> Koopmans, R. and Statham, P., 1999a, 'Challenging the liberal nation-state? Post-nationalism, multiculturalism and the collective claims –making of migrants and ethnic minorities in Britain and Germany', *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 105, no. 3, pp.652-96

<sup>63</sup> Castles, S. and Miller, M.J., 2003, *The age of migration: International population movements in the modern world*, The Guilford Press, New York, Ch.5

With an overview of the citizenry and non-citizenry framework in mind, the next section will explore the political participation of non-citizens. Literature on citizen social movements continues to expand, and deepen under the rubric of social movement and contentious collective action theories.<sup>64</sup> A key criticism of current literature on power and participation is the lack of consideration on temporary residents and their contribution to political interaction between state and non-citizen communities.<sup>65</sup> Recent literature tends to concentrate largely on denizens and citizens, investigating how the ‘powerless’ or ‘oppressed’ citizens and denizens seek to participate in public debates and articulate their claims to either instigate or influence policy changes within their national political space.<sup>66</sup> Indeed, since the 1970s, as a new phase of international migration to highly developed countries took shape, there has been a growing interest in the relationships between institutions of the nation-state and nationals who permanently reside outside the boundaries of the state.<sup>67</sup> Hammar, for example, examines the political participation of denizens in a number of countries in Europe and how some states, driven by economic demand for labour, have developed institutional alternatives

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<sup>64</sup> Della Porta, D. & Diani, M., 2006, *Social Movements: An Introduction*, Blackwell Publishing, UK; Crossley, N., 2002, *Making Sense of Social Movements*, Open University Press, Buckingham; McAdam, D., Tarrow, S., & Tilly, C., 2001, *Dynamics of contention*, Cambridge University Press, New York; McAdam, D., 1982, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago; della Porta, D and Diani, M., 1999, *Social movements: An introduction*, Blackwell, Oxford; Gamson, W., 1990, *The strategy of social protest*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Wadsworth Publishing Company, Belmont;

<sup>65</sup> Lim, T., 1999, The fight for equal rights: The power of foreign workers in South Korea, *Alternatives: Social Transformation and Humane Governance*, vol. 24, no. 3, July-September, pp.329-353

<sup>66</sup> Burgmann, V., 1993, *Power and protest: Movements for change in Australian society*, Allen & Unwin, St. Leonards; Pakulski, J., 1991, *Social movements: The politics of moral protest*, Longman Cheshire, Melbourne; Parsons, I., 1999, *Cripples, coons, fags and fems: A look at how four human rights movements have fought prejudice*, Villamanta Legal Service, December, Geelong West; and Gaventa, J., 1980; *Power and the powerlessness: Quiescence and rebellion in an Appalachian valley*, Clarendon Press, Oxford; Rodriguez, R.M., 2004, *Decentering transnationalism: Transnational Filipino migrant organizations and citizenship struggles*, paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association, Hilton San Francisco & Renaissance Parc 55 Hotel, San Francisco; Koopmans, R., 2004, *Migrant mobilisation and political opportunities: Variation among German cities and a comparison with the United Kingdom and the Netherlands*, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, vol.30, no.3, May, pp. 449-470; Odmalm, P., 2004, *Civil society, migrant organizations and political parties: Theoretical linkages and applications to the Swedish context*, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, vol.30, no.3, May, pp.471-489; Castles, S. and Miller, M.J., 2003, *The age of migration: International population movements in the modern world*, The Guilford Press, New York

<sup>67</sup> Basch, L., Schiller, N.G. & Blanc, C.S., 1994, *Nations unbound: Transnational projects, postcolonial predicaments, and deterritorialized nation-states*, Gordon and Breach, Amsterdam; and Castles, S. and Miller, M.J., 2003, *The age of migration: International population movements in the modern world*, The Guilford Press, New York

to citizenship as a way to accommodate the large influx of migrants. Hammar calls these innovative institutions “denizen rights”.<sup>68</sup> Since 1960, twenty-four democracies have enfranchised at least some denizens, while several others have considered but rejected such rights.<sup>69</sup> The incorporation of denizens and expansion of their political rights have Soysal suggesting that the traditional distinctions between permanent residents and citizens have begun to blur, giving rise to new forms of ‘post-national’ membership in European societies.<sup>70</sup>

In cases where immigrant groups may not be beneficiaries of Hammar’s denizen rights, they have had to organise both domestically and transnationally to articulate their claims for economic, social and political rights.<sup>71</sup> In Japan for example, Korean denizens have formed into interest groups to contest and negotiate the terms of their political incorporation.<sup>72</sup> Erin Chung observed that rather than naturalise and become a small section of the voting population, Korean activists have increasingly used their non-citizen status as their “voice” to express their opposition to state policies, challenging Japanese citizenship based on the discourse of cultural homogeneity.<sup>73</sup> Koreans in Japan have managed to transnationalise their claims by regularly drawing on ‘moral leverage and scepticism’ that characterises the broader Korean—Japanese relations, underscored by Japanese colonial atrocities before the Second World War. On the other hand, notes Michael Strausz, Turkish activists in Germany have lacked the same success because Germany did not commit atrocities against the Turkish community during the war, and there were not large numbers of Turkish victims.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Hammar, T., op.cit.

<sup>69</sup> Rath, J., 1990, “Voting Rights,” in Zig Layton-Henry, ed., *The Political Rights of Migrant Workers in Western Europe*, Sage Publications, London; David C. Earnest, 2006, *Neither citizens nor stranger: Why states enfranchise resident aliens*, *World Politics*, 58, January, pp.242-75

<sup>70</sup> Soysal, Y., *Limits of citizenship: Migrants and post-national membership in Europe*, op.cit.

<sup>71</sup> Earnest, D.C., 2006, *Neither citizens nor stranger: Why states enfranchise resident aliens*, *World Politics*, 58, January, pp.242-75; Saskia Sassen, 1996, *Losing Control? Sovereignty in an Age of Globalization*, Columbia University Press, New York; Gary P. Freeman, 1995, “Modes of Immigration Politics in Liberal Democratic States,” *International Migration Review* 29, Winter

<sup>72</sup> Chung, E.A., 2003, *Non-citizens, voice and identity: The politics of citizenship in Japan’s Korean community*, First Annual Summer Institute on International Migration Conference, University of California, San Diego, June 20-22

<sup>73</sup> Chung, E.A, *ibid.*; Higuchi Nato, 2002, *Political participation of non-citizens in Japan: Continuity and change in the 1990s*, *Social Science Research*, University of Tokushima, No. 15, February, pp.257-271

<sup>74</sup> Strausz, M., 2001, *National identities and transnational activism: Home country alliances and diaspora mobilisation in Japan and Germany*, University of Washington Asian Languages and Literature Colloquium, May 21, p.3

Moreover, the ability of the Turkish state to influence German policy, he argues, is further limited by the desire of many Turkish policy-makers to join the European Union and to have a good relationship with the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation members.<sup>75</sup>

### *Mobilisation of foreign workers*

While there is a growing body of literature examining mobilisation and participation of citizen and denizen groupings, little is written about temporary residents and their political participation. Participation, according to some theorists, is assumed to occur within decision-making and voting arenas, which are in turn assumed open to virtually any organised groups.<sup>76</sup> However, outside the political arena of citizenry there exist several groups of temporary and permanent residents, with each having a stake in the public policy process.<sup>77</sup> Temporary residents form a key and growing component of this fragmented and heterogeneous category, and have an interest in how policy directly affecting them is developed and implemented. Having no political rights, limited voice and minimal access to social and legal support, they reside in a space that seems beyond the sphere of influence and outside national political membership, which ostensibly limits how they seek to advocate their views and represent concerns.

In his study of temporary foreign workers, Miller argues that the temporary workers' fate is to exist at the margins of societies. Because of constraints created by unemployment and low wages at home, temporary workers seek employment abroad and are willing to endure certain deprivations such as restrictions placed upon temporary residency and employment, which render their status precarious.<sup>78</sup> Miller further suggests that temporary workers may be afforded the right to unionise, but organisation of short-term workers whose residency rights hinge upon employment is

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid p.3

<sup>76</sup> Gaventa, J., 1980, *Power and powerlessness: Quiescence and rebellion in an Appalachian Valley*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, p.4

<sup>77</sup> Other groups include refugees, expatriates, spouses and dependants on temporary resident visas, and tourists

<sup>78</sup> Miller, M.J., 1986, Special Issue: Temporary worker programs: Mechanisms, conditions, consequences, *International Migration Review*, Vol. 20, No.4, p.740

particularly difficult. The extreme vulnerability of temporary workers and their limited ability to protect themselves make close governmental regulation of their employment necessary.<sup>79</sup>

Robert Tierney's study of foreign guestworkers' experiences in Taiwan in the context of class interest and conflict, highlights in particular the economic exploitation by both capital and the state, and marginalisation within the labour unions of guestworkers.<sup>80</sup> Indeed, in most countries with significant presence of foreign temporary workers, governments continue to impose or attempt to impose exclusionary immigration policies designed to keep foreign migrant workers isolated, marginalised and disempowered.<sup>81</sup>

In some circumstances however, the state plays an important role in protecting vulnerable temporary workers from abuses and discrimination.<sup>82</sup> The Philippines Government for example, established the Overseas Worker Welfare Administration (OWWA), passed the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipino Act of 1995 (RA8042) and reformed the Philippines Overseas Employment Agency (POEA) specifically to intensify the protection and promote the welfare of its overseas workers, who provide a significant boost to the Philippines economy through the regular flow of remittances home.<sup>83</sup> Similarly, multilateral organisations have also recognised the necessity of international mechanisms and policies to protect migrant workers and guarantee their rights. In 1990, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Tierney, R., 2007, The guest labor system in Taiwan: Labor market considerations, wage injustices, and the politics of foreign labor brokerage, *Critical Asian Studies*, vol. 39, no.2, pp. 205-228

<sup>81</sup> Lim, T.C., 2003, Foreign migrant workers and civil society in South Korea: The search for power in an era of global turbulence, in Marjorie Griffin Cohen and Stephen McBride (eds.), *Global Turbulence: Social Activists' and State Responses to Globalization*, Ashgate, England, pp.140-155 (p.140)

<sup>82</sup> Raghavan, C., 2002, Asian female migrant workers require protection, Third World Network website. Online: <http://www.twinside.org.sg/title/ilo-cn.htm> Accessed 25 November 2008; Keban, Y.T., 2000, International migration, the strategy for national development and globalisation in Abdul H Sukamdi and Patrick Brownlee (eds.), *Labour migration in Indonesia: policies and practice*, Population Studies Centre, Gadjaja Mada University, Yogyakarta.

<sup>83</sup> Lisa Law, 2002, Sites of transnational activism: Filipino non-government organizations in Hong Kong, in Brenda S.A Yeoh, Peggy Teo and Shirlena Huang (Eds.), *Gender Politics in the Asia Pacific Region*, Routledge, London, pp. 205-222

their Families.<sup>84</sup> Hosting countries, however, tend to impose restrictions on rights and little is done to ensure that the conditions of temporary workers' labour rights are upheld and protected. Yeoh *et al.* give the example of Singapore, which is not a signatory to international agreements relating to migrant workers, and considers such workers no more than a transient labour supply, and regulates them through a battery of controls effected through labour and immigration laws.<sup>85</sup>

Any propensity to address cases of discrimination or apply policies to protect rights of temporary residents, therefore, may not necessarily stem directly from intervention of benevolent nation-states or supranational institutions. Increasingly, foreign workers have greater opportunities to assert their rights in a concrete and meaningful manner.<sup>86</sup> In South Korea for example, over the past decade, the position of foreign migrant workers has improved significantly. While still undertaking the so-called '3-D jobs' – difficult, dirty and dangerous – foreign migrant workers have achieved meaningful gains in terms of wages, benefits, coverage for industrial and job-related accidents, and protection from abusive and exploitative employers.<sup>87</sup> Timothy Lim, in his study of foreign migrant workers in South Korea, argues that these workers are 'on the path (albeit a rocky one) toward securing legal recognition from the South Korean Government, which would not only guarantee protection of their basic 'human rights', but would also provide them the same legal rights and legal protections as domestic workers.'<sup>88</sup> Lim suggests that the greater opportunity for temporary workers to exercise power may be due, broadly, to 'certain transnational processes – specifically, democratisation and globalisation of human and labour rights standards, which have helped to lay the basis for new patterns of social relations,' which have until recently excluded subordinate social groups.<sup>89</sup> Though comprising a small proportion of the total workforce, temporary foreign workers occupy a structurally important role in a host

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<sup>84</sup> Yeoh, B.S.A, Huang, S., and Devasahayam, T.W., 2004, Diasporic subject in the nation: foreign domestic workers, the reach of law and civil society in Singapore, *Asian Studies Review*, Vol. 28, March, p. 9

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.* p.11

<sup>86</sup> Lim, T.C., 2003, Foreign migrant workers and civil society in South Korea: The search for power in an era of global turbulence, in Marjorie Griffin Cohen and Stephen McBride (eds.), *Global Turbulence: Social Activists' and State Responses to Globalization*, Ashgate, England, p.141

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> Lim, T., 1999, The fight for equal rights: the power of foreign workers in South Korea, *Alternatives: Social Transformation & Humane Governance*, vol.24, no.3, July-Sept., p.329-353 (p.330)

country's economy. However, Singapore's strict regulation of labour and immigration laws and attitudes towards temporary workers, for example, proves the exception to 'certain transnational processes'. In this city-state's case, Yeoh *et al.* point out that foreign workers are brought in on a "use and discard" contract basis, remaining almost entirely outside the project of constructing civil society in Singapore. As such, there is little concern about whether they are accorded the opportunity to enjoy the full slate of civil rights in Singapore.<sup>90</sup>

In spite of the transnational processes, the capacity to 'collectivise grievances' in the form of organised groups, and the ability to mobilise the 'voting masses' in solidarity behind an issue and act on an issue can be a powerful tool for affecting political change. In the case of the non-citizen community however, mass mobilisations of temporary residents are unlikely to form and where they do, rarely do they translate into policy change or meaningful political effect. The weakness of collective action of temporary residents, at least in the South Korean context, is due to two important factors. First, foreign migrant workers are generally divided by language, ethnicity and nationality – historically, the ability to play one group of migrant workers off against another has been a tried-and-true method of disempowerment.<sup>91</sup> Second, the capacity of foreign workers to exercise power is limited because migrant work, by its nature, is transitory, thereby making it difficult to sustain a coherent strategy over time.<sup>92</sup>

There are some instances where actions and strategies undertaken by foreign migrant workers have in fact been successful. However, their successes were premised largely on the sustained participation of domestic support networks of religious and civil organisations.<sup>93</sup> Tierney for example, suggests in some cases the foreign workers themselves may mobilise temporarily, supported by migrant groups and in particular the

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<sup>90</sup> Yeoh, B.S.A, Huang, S., and Devasahayam, T.W., *Diasporic subject in the nation: foreign domestic workers, the reach of law and civil society in Singapore*, op.cit.

<sup>91</sup> Lim, T.C., op.cit. p.145

<sup>92</sup> Lim, T.C., *ibid.* p.145

<sup>93</sup> Lim, T.C., *ibid*; Tierney, R., 2007, *The guest labor system in Taiwan: Labor market considerations, wage injustices, and the politics of foreign labor brokerage*, *Critical Asian Studies*, vol. 39, no.2; Yeoh, B.S.A, Huang, S., and Devasahayam, T.W., *Diasporic subject in the nation: foreign domestic workers, the reach of law and civil society in Singapore*, op.cit.; Lisa Law, 2002, *Sites of transnational activism: Filipino non-government organizations in Hong Kong*, in Brenda S.A Yeoh, Peggy Teo and Shirlena Huang (Eds.), *Gender Politics in the Asia Pacific Region*, Routledge, London; Nicole Constable, 1997, *Maid to order in Hong Kong: Stories of Filipina workers*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca.

working class and its unions, to vehemently protest to highlight the frustrations, stark exploitation or degradation they experience in the workplace.<sup>94</sup> The involvement of religious and civil labour organisations represents what Statham and Mynott refer to as ‘altruistic mobilisation’.<sup>95</sup> Altruistic mobilisation occurs when beneficiaries are too weak to make autonomous demands on political institutions. Such mobilisation is a form of ‘collective action that is strongly based in discursive strategies and public constituency building.’<sup>96</sup> Statham and Mynott argue that:

Altruistic movements mobilise to introduce a definitional change within the political discourse so that the interests of the beneficiary are defined as part of the common public good, and are no longer seen as something that can be provided for by the pursuit of individual interests – a market logic, which leads to “free-riding”. Anti-racist mobilisation aims to push state institutions to define racism and discrimination as detrimental to the whole of society not just a problem for individuals of ethnic minority origin. Pro-migrant mobilisation aims to push state institutions to see immigration as beneficial to the whole of society, and not just as the self-interest of the asylum seeker or foreign migrant, or potential employer.<sup>97</sup>

Lim suggests that through linkages with domestic groups, migrant workers have been able to use certain aspects of globalisation to their advantage – such as globalisation of a common discourse on human rights and democracy – as a political resource and to use their marginalised states as a powerful ideological weapon.<sup>98</sup> Similarly in Hong Kong, Lisa Law observed that the existence of migrant worker organisations and coalitions actively addresses the injustices of guestworkers and frequently engages in protest campaigns on their behalf.<sup>99</sup> For example, Filipino domestic workers in coalescence

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<sup>94</sup> Tierney, R., 2007, The guest labor system in Taiwan: Labor market considerations, wage injustices, and the politics of foreign labor brokerage, *Critical Asian Studies*, vol. 39, no.2, p.224

<sup>95</sup> Statham, P. & Mynott, E., 2002, The dilemma of anti-racist and pro-migrant mobilisation in Britain: Visibility or political power?, Paper for the Joint Sessions of the ECPR ‘Immigration Politics: Between Centre and Periphery, National States and the EU’, Turin, 22-27 March, p.4

<sup>96</sup> Statham, P. & Mynott, E., 2002, The dilemma of anti-racist and pro-migrant mobilisation in Britain: Visibility or political power?, Paper for the Joint Sessions of the ECPR ‘Immigration Politics: Between Centre and Periphery, National States and the EU’, Turin, 22-27 March, p.4

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> Lim, T.C., Foreign migrant workers and civil society in South Korea: The search for power in an era of global turbulence, *op.cit.* p.141

<sup>99</sup> Law, L., 2002, Sites of transnational activism: Filipino non-government organizations in Hong Kong, in Brenda S.A Yeoh, Peggy Teo and Shirlena Huang (Eds.), *Gender Politics in the Asia Pacific Region*, Routledge, London, pp. 205-222

with politically active groups such as United Filipinos in Hong Kong (UNIFIL) or the Asian Domestic Workers Union (ADWU) rallied successfully in support of wage increases and in opposition to increases in administrative fees or taxes imposed by the Philippines Government.<sup>100</sup> Temporary foreign workers developing linkages with domestic action groups would be a key element in sustaining any actions that go beyond temporary and sporadic.

### **POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES, MOBILISING STRUCTURES AND FRAMINGS PROCESSES**

In the previous section I discussed the political participation and mobilisation of foreign workers. In this section, I will shift my focus to explaining political opportunities, mobilising structures and framing processes; in particular, I will elaborate how the dynamics of collective action formation and mobilisation are understood. In the field of social movements, protest and collective action, there has been an emerging consensus and convergence between different theoretical traditions with the combining of political opportunities (contextual factors), mobilising structures (organisational resources), and framing processes (discursive resources).<sup>101</sup> In their book on *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements*, Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald sought to synthesise a ‘profusion of work’ in the field of social movements under three broad sets of factors in analysing the emergence and development of social movements/revolutions: political opportunities, mobilising structures and framing processes.<sup>102</sup> These three factors are also applied generally to formation and mobilisation of collective action. Each will now be discussed in turn.

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<sup>100</sup> Constable, N., 1997, *Maid to order in Hong Kong: Stories of Filipina workers*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, p.164

<sup>101</sup> McAdam, D., McCarthy, J.D., and Zald, M.N., 1996, *Comparative perspectives on social movements: Political opportunities, mobilising structures and cultural framing*, Cambridge University Press, UK; Ruud Koopmans and Paul Statham, 1999, *Political claims analysis: Integrating protest event and political discourse approaches*, *Mobilisation: an International Journal*, vol.2, no.1, pp.203-221

<sup>102</sup> McAdam, D., McCarthy, J.D. and Zald, M.N., *ibid.*; Tarrow, S., 1996, *States and opportunities: The political structuring of social movements*, in Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, Mayer N. Zald, *Comparative perspectives on social movements: Political opportunities, mobilising structures and cultural framing*, Cambridge University Press, UK

## 1. *Political opportunities*

Political opportunities or political processes explain how institutionalised politics – within the national context in which they are embedded – shape or incentivise the formation of social movements.<sup>103</sup> Proponents of the political opportunities model<sup>104</sup> saw the timing and fate of movements as largely dependent upon the opportunities given to insurgents by the ‘shifting institutional structure and ideological disposition of those in power’.<sup>105</sup> However, this is only one perspective. Conceptualisations of the so-called ‘expansion and contraction’ of political opportunities vary greatly. For example, Sidney Tarrow suggests that some researchers focused on large-scale structures, others on ones that are proximate to particular actors; some analyse cross-sectional variations in political opportunity, while others look at how changes in political conflict and alliances trigger, channel and demobilise social movements.<sup>106</sup> What has emerged, nevertheless, is an implicit typology of approaches to political opportunity structure.<sup>107</sup> Despite various perspectives on political opportunity, the interaction between protest groups and ‘institutionalised politics’ helps explain the formation of collective action ‘on the basis of change in the institutional structure or informal power relations of a given national political system’.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> McAdam, D., McCarthy, J.D., and Zald, M.N., *Comparative perspectives on social movements: Political opportunities, mobilising structures and cultural framing*, op.cit. p.3

<sup>104</sup> Jenkins, C.J., & Perrow, C., 1977, *Insurgency of powerless: Farm worker movements (1946-1972)*, *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 42, pp. 249-268; McAdam, D., 1982, *Political process and the development of black insurgency, 1930-1970*, University of Chicago, Chicago; Tarrow, S., 1983, *Struggling to reform: Social movements and policy change during cycles of protest*, Western Societies Program Occasional Paper No. 15, New York Center for International Studies, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York; Tilly, C., 1978, *From mobilization to revolution*, Addison-Wesley, Reading, Mass.

<sup>105</sup> McAdam, D., 1996, *Conceptual origins, current problems, future directions*, in Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, Mayer N. Zald, *Comparative perspectives on social movements: Political opportunities, mobilising structures and cultural framing*, Cambridge University Press, UK

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>107</sup> Tarrow, S., 1996, *States and opportunities: The political structuring of social movements*, in Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, Mayer N. Zald, *Comparative perspectives on social movements: Political opportunities, mobilising structures and cultural framing*, Cambridge University Press, UK

<sup>108</sup> McAdam, D., McCarthy, J.D., and Zald, M.N., 1996, *Comparative perspectives on social movements: Political opportunities, mobilising structures and cultural framing*, op.cit. p.3

Tarrow defines political opportunity structure as ‘consistent – but not necessarily formal, permanent or national – signals to social or political actors which either encourage or discourage them to use their internal resources to form social movements’ or collective actions.<sup>109</sup> In specifying the dimensions of political opportunity structure, Tarrow and McAdam focus narrowly on four salient kinds of ‘signals’: the opening up of access to power, shifting alignments, the availability of influential allies, and cleavages within and among elites.<sup>110</sup>

In the context of non-citizen mobilisation, these ‘signals’ or vulnerabilities have limited relevance, because unlike collective actions of citizen groups, non-citizens’ interest in mobilising to intentionally access power structures or exploit institutional cleavages is generally reactionary and may only occur in cases when policy change impinges directly on them. Secondly, Tarrow’s political specifications do not clearly explain the role and relevance of public policy in precipitating collective action. Meyer and Minkoff<sup>111</sup> on the other hand, demonstrate a wider latitude in interpreting these political factors. They extends their specifications to include public policy, in which its relevance for analysis presents many possibilities including policies that produces formal recognition or new advantages for a constituency;<sup>112</sup> introduces and adopts discrete policy changes;<sup>113</sup> levels of appropriations;<sup>114</sup> policy implementation;<sup>115</sup> or actual

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<sup>109</sup> Tarrow, S., 1996, *States and opportunities: The political structuring of social movements*, p.54, in Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, Mayer N. Zald, *Comparative perspectives on social movements: Political opportunities, mobilising structures and cultural framing*, Cambridge University Press, UK

<sup>110</sup> McAdam, D., 1996, *Conceptual origins, current problems, future directions*, in Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, Mayer N. Zald, *Comparative perspectives on social movements: Political opportunities, mobilising structures and cultural framing*, Cambridge University Press, UK, p.26-27; and Tarrow, S., 1996, *States and opportunities: The political structuring of social movements*, in Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, Mayer N. Zald, *Comparative perspectives on social movements: Political opportunities, mobilising structures and cultural framing*, Cambridge University Press, UK

<sup>111</sup> Meyer, D.S., & Minkoff D.C., 2004, *Conceptualising political opportunity*, *Social Forces*, June, 82(4), pp. 1457-1492

<sup>112</sup> Gamson, W. A., 1990. *The Strategy of Social Protest*. Wadsworth. Santoro, Wayne A. 2002. “The Civil Rights Movement’s Struggle for Fair Employment: A ‘Dramatic Events — Conventional Politics’ Model.” *Social Forces* 81:177-206; Strong, D., Waters, P.B., Driscoll, B., and Rosenberg. S., 2000, *Leveraging the State: Private Money and the Development of Public Education for Blacks*, *American Sociological Review* Vol. 65, pp. 658-81

<sup>113</sup> Banaszak, L.A., 1996, *Why Movements Succeed or Fail: Opportunity, Culture, and the Struggle for Woman Suffrage*. Princeton University Press; Burstein, P., 1991, *Legal Mobilization As a Social Movement Tactic: The Struggle for Equal Employment Opportunity*, *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 96 pp. 1201-25; McCammon, H., Campbell, K., Granberg, E. and Mowery, C., 2001, *How Movements Win: Gendered Opportunity Structures and U.S. Women’s Suffrage Movements, 1866 to 1919*, *American Sociological Review* vol. 66, pp. 47-70; Soule, S. A., McAdam, D., McCarthy, J.D.

practices.<sup>116</sup> The inclusion of public policy factors, whether in addition to the institutional structures, or implicit in its institutional ambit is an important element within a political system in structuring the opportunities for collective action. Public policy is a substantiation of shifting institutional structures and ideological disposition of those in power. While political conflict and alliances can trigger, channel and demobilise social movements, public policy used as a political mechanism, can equally influence the expansion or contraction of political opportunities for collective action and catalyse or limit the formation of new groupings.

## 2. *Mobilising structures*

If institutionalised political systems shape the prospects and form of collective actions, then the second conceptual factor, mobilising structures, influences the way in which groups seek to organise. McAdam *et al.* broadly define mobilising structures as ‘collective vehicles, informal as well as formal, through which people mobilise and engage in collective action.’<sup>117</sup> Mobilising structures essentially focus on ‘meso-level groups, organisations and informal networks that comprise the collective building blocks’ of protest. They are derived from two distinct theoretical perspectives: resource mobilisation theory<sup>118</sup> and political process model.<sup>119</sup> Resource mobilisation theorists

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& Su, Y., 1999, Protest Events: Cause or Consequence of State Action: The U.S. Women’s Movement and Federal Congressional Activities, *Mobilization* vol. 4, pp. 239-56; Cott, V., & Lee, D., 2001, Explaining Ethnic Autonomy Regimes in Latin America, *Studies in Comparative International Development* vol.35, pp. 30-58.

<sup>114</sup> Amenta, E., Dunleavy, K. and Bernstein, M., 1994, Stolen Thunder? Huey Long’s ‘Share our Wealth,’ Political Mediation, and the Second New Deal, *American Sociological Review* vol.59, pp.678-702; Button, J. W., 1978. *Black Violence*, Princeton University Press, USA

<sup>115</sup> Andrews, K. T., 2001, Social Movements and Policy Implementation: The Mississippi Civil Rights Movement and the War on Poverty, 1965-1971, *American Sociological Review*, vol.66, pp.21- 48

<sup>116</sup> Einwohner, R, 1999, Practices, opportunity, and protest effectiveness: illustrations from four animal rights campaigns, *Annual Review of Sociology*, vol.46, no.2, pp.169–86; Krain, M., 1997, State-Sponsored Mass Murder, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol.41, pp.331-60

<sup>117</sup> McAdam, D., McCarthy, J.D., and Zald, M.N., *Comparative perspectives on social movements: Political opportunities, mobilising structures and cultural framing*, op.cit.

<sup>118</sup> McCarthy, J.D and Zald, M.N., 1973, *The trend of social movements in America: Professionalization and resource mobilization*, General Learning Press, Morristown, N.J; and McCarthy, J.D and Zald, M.N., 1977, ‘Resource mobilisation and social movements: A partial theory’, *American Journal of Sociology*, vol.82, No.6, pp.1212-1241

<sup>119</sup> Tilly, C., 1975, *The rebellious century 1830-1930*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass.; Tilly, C., 1978, *From mobilization to revolution*, Addison-Wesley, Reading, Mass.

focused on mobilisation processes and the formal organisational manifestations of political processes.<sup>120</sup> McCarthy and Zald in particular focused primarily on formal type organisations, *Social Movement Organisations* (SMO). SMO are manifestations of social movements, in which they become institutionalised and professionalised organisations operating like private companies.<sup>121</sup> Political process model theorists on the other hand, approached organisational dynamics of collective action from an informal grassroots mobilisation such as work, churches, women's networks, neighbourhoods.<sup>122</sup> Despite their contrasting positions, both present a broader scope within an *informal-formal* spectrum to explain the structural forms of movements and their evolution.

In any concrete social setting, activists have a choice of a range of mobilising structures as they attempt to create new movements or nurture and direct ongoing ones.<sup>123</sup> The choice of establishing an *informal* or *formal* mobilising structure plays an important role in determining the success and sustainability of any collective action. McCarthy (See Table 2.1) for instance, argues that the choices that activists make about how to more or less formally pursue change have consequences for their ability to raise material resources and mobilise dissident efforts, as well as for society-wide legitimacy – all of which can directly affect the chances that their common efforts will succeed.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> McAdam, D. McCarthy, J.D., Zald, M.N., *Comparative perspectives on social movements: Political opportunities, mobilising structures and cultural framing*, op.cit. p.3

<sup>121</sup> Zald, M.N., & McCarthy, J.D., 1997, *Social Movements in an Organizational Society: Collected Essays*, Transaction Publishers

<sup>122</sup> Tilly, C., *The rebellious century 1830-1930*, op.cit.; Tilly, C., 1978, *From mobilization to revolution*, Addison-Wesley, Reading, Mass.; Morris, A., 1981, 'The black southern sit-in movement: An analysis of internal organisation', *American Sociological Review*, No.46, pp.744-767; Morris, A., 1984, *The origins of the civil rights movement: Black communities organising for change*, Free Press, New York; Gould, R., 1991, 'Multiple networks and mobilisation in the Paris Commune, 1871', *American Sociological Review*, No.56, pp.716-729; Kriesi, H., 1988, 'Local mobilisation for the people's petition of the Dutch peace movement', pp.41-81 in Bert Klandermans, Hanspeter Kriesi and Sidney Tarrow (eds.), *From structure to action: Comparing social movement research across cultures*, JAI Press, Greenwich, Conn.; McAdam, D., 1986, 'Recruitment of high-risk activism: The case of freedom summer', *American Journal of Sociology*, No.92, pp.64-90

<sup>123</sup> McCarthy, J.D., 1996, *Constraints and opportunities in adopting, adapting and inventing*, in Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, Mayer N. Zald, *Comparative perspectives on social movements: Political opportunities, mobilising structures and cultural framing*, Cambridge University Press, UK

<sup>124</sup> McCarthy, J.D., 1996, *Constraints and opportunities in adopting, adapting and inventing*, in Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, Mayer N. Zald, *Comparative perspectives on social movements: Political opportunities, mobilising structures and cultural framing*, Cambridge University Press, UK, p.141

**Table 2.1 Dimensions of Movement Mobilising Structures<sup>125</sup>**

|                 | <b>Non-movement</b>                                | <b>Movement</b>                                 |
|-----------------|--|---|
| <b>Informal</b> | Friendship networks<br>Neighbours<br>Work networks | Activist networks<br>Affinity groups            |
| <b>Formal</b>   | Churches<br>Unions<br>Professional associations    | SMOs<br>Protest communities<br>Movement schools |

McCarthy suggests at the *informal* end of the organisational spectrum – ‘the micromobilisation contexts’<sup>126</sup> – are ‘families and networks of friends’. The kinship and friendship structures are the basic structures for mobilisation and recruitment of activists. In the less informal organisational structure are informal networks, for example, social movement communities.<sup>127</sup> Prayer groups, caucuses, study groups and sports teams are some examples of community level and informal organising. Another common form is the freestanding protest campaign committee that links networks, organisations and caucuses together in order to coordinate events and efforts.<sup>128</sup>

While Social Movement Communities (SMC) are ‘informal communities of politicised individuals with fluid boundaries, flexible leadership structures, and malleable divisions of labor’, at the *formal* organisational end of the spectrum are Social Movement

<sup>125</sup> McCarthy, J.D., 1996, Constraints and opportunities in adopting, adapting and inventing, in Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, Mayer N. Zald, Comparative perspectives on social movements: Political opportunities, mobilising structures and cultural framing, Cambridge University Press, UK

<sup>126</sup> McAdam, D., 1988b, ‘Micromobilisation contexts and recruitment to activism’, International Social Movement Research, No.1, pp. 125-154; McAdam, D., McCarthy, J.D., and Zald, M.N., 1988, ‘Social movements’, pp.695-738, in Neil J. Smelser (ed.), Handbook of Sociology, Sage, Newbury Park, California.

<sup>127</sup> Buechler, S., 1990, Women’s movements in the U.S., Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, N.J.

<sup>128</sup> McCarthy, J.D., 1996, ‘Constraints and opportunities in adopting, adapting and inventing, p.144, in Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, Comparative perspectives on social movements: Political opportunities, mobilising structures and cultural framings, Cambridge University Press, USA

Organisations (SMO).<sup>129</sup> In contrast to SMC, SMO are formal, complex organisational structures and can vary in their institutional form, from ‘independent local’ volunteer based groups, and national professional associations such as the Public Interest Research Group<sup>130</sup> to international groups that cross national boundaries, such as Amnesty International and Greenpeace.<sup>131</sup> With a range of options available within the *informal-formal* spectrum of mobilisation, collective action actors, McCarthy suggests, most often adopt forms that are known to them from direct experience.<sup>132</sup>

For collective action actors that instead adopt formal organisational structures, Hanspeter Kriesi offers four broad factors for analysing organisational development: organisational growth, internal structuration, external structuration, and goal orientations and action repertoires.

i) *Organisational growth* – in the early phases, collective action networks tend to be weak and informally structured. Resources from conscience constituents and supportive elites are not easily forthcoming. Collective action actors have to attract public attention to their cause, and they have to create their constituency and elite patronage on their own – either by explicit consensus mobilisation or as a by-product of their action mobilisation.<sup>133</sup>

ii) *Internal structuration* – during their development phase, organisations undergo a process of formalisation, professionalisation, internal differentiation and integration. Formalisation, according to Kriesi, means the development of formal membership criteria, the introduction of formal statutes and established procedures, and the creation

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<sup>129</sup> Buechler, S., 1990, *Women’s movements in the U.S.*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, N.J., p.42

<sup>130</sup> McCarthy, J.D. & Zald, M. N., 1973, *The trend of social movements in America: Professionalization and resource mobilization*, General Learning Press, Morristown, N.J.

<sup>131</sup> Smith, J., Pagnucco, R. & Romeril, W., 1994, ‘Transnational social movement organisations in the global political arena’, *Voluntas*, No.5, pp.121-154 cited by McCarthy, J.D., 1996, ‘Constraints and opportunities in adopting, adapting and inventing’, p.144, in Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, *Comparative perspectives on social movements: Political opportunities, mobilising structures and cultural framings*, Cambridge University Press, USA

<sup>132</sup> McCarthy, J.D., 1996, *Constraints and opportunities in adopting, adapting and inventing*, in Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, Mayer N. Zald, *Comparative perspectives on social movements: Political opportunities, mobilising structures and cultural framing*, Cambridge University Press, UK

<sup>133</sup> Kriesi, H., 1996, *The organisational structure of new social movements in a political context*, in Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, Mayer N. Zald, *Comparative perspectives on social movements: Political opportunities, mobilising structures and cultural framing*, Cambridge University Press, UK, p.149

of a formal leadership and office structure. Professionalisation means management by paid staff members who make careers out of movement work. Internal differentiation concerns the functional division of labour (task-structure) and the territorial decentralisation (territorial subunits). The integration of the differentiated functional and territorial subunits is achieved by horizontal coordinating mechanisms, and by centralisation of decisions.

The process of internal structuration, Kriesi argues, is virtually inevitable; if the organisation is to have success in the long run, it will need to undergo centralisation. Centralisation contributes to stability of an organisation.<sup>134</sup>

iii) *External structuration* - Kriesi refers to external structuration as the integration of a formal organisation into its environment. There are at least three dimensions to this effect: the organisation's relations with its constituency, its allies and the authorities. Organisations are highly dependent on their constituency, since its main activity consists in mobilising its constituency for collective action. Having support from strong allies is another dimension of an organisation's development. Powerful allies may provide important resources but on the other hand reduce the organisation's autonomy and threaten its stability in the long run. The third dimension involves establishing a working relationship with the authorities. The extent of the working relationship may have adverse effects. Public recognition, access to decision-making procedures and public subsidies may provide crucial resources and represent important successes for an organisation; however the integration into established systems of interest intermediation may impose limits on the mobilisation capacity of the organisation and potentially alienate important parts of its constituency, with the consequence of weakening it in the long run.<sup>135</sup>

iv) *Goal orientations and action repertoires* – a fourth factor in analysing an organisation's development. Kriesi argues that an organisation undergoes two significant changes as part of its development: its goal transforms, becoming increasingly conservative, and accommodating 'dominant societal consensus'; and it

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<sup>134</sup> Ibid. p.155

<sup>135</sup> Kriesi, H., 1996, The organisational structure of new social movements in a political context, in Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, Mayer N. Zald, Comparative perspectives on social movements: Political opportunities, mobilising structures and cultural framing, Cambridge University Press, UK, p.155

shifts towards ‘organisational maintenance’, in which the organisation’s primary activity becomes the maintenance of membership, funds and other requirements of organisational existence. In the process, the action repertoires of the organisation are also expected to be modified and tending to become more moderate, more conventional, more institutionalised.<sup>136</sup>

### 3. *Framing processes*

Framing processes are the third broad set of factors in combination with political opportunities and mobilising structures. Mediating between opportunity, organization and action are the shared meanings and definitions that people bring to their situation.<sup>137</sup> McAdam *et al.* note that political opportunities and mobilising structures alone are insufficient to account for collective action. Ideas, cultures and sentiments are the more ‘cognitive or ideational dimensions’ of collective action.<sup>138</sup> Drawing on David Snow’s original conception, McAdam *et al.* narrowly define framing as referring to the conscious strategic efforts by groups of people to fashion shared understandings of the world and of themselves that legitimate and motivate collective action.<sup>139</sup> The shared understanding also extends to the problematic condition or situation they define as in need of change, making attributions regarding who or what is to blame, articulating an alternative set of arrangements, and urging others to act in concert to affect change.<sup>140</sup> Snow and Benford refer to these core functions of a collective action frame, or ‘what frames must do,’ as *diagnostic framing*, *prognostic framing* and *motivational framing*.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Kriesi, H., 1996, The organisational structure of new social movements in a political context, in Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, Mayer N. Zald, Comparative perspectives on social movements: Political opportunities, mobilising structures and cultural framing, Cambridge University Press, UK, p.156

<sup>137</sup> McAdam, D., McCarthy, J.D., and Zald, M.N., Comparative perspectives on social movements: Political opportunities, mobilising structures and cultural framing, op.cit. p.5

<sup>138</sup> McAdam, D., McCarthy, J.D., and Zald, M.N., *ibid.*

<sup>139</sup> McAdam, D., McCarthy, J.D., and Zald, M.N., *ibid.* p.6

<sup>140</sup> Benford, R.D. & Snow, D.A., 2000, Framing processes and social movements: An overview and assessment, *Annu. Rev. Sociol.*, vol. 26, pp.611-639

<sup>141</sup> Snow, D.A. & Benford, R.D., 1988, Ideology, frame resonance, and participant mobilisation, *Int. Soc. Mov. Res.*, vol.1, pp.197-218s

- *Diagnostic framing* presents to potential recruits a new interpretation of issues or events - what is wrong and why;
- *Prognostic framing* presents a proposed solution to the problem suggested in the diagnosis or at least a plan of attack, and the strategies for carrying out the plan – what is to be done;<sup>142</sup>
- *Motivational framing* attempts to give people a rationale for engaging in ameliorative collective action including the construction of appropriate vocabularies of motive.<sup>143</sup> The problem defined in the diagnosis and the solution in the prognosis are usually sufficient to get people to act – the ‘call to arms’<sup>144</sup> The call for collective action, Benford and Snow suggest, usually involves the construction and adoption of ‘socially constructed vocabularies’ used to provide ‘adherents with compelling accounts for engaging in collective action and for sustaining their participation.’<sup>145</sup>

How are frames constructed? Frames can be ‘bottom-up’ or ‘top-down’. John Noakes and Hank Johnston, for example, observed protesters mobilising and interacting with each other or the community in the streets to construct alternative interpretations of events as an example of ‘bottom-up’ frames.<sup>146</sup> Their meaning evolves over time as they confront alternative interpretations of events, sometime being co-opted and used for purposes unintended by their originators.<sup>147</sup> Top-down driven frames stem mainly from the so-called ‘social movement entrepreneur’ – people who exhibit strategic initiative in promoting their message – or leaders and organisers, making practical decisions in response to the styles, forms and normative codes of the target audience.<sup>148</sup> According

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<sup>142</sup> Benford, R.D. & Snow, D.A., Framing processes and social movements: An overview and assessment, op.cit. p.616

<sup>143</sup> Benford, R.D. & Snow, D.A., ibid. p.616

<sup>144</sup> Noakes, J.A & Johnston, H., 2005, Frames of protest: A road map to a perspective, pp.5-6, in Hank Johnston and John A. Noakes, Frames of protests: Social movements and the framing perspective, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. Lanham

<sup>145</sup> Benford, R.D. & Snow, D.A., Framing processes and social movements: An overview and assessment, op.cit. p.616

<sup>146</sup> Noakes, J.A & Johnston, H., Frames of protest: A road map to a perspective, op.cit. p.7

<sup>147</sup> della Porta, D., 2002, ‘Protests, protesters and protest policing: Some reflections on the Italian case’, pp. 228-252 in Policing protest, Donatella della Porta and Herbert Reiter, eds. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis

<sup>148</sup> Kubal, T., 1998, ‘The presentation of political self: Cultural resonance and the construction of collective action frames’, Sociological Quarterly, No.39, pp.539-554

to Snow and Benford, the communication of an entrepreneur's message to current and potential constituents is done through two processes: *articulation* and *amplification*. Social movement entrepreneurs articulate frames by connecting and aligning events 'so they hang together in a relatively unified and compelling fashion', thus offering a new perspective on events or situations.<sup>149</sup> 'Slices of observed, [sic] experiences and/or recorded reality', Benford and Snow argue, 'are assembled, collated and packaged.'<sup>150</sup> The articulation process involves drawing from the 'cultural tool kit' of mobilising symbols, which contains diverse and often contradictory symbols which a movement entrepreneur may use to emphasise or to repackage.<sup>151</sup> As Benford and Snow note, it is this selective 'punctuating and encoding objects, situations, events, experiences, and sequences of action' that renders events meaningful to potential recruits.<sup>152</sup>

Amplification of collective action frames involves highlighting or accenting of various issues, events or beliefs from the broader interpretive sweep of the movement.<sup>153</sup> These punctuated or accented elements function as part of the discursive process when frames are articulated. Johnston and Noakes suggest that the development of a poignant set of symbols allows a movement's frame to be carried out quickly and efficiently. An example of frame amplification is the bumper stickers or catchphrases such as 'I'm pro-choice and I vote', 'Abortion is murder'.<sup>154</sup>

The condensing of broad issues distilled into sharp catchphrase messages attempts to cut an issue in a different way in which it captures attention and resonates effectively to mobilise people to take collective action. To this extent the content of frames, or the materials component of the interpretive schema, becomes an important element in frame making.

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<sup>149</sup> Benford, R. & Snow, D., Framing processes and social movements: An overview and assessment, op.cit.

<sup>150</sup> Benford, R. & Snow, D., Framing processes and social movements: An overview and assessment, op.cit.

<sup>151</sup> Noakes, J.A & Johnston, H., Frames of protest: A road map to a perspective, op.cit. pp.5-6,

<sup>152</sup> Snow, D. & Benford, R.D., 1988, 'Ideology, frame resonance and participant mobilisation,' International Social Movement Research, no.1, pp.197-218

<sup>153</sup> Noakes, J.A & Johnston, H., Frames of protest: A road map to a perspective, op.cit. p.8  
Noakes, J.A & Johnston, H., ibid. p.8

## COLLECTIVE ACTION FRAMEWORK AND OVERSEAS STUDENTS

In this thesis, I seek to apply all three factors in the collective action framework to help understand the emergence and mobilisation of overseas students' action against changes to the overseas students program. The framework maps, in general, concepts that explain how and why collective action forms, what mobilising structural shape they take, and how collective action actors attempt to frame their arguments in support of their claims. McAdam *et al.* argue that scholars have tended to study only one aspect of a movement, for example, the effect of expanding political opportunities or the organisational dynamics of collective action. In isolation, each element within the framework offers a one-dimensional perspective of collective action. When linked together however, their interactivity offers a broader and deeper understanding of the origins of collective action and the extent and form it takes over time. The challenge however, according to McAdam *et al.*, is to 'sketch the relationships' between these factors to yield a fuller understanding of collective action dynamics.<sup>155</sup> This thesis seeks to take up this challenge by applying the framework to give a fuller understanding of the factors and processes that shaped the collective action of overseas students, its emergence on the one hand, and its ongoing development on the other.

To understand the factors that led to the emergence of overseas students' collective action, we would need to consider the first element, political opportunities. The political opportunities structure helps explain the shift in public policy and its significance in catalysing the formation of overseas students' collective action and their subsequent mobilisation. As McAdam *et al.* argue, political opportunities are necessary prerequisites to action.<sup>156</sup> Developments and changes in aid policy, whether driven by political, economic or foreign policy considerations are arguably an influential factor in understanding not only the timing of emerging collective action, but also the form the action takes. During the early developments of the Colombo Plan, overseas students'

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<sup>155</sup> McAdam, D., McCarthy, J.D., and Zald, M.N., *Comparative perspectives on social movements: Political opportunities, mobilising structures and cultural framing*, op.cit, p.17

<sup>156</sup> McAdam, D., McCarthy, J.D., and Zald, M.N., *ibid.* p.8

political mobilisation was constrained due to: the aid emphasis of the Australian Government program, tightened scholar restrictions, new policies introduced to regulate satisfactory progress, and conservative community cultural attitudes. As policies governing the aid program were relaxed from the 1970s onwards, constraints on political mobilisation were eased, allowing the eventual formation of overseas students' action against the government's education aid reforms in the early 1980s. Though the policy environment may have played a significant role in catalysing the formation of overseas students' mobilisation, its influence does not end at the emergent phase. The shaping and reshaping of the policy environment and the structure of political opportunities now becomes more a product of the interaction of the overseas students group with its environment than a simple reflection of changes occurring elsewhere.<sup>157</sup> The policy environment continues to play a significant role on the development of the overseas students group, as the group continues to play an important role in influencing the broader export of education services sector's landscape.

With the political opportunities structure in mind, we will need to consider the second element in the collective action framework, mobilising structures. McAdam *et al.* argue that at the emergent phase of a collective action, the availability of mobilising structures of sufficient strength – whether *formal* or *informal* – is important in getting a movement started.<sup>158</sup> Without the existence of sufficient organisation, such opportunities for action are not likely to be seized. The existence of campus based overseas student organisations were an important factor in contributing to a loose network of connective structures crucial in underpinning the emergent phase of overseas student mobilisation. However, once a collective action is underway, a new set of challenges takes over. It is no longer the simple availability of mobilising structures or a loose network of connective structures, but developing an organisational profile of a particular group that claims to represent its larger constituent that becomes important.<sup>159</sup> Overseas students formed a national body, the National Liaison Committee for Overseas Students in Australia (NLC) to organisationally represent their collective action. The students subsequently created a more enduring organisational structure to support their actions, formed larger community networks to widen avenues for opposition, employed

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<sup>157</sup> McAdam, D., McCarthy, J.D., and Zald, M.N., *ibid* p.13

<sup>158</sup> McAdam, D., McCarthy, J.D., and Zald, M.N., *ibid* p.13

<sup>159</sup> McAdam, D., McCarthy, J.D., and Zald, M.N., *ibid*, p.13

appropriate tactical actions to instigate policy change and attempted to acquire resources (funding and facilities) to help sustain their mobilisation. In developing a sustainable organisational structure, in response to rapid expansion of the export of education services sector, the NLC underwent periods of restructuring to strengthen their internal structures; professionalising their management practices and moving from a decentralised to a centralised decision-making structure to create a stable and professional representative body. As their organisation developed, the NLC gradually became more conservative, accommodating dominant government and industry consensus and becoming more moderate, more conventional and more institutionalised.<sup>160</sup>

The third element mediating between structural requirements of political opportunity and organisation is the emergent meanings and definitions – or frames – shared by the supporters of collective actors.<sup>161</sup> Framing is important not only in the early phase of shaping the emergence of collective action but also at the later stage of its development. Framing at the early stage is different from the later stage. During the emergent phase, framing is less consciously strategic. McAdam *et al.* argue, that ‘at the outset, participants may not even be fully aware that they are engaged in an interpretive process of any real significance. This is certainly not the case later on as various factions and figures within the movement struggle endlessly to determine the most compelling and effective way to bring the movement’s “message” to the “people”.’<sup>162</sup> The framing processes shed some light on the way overseas student leaders sought to frame their message to mobilise their constituents and gain broader community support against changes to government policy. In the initial stage of education aid reforms, overseas students framed their arguments based on education aid as a ‘right’ for students from developing countries. Within the ‘*education rights*’ frame, they reinterpreted issues such as deportation and financial pressures to propose solutions such as a freeze in fees and instalment payment schemes as ways to alleviate pressures imposed on students due to policy changes. Their campaign achieved modest success in securing some policy

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<sup>160</sup> Kriesi, H., 1996, The organisational structure of new social movements in a political context, in Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, Mayer N. Zald, *Comparative perspectives on social movements: Political opportunities, mobilising structures and cultural framing*, Cambridge University Press, UK, p.156

<sup>161</sup> McAdam, D., McCarthy, J.D., and Zald, M.N., *Comparative perspectives on social movements: Political opportunities, mobilising structures and cultural framing*, op.cit, p.8

<sup>162</sup> McAdam, D., McCarthy, J.D., and Zald, M.N., *ibid.* p.16

concessions, particularly at the early stages of education aid reform. However, their strategy evolved as the fledgling export education services sector developed; they subsequently embraced and reinterpreted the government's own 'language of liberalisation', and repackaged their claims based on '*consumer rights*'. They then amplified their new claims by adopting catchphrases such as 'your money, your rights', 'value for money' and 'milking cows'. The condensing of these issues into sharp catchphrases was used with greater effectiveness in attracting the attention of domestic and international media and making consequent claims to government.

### **OVERSEAS STUDENTS' POLITICAL PARTICIPATION**

I have so far considered how overseas students, as temporary residents, fit within the context of Hammar's citizenry and non-citizenry construct; I then proceeded to introduce the collective action framework as a tool to consider the emergence and mobilisation of overseas students' collective action. I will now consider how overseas students' participation in the Australian export of education services sector is viewed in current literature. There is no research focusing on overseas students and their participation and representation in political life. Available research significantly focuses on the 'macro' and 'micro' levels of overseas student contribution in general and the export of education services sector in particular. The current discourse about the overseas students program broadly tends to be pragmatic, implicitly positivistic and multi-disciplinary.<sup>163</sup>

From a 'macro' perspective, the literature is confined predominantly to the economic and political benefits of the overseas students program. Since the mid-eighties, substantive literature concentrated on the economic dimensions, the demand and supply

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<sup>163</sup> Albinski, H., 1996, Australia's external policy/international education nexus. *Journal of Institutional Research in Australasia*, September v.5 n.2 p.1-13; Nesdale, D., Simkin, K., Sang, D., Burke, B., & Fraser, S., 1995, International students and immigration, Aust Govt Pub Service, Canberra; Lee, L., 1991, The cultural adaptation of Chinese tertiary students in South Australia: a humanistic sociological analysis of the cultural experiences of Chinese who were students in Australia. Adelaide: University of Adelaide. Med; Lewit, T., 2002, Overseas students : making the transition across intellectual traditions. In 'Mind the gap : transition from all perspectives : papers from a roundtable conference' pages 62-63. Parkville Vic : Transition Program, University of Melbourne

for educational services.<sup>164</sup> Harris and Hooke in particular, testify to the commercial and export benefits of the program to the national economy. Kemp explores the higher education export industry in Australia and assesses the growth and impact of overseas students in the country. Kemp also cites and analyses the flow of students from Asia and investigates factors affecting overseas students' choice of educational destination.<sup>165</sup>

From a political dimension, numerous research papers explore the motivation for the supply of and demand for educational services.<sup>166</sup> Curt Anderssen, for example, probes the domestic politico-nationalist welfare policy of Malaysia's New Economic Policy and its influence on non-Malay demand for Australian export education services.<sup>167</sup> Brown argues that the changing emphasis in Australia's international education policy from aid to trade manifests certain contradictions, contestations and complexities in the context of Asia-Australia relations, and that Australian policy continues to reflect attitudes variously identified as post-colonialism, neo-colonialism, orientalism, and the construction of the 'other'.<sup>168</sup> From an immigration perspective, Nesdale, Simkin, Sang,

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<sup>164</sup> Anderssen, C. A., 1990, "Can I afford it? The cost of education and the choice of Australia as a study destination: The case of private Malaysian students", *Policy Organisation and Society*, Summer, pp.79 – 85; Bureau of Industry Economics, 1989, *Exporting Australia's tertiary education services*, AGPS, Canberra; Harold, R., 1990, *Marketing the academy: Aspects of exporting higher education courses*, A report prepared for the Industry Commission; Harris, G., 1990, *Educating overseas students in Australia: Who benefits?*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney; Hooke, G., 1987, "Prospects for expanding the export of services", *Economics Papers*, Vol. 6 No.3, September, pp.15-26; The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, 1992, *Australian Parliament Senate Standing Committee on Employment Education and Training, Inquiry into the operation of the Education Services for Overseas Students (Registration of Providers and Financial Regulations) Act 1991 (ESOS Act) / Report by the Senate Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training*. For political and foreign policy perspectives see Anderssen, C., 1993, *The End of an Era? Contemporary Trends in Malaysian Student Movement in Australia*, Asian Studies Discipline, The Flinders University of South Australia, Adelaide; Harvey Jones, P.W., 1986, *Australia's international relations in education*, Australian Council for Education Research, Hawthorn

<sup>165</sup> Kemp, S.J., 1992, *The export of higher education*, M.Business, Curtin University, Perth

<sup>166</sup> Harvey Jones, P.W., 1986, *Australia's international relations in education*, Australian Council for Education Research, Hawthorn; Oakman, D., 2000, "The seed of freedom: Regional security and the Colombo Plan", *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, Vol.46, No.1, pp.67-85; Oakman, D., 2001, "The Politics of foreign aid: Counter-subversion and the Colombo Plan", *Pacifica Review: Peace, Security and Global Change*, Vol13, No.3, pp.255-272

<sup>167</sup> Anderssen, C., *The End of an Era? Contemporary Trends in Malaysian Student Movement in Australia*, op.cit.

<sup>168</sup> Brown, D., 1993, *From aid to trade: contradictions, contestations and complexities of Australia's policy to market education to Asia*. In 'Higher education in transition: working papers of the Higher Education Policy Project' edited by M Bella, J McCollow and J Knight, pages 124-138. Brisbane: University of Queensland. Graduate School of Education. Henry Albinski tackles the interface between Australia's international or export education sector with the broader features of the nation's external policy objectives

Burke and Fraser, in their study commissioned by the Bureau of Immigration, Multicultural and Population Research, reveal the results of a research project examining the causes, processes and consequences of overseas students studying in Australia and explore the relationship between an increase in overseas students in Australia and subsequent immigration of these students to this country. The project also considers economic, educational and foreign relations implications that the relationship between study and immigration might have for Australia.<sup>169</sup>

At a 'micro' level, the research tends toward a socio-welfare view. Current literature covers nearly every facet of student experiences; practical challenges, including accommodation and visas<sup>170</sup>; emotional and affective issues – such as loneliness<sup>171</sup>, stress and homesickness<sup>172</sup>; cultural adaptation and integration<sup>173</sup>; English language acquisition and competence<sup>174</sup>; pedagogical difficulties<sup>175</sup>; curriculum and assessment<sup>176</sup> and performance and outcomes<sup>177</sup>. The contribution of Deumert, Marginson, Nyland, Ramia and Sawir has extended the socio-welfare perspective of overseas students to

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– Albinski, H., 1996, Australia's external policy/international education nexus. *Journal of Institutional Research in Australasia*, September v.5 n.2 p.1-13

<sup>169</sup> Nesdale, D., Simkin, K., Sang, D., Burke, B., & Fraser, S., 1995, International students and immigration, Aust Govt Pub Service, Canberra

<sup>170</sup> Nesdale, D., Simkin, K., Sang, D., Burke, B., & Fraser, S., *ibid.*; Radford, H.B.M, Ongkili, D.J., & Toyozumi M., 1984, Overseas Students in South Australia, Flinders International Students Association, Flinders University of South Australia, Adelaide;

<sup>171</sup> Sawir, E., Marginson, S., Deumert, A., Nyland, C., Ramia, G., 2008, Loneliness and international students: An Australian study, *Journal of Studies in International Education*, Vol.12, No. 2., pp. 148-180

<sup>172</sup> Raman, L., 1983, Racism and overseas tertiary students, NSW Ethnic Affairs Commission, Sydney, NSW; and Browne, R.K. & Dale, E.C. (eds.), 1989, Overseas Students, Educational Opportunity and Challenge, Australian College of Education Curtin, A.C.T

<sup>173</sup> Lee, L., 1991, The cultural adaptation of Chinese tertiary students in South Australia: a humanistic sociological analysis of the cultural experiences of Chinese who were students in Australia. Adelaide: University of Adelaide. Med; Sanderson, G., 2000, Promoting a culture of support at Australian universities. *ARIES* v.1 n.2 p.91-101, Summer; Dunstan P., 2003, Cultural diversity for life: a case study from Australia. *Journal of Studies in International Education* v.7 n.1 p.64-76, Spring

<sup>174</sup> Paltridge, B., 1991, English as an international language: an overview. In 'Proceedings of the 4th Annual Education Conference [of the ELICOS Association], Monash University, Melbourne, 21-23 August;

Coffey, M., 1997, Intercultural advising in English-language programs. Washington DC: NAFSA Association of International Educators; and Lewit, T., 2002, Overseas students: making the transition across intellectual traditions. In 'Mind the gap : transition from all perspectives : papers from a roundtable conference' pages 62-63. Parkville Victoria: Transition Program, University of Melbourne

<sup>175</sup> Allan, M., 1997, Assisting autonomous performance. *Prospect* v.12 n.3 p.4-14, Dec

<sup>176</sup> Nouwens, F. and Robinson, P., 1991, Evaluation and the development of quality learning materials. *Australian Journal of Educational Technology* v.7 n.2 p.93-116, Summer

<sup>177</sup> Murray, M.H., 1997, Students, learning, resources : an inseparable triad. *Australasian Journal of Engineering Education* v.7 n.2 p.129-134,

include gaps in 'governance of overseas students' rights'. In their work on overseas students and employment, they argue that existing social protection in Australia fails to recognise students' rights.<sup>178</sup>

Although there is some discussion of the overseas students' educational benefits to institutions, it tends to be located within an audit culture concerned with performance indicators, market research and educational 'massification'. Little research at this stage however has examined another dimension of the export education sector, specifically the role of a national overseas student body established to directly lobby, challenge and influence change in government and industry policy in the delivery of education services. Within existing literature on overseas students, none have explored the development, role and contribution of this student body in improving overseas students' health and welfare support policies and advocating regulations and guidelines to safeguard their 'consumer' education rights.

One explanation for the lack of examination and analysis is that most observers believe that the overseas student coalition in Australia had little if any impact on the government's export of education services agenda;<sup>179</sup> any changes to industry policy were a result of government's and industry's response to market forces, broader consumer trends and international competitiveness, rather than due to effectiveness of student representation.<sup>180</sup> This thesis will test this assumption by exploring the role of overseas students in influencing Australia's export education policy.

## CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have argued that the theoretical variables – political opportunities, mobilising structures and framing processes – within the social movement framework

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<sup>178</sup> Deumert, A., Marginson, S., Nyland, C., Ramia, G., & Sawir, E., 2005, Global migration and social protection rights: The social and economic security of cross-border students in Australia, *Global Social Policy*, Vol.5, No.3, pp. 329-352

<sup>179</sup> Hooke, G, 1987, Prospects for expanding the export of services, *Economics Papers*, Vol. 6 No.3, September, pp.15-26

<sup>180</sup> Harold, R., 1990, Marketing the academy: Aspects of exporting higher education courses, A report prepared for the Industry Commission and Browne, R.K. & Dale, E.C, (eds.), 1989, *Overseas Students, Educational Opportunity and Challenge*, Australian College of Education Curtin, A.C.T

have thus far focused broadly on the formation of collective action within the citizenship sphere, which is based on the assumption that in a democracy there is little impediment for citizen groups to mobilise in response to political opportunity, create dense networks and access available resources to make claims and take action. To date, this framework has not been extended to understand its application outside the regime of citizenship. This thesis attempts to apply the framework to analysing the collective action of overseas students and their mobilisation against education aid reforms. It aims to explain the development of overseas students' action, how they largely mimicked and, arguably, adopted similar trajectories to social movement mobilisation.

In this chapter, I have done three things. I firstly explored the location of overseas students, as a group of temporary residents, within Hammar's framework of citizenry and non-citizenry. Secondly, I examined the mobilisation of temporary residents within the context of non-citizenry. Finally, I considered the three factors within the collective action framework – political opportunities, mobilising structures and framing processes – in explaining broadly, the dynamics of collective action development, but applying it to overseas students as an example to assist in understanding how a politically disenfranchised group located outside the boundaries of citizenship can respond and attempt to alter policy norms that directly affect them. In seeking to understand political participation of non-citizens, I focused my discussion on foreign guestworkers because they share similarities with overseas students and have been the focus of previous theorising on the political status and activities of non-citizens. In the next chapter I will consider the first factor within the framework, political opportunities, and its importance in catalysing the formation and development of overseas students' representation since the beginning of the Colombo Plan.

# Three

## **OVERSEAS STUDENTS PROGRAM FROM 1950 TO 1985**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The beginning of Australia's active interest in education aid began with the Colombo Plan in 1951. Over the next twenty years, the Plan would undergo major administrative, academic and welfare changes to emerge as an important part of Australia's foreign policy agenda and the foundations of an Overseas Students Program (OSP). When the Labor party took government in 1972, the OSP underwent considerable expansion, continuing to play a significant role in foreign policy, while shifting more into core areas of higher education policy and planning. Australia continued to expand its engagement with the Asia Pacific region, increasing the volume of development assistance and university places for overseas students. By the mid-seventies however, Labor's audacious education expansion would prematurely end with the sacking of Prime Minister Gough Whitlam and return of a conservative Liberal led coalition under Malcolm Fraser. Rapid deterioration of the global economic environment imposed further financial pressures on Fraser's government, having considerable impact on the higher education sector and the OSP specifically. Protectionist policy tendencies began to take root in the program with new restrictive policy measures initiated, quota places imposed and partial fee charges introduced. Fraser's reluctance to enforce bolder economic reforms led to the election of a Labor government, which subsequently resolved to introduce radical changes to the OSP and participate in the development of a new export services sector.

In this chapter I will examine the historical backdrop against which Australia's OSP evolved. I will explore the evolution of the program from its inception in 1950 with the creation of the Colombo Plan until 1985, when sweeping reforms were introduced to radically transform the program into a lucrative export education services sector. The OSP's development will be examined in four distinctive parts: education aid, education expansion, education subsidy and education trade. The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the shifting institutional policies governing the development of education aid and its transformation into education trade. The policy shift set the context for the formation of overseas students' collective action.

## **DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION AID**

In 1937, Joseph Lyons' United Australia Party government introduced a common entry policy for all Asian students wishing to study in Australia. To qualify for an Australian education, students had to pay full tuition fees, study full-time, demonstrate adequate financial support and make satisfactory progress towards completing their degree. Beyond the common entry requirement such policy held little official interest to the Australian Government. Students were seen merely as a means of facilitating cultural exchange or gaining access to regional trade opportunities.<sup>181</sup>

By the end of the Second World War this circumscribed view changed. While American and European institutions were overcrowded with 'reconstruction trainees', the new Asian nations became increasingly aware of the geographical proximity of Australia and the quality of training offered by its education institutions.<sup>182</sup> Equally capturing the attention of Australian policy-makers was the growing geo-political and strategic

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<sup>181</sup> Harper, N., 1958, Asian students and Asian Studies in Australia, *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 31, Issue 1, March, p. 55

<sup>182</sup> *ibid.*

importance of the emerging Asian nations to Australia's foreign and defence policy thinking.<sup>183</sup>

The beginning of Australia's active interest in a regional educational aid policy can be located in the *Commonwealth Declaration*, a forum comprising former British colonies primarily aimed at encouraging consultation and cooperation between its member Commonwealth states. Out of this consultation and cooperation emerged the *Colombo Plan* and the *Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan* aimed at facilitating education and training specifically for developing nations. The Colombo Plan, formulated in 1950 at a Foreign Ministers' conference of Commonwealth nations in Colombo, Sri Lanka, involved developed nations such as Britain, Canada and Australia providing education aid to developing South and South East Asian countries.<sup>184</sup> At the early stage of the Plan's development, membership was voluntary and was limited to Commonwealth countries. However from 1 July 1951 until 1 July 1957, its membership extended to involve all countries in South and South East Asia, the United States and Japan.<sup>185</sup> Although it was originally conceived to run for a period of six years, the Colombo Plan's success continued until 1980, eventually losing its effectiveness by the mid-eighties.

#### *Colombo Plan and Education Aid*

Unlike the Marshall Plan<sup>186</sup> that was developed and organisationally structured to assist Europe's postwar rehabilitation, the Colombo Plan formed a 'sum of individual plans'

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<sup>183</sup> Dalrymple, R, 2003, *Continental drift: Australia's search for a regional identity*, Ashgate, England, Ch.1 – Dalrymple offers an interesting discussion of Australia's attitudes, anxiety and vulnerability the Asia Pacific region, particularly in relation to the Cold War.

<sup>184</sup> The Colombo Plan meeting took place in the capital of Ceylon, Colombo, between 9 and 14 January 1950. Participating Commonwealth members were the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, Southern Rhodesia, India, Pakistan and Ceylon.

<sup>185</sup> Member countries in South and South East Asia included Myanmar (Burma), Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, India, Indonesia, Laos, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. Members from outside the region were Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and later Japan.

<sup>186</sup> In 1948, the US government created an independent agency, the Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA), to oversee the Marshall Plan's economic and technical aid.

of development activities, rather than an integrated foreign aid program aimed at developing the economies, solving poverty or raising living standards. Funding for such plans was negotiated on a bilateral basis, with recipient governments devising and executing their own development programs. Such arrangements emphasised mutual assistance rather than ‘hand-outs’, with little to no expectation on recipients to return funds to the donors.

With limited permanent employees, the Colombo Plan had no central administrative authority and no secretariat. Deliberations on economic and administrative issues were handled at annual meetings of the Colombo Plan Consultative Committee, comprising ministers representing member governments of the Plan. The Committee would review the scheme’s accomplishments during the preceding year, the difficulties and challenges encountered, and developmental changes made. Similarly, future tasks and possible problems were assessed, objectives and goals identified and likelihood of achieving set outcomes appraised. Its uniqueness, Gillett suggests, came from the fact that not “aid” but “cooperation” was its spirit, not formal organisation but flexibility its *modus operandi*, together with the absence of rules and limits to its activities.<sup>187</sup>

The Colombo Plan comprised two main programs: the ‘*Capital Development Program*’, which funded major projects in agriculture, power and communications, and the ‘*Technical Cooperation Scheme*’, which supplied equipment and capacity building – ‘technical’ experts and the training of students. The *Technical Cooperation Scheme* became the most favoured by the Australian Government because: it generated its own momentum of economic and social advancement; it was easier to administer; outcomes were more visible and quicker to achieve; and it created good publicity for government ministers for local and media consumption.<sup>188</sup> Indeed, in 1953 Australian High Commissioner to India, Walter Crocker, reported to Alan Watt, Secretary of the Department of External Affairs (DEA), that ‘the best publicity we have received so far has been from students who have been studying in Australia. In fact I am inclined to

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<sup>187</sup> Gillett, M, 1961, *The Colombo Plan and Australia’s role in its international education program*, Columbia University, Ed. D. dissertation, p.10

<sup>188</sup> Auletta, A, 2001, *The Colombo Plan and the development of Australian international education*, in *The Colombo Plan for cooperative economic development in South and South East Asia 1951 – 2001: The Malaysian – Australian perspective*, Australian Malaysia Cultural Foundation, December, Adelaide, p. 7; and Wade, R.H, 1958, *International economic cooperation*, *The Colombo Plan broadsheet* III, No. vi. p. 8

feel that the only political value which Australia has got out of its Colombo Plan efforts has been from the students.’<sup>189</sup>

The goodwill generated from the training scheme also attracted increasing support from the Cabinet. Over the next ten years, the proportion of aid devoted to education, training and supply of equipment increased steadily from 22 percent in 1954/55 to 46 percent in 1963/64.<sup>190</sup> By 1970, the Colombo Plan budget was split equally between capital aid projects and technical assistance.

### *Consolidation and Reform*

From 1950 to 1965, the Colombo Plan underwent a process of policy consolidation and reform. Three significant changes were undertaken: (1) administrative reform to further decentralise the policy infrastructure; (2) academic reform to tighten the selection process and ensure students completed within the allocated timeframe; and (3) welfare reform to establish support structures that minimised student failure and maximised their positive experience in Australia.

#### *1. Administrative reform*

The first significant reform involved reorganising the Colombo Plan’s administrative arrangements and establishing a proper bureaucratic system to deal with academic progress, reporting and statistics gathering. Since the Plan’s inception, student information and administration had been spread across various departments, making any coherent attempt at policy development difficult.<sup>191</sup> Under such fragmented arrangement, each department conducted its own technical cooperation activities, which

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<sup>189</sup> Oakman, D, 2004, *Facing Asia: a history of the Colombo Plan*, Pandanus Books, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, The Australian National University, Canberra, p.180, cites ‘General review of the Technical Co-operation Scheme’, 1953, D035/5768, PRO

<sup>190</sup> *ibid.* p.181

<sup>191</sup> Agencies involved in the Plan included the Department of External Affairs (DEA), the Commonwealth Office of Education (COE), the Public Service Board, the Department of Labour and National Service and the Department of Health.

frequently led to costly duplications and ad hoc administrative procedures.<sup>192</sup> In September 1955, the Department of External Affairs (DEA) attempted to address the lack of coordination by pushing for a formal agreement with the various stakeholders. To be reviewed after two years, the agreement would be 'brief and flexible' and outline the administrative responsibilities of all participating agencies to the Plan. The agreement had two parts. Part I involved a '*Common Services*' component that covered various allowances to Colombo Plan students. Part II, the '*Administration of Training*', specified the program's academic side such as course administration, unsatisfactory progress and progress reports for the Posts at embassies of the DEA.<sup>193</sup>

Under the terms of the agreement, the DEA would be responsible for *Administration of Training*, while the agreement's operational side, the *Common Services*, which included payment of allowances, reception, accommodation, the provision of English tuition and student orientation would be shifted to the Commonwealth Office of Education (COE). Such policy centralisation and operational diffusion would subsequently result in an increasing shift in the proportion of the *Common Services*, such as admission requirements and candidates' selection, to other authorities including tertiary institutions.<sup>194</sup> The administrative reform also helped reduce the ad hoc nature of the program's administration, elevate its importance to Australian foreign policy, and confine the DEA's role in providing 'minimum service', while other 'training authorities took over certain commitments relating to their students'.<sup>195</sup>

## 2. Academic reform

The second reform of the Colombo Plan involved substantial changes to the academic administration of the program. In 1956, the COE commissioned a report on the academic progress of the Plan's students at Australian universities. The report found a high failure rate among some overseas students with only 66.7 percent of 309

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<sup>192</sup> Other issues resulting from the uncoordinated approach included a 'less haphazard procedure for the reception, accommodation, payment and welfare of Colombo Plan students' - Australian Archives (ACT): A1838/294, 2008/1/1 Part 2)

<sup>193</sup> Auletta, A, 2000, "A retrospective view of the Colombo Plan: government policy, departmental administration and overseas students", *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, Vol. 22, No. 1, p. 54

<sup>194</sup> *ibid.* p.56

<sup>195</sup> Australian Archives (ACT): A1838/294, 2047/1

bachelor's degree students having successfully passed their exams. Unlike students that studied under the colonial British education system,<sup>196</sup> such as that of Malaya and Singapore, other cohorts of students had difficulties coping with the English language and adapting to a foreign culture, which resulted in students not completing their degrees within the allocated timeframe.

Adding to the difficulties was the growing demand from domestic students and private fee paying overseas students for limited university places. During the three decades following the Second World War, local student demand for higher education underwent spectacular expansion, with numbers rising in 1945 from 15 585 to 273 137 by 1975.<sup>197</sup> In 1953, private fee paying overseas students from Asia outnumbered Colombo Plan scholars by five to one. By 1961, there were 3250 private overseas students compared to 500 Colombo Plan scholars.<sup>198</sup> Such demand placed considerable pressure on the higher education system to the extent that it prompted the DEA and COE to introduce mechanisms to ensure scholarship holders completed their degrees on time. The government introduced new policies to regulate satisfactory progress of all overseas students, improve English language support services, increase monitoring of student progress, tighten scholar restrictions and obligations, and impose stricter selection and enrolment standards. To alleviate the growing pressure on the higher education sector, the government also established more universities. In 1960 nine universities existed, within fifteen years there were eighteen in total.<sup>199</sup> Table 3.1 provides a list of public

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<sup>196</sup> Singapore averaged 74 percent whereas Malaya averaged 93 percent pass rates compared to students from Brunei, Sarawak and North Borneo who were achieving a 50 percent pass rate – Oakman, D, op. cit.

<sup>197</sup> Marginson, S, 1997, *Educating Australia: Government, economy and citizen since 1960*, Cambridge University Press, United Kingdom, p. 20

<sup>198</sup> Australian Archives (ACT): A1838/294, 2008/6/1/2. Increased demand from private students was due to a dramatic shift in student destination away from the United Kingdom and the United States. Supply of 'tertiary education services' was limited and largely compounded by growing pressure on resources and finance of popular destination countries such as the United Kingdom and the United States. During 1967/68, the demand for Australian tertiary places became further acute due to the British Labour Government's introduction of a 'differential fee' for overseas students. The £250 fee introduced in December 1966 caused a hiccup in the rising trend of the overseas student applications and entrants to British universities. Applications fell from a record number of 9643 for 1967 to a low point of 7068 in 1969 and did not fully recover their 1967 level until 1972. Williams, P, 1981, *Overseas students in Britain: the background*, in Peter Williams (ed.), *The overseas student question, studies for a policy*, Heinemann, London, p.35

<sup>199</sup> Dates compiled from Universities Australia website:

[http://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/content.asp?page=/about/current\\_office\\_holders/avcc\\_members.ht](http://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/content.asp?page=/about/current_office_holders/avcc_members.ht)

universities that were established since 1850 and the growth in numbers post-Second World War.

**Table 3.1: Public Universities in Australia**

| <b>University</b>                   | <b>Year established as a public university</b> |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| The University of Sydney            | 1850   |
| The University of Melbourne         | 1853   |
| The University of Adelaide          | 1874   |
| University of Tasmania              | 1890   |
| The University of Queensland        | 1909   |
| The University of Western Australia | 1911   |
| The Australian National University  | 1946   |
| The University of New South Wales   | 1949   |
| Monash University                   | 1958   |
| Macquarie University                | 1964   |
| The University of Newcastle         | 1965   |
| Flinders University                 | 1966   |
| La Trobe University                 | 1967   |
| James Cook University               | 1970   |
| Griffith University                 | 1971   |
| Deakin University                   | 1974   |
| Murdoch University                  | 1975   |
| University of Wollongong            | 1975   |
| Curtin University of Technology     | 1986   |
| The University of Western Sydney    | 1989   |
| Charles Sturt University            | 1989   |
| University of Canberra              | 1990   |
| Queensland University of Technology | 1990   |
| The University of South Australia   | 1991   |
| RMIT                                | 1992*  |
| Swinburne University of Technology  | 1992   |
| Central Queensland of University    | 1992   |
| University of New England           | 1993   |
| Southern Cross University           | 1994   |
| University of Ballarat              | 1994   |
| University of Sunshine Coast        | 1994   |
| Victoria University                 | 1998   |
| Charles Darwin University           | 2004   |

The growth in private overseas student numbers attracted the attention of the DEA, which feared that large numbers of private students would displace sponsored students,

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[m](#) - \*RMIT (Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology) was founded in 1887. In 1992, it was granted a 'public university' status by the government of Victoria.

threatening to overtake the success of the Colombo Plan's education and training program. To help restrict the number of students entering universities, the department proposed regulating the private student intake through a tighter selection process, making it easier to 'permit the expansion in the number of sponsored students' in universities'.<sup>200</sup> Plans were also put in place by the department to increase the number of Colombo Plan students to 1000, with two-thirds attending universities.

### *3. Welfare reform*

The third reform introduced by the government involved helping improve students' experiences while studying in Australia. The early success of the Plan had come as a surprise to the government. In its attempt to expand the enrolment of sponsored students, the government failed to support the increase by providing adequate welfare and support services. In the first few years of the program, the DEA had difficulty accommodating and integrating newly arrived students into the academic and social community. Such difficulties had tragic consequences. Between 1950 and 1951, three Asian students studying at the University of Western Australia committed suicide and another suffered a mental breakdown as a result of social isolation.<sup>201</sup>

The welfare neglect had become such a tense issue for policy-makers that at one stage it threatened to derail the Overseas Students Program. Raising his concerns in July 1951, Richard Casey, Minister for External Affairs, highlighted the issue with Prime Minister Robert Menzies: 'My department has for some time been concerned that accommodation difficulties, problems of orientation and a good deal of ordinary loneliness may not only lead to occasional instances of personal tragedy, but also leave the way open to Communist influences'.<sup>202</sup>

In dealing with the welfare issue, the government began to take a greater interest in the welfare concerns of overseas students, allocating for example £A50 000 of Colombo Plan finance to build hostels for international students. In 1957 construction of an International House began in Melbourne, with new houses subsequently built at the

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<sup>200</sup> Australian Archives (ACT): A1838/294, 2008/6/1/2

<sup>201</sup> Op.cit. Oakman, D, p. 190

<sup>202</sup> Letter Casey to Menzies, 19 July 1951, A10299, A18, NAA

University of Sydney and the University of New South Wales. Meanwhile, community based hospitality organisations such as Rotary, Lions, Apex and the Jaycees grew in numbers. Operating independently of the government, these groups began playing an active role in providing a range of programs that involved host schemes and student exchanges.

By the mid to late fifties, the Department of External Affairs had decided to leverage and shift welfare responsibilities for overseas students to the growing number of private community organisations. The shift in welfare responsibilities came largely in response to Casey's push for maximum community involvement in Australia's 'good neighbour' policy, and urging the creation of Australia – Asian associations to serve as rallying points 'for those many people who have goodwill towards people of Asia but who now have no means of expressing themselves'.<sup>203</sup> New associations such as the *Coordinating Committee for the Welfare of Overseas Students (CCWOS)* led by local community leaders began emerging in Victoria, New South Wales, Western Australia, Queensland and South Australia. These coordinating committees brought together the 'function of the middle class community' organisations across Australia to play a critical role in mobilising welfare and community support for the overseas students program. Such government support for community involvement would, however, diminish in the eighties as the political imperative influencing the government's education aid commitment was gradually overtaken by the economic imperative of education commercialisation.

The Colombo Plan formed the foundations for the development of a formal Overseas Students Program. The OSP underwent three significant consolidations and reforms – administrative, academic and welfare – to achieve greater policy coordination, better academic outcomes and improved student experiences.

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<sup>203</sup> Gifford, P, 2001, The cold war across Asia, in David Goldsworthy, (ed.), In facing north: a century of Australian engagement with Asia, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, p. 217

## FROM EDUCATION AID TO EDUCATION EXPANSION

In 1972, the Liberal Coalition's twenty-three years in government ended. After years in the 'political wilderness', the election of Gough Whitlam's Labor government signalled far-reaching changes to Australia's education system generally, and overseas students' participation particularly. Education's popularity as an electoral issue had made it a central platform of Labor's election campaign, forming a fundamental part of its social reform agenda while driving the party's ambitious higher education reform program. After winning the federal election, the new Labor government introduced a number of important changes that would continue to increase an already expanding education system initiated by the previous Liberal government.

Firstly, the government assumed total financial responsibility for all universities and colleges of advanced education from 1 January 1974. The share of total government funding increased by a remarkable 41.9 percent between 1975 and 1976.<sup>204</sup> The role of the public sector expanded to accommodate the already growing function of the government in education. In 1968 the national education bureaucracy almost doubled. Six years later it multiplied, increasing from 397 to 2990 staff and reaching a high point in 1976 of 3357.<sup>205</sup> Secondly, government spending on education increased all Commonwealth outlays from 4.4 percent in 1972 to 8.5 percent in 1975. The number of tertiary places available expanded from 211 045 in 1972 to 273 137 a year later. Thirdly, on 1 January 1974, the government abolished tuition fees for all full-time, part-time and external students, including overseas students at tertiary institutions and technical colleges. Finally, it approved the construction of new higher education facilities, making the University of Wollongong autonomous, allowing Murdoch University and Griffith University to admit their first students and endorsing plans for Deakin University.<sup>206</sup>

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<sup>204</sup> Growth in the Commonwealth funding increased over the states in the share of total government funding of education. It rose from 2.0 percent in 1950 – 51 and 9.0 percent in 1960 – 61 to a remarkable 41.9 percent in 1975 – 76 - Marginson, S., 1997, *Educating Australia: government, economy and citizen since 1960*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, p.31

<sup>205</sup> *ibid*

<sup>206</sup> Marginson, S., 2003, *The Whitlam government and education*, in Jenny Hocking and Colleen Lewis, *It's time again: Whitlam and Modern Labor, Circa*, Melbourne, p. 260

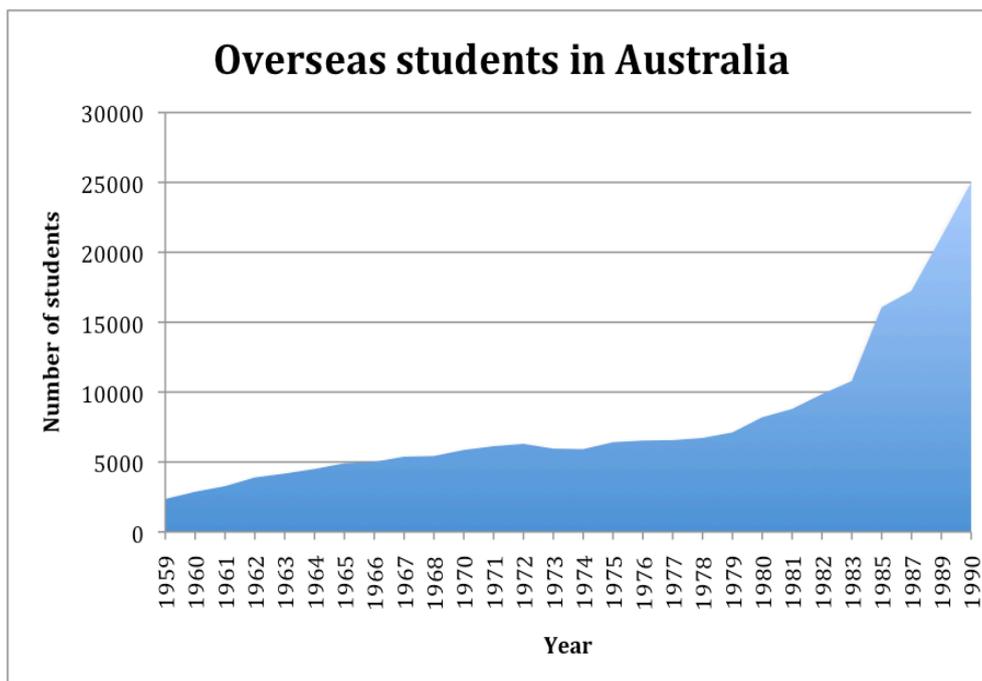
By 1971 the overseas students program had not only become an ingrained and significant part of Australia's foreign policy agenda, but it had also gradually shifted closer to the core of Australia's higher education planning and development. The increased investment in higher education infrastructure in the early sixties following the Commonwealth Government's inquiry (Martin Committee) in 1964, played an important part in contributing to the expansion of the overseas students program and creating additional places to meet overseas demand. In 1962 out of a total of 12 049 overseas students studying in Australia, about 3895 were sponsored and private students studying at tertiary institutions.<sup>207</sup> Within 10 years, the number of tertiary overseas students increased from 3895 to 6300 with a majority studying at five universities – University of New South Wales (1330), Monash University (655), University of Melbourne (638), University of Sydney (626), and University of Western Australia (622).<sup>208</sup> See Figure 3.1 for number of overseas students in Australian universities since 1959.

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<sup>207</sup> Report of the Committee on the Future of Tertiary Education in Australia to the Australian Universities Commission, 1964, *Tertiary Education in Australia*, Vol. 1, August, p.51. Of the total 12 049 overseas students, only 9.5 percent (1146) were sponsored while the remaining 10 903 were private overseas students.

<sup>208</sup> Commonwealth of Australia, 1972, *Fifth report of the Australian Universities Commission*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra

Figure 3.1: Number of Overseas Students in Australian Universities<sup>209</sup>



### *Two-tier system*

By 1972, a formal Overseas Students Program with a two-tier system had developed; the *private overseas students scheme*, which provided a full-cost basis educational access to students from developing countries and the *sponsorship program* which involved scholarship students under the Colombo Plan, bilateral, multilateral and home country scholarship schemes. The private and sponsored programs each had their own distinct features.

<sup>209</sup> Third Report of the Australian Universities Commission, 1966, Australian Universities 1964 – 1969, The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, 21 September, p.55; Commonwealth of Australia, 1969, Fourth Report of the Australian Universities Commission, Commonwealth Government Printing Office, Canberra; Commonwealth of Australia, 1972, Fifth report of the Australian Universities Commission, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra; Sixth report of the Universities Commission, 1975, May, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra; Tertiary Education Commission, 1980, Report for 1982 – 84 triennium, Advice of the Universities Council, Vol. 1, Part 2, October, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra

Private overseas students were the dominant cohort studying in Australian higher education institutions. By 1966, they outnumbered students under the various sponsored schemes by about ten to one.<sup>210</sup> The majority of students came from Malaysia, Singapore and Hong Kong, accounting for about 80 percent of the total private overseas student population. These students received no official backing from their governments. They enrolled by direct personal application to Australian institutions; they provided their own financial resources to travel; they covered their accommodation and living expenses while studying; and the courses they enrolled in were predominantly business and engineering related.

The sponsored students, on the other hand, were funded by the Australian Government, international organisations or home countries. They came from a wider range of countries and were required to enrol in courses – such as education, engineering, agriculture, medicine and public administration – that were specifically relevant to their country's development needs. Scholarships funds covered their accommodation and living expenses.

The commonalities between both programs were in the academic and visa requirements. Academic administration required sponsored and private students to meet tight admissions criteria and maintain adequate progress during the course of their studies. The visa administrative system stipulated that students must return home upon completion of their program. Ongoing tightening of administrative and visa arrangements, combined with an increase in academic and welfare support provided by educational institutions and community groups, had indeed ensured that the majority of overseas students were completing their studies on time and returning home. According to government reports, in the 1970s sponsored overseas students were achieving a 'satisfactory' pass rate result of over 80 percent at the annual examinations of Australian universities.<sup>211</sup>

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<sup>210</sup> Third Report of the Australian Universities Commission, 1966, Australian Universities 1964 – 1969, The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, 21 September, p.53

<sup>211</sup> Whitlam, G, 1974, Australia and Asia: The challenge of education, Asian Seminar, Centenary Celebration of the University of Adelaide, Tuesday 5 March

*Whitlam's reform of education aid*

By 1973, education aid, especially the training of large numbers of overseas students, continued to yield tremendous diplomatic returns to government policy. The Prime Minister's deep personal commitment towards overseas aid and the 'progress and development of the region' also gave the program added influence.<sup>212</sup> Two primary objectives formed Whitlam's aid agenda: to improve the quality of assistance provided and increase the volume of Australian aid.

In his first term, Whitlam undertook a series of important policy changes to the aid program. Until 1975, aid policy and administration remained decentralised and uncoordinated: the Department of Territories (defunct in 1973) administered aid to Papua New Guinea; the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (previously External Affairs) directed bilateral and multilateral aid; the Treasury handled aid to international financial institutions such as the Asia Development Bank (ADB); while the Department of Education managed the overseas students program. Under such arrangements, departments invested considerable interest into the administration of their individual aid programs to the extent that in a bureaucratic and highly competitive environment, strategic policy planning became difficult as each contested for policy influence and increased program funding.

Part of the aid reform involved establishing a single centralised statutory agency to manage and administer all international development activities.<sup>213</sup> The decision to reorganise the administration of the aid under a single statutory authority stems primarily from the government's desire 'to downgrade (but not remove) the overtly political nature of Australian aid, to upgrade its impact on development, to professionalise its practice, to increase its volume and to unify its administration'.<sup>214</sup> As an interim measure, the government established the *Office of Australian Development*

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<sup>212</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>213</sup> Second reading speech in the House of Representatives, Australian Development Assistance Agency Bill 1974, 12 March 1974

<sup>214</sup> Viviani, N, 1983, Aid policies and programs, in Boyce, P.J. and Angel, J.R, (eds.), *Independence and Alliance: Australian in World Affairs 1976 – 1980*, George Allen and Unwin and the Australian Institute of International Affairs, p.122

*Assistance Agency* under the Department of Foreign Affairs.<sup>215</sup> Within a year, the government replaced the Office with a newly established *Australian Development Assistance Agency (ADAA)* with responsibilities for administering all bilateral and multilateral aid to developing countries.<sup>216</sup> The government transferred the administration of the Colombo Plan to the ADAA and handed the management of the private overseas students program to the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs – which also handled visa processing arrangements. To direct the development of the overseas students program, the government established a standing Inter-departmental Committee comprising the DIEA, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) and the Department of Education.

The government also expanded the scope of its educational assistance to building institutional capacity of regional education institutions and increasing assistance through bilateral and multilateral arrangements. In Indonesia, the government assisted the Ministry of Education and Culture with planning vocational training programs for technical teachers and administrators. In Singapore the Colombo Plan funded equipment and advice on curriculum planning at the Jurong Vocational Institute and medical degree examinations at the University of Singapore. Australia became an associate member of the South East Asian Ministers of Education Organisation (SEAMEO) on 27 August 1973, contributing \$86 000 to SEAMEO's resources in 1973/74 and \$33 000 to the Colombo Plan training awards for the organisation's regional training centres.<sup>217</sup> In tandem with its increased educational assistance, 'third country' awards and fellowships were offered to developing countries, allowing their students to study in another country, apart from Australia, within the Colombo Plan region. This offering helped relieve some of the existing pressures placed on limited Australian higher education places.

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<sup>215</sup> Archives ADAB Agency notes CA 1580 - Press release No M/176, 30 November 1973

<sup>216</sup> The Australian Development Assistance Agency Act 1974 (An Act Relating to the Provision by Australia of Aid for Developing Countries) (No 137 of 1974)

<sup>217</sup> Australia joins South East Asian Education Organisation, Department of Foreign Affairs news release, 27 August 1973. SEAMEO membership includes Indonesia, the Khmer Republic, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and South Vietnam.

## *PROGRAM CONSOLIDATION*

In the push to reorganise the overseas students program in 1973, the government consolidated its private and sponsored students into a unified scheme. Though the Colombo Plan was considered the ‘shoehorn’ of Australia’s diplomatic relations with the Asia Pacific region with more than 13 000 students participating in the program since its inception in 1950, the private overseas students numbers were even more striking. In 1972 alone, more than 10 000 private students studied in Australian institutions. Since 1950 over 20 000 overseas students have studied in Australia.<sup>218</sup> Recognising the private overseas student potential in creating ‘good relations and cultural exchange,’ the government elevated its status to an important part of its foreign policy agenda by making three significant changes. First, the government abolished tertiary fees in 1974 for all private overseas students in universities, colleges and schools. The government absorbed the cost of \$9.2 million in private student subsidies to educational institutions believing that the benefits of these growing and potentially strategic alumni outweighed the annual cost in government subsidy. Second, the government increased the private students quota from 6300 to 10 000. The quota would control the anticipated influx of private overseas students, while safeguarding against the potential displacement of local students.<sup>219</sup> Third, private overseas students would be allowed to remain in Australia if they met the normal migration criteria. Sponsored students, on the other hand, were obliged to return home and ‘make the skills acquired in the course of their studies and training available for economic and social development of their homelands.’<sup>220</sup> The decision to allow private overseas students to remain in the country would be part of an intentional commitment by the government to dispel the stigma of racism associated with the White Australia Policy.<sup>221</sup> Moreover, the

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<sup>218</sup> Whitlam, G, op. cit.

<sup>219</sup> Report of the Committee of Review of Private Overseas Student Policy, 1984, Mutual Advantage, Australian Government Publishing Service, March, Canberra, p.31

<sup>220</sup> The Special Minister of State and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Senator Don Willesee, 1973, ‘Obligations of overseas students’, Department of Foreign Affairs news release, 21 May

<sup>221</sup> Whitlam, according to Michelle Grattan, displays a dramatic contradiction. ‘Gough Whitlam was passionately against racial discrimination, and equally passionate against Vietnamese refugees.’ Grattan, M, 1993, Immigration and the Australian Labor Party, in James Jupp and Marie Kabala, (eds.), The politics of Australian immigration, Bureau of Immigration Research, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, p.125

Prime Minister believed that despite loosening migration regulations most students would indeed return home upon completion of their course:

As in the past, I expect that most private students will continue to see their future in their own homelands. We have been inclined to exaggerate the attraction of Australia to the young people of other countries. The ties of family and friends, their obligations to their fellow countrymen and their own natural attachment to the land of their birth will draw most of the students home when their studies are completed.<sup>222</sup>

Indeed, students remaining in Australia as a result of marriages to Australians were less than two percent of the total number of sponsored students in the 1970s.<sup>223</sup>

#### *GLOBAL DEVELOPMENTS AND NATIONAL RESPONSE*

By the mid-seventies, the ‘overseas student question’ was clearly becoming a pressing issue for the major providers of higher education – the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany and Canada – to the extent that the tendency towards ‘education protectionism’ seemed inescapable.<sup>224</sup>

On 12 December 1979, the British House of Lords met to debate the new Conservative Government’s policy decision to impose full fees for all overseas students studying in the United Kingdom. The government, led by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, justified its radical fee policy based on the need to cut public expenditure and the subsidisation of overseas students by an estimated total of £127m. Moves to overhaul the program were largely instigated by a six-month study completed a year before by officials from the Department of Education and Science, the Ministry of Overseas Development, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Home Office, the Treasury

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<sup>222</sup> Whitlam, G, op.cit.

<sup>223</sup> Whitlam, G, *ibid.*

<sup>224</sup> In the United Kingdom, the second half of the 1970s saw the emergence of unprecedented public debate on the overseas student question (including fourteen parliamentary debates between 1976 and 1980). Jones, P.W, 1986, Australia’s international relations in education, *Australian Education Review*, Number 23, Australian Council for Education Research, Hawthorn, p.69

and the Department of Trade.<sup>225</sup> Previous attempts at reining in the striking rise in overseas students by imposing quotas and charging differential fees were unsuccessful; so unsuccessful that higher education institutions had been educating 5000 more overseas students than provided under the recurrent grant (while local students were 5000 below target) and the total higher education system had 8600 (17 percent) more overseas students than provided for.<sup>226</sup> In 1973 the government's Expenditure Committee Report proposed the implementation of full-cost fees; however, that attempt failed. Little was done to take up the Committee's recommendation except to increase the overseas students' fees annually from 1975 to 1979 and introduce new types of fees in 1977/78 for undergraduate and postgraduate studies.<sup>227</sup>

Two major influencing factors emerged: the global economic downturn and rising demand for foreign education services. The rapidly deteriorating global economy began imposing pressure on all major higher education destinations to find new ways of cutting public expenditure. The turning point in policy occurred in 1974 when the worst economic slump since the Second World War disrupted the extraordinary growth of the postwar years and shattered the Keynesian policy consensus<sup>228</sup> – a policy consensus, which largely underwrote the postwar 'massification' in higher education and aided the expansion of education aid. Coupled with the economic slump was the extraordinary expansion in global demand for foreign education. Student mobility was becoming a worldwide phenomenon, so that by 1980 more than a million overseas students were studying in foreign education institutions<sup>229</sup> compared to a quarter of a million students twenty years previous to that.<sup>230</sup> In Britain, the number of overseas students doubled in the 1960s and trebled during the 1970s.<sup>231</sup> In the United States, the number of post-

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<sup>225</sup> Geddes, D., 1978, Some foreign students may pay full cost of courses under a plan to level out aid funds, *The Times*, Wednesday 23 August.

<sup>226</sup> Williams, P, 1981, Overseas students in Britain: the background, in Peter William (ed.), *The overseas student question, studies for a policy*, Heinemann, London, p.40

<sup>227</sup> The government introduced a new type of fees based on the levels of study with undergraduate fees rising to 56 percent while postgraduates rose by 104 percent. William, P, (ed.), *The overseas student question, studies for a policy*, Heinemann, London

<sup>228</sup> Marginson, S, 1997, *Markets in education*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, p.55

<sup>229</sup> *The Economist*, 1981, *The Economist* discusses the prospects for overseas students in the light of "The overseas student question", produced by the Overseas Students Trust. , 24 May, *The Economist Newspaper Limited*, London, p.36

<sup>230</sup> Hon. Susan Ryan, 1986, Ministerial Statement at the Inaugural Meeting of the Australian Council on Overseas Students (AUSCOS)

<sup>231</sup> Foreign students studying in the United Kingdom increased from 12 410 in 1960 to 56 003 in 1980.

secondary foreign students increased from 53 107 in 1960 to 325 628 in 1980, and in France foreign student numbers grew from 27 132 to 114 181.<sup>232</sup> (See Table 3.2)

**Table 3.2: Trend in International Tertiary Students in Host Countries, 1977 to 1993 – Enrolments of International Students<sup>233</sup>**

|                | <b>1977</b> | <b>1982</b> | <b>1987</b> | <b>1993</b> |
|----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| United States  | 235 544     | 326 299     | 356 190     | 449 745     |
| France         | 104 317     | 110 763     | 123 978     | 139 562     |
| Germany        | 54 062      | 71 393      | 81 724      | 116 474     |
| United Kingdom | 58 563      | 50 684      | 53 694      | 95 594      |
| Australia      | 8258        | 12 104      | 16 075      | 42 415      |

In response to a deteriorating global economy and a rising demand for foreign education, the British embarked on a full fee program; the United States and Canada attempted to regulate overseas student enrolment by imposing substantial tuition fees, while France and Germany resisted the tuition fees option, choosing instead to tighten the admission standards and impose strict quotas. What seemed universal, however, was the recognition by governments of the need to develop a national policy framework to deal with the rapid growth of students studying abroad. Increasing fees, tightening admissions and imposing quotas may have presented short-term solutions to the immediate policy challenge, but it did little to address the emerging structural and supply issues created by growing demand for education services.

One clear repercussion of the short-term measures was its noticeable impact on Australia's overseas students program. By the mid to late seventies, foreign demand for Australian educational services had returned to growth, increasing further the pressure on educational institutions' places and government coffers. Demand from the Malaysians, the largest block of private overseas students, had nearly doubled from 3139 in 1976 to 6016 in 1983. Hong Kong, the second largest group had more than

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<sup>232</sup> Jones, P.W, op.cit. p. 68

<sup>233</sup> Cited in Jolley, A., 1997, *Exporting education to Asia*, Victoria University Press, p.18

tripled from 421 in 1976 to 1388 by 1983.<sup>234</sup> The increase in overseas students in Australia is not surprising. Given the small number of ‘Anglophone host countries’, a policy change in one country, Philip Jones points out, can have implications for others. Fee increases in Britain in 1979, more than any other single factor, had two striking impacts on Australia. It firstly ‘helped shape attitudes and policies’ for its Overseas Students Program, and it ‘guaranteed Australia’s increasing attractiveness as an education destination’.<sup>235</sup>

Under the Whitlam government, the OSP underwent further expansion with development of a delineated two-tier program. Recognising the foreign policy advantage of the OSP, Whitlam elevated the private overseas students element of the program by abolishing their tuition fees, increasing their quota to 10 000 and allowing private students to remain in Australia after their studies. The changing global economic climate would, however, challenge Whitlam’s policy, reshaping subsequent governments’ policy thinking and attitudes towards the overseas students question.

## **FROM EDUCATION EXPANSION TO EDUCATION SUBSIDY**

During 1974–75, the Australian economy suffered similar problems to those experienced internationally: declining growth, high inflation and high unemployment.<sup>236</sup> Labor’s generous and even-handed financial policies for tertiary education, Andrew Spaul observed, turned sour in 1975.<sup>237</sup>

The shift in Labor’s fiscal policy in mid-1975 meant that the honeymoon was over for education, and especially for tertiary education. Once the decision was made to heed Treasury advice

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<sup>234</sup> *Mutual Advantage*, op.cit. p.202

<sup>235</sup> Jones, P.W, op.cit. p. 69

<sup>236</sup> Dyster, B. & Meredith, D, (eds.), *Australia in the international economy in the twentieth century*, Cambridge University Press, p. 221; Manne, R, 1999, “The Whitlam revolution, in Manne, R., (ed.), *The Australian century: political struggle in the building of a nation*, Text Publishing, Melbourne, p. 203 and Stilwell, F., 1986, *The Accord and beyond: the political economy of the Labor government*, Pluto Press, Sydney, p. 7

<sup>237</sup> Spaul, A., 1979, *Education*, in Patience, A. & Head, B., (eds.), *From Whitlam to Fraser: Reform and reaction in Australian politics*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, p.132

and reduce public spending, education would be one of the first targets. After all, its budget was now very high, relative to pre-1972 levels, indeed it was over \$1600 million in 1974-75 which is more than defence expenditure.<sup>238</sup>

The government made financial cutbacks across the tertiary education sector. In 1975, the Labor government initiated an inter-departmental review of the overseas students program to address the growing fiscal problems. However, the constitutional crisis and the ‘sacking’ of the Whitlam government stalled the review.

Under the new Liberal-National Coalition government led by Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser, the government sought to address the economic malaise by introducing fiscal tightening to reduce the public deficit and curb spending. Higher education, a largely funded Commonwealth initiative and directly regulated by national fiscal strategies bore the initial brunt of the government’s reform.<sup>239</sup> New tightening measures were introduced: postgraduate awards were reduced in number, tuition fees for students undertaking second and higher degrees other than combined courses were reintroduced, and student numbers for 1977-78 were capped at the 1976 level.<sup>240</sup> While university enrolments were restricted, the numbers of young persons completing secondary education continued to grow, consequently increasing competition for limited university places.<sup>241</sup>

#### *ATTEMPTS AT POLICY REFORM*

In April 1976, the Fraser government reinstated the Inter-Departmental Committee (IDC) – comprising the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs (DIEA), the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) and the Department of Education (DoE) – to review the overseas students program. The attempt at formulating a new direction failed after two years of lengthy debates and no clear consensus. Advocating for more migration regulatory controls with fewer foreign policy and aid considerations, the

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<sup>238</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>239</sup> Marginson, S., 1997, *Markets in education*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, p.62

<sup>240</sup> Connell, W.F., 1993, *Reshaping Australian education 1960 – 1985*, ACER, Hawthorn, p.407

<sup>241</sup> *ibid.*

DIEA argued that the program was ‘not fulfilling its objectives and was increasingly being abused by students to gain back-door migrant entry.’ To mitigate such abuse, immigration officials recommended that the ‘entire program should be seen as another form of temporary entry policy and should no longer be regarded as a means of influencing Australia’s relationships with other countries.’<sup>242</sup> The DFA on the other hand pressed to maintain the foreign policy emphasis, arguing instead for a balanced approach to aid with foreign policy aims remaining while tightening migration regulatory controls. Overseas students, the DFA argued, fulfilled ‘valuable foreign policy and aid objectives.’<sup>243</sup> It was indeed this continued recognition of the diplomatic returns from overseas student training that helped ensure its continued prominence within the aid program.<sup>244</sup> For the next two years the continuation of a foreign policy emphasis seems to have prevailed.

By the end of the decade Australia’s policy of domestic insulation from the global economy was no longer tenable.<sup>245</sup> In 1979, the Fraser government decided to commission a ‘fresh’ review of the private overseas student policy. On this occasion the review would involve the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Department of Finance in the consultation process. The participation of both departments meant that the scope of the review would be expanded to include fiscal matters other than immigration and foreign policy to reflect growing economic concerns.

Five significant outcomes emerged from the review. First, it saw a fresh acceptance of the foreign policy, aid and cultural relations benefits from increased student mobility.<sup>246</sup> Second, the limit of 10 000 on overseas student numbers would be removed and replaced by unofficial country quotas – referred to as ‘guaranteed student approvals’. The quotas would reflect the degree of importance attached to countries in the area of

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<sup>242</sup> Goldring, J., 1984, *Mutual Advantage: Report of the Committee of Review of Private Overseas Students Policy*, Australian Government Publishing Service, March, Canberra, p. 32

<sup>243</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>244</sup> Jones, P.W, *op.cit* p.14

<sup>245</sup> Ravenhill, J., 1994, ‘Australia and the global economy’, in S. Bell and B. Head, (eds.), *State, economy and public policy in Australia*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, p. 89

<sup>246</sup> Jones, P.W, *op.cit.* p. 76.

foreign relations.<sup>247</sup> Third, an Overseas Students Charge (OSC), framed as a visa levy and representing about 10 percent of the notional full cost of a university place, would be introduced and increased gradually to recuperate government revenue. The OSC would range from \$1500 to \$2500 per annum and the revenue, collected before the issue and renewal of student visas, would go into the government's consolidated revenue. Fourth, secondary school students would now be permitted to study in Australia on a subsidised fee basis. Last, all overseas students would be required to return home for at least two years after completing their studies before being eligible to apply for migrant entry to Australia.

Most of the key elements of the review did not attract any major opposition. In fact the 'return home' policy had a swift and considerable effect. In the 1970s, an estimated 75 percent of private overseas students were granted permanent residency; by 1983, that figure had fallen to less than 10 percent.<sup>248</sup> The only element that attracted controversy involved the introduction of the overseas students charge. There are those who suggest that growing fears of migration exploitation had led to the new charges.<sup>249</sup> The DIEA's strident advocacy of full-cost recovery did indeed reflect the department's hardline position on the overseas students program. Immigration abuse by overseas students did continue to underline the department's argument for a complete program overhaul. By proposing an extreme measure, such as placing greater requirement on students to contribute to the cost of their education, the DIEA believed that such measures would inevitably close the 'back-door' migrant entry.<sup>250</sup> Such arguments were indeed influential in guiding the outcome of the review; however, the fiscal problems influenced by global economic changes played an equally important role in shaping the overall policy reorientation.

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<sup>247</sup> Hans de Wit, e.d., 1995, *Strategies for internationalization of Higher Education. A comparative study of Australia, Canada, Europe and the United States of America*, European Association of International Education, Amsterdam, p.123

<sup>248</sup> Goldring, J, *op.cit.* p.33

<sup>249</sup> Hudson, H., 1991, *Overseas Student Policy in Australia, 1980 – 1990*, A report prepared for the Industry Commission; Kendall, T, 2004, *Exporting Australian educational services to China*, *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, Vol. 26, No. 1, March

<sup>250</sup> John Dawkin's parliamentary speech opposing the OSC in Overseas Students Charge Amendment Bill 1982: Second Reading, 18 March 1982, House Hansard, p. 1188

## *POLICY COMPROMISE*

The outcome of the review in fact reflected a policy compromise between proponents of ‘full-cost’ recovery, the ‘free-educationist’ lobby, the ‘border-control’ and the ‘foreign-policy’ groups. The *Report of the Committee of Review of Private Overseas Student Policy* offers some clues to the key arguments that eventually led to the government’s decision on charges. In the lead-up to the 1979 changes, the charges issue had been one of considerable contention in inter-departmental discussions. On one end of the policy spectrum stood the DIEA, which advocated full-cost recovery for all overseas students. The Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Department of Finance favoured a less extreme option, pushing instead for a charge which would help recoup the cost of education. Whether it was ‘more appropriate to assess the cost of overseas students at average or marginal cost’ was the subject of the debate.<sup>251</sup> While raising no objections in principle to the introduction of charges, the Department of Foreign Affairs on the other hand wanted the charges at a level that would not deter overseas students from coming to Australia. The only opposition came from the Department of Education, which ‘opposed the imposition of charges on the grounds that there should be no discrimination between Australian and overseas students.’<sup>252</sup>

The divergence in views led, at least in the short term, to a compromise where foreign policy, immigration concerns and cost subsidisation emerged as a reformed national framework for the program. It was eventually agreed, at least in practice, that ‘so long as overseas students were considered to be occupying only marginal places in the education system, it was reasonable to charge them something considerably less than average cost.’<sup>253</sup> To placate immigration concerns, the compromise involved giving DIEA greater control over collecting the new levy on overseas students studying primarily in universities and colleges of advanced education as they entered Australia. This arrangement de-centralised the management of the OSP across two departments and an agency – the Department of Immigration would be responsible for all private overseas students; the Department of Education would be responsible for the

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<sup>251</sup> Goldring, J, op.cit. p.33

<sup>252</sup> Goldring, J, ibid.

<sup>253</sup> Goldring, J, ibid.

administrative arrangements of the OSP; and the Australian Development Assistance Agency (ADAB) would be responsible for all sponsored students.

Though the ‘full-cost recovery’ faction<sup>254</sup> did not gain much traction in the Fraser government, it did begin to gain a foothold with the overseas students program. The program with an annual estimated total expenditure of more than \$83 million<sup>255</sup> needed to be curbed, without substantially renegeing on Australia’s aid responsibility. The decision to charge overseas students would help the government recoup \$12 million in visa fees.<sup>256</sup> That amount was anticipated to increase to \$16.2 million in 1982-83 and \$25.6 million in 1983-84.<sup>257</sup>

## **FROM EDUCATION SUBSIDY TO EDUCATION TRADE**

When the Hawke Labor government came to power in March 1983, the economy was in serious trouble. In response to a deteriorating situation the government’s economic strategy moved to reinvigorate the national economy by stripping away policies and practices insulating Australia from international competition.<sup>258</sup> The government believed that by diversifying Australia’s exports, liberalising its capital and deregulating its currency it would invariably drive economic growth. Labor worked through a market liberal reform agenda, picking first those issues that impacted least adversely on its

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<sup>254</sup> Bell, S, 1997, Globalisation, Neo-liberalism and the transformation of the Australian State, *Australian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 32, No. 3, pp. 345 – 3677; Kelly, P, 1992, *The end of certainty: The story of the 1980s*, Allen & Unwin, St. Leonards; Andrew Leigh, 2002, Trade liberalisation and the Australian Labor Party, *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, Vol. 48, No. 4, pp.487-508; Carey, M. & Powis, T., 1985, The new right think tanks, *The National Times*, September 13 – 19, pp. 14 – 17; Pusey, M., 1991, *Economic rationalism in Canberra*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne

<sup>254</sup> Kelly P, *op.cit.*, pp.38 – 41. The ‘free market’ backbenchers were supported a proliferation of right-wing Policy institutes, think tanks and research organisations. The elevation of John Howard to the Liberal leadership gave the ‘free market’ lobby added influence. See Carey, M. & Powis, T, 1985, *The new right think tanks*, *The National Times*, September 13 – 19, pp. 14 - 17

<sup>255</sup> Goldring, J, *op.cit.* p.126

<sup>256</sup> Overseas Students Charge Amendment Bill 1982: Second Reading, 18 March 1982, House Hansard, p. 1188

<sup>257</sup> Overseas Students Charge Amendment Bill 1983: Second Reading, 4 October 1983, Senate Hansard, Sen. John Button (Industry and Commerce), p.1041

<sup>258</sup> Kelly P, *op.cit.*

‘core constituency’.<sup>259</sup> Education aid represented a policy area that not only required drastic changes to flexibly respond to international demands for limited tertiary places, but also signified a politically soft target with minimal public opposition towards any radical changes.

On advice from the Department of Education and Youth Affairs, the government introduced quotas to limit the number of private overseas students entering tertiary institutions to a maximum of 1500, while only 2000 students were allowed into secondary schools.<sup>260</sup> The government also introduced in the 1983/84 Federal Budget, the Overseas Students Charge Amendment Bill to increase student fees. Both actions were in direct response to perceived failures of Fraser’s reform measures and were aimed at containing the rapid expansion of the overseas students program. Fraser’s introduction of the subsidy scheme had in fact created little respite in foreign demand pressures on Australian education. His removal of the 10 000 overseas student quotas led to a dramatic rise in the number of private overseas students seeking education opportunities in Australia. In fact the number of overseas students enrolled in tertiary institutions more than doubled from 6745 in 1979 to 13 047 in 1984.<sup>261</sup>

The rapid rise in student numbers had considerable impact on higher education institutions. Fraser’s failure to integrate fully the overseas students program into the overall national education planning had intensified pressures on tertiary institutions already struggling for limited resources. The increased student presence produced two striking effects. First it led to an uneven distribution of overseas students concentrated at certain institutions. In 1983, higher degree overseas students at Monash University comprised 10.8 percent, with undergraduates at 12.9 percent. At the University of New South Wales, higher degree students stood at 15 percent and undergraduates at 13.2 percent.<sup>262</sup> (See Table 3.3 and 3.4) Second, the high numbers of overseas students in some institutions had resulted in heavy concentration in some courses. In a University

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<sup>259</sup> Easton, B., & Gerritsen, R, 1996, ‘Economic reform: Parallels and divergences’, in F. Castles, R. Gerritsen & J. Vowles (eds.) *The great experiment: Labour Parties and Public Policy Transformation in Australia and New Zealand*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney,

<sup>260</sup> The Hon. S.J. West, Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, ALP, Overseas Students Charge Amendment Bill 1983: Second Reading, 14 September 1983, House Hansard

<sup>261</sup> Committee of Review of Private Overseas Student Policy, 1984, Commonwealth Department of Education, p. 34,

<sup>262</sup> Goldring, J, op.cit. p.115

of New South Wales survey undertaken in 1983, overseas undergraduates formed 23.3 percent of total enrolments within the Faculty of Architecture, 24.6 percent in engineering. This is in comparison to 9.2 percent and 11.5 percent respectively three years earlier.<sup>263</sup>

**Table 3.3: Higher Degree Overseas Students in Universities 1982 and 1983<sup>264</sup>**

| Universities                   | Overseas students as percentage total |             |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------|
|                                | 1982                                  | 1983        |
| Adelaide                       | 10.2                                  | 15.6        |
| Australian National University | 36.1                                  | 36.7        |
| Deakin                         | 2.8                                   | 3.2         |
| Flinders                       | 6.4                                   | 6.3         |
| Griffith                       | 7.6                                   | 9.2         |
| James Cook                     | 12.7                                  | 11.7        |
| La Trobe                       | 5.3                                   | 5.0         |
| Macquarie                      | 4.9                                   | 4.3         |
| Melbourne                      | 7.3                                   | 8.0         |
| Monash                         | 9.5                                   | 10.8        |
| Murdoch                        | 2.8                                   | 1.9         |
| New England                    | 11.1                                  | 12.9        |
| NSW                            | 14.6                                  | 15.0        |
| Newcastle                      | 9.4                                   | 12.3        |
| Queensland                     | 10.3                                  | 10.6        |
| Sydney                         | 6.9                                   | 7.6         |
| Tasmania                       | 8.5                                   | 9.7         |
| WA                             | 7.0                                   | 7.6         |
| Wollongong                     | 8.4                                   | 8.2         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                   | <b>9.9</b>                            | <b>10.6</b> |

<sup>263</sup> Mutual Advantage, Report of the Committee to Review, 1984, The Australian Overseas Aid Program, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, p.118

<sup>264</sup> Mutual Advantage, Report of the Committee to Review, 1984, The Australian Overseas Aid Program, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, p.115

**Table 3.4: Other than Higher Degree Overseas Students in Universities 1982 and 1983<sup>265</sup>**

| <b>Universities</b>            | <b>Overseas students as percentage total</b> |             |
|--------------------------------|--|-------------|
|                                | <b>1982</b>                                  | <b>1983</b> |
| Adelaide                       | 3.7  | 4.3         |
| Australian National University | 4.2  | 5.3         |
| Deakin                         | 4.9  | 5.0         |
| Flinders                       | 2.2  | 2.9         |
| Griffith                       | 1.4  | 1.6         |
| James Cook                     | 2.9  | 3.2         |
| La Trobe                       | 5.6  | 6.2         |
| Macquarie                      | 2.9  | 4.1         |
| Melbourne                      | 5.1  | 5.4         |
| Monash                         | 12.9   | 12.9        |
| Murdoch                        | 0.8  | 0.9         |
| New England                    | 2.3  | 2.5         |
| NSW                            | 11.8   | 13.2        |
| Newcastle                      | 5.3  | 7.8         |
| Queensland                     | 2.4  | 2.5         |
| Sydney                         | 2.8  | 2.5         |
| Tasmania                       | 4.1  | 4.8         |
| WA                             | 5.0  | 5.4         |
| Wollongong                     | 2.3  | 3.4         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                   | <b>5.2</b>                                   | <b>5.7</b>  |

Fraser's reform measures also had an indirect impact on universities. The decision to ease entry restrictions for secondary students meant junior secondary level students were now permitted to study in Australia. This led to a dramatic rise in secondary enrolments between 1982 and 1983, creating a large overrun of student numbers and a bottleneck effect. The rise in secondary schools came particularly from Malaysian students. Malaysian students studying in secondary schools increased from 457 in 1976 to 3191 in 1983. More Malaysians viewed secondary education as an alternative and less competitive route to tertiary study. The raised expectations invariably led to a

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<sup>265</sup> Mutual Advantage, Report of the Committee to Review, 1984, The Australian Overseas Aid Program, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, p.115

bottleneck effect and pressure for more places to be made available since 85 percent of overseas students completing Year 12 proceeded to tertiary study. Such strains led the Minister for Industry and Commerce, Senator John Button to argue: ‘If we are to control future intakes into tertiary institutions it necessarily follows that we must now control secondary school intakes’.<sup>266</sup> In November 1983, the Labor government passed legislation limiting the number of overseas students for the 1984 intake to a total of 4000 enrolled at Australian institutions – 2500 overseas students completing their secondary education in Australia and 1500 overseas students directly entering tertiary institutions.<sup>267</sup> The total represents an increase of only 400 students over 1983, the lowest number in the previous 25 years.

#### *JACKSON AND GOLDRING REPORTS*

Following the fee increase and quota restrictions, the government commissioned two committees to review the overseas students and Australia’s aid programs. The Goldring Committee, chaired by John Goldring, Professor of Law from Macquarie University, examined the extent to which the private overseas student program served Australia’s interest in the areas of immigration, trade, education, development assistance, international understanding and cultural exchange.<sup>268</sup> While Sir Gordon Jackson, chairing the Committee to review the Australian Overseas Aid Program and supported by six other members, mainly from commercial interests and economists, considered the trade benefits of Australia’s aid program in which education assistance represented a small yet important part.<sup>269</sup>

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<sup>266</sup> The Hon. J.N. Button, Minister of Industry and Commerce, Overseas Students Charge Amendment Bill 1983: Second Reading, Senate Hansard, 4 October 1983, p. 1041

<sup>267</sup> Overseas Students Charge, 1983, HVP No. 35 9 Messages from the Governor General, Assent to Bills, 1 November 1983, p.324

<sup>268</sup> Goldring, J, op.cit

<sup>269</sup> Sir Gordon served as Director, member of the Board of Management and Chairman of various companies and organisations, including Rothmans Holdings Limited, CSR, Australian Industry Development Corporation, United Technologies Corporation, The Foundation for Development Corporation, Sydney Hospital Foundation for Research, Australian National University, Order of Australia Association, Police Board of New South Wales and the Salvation Army.

The Goldring and Jackson Committees offered antithetical responses.<sup>270</sup> Goldring recommended a non-controversial and more conservative approach to the development of the overseas students program. The report did not favour the commercial development of education but recommended instead continuing the subsidised scheme with a higher overseas students charge fixed at a proportion of the actual cost of individual places. It also recommended quotas for institutions and courses, a merit-based system of selecting subsidised students, and a planned approach to integrating the overseas students program into the national education planning and funding.<sup>271</sup> Philip Jones suggests that the Goldring Report, with its cautious and pragmatic approach, would not have caused much excitement in educational, government and community circles. 'It had attempted to do the right thing by all interested parties, especially overseas and Australian students.'<sup>272</sup>

The Jackson Committee on the other hand recommended a less conservative approach. The report argued for the commercialisation of education as an export service. 'International trade in Australian education services had the potential as a significant new industry for Australia, that a deregulated industry would maximise industry competitiveness, and that existing subsidies constituted a form of protectionism and should be abandoned.'<sup>273</sup> To realise its radical goal, the committee advocated a duality approach to aid, offering proposals for an expanded and more explicit aid program to run in parallel with a market approach in education promotions. Further, the number and types of scholarships should be increased to meet development assistance aims, full fees introduced to cover the 'full economic cost' of students' education, government protection removed and competition introduced in the tertiary education sector for overseas students.

The Jackson recommendations attracted considerable support from segments of the political community. During its deliberation on challenges and opportunities in

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<sup>270</sup> Kendall, T, *op.cit.* p.25

<sup>271</sup> Buckingham, D, 1988, *Overseas students in Australia – A Bicentennial reflection*, Overseas Student Council of Victoria (OSCAFF) Seminar, Melbourne University, 21 July, p. 2

<sup>272</sup> Jones, P.W, *op.cit.* p. 82

<sup>273</sup> National Board of Employment, Education and Training, NBEET, 1990, *Australian papers for the OECD/CERI conference on 'Higher education and the flow of foreign students: programs and policies'*, Hanover, 16 – 18 April, Canberra.

Australia and ASEAN relations, the Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence considered, among other issues, the topic of overseas students in the context of the Jackson and Goldring reports. Chaired by the Hon. W.L. Morrison, the Morrison Report proposed a number of changes. Firstly, that the government introduce a gradual and predictable increase in the overseas students charge to reach a level of operating costs as determined by the government. Secondly, enrolling institutions should be allowed to retain overseas students' fees to assist in funding additional places and as an incentive to attract more students. Thirdly, there should be a comprehensive system of scholarships to be funded by the aid budget and parallel the development of the fees program.<sup>274</sup>

The report also went further than Jackson's recommendations, arguing that the education sector should be seen as the 'forerunner of an augmented business and diplomatic push in the ASEAN region.'<sup>275</sup> Australia should be sensitive to the long-term aspirations of Asian countries by not disturbing the 'safety valve functions' performed by its educational resources in providing access to ethnic groups marginalised by home country national policies. In effect, the Morrison Report was an early expression of the philosophy of integrating educational exports with trade and foreign policy into a focused attempt to become part of South-East Asia.<sup>276</sup>

The Opposition Coalition parties effectively embraced the Jackson Report's contentious recommendation for full fees, suggesting that 'the Jackson Committee has taken, we think, a more adventurous course. We think it has come up with a more definitive solution to the problem.'<sup>277</sup> The Opposition advocated opening up an opportunity for overseas students to 'pay their way' for an education in Australia, when they would already be paying full fees in North America and the United Kingdom. Allowing full

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<sup>274</sup> Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence, Report on Australia and ASEAN: Challenges and Opportunities, 9 October 1984, House Hansard, p.1925

<sup>275</sup> *ibid.* p.250

<sup>276</sup> Nesdale, D, Simkin, K, Sang, D, Burke, B & Fraser, S, 1995, International students and immigration, Bureau of Immigration and Multicultural and Population Research, Canberra, p.6

<sup>277</sup> Overseas Students Charge Amendment Bill 1984, International Development Association (Further Payment) Bill 1984: Second Reading, Senator Baume, P.E., Senate Hansard, p. 1886

fees, they believed, would also help solve the ‘displacement problem’, if the money generated from fees could be ‘applied back to education to provide extra places’.<sup>278</sup>

#### *UNIVERSITIES’ RESPONSE*

Following the recommendations of the Jackson Report, the Minister for Trade, later Education, continually exhorted universities to look to the ‘export of education services’ as a means of creating new tertiary jobs and assisting the country’s balance of trade.<sup>279</sup> Most universities responded coldly to the Jackson report. At a dinner with 19 vice chancellors of the major universities held at the Australian National University, the Secretary of the Department of Trade, Mr John Menadue, spoke about the Department’s thinking and plans for the export of educational services.

I outlined the ways in which I thought we could promote educational services offshore and encourage more Asian students to come to Australia. The Americans and British have been doing it very successfully. We were not serious competitors. With the universities under financial pressure, this was a commercial opportunity for them. It would also transform university campuses and, hopefully, student attitudes towards Asia.<sup>280</sup>

The dinner, John Menadue found out, ‘turned to frost’. ‘The vice-chancellors were not impressed with my commercialism.’<sup>281</sup> The main criticism came from Professor Peter Karmel, vice-chancellor of the ANU. ‘He was upset at commercially exploiting educational services on such a scale.’<sup>282</sup>

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<sup>278</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>279</sup> Smart, D, 1989, *Education*, Ch. 12, in Head, W.B., & Patience, A., (eds.), *From Fraser to Hawke*, Longman Cheshire, Melbourne

<sup>280</sup> Menadue, J, 1999, *Things you learn along the way*, David Lovell Publishing, Melbourne, pp. 245 - 246

<sup>281</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>282</sup> *ibid.* p. 246

Opposition to the marketisation of education was not universal. Some sections of the higher education sector foresaw ‘a rosy future as international entrepreneurs.’<sup>283</sup> In Western Australia, Murdoch University in alliance with the state’s trade agency, EXIM Corporation Ltd, put in motion plans to build and run a private university targeting only private Asian students.<sup>284</sup> The Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) began developing and promoting full fee programs. By July 1986, RMIT had in place a proposal to offer a full fee Bachelor of Business in Accountancy degree course in Malaysia. The program would be controlled by RMIT staff and conducted on the basis of two academic years in Kuala Lumpur and the final academic year in Melbourne.<sup>285</sup> Even challenging the universities’ sector monopoly over granting of degrees, the West Australian Institute of Technology, a College of Advanced Education, entered the full fee fray with an aggressive push into South-East Asia.<sup>286</sup>

The government however had great difficulty wrestling with the two antithetical reports. It opted instead for a middle lane approach, melding aspects of Goldring with Jackson recommendations. The approach would involve incorporating the Goldring recommendations for the sponsored and subsidy program, while the Jackson recommendation of a user-pay system would be introduced as an addition to the existing program in the form of full fees.

#### *SHIFT TO EDUCATION EXPORT*

On 22 March 1985, the Minister for Education, Senator Susan Ryan, announced preliminary yet radical changes to the Overseas Student Policy. The government would impose an ‘annual ceiling’ on all overseas students. Institutions would be allowed to enrol overseas students up to ten percent of their total number, and up to 20 percent in

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<sup>283</sup> Nicholls, J, 1985, Marketing full cost higher education: implications for FAUSA ( ) 23 August, Memo to Executive, Staff Association Secretaries and Education committee, Ref: 94/5:1061W, p.1

<sup>284</sup> Markey, R, 1985, Perth move on varsity for foreign students, *The Western Australian*, 5 August, p.3; Simmonds, C, 1985, Burke backs study into plan for first private university, *The Australian*, 5 August, p.3

<sup>285</sup> RMIT, 1986, Faculty of Business proposal to offer Bachelor of Business in Accountancy degree in Malaysia, 17 July

<sup>286</sup> Simmonds, C, 1986, WAIT moves further into varsity territory, Higher Education, *The Australian*, 26 February, p.7

any course, within the overall ceiling. The Overseas Students Charge was increased, so that it represented 35 percent of the full cost of a place in 1986, and 45 percent of the full cost of a place in 1987 for undergraduate and postgraduate students. And to provide increased opportunities for overseas students wishing to study in Australia but who were not able to be accommodated within the quota of students to be subsidised by the government, institutions would be able to offer places at full cost in courses, separate from their normal degree and diploma offerings specifically designed for overseas students.<sup>287</sup>

Within six months of Senator Ryan's announcement, Federal Cabinet decided on a radical strategy to develop the export of the Australian education services industry. Two sectors would emerge: formal and informal. The formal sector would comprise the public and private secondary schools, universities and Colleges of Technical and Further Education (TAFE), while the informal sector would be made up of private colleges and institutes offering non-accredited university courses such as English language, tourism management and secretarial studies.

## CONCLUSION

This chapter has attempted to map the transformation of Australia's overseas students program from its beginning in 1950 until 1985. Its main purpose is to introduce the shifting institutional policies governing the development of education aid and its transformation to education trade. Under the Colombo Plan, the program enjoyed considerable interest and bipartisan political support. In 1972, the program underwent far-reaching changes, becoming an important part of Australia's foreign policy and progressively shifting closer towards the core of higher education planning. A two-tier system had developed with the private overseas students scheme gaining importance and popularity. By the mid-seventies however, global developments had to a large extent undermined the program's original aid objectives. Around the world, developed nations quickly moved to introduce protectionist measures in an attempt to reduce

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<sup>287</sup> Overseas Student Policy Review: Ministerial Statement, Senator Susan Ryan, Senate Hansard, 22 March 1985, p. 630

global demand pressures on their higher education resources, which inevitably had a direct impact on Australia's higher education system.

In the late seventies, Malcolm Fraser's government introduced policy measures to ease the mounting strain on the higher education system. The government's response, in retrospect, failed to fully integrate the overseas students program into its overall national education thinking, further intensifying instead of relieving pressure on tertiary institutions already struggling for limited resources. In 1983, when the Hawke Labor government came to power, it moved quickly to address the problem by pursuing a bipartisan, yet controversial policy prescription. The government proposed to gradually remove education subsidies and encourage commercialisation of the overseas students program. Market solutions imposed on the overseas student part of the higher education system was instrumental in radically transforming the program into a multi-billion dollar export education services sector and significantly influencing the future development of Australia's higher education system.

By describing the historical development of the overseas students program's transition from aid to trade, I seek to set the context in which to locate the formation of the overseas students' collective action. There are two important elements I would like to highlight in this chapter. First is that policies and reforms implemented during the early years of the Colombo Plan largely constrained the political mobilisation of overseas students. Second is the institutional and policy changes that took place after the mid-1970s onwards, catalysed the formation of overseas students' collective action. The changing policy environment, which eventually led to the Labor government's radical reforms to education aid signalled to overseas students and encouraged them to use their internal yet fragmented resources to form a national body in which to represent their concerns and oppose changes to education aid. As the tone of education aid changed in response to the global economic environment and mounting demand pressures on Australian universities, political mobilisation of overseas students became less constrained, precipitating growing activism during the 1970s, and widescale mobilisation in response to education aid reforms in the mid-1980s. In Chapter four, I will further elaborate on these two elements.

# Four

## **OPPOSING CHANGES TO THE OVERSEAS STUDENTS PROGRAM**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The formation of overseas student groups was a conjunctural phenomenon largely in response to prevailing reforms in Australia's education aid program. Growth in numbers of overseas students under the Colombo Plan prompted two responses: it influenced local public perceptions of and curiosity about foreign students, and imposed considerable pressure on the capacity of the universities' welfare support to accommodate a rapidly growing yet distinctive cohort. Overseas students – both scholarship holders and private fee paying – instinctively responded by clustering into groups to create an informal protective support network. As the Colombo Plan expanded, changing community perceptions and increasing welfare concerns helped proliferate the number of overseas student groups on campuses, even extending their social and cultural network of activities across campuses in each state. An important aspect to their formation was the establishment of an overseas students department created under the auspices of a national student body, the *National Union of Australian Students*, to serve the welfare needs of all foreign students at universities. Even with an increase in overseas student representation, political mobilisation of overseas students was still constrained, due largely to tight regulations imposed under the aid program and restrictions on political activities.

The election of a new government in 1972 brought significant changes to education aid policy, producing a pivotal shift that would recast overseas student activities. Students began to deviate from welfare concerns towards foreign policy activism. Such activism on issues concerning dictatorship, hegemony, third world debt and abridgement of human rights was publicly expressed through campaigns mostly in collaboration with local student activists. The national student leadership's move to retrench welfare responsibilities in favour of international activism ultimately diminished the leadership's relevance to overseas students in general concerned primarily about welfare and academic issues. Their increasing irrelevance significantly reduced the student leadership's ability to mobilise an effective opposition to policy changes introduced in the late seventies and early eighties. In 1985 however, the Overseas Students Program (OSP) underwent radical changes, which catalysed a re-mobilisation of overseas students strongly opposed to the Government's policy shifts from education aid to education trade.

In the previous chapter I set the context by describing the historical development of the OSP since 1950. This chapter I explicitly seek to overlay that historical backdrop by examining the formation and mobilisation of overseas students during the same period. This chapter is divided into two parts. The first part will provide a historical overview of overseas student activities under the Colombo Plan and its shift in focus from social and welfare to foreign policy concerns. In part two I will explore government policy changes introduced in 1985 and the policy shifts on grassroots overseas student mobilisation.

## **EMERGENCE OF OVERSEAS STUDENTS ORGANISATIONS**

In the early fifties, a modest influx of Colombo Plan students provoked xenophobic outrage within the Australian community. Reports of Asia's growing criticism of Australia's immigration policy largely influenced negative views of overseas

students.<sup>288</sup> ‘Right throughout the East,’ the *Daily Mirror* newspaper reported ‘the White man is held in increasing contempt. If there is any especially good reason why millions should be spent educating non-Australians, then let us bring out youngsters from America, where we know we have friends, or from England, Italy, Greece, France, Malta and Germany.’<sup>289</sup> The general community’s negativity against acceptance of Asian immigration had also underlined unfavourable response towards the Colombo Plan. In 1943, 51 percent of respondents to a Gallup Poll were against Asian immigration to Australia. In 1954, it grew to 61 percent.<sup>290</sup>

In forming a defence against growing community backlash, overseas students naturally clustered together into social groups. Such groups acted as a support network for foreign students and a vehicle to counter prejudices by raising cultural awareness through social activities in their local community. In June 1953, Colombo Plan scholars in Sydney convened a meeting to establish the *Colombo Plan Fellows Association*. The association became a first attempt by scholars to establish an informal social network to stage ‘parties, cultural evenings, film nights, and excursions for Australian and overseas students.’<sup>291</sup> While Colombo Plan scholars were promoting their activities, privately funded overseas students organised their own regular social events, such as festivals, food fairs and cultural events through nationality-based clubs like the Malaysian Students Association, Singapore Students Club and the Thai Students Association.

The xenophobic reaction within the community also led to widespread debate on Australian campuses about the Colombo Plan students’ presence, the restrictive

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<sup>288</sup> Australia accepted more than 170 000 refugees (or as they were called ‘Displaced Persons’) up until 1954. However, none were accepted from Asia - McMaster, D, 2002, *White Australia to detention: restriction and racism*, *Mots Pluriels*, No.21, May. According to the Immigration Reform Group and Brawley, overt attacks from Asia subsided somewhat after 1966. However, Australia remained vulnerable to occasional public criticism from Asian leaders - Brawley, S, 1995, *The white peril: Foreign relations and Asian immigration to Australia and North America 1918 – 1973*, UNSW Press, Sydney, p. 319; Rivett, K, (ed.), 1975, *Australia and the non-white migrant*, Immigration Reform Group, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne.

<sup>289</sup> *Daily Mirror*, 1953, October 3. The paper also reported that: ‘Many of these Colombo Plan students seem to spend a lot of their spare time wandering around the country with their cameras. There may be nothing wrong with this. The photographs they take maybe of views and valleys. They could also be of views of airports and Army camps, of defence Installations and ships.’

<sup>290</sup> Mackie, J, 1997, ‘The politics of Asian immigration’, in J.E. Coughlan and D.J. McNamara, *Asians in Australia: patterns of migration and settlement*, Macmillan Education Australia, Melbourne, p.17

<sup>291</sup> Oakman, D, 2004, *Facing Asia: A history of the Colombo Plan*, Pandanus Books, Australian National University, Canberra, p. 201

Immigration Act (the cornerstone of the White Australia Policy) and racism in general. Graham Hasting suggests that campus debates had three significant effects on overseas students. First, it galvanised eight hundred students at the University of Sydney and University of New South Wales to organise large general student meetings condemning racism. Second, it encouraged the National Union of Australian Students (NUAUS)<sup>292</sup>, a body representing all tertiary students, to widen the anti-racism debate by holding a series of campus referenda throughout the 1950s and into the 1960s.<sup>293</sup> NUAUS anti-racism campaigns were bolstered by anti-White Australia organisations such as the Immigration Reform Group, the state based Immigration Reform Associations and Student Action that began to mobilise at Australian universities.<sup>294</sup> Third, it provoked community groups to align with overseas students to establish the Australian Co-ordinating Committee for Overseas Students (AOCCOS)<sup>295</sup>. AOCCOS became an umbrella organisation – comprising overseas students and community groups – to challenge racism and lessen the adjustment difficulties faced by students. AOCCOS was also instrumental in forming the New South Wales Overseas Student Committee, a student network organised to change community attitudes by publicising the positive aspects of Asian culture through co-ordinating and promoting Asian festivals on campus.<sup>296</sup>

#### *GROWING WELFARE CONCERNS AND STUDENTS' RESPONSE*

By 1961, a rapidly expanding education aid program and dramatic rise in private overseas student numbers were beginning to place considerable pressure on

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<sup>292</sup> National Union of Australian University Students was created in 1937 to represent all university students in Australia. The NUAUS became the Australia Union of Students (AUS) in May 1971.

<sup>293</sup> Hastings, G, 2002, It can't happen here: a political history of Australian student activism, The Students Association of Flinders University, Adelaide, p.142

<sup>294</sup> Tavan, G, 2004, The dismantling of the White Australia policy: elite conspiracy or will of the Australian people? Australian Journal of Political Science, Vol. 39, No. 1, March, p. 116

<sup>295</sup> Hastings, G, op.cit. 2002, p.142

<sup>296</sup> Giles, G, 1985, Overseas students in Australia: Issues and organisation, (unpublished paper), University of New South Wales Guild

government's, universities' and even local student bodies' capacity to respond to growing welfare concerns. Despite the different nationalities, overseas students' academic and welfare stress such as cultural adaptation, social interaction with the local community, language difficulties and adapting to a different learning environment, were common and becoming increasingly noticeable on campus. Research and data on the socio-economic background of students were limited until the mid-eighties.<sup>297</sup> In fact, there was little research examining welfare and education issues in the early decades of the overseas students program. By the seventies, research studies by Rao, Bochner, Brein and David had made early attempts to understand the cultural, academic, language and welfare challenges.<sup>298</sup> In the eighties the volume of research expanded. Burke, Elkerton, Furnham, and Ballard were instrumental in highlighting concerns and strongly advocating an increase of welfare support services.<sup>299</sup>

Although some generic services available to Australian students were also accessible to overseas students, these students were however more in need of immediate welfare support such as housing and employment than 'university tutorials and career guidance services'.<sup>300</sup> The NUAUS promptly responded to the pressure for support services by creating a national specialist department called the Overseas Students Services (OSS) and appointed an Overseas Students Director to handle welfare concerns of all overseas students in universities. Some universities did attempt to offer students separate or additional counselling, English language tuition and cultural adjustment support.

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<sup>297</sup> A close to a comprehensive research profiling the socio-economic backgrounds of overseas students was examined in the Mutual Advantage Report released in 1984

<sup>298</sup> Brein, M., & David, K. H, 1971, Intercultural communication and the adjustment of the sojourner, *Psychological Bulletin*, No. 76, pp. 215 – 230; Bochner, S, 1972, Problems in culture learning, in Bochner, S. & Wicks, P, (eds.), *Overseas Students in Australia*, University of New South Wales Press, Randwick; Brislin, R.W., & Van Buren, H, 1974, Can they go home again? *International educational and cultural exchange*, No. 9, pp. 19-24; Bochner, S., & Orr, F.E, 1979, Race and academic status as determinants of friendship formation: A field study, *International Journal of Psychology*, 14, pp. 265 – 272

<sup>299</sup> Burke, B.D, 1989, Support services for overseas students, in B. Williams, (ed.), *Overseas students in Australia: policy and practice*, International Development Program, Canberra; Ballard, B, 1989, Overseas students and Australian academics: Learning and teaching styles, in B. Williams, (ed.), *Overseas students in Australia: policy and practice*, International Development Program, Canberra; Ballard, B. & Clanchy, J, 1988, *Studying in Australia*, Longman Cheshire, Melbourne; Elkerton, C.A, 1985, A survey of overseas postgraduate students satisfaction with life and study in Australia, Student Counselling and Research Unit, Research & Development Paper, University of New South Wales, No. 8, 1985.

<sup>300</sup> Benn, R.W, 1961, The adjustment problems of a group of Asian students at an Australian university, Thesis (M.Ed.) University of Sydney, p.234. Benn's thesis provides an interesting insights into the social, welfare and academic concerns of overseas students in the late fifties.

However, these services were often either insufficient or unavailable. Student organisations on campuses such as the Student Representative Councils (SRCs) also sought to address the welfare void by arranging special activities for new students. But activities offered were either limited or only available during orientation week at the beginning of each academic year.

In response to the growing welfare gap, the NUAUS became increasingly involved in directing development of campus based overseas student activities. The NUAUS's intervention through the OSS did help address some welfare needs and create specialist services specifically for overseas students. It also helped catalyse the creation of Overseas Student Officer positions within SRCs at most campuses to act as a go-between for the NUAUS and the campus overseas student community.<sup>301</sup>

#### *OVERSEAS STUDENTS SERVICES - EARLY YEARS*

During the early years, the OSS confined their activities to dealing with welfare concerns and providing up-to-date information on culture and finance. When raising visa matters, it regularly liaised with immigration officials and embassies on the students' behalf. For example, in 1966, the OSS successfully lobbied the Department of Immigration for more qualified officers to deal with student visa matters and acceptance entries of spouses of students studying in Australia.<sup>302</sup>

While the welfare and representational roles became the OSS' major activities, overseas students themselves began forming their own clubs and societies on campuses to facilitate social and cultural interactions. Nationality based clubs, such as the Singapore Student Clubs, the Malaysian Students Associations and Thai Students Associations

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<sup>301</sup> Hastings, G, op.cit. p.143; and Barcan, A, 2002, Student activism in the welfare university, Quadrant, July – August, pp. 31 - 40

<sup>302</sup> Yau, G, 1994, History of the overseas students movement, International Students Handbook, UNSW International Students Department, Student Guild, Sydney, p.7

actively organised social events and orientation support. These clubs were mostly financially supported or encouraged by their national governments to act as a support network and to help broaden campus activities for their fellow nationals. Some support even included creation of state and national networks. In 1960, the Thai Ambassador advocated and supported the establishment of a National Thai Association to create an opportunity for Thai students from all states to meet annually on a social basis.<sup>303</sup>

Within a decade more campus based overseas student clubs and societies were formed and welfare activities became a key feature in addition to existing social and cultural programs. In 1964 for example, a group of overseas students from different nationalities at the University of Western Australia formed an Overseas Students department to have a representative voice within the Student Union. The department would provide a network for students from similar backgrounds and an opportunity to get together for support and social activities. Its role expanded to include education, sports and welfare activities and its funding came from the Student Union fees paid by overseas students. From the early sixties, similar bodies formed with overseas students' associations established at the University of New South Wales. A decade later, Melbourne University created its Overseas Students Services and in 1972 Flinders University formed the Flinders International Students Association.

## **CHANGING ROLE OF THE OVERSEAS STUDENTS SERVICES**

In late sixties and early seventies, the war in Vietnam dominated Australian politics. The Australian student movement expanded its welfare focus to incorporate international issues such as opposition towards exploitation of 'Third world' countries, debt concerns, poverty eradication and racism.<sup>304</sup> The election of the Whitlam government in 1972 signalled profound changes to the overseas students program.

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<sup>303</sup> Commonwealth of Education Office, 1960, Hemisphere, Vol. 4., No. 10, October, p.226

<sup>304</sup> Armstrong, M, 1970, 1,2,3 What are we fighting for? The Australian student movement from its origins to the 1970s, Socialist Alternative, Melbourne; and Hastings, G., op.cit.

Overseas student fees were abolished and migration restrictions removed (see Chapter three). Shifts in government policy encouraged the OSS to expand their energies to focus on foreign policy enterprise. In fact, Whitlam's substantive changes to the overseas students program inadvertently contributed to the radicalisation of the OSS. The removal of tuition fees and loosening of immigration regulations had created new opportunities for overseas student leaders to express themselves politically, while actively participating in local student movement activities. Prior to Whitlam's policy changes, private overseas students were obliged to pay the full cost of their education and abstain from political activities. Students spent little time on extracurricular ventures and adhered to strict policy requirements that they complete their studies on time, return home or risk possible deportation. Under Whitlam's markedly liberal policy arrangement, the burden of financial responsibility was removed, hindrances to extracurricular activities minimised, and participation in issues other than social and welfare concerns of overseas students broadened.

The election of a new OSS director in 1973, T.B. Krishnan, marked a fundamental departure in the OSS policy. Krishnan announced the widening of the department's scope from a welfare orientation to an emphasis on international and foreign policy issues. Krishnan boldly declared that such traditional preoccupation with immigration problems, student permits, counselling services, financial assistance, working permits, residency and financial guarantor requirements were no longer dominant.<sup>305</sup> These issues 'have tended to exhaust the energy of the overseas student movement and to divert the students from critically reviewing the Australian government's policies in political, diplomatic, economic and social terms and from critically evaluating the situation in their own society'.<sup>306</sup>

Krishnan's transposing of overseas students' welfare for foreign policy concerns reflected an already growing influence of local student radicalism over the national student movement in general and overseas students in particular. This policy deviation spilt over into the streets with increased activism and public expression on issues such as democratic struggles in the Asia Pacific region, South Africa, Central and South

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<sup>305</sup> Malaya News Service, 1973, No.8, p.8

<sup>306</sup> Ibid.

America. During Malaysian Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak's visit to Australia in 1975, the OSS played an instrumental role in organising a major protest against the Malaysian Government's increasing 'surveillance of Malaysian students' activities' and its discriminatory New Economic Policy.<sup>307</sup> A year later a similar campaign action was organised to coincide with Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Kwan Yew's state visit.

By 1976, the OSS's radical activism had reached its pinnacle, when it finally jettisoned its overseas students' welfare role for anti-imperialist and national liberation policies:

The work and orientation of the movement has progressed beyond a sole preoccupation with 'student welfare' matters, beyond identification of the problems and the general calls for human rights, to actually joining in the march towards a solution. That solution is the national liberation of overseas students by overthrowing imperialism and neo-colonial regimes so that the construction of a new genuine socialist society can begin...this has become the underlying aim of all our work.<sup>308</sup>

By the mid to late seventies, overseas student activism had narrowed to a few campuses, yet its influence within the Australian Union of Students had broadened to such an extent that it became a base for an emerging Maoist faction. Its strong alliance with the Maoist faction partly contributed to a 'convoluted power struggle' that subsequently split the left within the Union.<sup>309</sup> During the power struggle, the right wing factions in the Australian Union of Students had accused the OSS of sending significant amounts of money overseas to aid Asian national liberation movements.<sup>310</sup> When the student union executive threatened to withhold funding, the OSS in return threatened to withdraw from the organisation. By 1980, the conflict had come to a head, with the OSS finally ceasing its affiliation with the Australian Union of Students; it renamed itself the National Overseas Student Service (NOSS), establishing a new headquarters in the Melbourne suburb of Fitzroy.

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<sup>307</sup> Yau, G., 1994, History of the overseas students movement, International Students Handbook, UNSW International Students Department, Student Guild, Sydney, p.7

<sup>308</sup> Overseas Student Services Report to Australian Union of Students Council, 1977

<sup>309</sup> Hastings, G, op.cit

<sup>310</sup> Ibid. p. 166

With a decline in national funding, a radical shift in policy directions, and limited opportunities for wider overseas student participation in the organisation, the NOSS had begun to slip from the core of overseas students' representation to its periphery. This decline in relevance subsequently crippled any attempt at mounting an effective response against the Fraser government's introduction of the Overseas Students Charge in 1979.<sup>311</sup> The NOSS had in fact 'become less and less relevant to overseas students on campuses throughout a major part of Australia'.<sup>312</sup> While the NOSS focused predominantly on international human rights issues, campus organizations became more socially oriented. Peter Subramaniam explains, with the overseas students charge looking more likely to stay, overseas student activism began tending away from the political and centering more and more on the social. 'The financial burden imposed by the overseas students charge served to push more overseas students than before into a rarefied atmosphere of academia – failure was (as it is now) costly and the number of overseas students who were willing to invest themselves in organisational and representational work fell away.' The overseas students movement, Subramaniam continues, 'receded from the mainstream of student representation and shut itself off'.<sup>313</sup> In 1983, from the review of the overseas student policy until the submission of the Goldring and Jackson reports, overseas students did little to involve themselves in the government's policy process. To justify planned changes to the overseas students program, the Hawke Labor government actively argued that overseas students were limiting education access and displacing local students. Such arguments received little opposition, due to an absence of an organised overseas students group or an effective local student movement. By 1984, the importance of the NOSS had receded, while the Australian Union of Students imploded and collapsed.

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<sup>311</sup> The general overseas student population showed little to no interest in international political issues. The fear and distance from politics in general was based on the fear that their activities were closely monitored by their home government. Their main concerns centred on their own personal welfare and ability to cope with the demands of education in a foreign environment. A survey commissioned by the Goldring Committee reported that 84 percent of overseas students indicated they have serious problems, over and above the normal problems, such as: homesickness, lack of finances, loneliness, alienation, language, accommodation, adaptation, academic progress, racism, health, sexism, harassment by insensitive government bureaucrats, legal hassles, etc. (in no particular order). Goldring, J, 1984, *Mutual Advantage: Report of the Committee of Review of Private Overseas Students Policy*, Australian Government Publishing Service, March, Canberra, p. 148

<sup>312</sup> Subramaniam, P, 1987, *The overseas students movement in the context of a national union of Australian students*, The National Liaison Committee for Overseas Students, (unpublished), Adelaide, October 2 – 5, p.1

<sup>313</sup> Ibid.

## **POLICY CHANGE AND OVERSEAS STUDENTS RESPONSE**

In the previous section I traced the formation of overseas students clubs and societies during the early years of the Colombo Plan. As the Colombo Plan expanded, the number of overseas students groups on campus increased. As the Plan underwent changes under subsequent governments, the overseas students' activities were transformed, increasingly focusing on international activism and to a lesser extent on welfare and education concerns. The decline of NOSS and the collapse of the AUS in 1984, left a vacuum in student representation broadly, and overseas student representation specifically. In the next section, I will focus my attention on the period after the decline of NOSS and the beginning of radical changes to education aid.

On the morning of 4 February 1985, the *Australian Financial Review* leaked a report that an independent committee established to review the Overseas Students Program (OSP) was favouring the introduction of full fees. The following day, the Minister for Education, Senator Susan Ryan denied any resolution on the future of the OSP.<sup>314</sup> Despite the Minister's denial, overseas students believed that a move towards a shift in government policy was inevitable. Ten days later a group of overseas student leaders convened in Melbourne to draft a response against the impending policy changes. Comprising leaders from the Malaysian Law Students Association at Monash University, the Medical Students Society for Overseas Students at Melbourne University and members of the Committee of Presidents – a committee consisting of presidents of a number of Victorian campus overseas student associations formed in response to the Goldring Report – they met to embark on a campaign in expectation of possible fee hikes.<sup>315</sup>

The first opportunity to respond came within weeks when news had reached the students that the Australian Foreign Minister, Mr Bill Hayden, was about to make a trip to South-East Asia in early March. The student leaders viewed his trip as a likely focus for some form of an indirect political intervention. On 16 February, a letter and petition was couriered to the Malaysian Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohammad and the

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<sup>314</sup> Dodson, L, 1985, Ryan moves to diffuse fee row, *Australian Financial Review*, 5 February; David Barnett, 1985, Alarm grows at Ryan's funding policies, *Bulletin*, v.107(5462) 9 Apr. 1985: 28-30.

<sup>315</sup> OSCAFF, 1986, OSCAFF activities - 1985 - 86. Melbourne, OSCAFF. (Unpublished)

Opposition leader, Mr Lim Kit Siang from the Democratic Action Party (DAP) appealing to intervene on behalf of overseas students in Australia.<sup>316</sup> No acknowledgement was forthcoming from the Prime Minister but the Malaysian Opposition called on the government to take some steps in preventing a fee increase.

The lack of immediate response from the Malaysian Government convinced the students of the urgency of organising a group in opposition to an imminent policy change. Within two days, a Victorian based students coalition formed the *Overseas Students Campaign Against Full Fees* (OSCAFF). OSCAFF comprised ten affiliate organisations from Melbourne University, Monash University, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT), La Trobe University, Chisolm, Swinburn and Footscray Institutes. Its aims were clear: to prevent the current trend towards fee increase leading to full-cost recovery, and push for the maintenance and integrity of the education aid program.<sup>317</sup>

Bill Hayden's trip to South-East Asia attracted considerable response in Malaysia. The Malaysian Socialist Democratic Party (SDP) urged the Australian Government to seriously reconsider its intention to increase the fees for overseas students. The party secretary-general, Mr Fan Yew Teng, said, 'any such drastic increase in fees could well jeopardise the educational and professional prospect of thousands of young Malaysians.'<sup>318</sup> On the same day, Malaysia's Education Minister, Abdullah Badawi, informed Mr Hayden that the Malaysians were not impressed with the fee increase. According to Abdullah, Prime Minister Dr Mahathir felt that Australia should back up its rhetoric about wanting to find a place in the South-East Asian region with 'hard-nosed and realistic contribution.'<sup>319</sup> The Malaysian Government viewed subsidised education, particularly at the tertiary level, as 'an example of the sort of thing, Australia could, and should do'<sup>320</sup>. The Opposition however considered that the Malaysian Education Minister's statement lacked the strong response previously served to the British over a similar fee hike five years earlier. The Thatcher government's full fee

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<sup>316</sup> Protest against rise in fees, DAP tells Govt, *The Star*, Malaysia, 7 March 1985

<sup>317</sup> OSCAFF, 1985, *Stop fee increases for overseas students*, (unpublished), Melbourne, p.1

<sup>318</sup> 1985, *Reconsider decisions to raise fees, Fan urges Australia*, *The Star*, Malaysia, 5 March.

<sup>319</sup> 1985, *The Herald*, 5 March

<sup>320</sup> *Ibid.*

initiative had in fact led to strident Malaysian protest provoking among other responses, a 'Buy British last' policy. Such attempts may not have succeeded in reversing the British full fee policy, they did however force the British Government to increase the number of scholarships places as a concession.<sup>321</sup>

Two factors largely contributed to the Malaysian Government's lack of public protest against Australia's fee rise. First, unlike the British fee hikes, the Australian fee increases had less of a direct financial impact on the Malaysian Government coffers. A significant portion of Malaysian Government scholarship funds mainly targeted ethnic Malay students, the main beneficiaries of the *New Economic Policy* (NEP). Under such schemes, Malay students chose the United Kingdom or the United States as destination of choice for their undergraduate and postgraduate studies. For example, during the mid-eighties approximately 20 percent of the total number of Malaysians studying in Australia were ethnic Malays having preferential access to Home Government Students (HGS).<sup>322</sup> Non-Malay students who could not afford the United Kingdom or the United States option chose Australia as an affordable alternative.<sup>323</sup>

Second, in 1983 the Australian Government imposed a quota of 1500 on private overseas students' enrolment to tertiary institutions. The quota had a significant effect on Malaysians, particularly limiting opportunities for tertiary studies in Australia. In fact, Malaysia, the *Australian Financial Review* reported, was getting 'stroppy about quotas placed in the way of Malaysian students' and was calling for the Australian Government to liberalise its tertiary places, allowing more student access to its higher education system.<sup>324</sup>

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<sup>321</sup> Williams, L, 1987, Overseas students in the United Kingdom: Some recent developments, Higher Education Quarterly, Volume 41, No. 2, Spring, pp.109-110

<sup>322</sup> Memo to Executive, Staff Association Secretaries and Education Committee from Jane Nicholls, 'Marketing full cost higher education: implications for FAUSA', (unpublished), 23 August 1985, Ref: 94/5:1061W, p.3

<sup>323</sup> The Goldring Committee found that 62 percent of overseas students in Australia come from families which have a combined income of less than AUD\$15,000 per annum. Goldring, J, op.cit. p.54

<sup>324</sup> 1985, Australian education could be a profitable export commodity, Financial Review, May 3.

On 22 March 1985, the Minister for Education, Senator Susan Ryan, announced preliminary yet radical changes to the overseas students program. Key elements of the change involved: imposing a limit on the number of overseas students admitted into secondary and tertiary institutions; substantially increasing the course fees by 35 percent for students enrolled in the 1985/86 academic years and by 45 percent in subsequent years; and allowing the higher education sector to recruit students and offer places at full-cost fees.<sup>325</sup>

A day after the Minister's announcement, overseas students across Australia acted. Public meetings, rallies and petition drives were organised. In Victoria, OSCAFF launched the 'Dear Mr Hawke' campaign to send a thousand signed letters to the Prime Minister and the Minister for Education.<sup>326</sup> The petition called on the government to 're-affirm its commitment to its policy that supports the social and economic development of developing countries through access to Australia's education and training resources.' It also asked for the formulation of a 'consistent and considerate policy concerning overseas students' and to 'reconsider as a matter of urgency the legislation of such a high increase in visa charges.'<sup>327</sup>

In New South Wales the overseas students declared 2 April Black Tuesday – a day to mourn the death of education. Steven Gan, spokesperson at the University of New South Wales, protested that 'the moves to reintroduce fees for all students and impose full-cost fees for overseas students would mark the end of free education in Australia and signal the demise of the aid component in the OSP'.<sup>328</sup> To demonstrate their strong public opposition, the overseas students along with their local student counterparts, conducted a mock funeral procession donning black bands in protest.<sup>329</sup> The mock

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<sup>325</sup> News release, Senator Susan Ryan, Minister for Education, *New policy on overseas students*, 22 March 1985

<sup>326</sup> OSCAFF Activities report 1985 – 1986, op.cit.

<sup>327</sup> Cross M. D., & Humphreys B.C, 1985, *Petition: Visa Charges for Overseas Students*, House of Representative, Parliament of Australia, p. 1645

<sup>328</sup> Steven Gan, Press release – Tuesday April 23 – *UNSW Day of Mourning*, NSWOSC – the New South Wales Collective, (unpublished) 23 April 1985

<sup>329</sup> Long, P.H, 1985, NSWOSC press release – NSWOSC, Overseas Students Department, Students' Union, University of New South Wales, (unpublished)

funeral was to symbolise the ‘death of the Overseas Students Program as the most effective form of foreign aid.’<sup>330</sup>

Around Australia, other campus based overseas student organisations, in alliance with their local student communities, campaigned publicly against the fee changes. Along with the public campaign, organisations in Victoria, South Australia and New South Wales conducted research into the impact of policy change on overseas students. OSCAFF commissioned the Department of Statistics at the University of Melbourne to undertake a state-wide survey of overseas students. In South Australia, the students conducted a financial survey of overseas students to determine the likely impact of fee increases. In New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory, the students coordinated a survey to examine the impact of policy change on private overseas students.<sup>331</sup>

As momentum against the fee policy gathered, segments of the public voiced their support for the overseas students’ campaign. The support was largely driven by fears that full fee policy would eventually affect local students. The University of Sydney’s Student Representative Council (SRC) declared its opposition to the policy arguing that the introduction of tuition fees for overseas students was a prelude to fees for local students. Student organiser, Adam Rorris, argued:

The present Overseas Students Program that requires overseas students to pay a high level of fees is unjust and discriminatory. We could not preserve a genuine free education system if a group of students are forced to pay for their education. We believe that the overseas students fee is a first step towards tuition fees for all students.<sup>332</sup>

Wider community support against the ‘marketisation of higher education’ grew. The Higher Education Round Table (HERT), a group of staff associations representing some 200 000 academics, teachers and postgraduates, also expressed some concerns. They

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<sup>330</sup> Ibid.

<sup>331</sup> NSWOSC, Results of a survey of private overseas students studying in educational institutions in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory, University of New South Wales, (unpublished) Sydney, 1985, p. 2

<sup>332</sup> Adam Rorris, University of Sydney Student Representative Council, (unpublished), 18 March 1985 Press release

argued that the policy move to export higher education might be a ‘back-door’ means of reducing the total level of aid that the government presently gave to South-East Asian countries in the form of subsidised tertiary education.<sup>333</sup> Such moves would also ‘put pressure on the provision of free higher education for Australian students and eventually lead to some form of fees being introduced.’<sup>334</sup>

#### *AN ATTEMPT AT NATIONAL MOBILISATION*

After the policy announcement, overseas students across Australia began to recognise that their disparate campaigns were having little impact on influencing any changes. The need to coordinate a national response, share limited resources and establish an information channel had grown. By May, a national overseas students network was taking shape. In New South Wales, a group of students met to establish a state based organisation, the NSW Overseas Students Collective (NSWOSC). Victoria and New South Wales became the principal leaders in the opposition to the government’s OSP changes, since these states had the majority of enrolled overseas students and tertiary institutions. While NSWOSC prepared to host an inaugural national overseas students conference in Sydney that would draw together the different campaigns around the country, OSCAFF was in the advanced stages of developing a draft proposal recommending the creation of a national umbrella body to represent the views of all overseas students in Australia. The proposal outlined the main problems facing the overseas students’ campaign: the low grassroots support, student apathy, lack of financial resources and limited political skills.<sup>335</sup> The new body would resolve the problems by coordinating national anti-fees campaigns; drawing together the various

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<sup>333</sup> Financial Review, 9 September 1985

<sup>334</sup> Ibid.

<sup>335</sup> Onn W W, Peng N K & Subramaniam P, 1985, Report of the overseas students campaign against full fees (OSCAFF) to the National Overseas Students Conference, Sydney, (unpublished) May 13 – 17, Melbourne, p.2

campaign groups; creating information linkages; sharing resources and presenting a unified voice on the fee charges.<sup>336</sup>

From 13 to 17 May 1985, overseas student leaders across Australia met for the inaugural national conference, held at the University of New South Wales. It was the first time overseas student representatives from across the country had met to discuss changes to government policy. Unfortunately, the diverging views that emerged on key issues would fracture the unity of this fledgling opposition, threatening to end prematurely a national coherent response. The conference in fact failed due to emerging tensions between two groups with contrasting policy views, different campaign styles and distinctive philosophical leanings.<sup>337</sup>

*Contrasting policy views:* During the inaugural conference, the NSW faction vigorously opposed the government's fees hike. They pressed the delegates to campaign against the OSC and push for the total 'abolition' of the fees as an immediate action. The principles of education as a public good, they trenchantly maintained, 'should not be traded in the market place and it was the moral responsibility of Australia to provide educational aid to developing countries in the region.'<sup>338</sup> 'To abolish tuition fees', they argued, would help 'promote more equitable participation of underprivileged overseas students from the third world countries.'<sup>339</sup>

The opposing faction, led by a coalition comprising campuses in Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania, represented a less confrontational alternative to the 'abolitionist' view. The majority of this faction's student leaders were also Malaysians, but were studying in older, more traditional institutions such as the University of Melbourne and the University of Adelaide, where student activism was less robust.<sup>340</sup> The coalition advocated instead a freeze in fees for current students, believing that such a 'moderate' and 'pragmatic' response to fees would be achievable in contrast to the 'abolitionist' position. The 'pro-freeze' camp in fact viewed the alternative position as 'unsustainable' and an 'idealistic' riposte to government policy at

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<sup>336</sup> Ibid, p.3

<sup>337</sup> Peter Subramaniam, *Preamble to structure, OSCAFF*, Melbourne, 1986, p.8

<sup>338</sup> Pang Hai Long, 1985, press release, NSWOSC, University of New South Wales

<sup>339</sup> Ibid

<sup>340</sup> Hastings, G, op. cit.

a time when tertiary fees for all students were actually being contemplated. Such idealism would have little influence in significantly shifting government policy in the short-term. By advocating for ‘freeze’ in fees instead of the more radical anti-fees campaign, the ‘pro-freeze’ faction wanted to minimise the adverse impact of fee increases on currently enrolled overseas students. The ‘pro-freeze’ group advocated a campaign that worked towards achieving ‘something concrete and obtainable in the shortest time’.<sup>341</sup> Raj Kanan argued:

...are we prepared to ignore the students who are facing the hardship of the 1986 charge of \$3,500, and proceed with a campaign that is based purely on idealistic assertions which will take a long time and a lot of effort to achieve. If we agree that the abolition of OSC is a long-term process, then shouldn't we address the immediate issue that is to ensure that the students, who are here, are not deported for failing to meet the increase? ...if something is not achieved in the short term than this will lead to a point where overseas students lose hope on the entire system or the campaign.<sup>342</sup>

*Different campaign styles and distinctive philosophical leanings:* One faction comprised a majority of campuses in New South Wales under the leadership of the NSWOSC. Dominated by Malaysian students who formed the majority intake of all private overseas students in Australia, studying mainly at the University of New South Wales (UNSW), and University of Technology Sydney (UTS), the faction advocated a confrontational style of campaign that relied on developing close alliances with local student organisations within a wider opposition to tuition fees. Their activism is indeed not surprising since UNSW and UTS, both established in the sixties, were considered historically more progressive than the older institutions. In fact, during the seventies, both institutions formed the backbone of the National Overseas Students Services (NOSS), a division created with the Australian Union of Students in 1961 to represent the concerns of overseas students. Under their influence, the NOSS gradually shifted its

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<sup>341</sup> Raj Kanan, 1985, Idealism and unity, Action Reaction – National Overseas Students Newsletter, Melbourne

<sup>342</sup> Ibid.

focus from welfare concerns to foreign policy issues.<sup>343</sup> This shift, as argued earlier, not only diminished its relevance but also significantly contributed to the organisation's demise by the mid-eighties.<sup>344</sup>

Despite the fracture in the overseas students' response, a number of key resolutions were passed, not as a compromise or due to the logic of a particular argument, but due to the fact that the 'pro-freeze' votes at the conference were much larger than the 'abolitionist' votes. In fact, the fracture in the fledgling movement remained clearly delineated across two distinct factions, pro-freeze and abolitionist.

Relying on a conference dominated by the pro-freeze faction, the conference swiftly passed five motions. First, it called on the Australian Federal Government to freeze the overseas students charge at the 1984/85 levels. Second, it called for the immediate re-evaluation of the overseas students program (OSP), including the total removal of the overseas students charge. Third, it called on the government to employ financial incentives or any other mechanisms to implement its new policy of 10 percent institutional quota for overseas students. Fourth, it called on the government to institute its new policy to impose 20 percent faculty quotas for overseas students in all institutions of higher learning. Finally, it called on home governments of overseas students in Australia to adopt all positive measures in support of the campaign against fee increases.<sup>345</sup> Having a significant majority of Malaysian students, the conference singled out the Malaysian Government for particular aid.<sup>346</sup>

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<sup>343</sup> Yau, G, 1994, History of the overseas students movement, International Students Handbook, UNSW International Students Department, Student Guild, Sydney.

<sup>344</sup> Hastings, G, op.cit.

<sup>345</sup> Service, M. O. S. (1986). The 2nd national overseas student conference - Monash 1986. Monash University, Monash Overseas Student Service

<sup>346</sup> McKenna, J., 1985, Fee protest: students call home for help, Herald, 27 May

## OPPOSING THE OVERSEAS STUDENTS CHARGES

On 22 May 1985, five student representatives from the NSWOSC met with the Minister of Education, Senator Susan Ryan, at her Parliament House office in Canberra. The students raised their concerns about the increase in visa charges, the discriminatory sub-quotas, and racism directed at overseas students on campus. The meeting achieved little in securing any concessions, only leaving the students 'feeling that they had not come any closer to resolving the many problems faced by overseas students'.<sup>347</sup> The Minister had in fact informed them that 'there was no room for compromise' and the 'overseas student fees were here to stay'.<sup>348</sup>

Within a month of the visit, the Minister unveiled further details of the planned changes to the OSP. The new policy would maintain the 1985 level of overseas student intake and allow in 1986 a maximum of 3500 new private students to commence studies – admitting 2000 to secondary schools and 1500 to tertiary institutions. By maintaining the 1985 intake level, the government also allowed itself more time to prepare the groundwork to introduce the legislative changes – the *Overseas Students Charge Amendment Bill 1985* – while controlling the growing pressure imposed on universities by an increased overseas demand for limited tertiary places.

In response to the Minister's policy, the students began accelerating their plans to conduct a major public campaign and prepare for a lobby trip to Canberra to oppose the legislative changes. From 15 to 19 July 1986, a *National Mobilisation Week* was organised across Australia. The week-long campaign involved a petition drive; compiling case histories of students with genuine financial difficulties; writing letters of protest to the media, State and Federal Parliament members; and organising multicultural social events on campus to help raise awareness and disseminate information to students.<sup>349</sup>

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<sup>347</sup> Steven Gan, 1985, press release, NSWOSC, 22 May (unpublished)

<sup>348</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>349</sup> OSCAFF, 1985, Campaign package for campuses in Victoria, OSCAFF Activities Report 1985 – 1986, p.3 (unpublished)

Accompanying the national campaign, OSCAFF began preparation to send a delegation to Canberra to lobby against the government's amendment. The lobby trip would involve meeting with politicians from the Australian Democrats, Labor and Liberal parties. As they prepared for their trip, news had reached the students that the Liberals would vote with the Democrats to block the fees Bill in the Senate. The good news served as a much added impetus to the group.

Meanwhile, another OSCAFF delegation departed for Malaysia to meet with the Deputy Education Minister, Datuk Ling Liong Sik, the Minister for Transport, Datuk Samy Velu, members of the social reform group ALIRAN,<sup>350</sup> and the Malaysian Trade Union Congress. The OSCAFF lobby sought the support of the ministers, non-government organisations and unions to oppose the fee policy. The students claimed that while the 'present (Overseas Students Charge) scheme is already a source of great financial hardship to Malaysian students, any further increase, much less full-cost recovery, would be disastrous.'<sup>351</sup>

It is interesting to note however that the students only met with non-Malay ethnic leaders from the national coalition front – the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) and the Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC) – a human rights media organisation and a non-Malay labour union. The majority of Malaysian students affected by fee rises were non-Malays (Chinese and Indians) who were not beneficiaries of Malaysian Government scholarships which mainly targeted '*Bumiputra*'<sup>352</sup> Malays, which preferential treatment under the the Government's New Economic Policy (NEP).<sup>353</sup> Since the Australian Government's announcement regarding raising the OSC and introducing full fee courses, the Malaysian Government had given little support to the students' opposition campaign. By meeting with the MCA and MIC, the students hoped

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<sup>350</sup> ALIRAN is a Malaysian multi-ethnic reform movement dedicated to Justice, Freedom and Solidarity – see <http://www.aliran.com/more.html>

<sup>351</sup> Peter Subramaniam, 1985, Leader of the Opposition, Encik Lim Kit Siang, 2 March (unpublished)

<sup>352</sup> Bumiputra literally means 'sons of soil' – a Malay term widely used in Malaysia, embracing ethnic Malays, Javanese, Bugis, Minang and other indigenous groups.

<sup>353</sup> For discussion on the Malaysian Government's New Economic Policy and education see Anderssen, C, 1993, The End of an Era? Contemporary Trends in Malaysian Student Movement in Australia, Asian Studies Discipline, The Flinders University of South Australia, Adelaide and Jomo, K.S, 2004, The New Economic Policy and interethnic relations in Malaysia, United nations research institute for social development

the ethnic based parties would indirectly influence the Malay dominated government to respond strongly against fee increases that directly affected their ethnic communities. By lobbying a human rights organisation and a labour union, the students hoped that these organisations would help increase pressure of the government to respond to fee increases. OSCAFF's lobby trip to Malaysia did attract the desired support from the Malaysian Trade Union Congress, which publicly criticised the Australian Government's decision to increase fees.<sup>354</sup>

While the lobby trips and media attention were beginning to raise the plight of the students, there were however emerging concerns by some Malaysian members of OSCAFF's leadership team. The Malaysian students were becoming deeply concerned that the Malaysian Government would misconstrue their strong opposition towards the Australian Government as 'undesirable' political activities, attracting reprisal when they returned home. The students particularly feared that their critical opposition of the Australian Government would adversely affect their campaign and discourage more Malaysian students from vocally opposing the fee charges.<sup>355</sup> To ease their fears, they met with the Malaysian High Commissioner in Melbourne to obtain some assurance about their public campaigns. The High Commissioner assured the leaders that the Malaysian Government would not consider the students' protest anti-national as long as they kept within the Australian legal limits.<sup>356</sup>

On 21 August 1985, the government introduced into the lower house the Bill for an Act to amend the *Overseas Students Charge Act 1979*. The Bill proposed to raise the overseas student charges for current and future students by 35 percent for the 1985/86 academic year and 40 percent for the 1986/87 period. It also proposed to set the upper ceiling for the overseas students quota at all tertiary institutions and courses.

On 7 October, a delegation of fourteen student representatives departed for Canberra armed with results from the survey research, case histories and letters of support.<sup>357</sup> The

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<sup>354</sup> 1985, MTUC raps Aussies for raising fees, *New Straits Times*, Malaysia, 24 March

<sup>355</sup> About eleven out of the 14 members of OSCAFF lobby trip to Canberra on 7 – 11 October were Malaysians – OSCAFF Campaign 1985, End of year report, (unpublished)

<sup>356</sup> OSCAFF Activities Report (1985 – 1986), Melbourne, (unpublished)

<sup>357</sup> The lobby team was composed of eleven overseas students and three members of the National Union of Students. The delegation included Ng Kong Peng and S. Subramaniam from Monash University; Raj

student lobby would attempt to convince the government of the impact of the fee increase on the welfare of overseas students, especially for students enrolled before 1 January 1986. Understanding the importance of securing the support of the Opposition parties to defeat the Bill, the students also invested considerable effort in lobbying the Opposition into a more vocal position against the amendment Bill. At the start of their lobby trip, the students met with Democrats, Senator Janine Haines and an advisor to Senator Macklin, to consolidate the support they had already received from the Democrats.<sup>358</sup> In fact, it was less than five months before when the leader of the Democrats, Senator Don Chipp wrote a letter in strong support of the students' cause:

The Australian Democrats oppose the recent increases in overseas students charges. We believe that the provision of places in our universities for overseas students should be seen as part of our overseas aid effort and that the government should face up to its moral obligations in this area. Places provided for overseas students should be additional to those provided to local students, and should not be seen as placing local students at a disadvantage by competing for those places. We further believe that if fees for overseas students are to be charged, then the level of those fees should be set in relation to the income in the students' home country.<sup>359</sup>

After the July National Mobilisation Week campaign, the student leaders had not only continued to stay in close contact with Senator Chipp's office, they were in fact regularly kept updated by his office about developments in Parliament. Even before the delegation departed for Canberra, the students met with Senator Don Chipp again to discuss suitable strategies in Parliament.

During their Canberra lobby trip, the students met with various members of government, including the Federal Australian Labor Party (ALP) Caucus Education Committee; the Ministers of Education, Trade, Industry, Finance, Social Security,

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Kannan, K.K. Ng, K.E. Cheng and K.T. Lim from RMIT (Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology); Sayed Khayum, Mark Randell and 'Tiny' from Warnambool; and L.L. Chua, D. Atkin, Evan Thornley and Peter Subramaniam from University of Melbourne – OSCAFF Campaign 1985 End of Year Report, OSCAFF Activities Report, Melbourne, (unpublished)

<sup>358</sup> Senator Macklin, Democrat spokesperson on Education was overseas at the time - OSCAFF Campaign 1985 End of Year Report, OSCAFF Activities Report, Melbourne, (unpublished)

<sup>359</sup> Senator Don Chipp, Correspondence. G. D. Mackay, S. Dasan, Canberra, Parliament of Australia - The Senate, 1985. (unpublished)

Science and Foreign Affairs; and the office of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. Recognising the importance of Caucus support to the ALP, the delegation also lobbied the back benchers in the House of Representatives and the Senate.

At the meetings, the students strongly argued that the fee increases, especially if it became retrospective, would have an adverse impact on students, particularly those enrolled before 1 January 1986. To substantiate their claims, they presented the results of their Victorian survey conducted by the Department of Statistics at the University of Melbourne. The survey gauged the likely effects the government's fee increase on current and future overseas student. It revealed that 246 out of 270 respondents would consider 'terminating their studies or increasing paid work'.<sup>360</sup> The results showed similarities with the New South Wales Overseas Students Collective (NSWOSC) survey conducted in the Australian Capital Territory and New South Wales. The NSWOSC study showed that 43 percent of enrolled overseas students would not be able to complete their studies or would be forced to transfer their studies to another country.<sup>361</sup> To add to their claims, the delegation also presented a dossier containing 150 case studies of students who would be forced to discontinue their courses if the fee increase became retrospective.

In lobbying the Liberal Opposition party into a more vocal position on the amendment, the students met with Opposition back benchers from both houses. They found particularly strong support from the Liberal Party's Shadow Minister for Education, the Hon. Peter Shack. The Hon. Peter Shack was convinced that the Australian Government had already entered into a 'tacit agreement with students already enrolled as to the level of the Overseas Student Charge (OSC)'.<sup>362</sup> This view received broad backing from the Opposition.<sup>363</sup>

For three days, they lobbied hard for changes to the Bill: 'We would normally start up at 8.00 am and be in the House until around 9.00 at night. It was indeed three whole days of constant lobbying, developing new arguments, realising the problems with old

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<sup>360</sup> Clayton, G, 1985, Analysis of a Survey of Overseas Students Relating to the Introduction of Full Fees Recovery. Melbourne, Statistical Consulting Centre, University of Melbourne, (unpublished)

<sup>361</sup> Parliamentary debate, Overseas Students Charge Amendment Bill, 20 November, 1985, p. 3249

<sup>362</sup> OSCAFF Campaign, End of Year Report, OSCAFF Activities Report, Melbourne, 1985 (unpublished)

<sup>363</sup> *ibid.*

arguments and adjusting the approach depending on whom we were speaking to.’<sup>364</sup> On the third day of the lobby trip, the students received news of a proposal circulating within the ALP Caucus Education Committee, proposing an amendment to Cabinet calling for a ‘significant compromise’ to protect students enrolled prior to 1 January 1986.

By the end of the trip, students believed that their campaign had made some progress. A week after their return, the President of OSCAFF, Peter Subramaniam, received information from the Democrats’ head office informing him that the government was floating a 15 percent increase instead of the 35 percent for students enrolled prior to 1 January 1986. Peter Subramaniam called an emergency OSCAFF executive meeting to consider the proposed compromise. The meeting agreed that the compromise did not adequately respond to the problems that the OSC Amendment Bill 1985 was creating.<sup>365</sup> Further ‘the 15 percent did not represent an indexed or regulated increase and thus was unacceptable.’<sup>366</sup> The students relayed their objection to the Democrats and Opposition Liberal parties. Both the Opposition and the Democrats shared the view and the Democrats submitted an amendment for a freeze in fees.

#### *DEPORTATION OF AHMAD RAZANI OTHMAN*

On Tuesday 15 October, news of the arrest and planned deportation of a Malaysian student, Mr Ahmad Razani Othman, reached OSCAFF and NSWOSC. The 22 year old economics student from the University of New England was arrested two weeks before his final exams and detained at the Westbridge migrant detention centre for failing to pay his tuition fees.<sup>367</sup> Within ten days, the Department of Immigration had deported Mr Ahmad, claiming that Mr Ahmad eventually ‘made the right decision in voluntarily

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<sup>364</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>365</sup> Subramaniam, S, 1985, OSCAFF Campaign 1985 – End of Year Report, OSCAFF, Melbourne (unpublished)

<sup>366</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>367</sup> Daily Telegraphy, 1985, Student defaulter faces deportation, 24 October

leaving Australia'.<sup>368</sup> The deportation of Mr Ahmad represented the first case of an overseas student forced to leave Australia for failing to pay his annual tuition fees.

The deportation of Mr Ahmad attracted considerable publicity and opposition. OSCAFF immediately responded by telexing the relevant Ministers of Cabinet appealing for leniency in cases of genuine financial difficulty. The ASEAN (Association for South-East Asian Nations) Teachers Organisations made representations to the Australian Teachers Federation seeking support to oppose the deportation by the government. The President of the Australian Teachers Federation (ATF), Jennie George, registered ATF's 'strongest protest' at the overseas student's arrest and subsequent deportation, describing it as 'overt heavy-handedness – with no obvious publicly understood mechanisms for appeals procedures on humanitarian and hardship grounds for these young people.'<sup>369</sup>

We object strongly being put into a position vis a vis our own extensive connections and positive relations in the Asian – Pacific region, to have to justify what in our view are totally inadequate procedures and processes, on this issue.<sup>370</sup>

About 20 members of the NSWOSC staged a protest outside the Polish Club at Ashfield, Sydney, where the Immigration Minister, Mr Hurford, was attending a meeting.<sup>371</sup> The NSWOSC claimed that on 27 September the Department of Education had in fact given guarantees that no overseas students would be deported without being given a chance to put their case forward. Further, the students accused the Federal Government of ignoring the Malaysian Consulate's and various academic unions' call for an inquiry into Mr Ahmad's case and for intimidating him into leaving Australia against his will. In a letter written and signed by Mr Ahmad at the detention centre and witnessed by NSWOSC members, Mr Peng Hai Long and Mr Steven Gan, Ahmad claimed:

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<sup>368</sup> Ryan, S., 1985, Question without Notice: Overseas student: Departure from Australia, Senate Hansard, 26 November, p. 2229

<sup>369</sup> George, J., & Bluer, R, 1985, Overseas student arrest, deportation, telex, 22 October – the Telex was sent to Bowen, Hurford, Hayden, Ryan, Dawkins, ACTU and FAUSA (unpublished)

<sup>370</sup> Ibid

<sup>371</sup> Daily Telegraphy, 1985, Student defaulter faces deportation, 24 October

My decision to consent to deportation was made under strong intimidation from officers of the Immigration dept. I have been interviewed a number of times by these officers, and on each occasion was told repeatedly that if I did not voluntarily leave this country, I would be deported therefore not be permitted re-entry to Australia until 1990. This would greatly jeopardize any opportunities I might have to complete my studies.<sup>372</sup>

An anti-racism group representing 30 trade unions attacked the State and Federal Governments for threatening to deport overseas students unable to pay increased overseas fees.<sup>373</sup> The secretary of the Combined Unions Against Racism, Mr Barry Cotter, claimed 15 students were being threatened with deportation just as they were about to sit final exams.<sup>374</sup> Mr Cotter called on the Federal Minister for Immigration, Mr Hurford, the NSW Attorney-General, Mr Sheehan, and the Minister for Police, Mr Anderson, to 'drop any proposed action against the students.'<sup>375</sup>

After considerable pressure, Senator Susan Ryan partly relented, allowing Mr Ahmad to complete his degree in Malaysia:

Government policy is that private overseas students, as with government supported Australian students, should maintain reasonable academic progress if they wish to retain government support. Because the student's poor record had been due to financial worries and because his most recent academic work in the Bachelor of Economics course had shown promise of improvement, his case was re-examined by my Department. My Department has taken up with the University the possibility of the student being allowed to sit for his end of year examinations in his own country.<sup>376</sup>

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<sup>372</sup> Ahmad Razani Othman, 1985, Letter signed at Westbridge Detention Centre, 25 October, 6.30pm, (unpublished)

<sup>373</sup> Campbell, E., 1985, Unions attack hard line on students, Sydney Morning Herald, 28 October

<sup>374</sup> Ibid

<sup>375</sup> Ibid

<sup>376</sup> Ryan, S., 1985, Question without Notice: Overseas student: Departure from Australia, Senate Hansard, 26 November, p. 2229

*OPPOSING THE OVERSEAS STUDENTS CHARGE: SECOND ATTEMPT*

From October to November 1985, the student leadership took a break from their campaigns to prepare for their exams. On 19 November, two OSCAFF representatives, Mr Peter Subramaniam and Mr Ooi Kheng Boon, left for Canberra when they were informed that Parliament would debate the OSC amendment. Apart from meeting members from both Government and Opposition, the students met with the Private Secretary to the Minister for Education to discuss at length several issues, including the reasons why the Minister could not accept the Democrats' 'fees freeze' amendment to the Bill. Immediately after the discussion, both met with a 'helpful Liberal' who indicated to them that approaches had already been made to the Liberal shadow minister involved.<sup>377</sup> At 10.00 pm, the same night, the students met with the Liberal spokesperson on Education, Hon. Peter Shack. At this meeting, they learnt that the Coalition had agreed to the Government's amendment of a 15 per cent charge for students enrolled before 1 January 1986. Both student leaders expressed 'great doubts as to whether a 15 percent increase was actually going to address the injustice to the students already enrolled.'<sup>378</sup>

On the morning of the second reading, the representatives met again with Hon. Peter Shack, to be informed that the Coalition had accepted some doubts expressed by the students. Mr Shack agreed with the arguments expressed by the students and gave them the assurance that the Coalition would not support the proposed 15 percent increase.

At 5.30 pm on 20 November, the House of Representatives debated the *Overseas Student Charge Amendment Bill 1985*. In a speech to the House, Mr Peter Shack expressed reservations about the amendments, arguing that they would produce 'substantially and unexpectedly higher costs to overseas students who are already in tertiary courses in Australia.'<sup>379</sup> Even Australian Labor Party back bencher, Mr Peter Milton, member for La Trobe, backed the Coalition argument, expressing his concern about the effect of the increased fees and proposing instead a three-year fixed period for student charges to ensure at least 'elements of stability and certainty' in the program.

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<sup>377</sup> OSCAFF Report 1985 – 1986, Melbourne, op.cit. (unpublished)

<sup>378</sup> *ibid*

<sup>379</sup> *Overseas Students Charge Amendment Bill 1985*, House Hansard, 20 November 1985, p.3249

Milton's view was in stark contrast to the government's, largely due to his discussion with the student leaders:

I must admit to being a convert to these views as a result of the many letters I have received and talks I have had with representatives of the various students' organisations around Australia.<sup>380</sup>

Having control of the Lower House, the amendment of a 15 percent increase on students enrolled before 1 January 1986 passed comfortably through to the Senate. The Coalition however kept its word and voted against the Bill.

Five days after the debate, the President of OSCAFF, Peter Subramaniam, received a telephone call from Senator Peter Baume, the Liberal spokesperson on Education in the Senate, informing him that a separate Liberal amendment – a compromise between the Democrats' freeze in real money terms and the government's unconditional 15 percent increase – would likely be accepted by the government. The compromise would involve setting the charge to reflect the rate of inflation, effectively imposing an increase of up to 15 percent on students enrolled before 1 January 1986. The Government accepted the amendment and on the night of 28 November, the Senate passed the *Overseas Student Charge Amendment Bill 1985*.

Even though the compromise did not truly reflect the students' ultimate aim of halting the fee increase, it did represent a major concession by the government in response to the students' campaigns. After their modest success, the students were determined to bolster their opposition to future policy changes. On May 1986, the second national conference of overseas students established the National Liaison Committee for Overseas Students in Australia (NLC). The new body would represent all overseas students in the country. The NLC would play a significant role in contributing to the development of Australia's Export Education Services Sector in subsequent years.

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<sup>380</sup> *ibid*

## CONCLUSION

This chapter forms the basis of understanding the emergence of an overseas student collective action against government education aid reforms. In this chapter I have attempted to trace the formation of overseas students' organisations during the early years of the Colombo Plan. As the Plan expanded, overseas students extended their social activities to incorporate welfare concerns. Its evolution led to creation of a national overseas students service incorporated within a larger student body to serve the welfare needs of students studying in universities. Under a markedly liberal policy regime, the students' focus in the seventies shifted to emphasise international activism. Such diversion from their original mandate subsequently marginalised a significant portion of their constituents, handicapping their ability to mobilise effective support to oppose policy changes. The government's policy announcement in 1985 catalysed a new grassroots response to the proposed changes and within two months overseas students across the country convened a national conference and mooted the creation of a national representative body. It was envisaged that such a body would help bridge the geographical distances, facilitate interstate communications and coordinate national campaigns. However, that attempt to mobilise failed, with the gathered student leaders unable to agree on a unified policy response. Meanwhile, students continued their fragmented push to stop the Overseas Students Amendment Bill being introduced in Parliament. During their lobby trip to Canberra, they realised their first attempt would not succeed. In response, they adapted their arguments, formulated new arguments and changed their lobby strategies to push for an amendment to the bill. Their 'Campaign 1985' did yield three important successes. First, it managed to reduce the government's proposed 35 percent charges to instead reflect the current rate of inflation. Second, they found a meaningful resolution to the deportation of the Malaysian student, Ahmed Othman. Third, the success added the necessary impetus to push once again for a national coordinating committee.

This chapter seeks to explain how institutionalised politics broadly and public policy specifically within the national context shaped the formation of overseas students' collective action. Four key observations can be drawn from this chapter. First, overseas student political mobilisation, under the Colombo Plan, was constrained by the

program's emphasis of the Australian Government and Australian cultural attitudes. However, shifting institutional structures and policies from the 1970s onwards, which were driven largely by economic factors, played a significant role in expanding political opportunities for overseas student mobilisation. By 1985, the easing of government constraints had allowed a 'fresh' mobilisation of grassroots overseas students. Second, the leaked report favouring the introduction of full fees signalled the beginning of a forming overseas students' action. Overseas students clubs and societies spawned during the early development of education aid coupled with the Australian Students Union's active promotion of campus based overseas student representation, were crucial in creating an environment of a loose network of campus overseas student bodies that subsequently coalesced in response to a common policy threat. The loose connective network of campus based overseas student clubs was an important element in mobilising a collective action.

Third, the formation of a coalition of overseas students grouping actively opposed government reforms by adopting action repertoires of movements and forming alliances with local students. In alliance with local students, the overseas students used petition drives, lobby trips, public rallies and the symbolism of a mock funeral procession to raise the public profile of their issues and attract support. Finally, during the emergent phase, the overseas students began to mobilise structures and resources to underpin their opposition. The shift from an informal loose network towards developing a formal structure of 'sufficient strength' was their attempt at seizing opportunities for action.

If changes in education aid policy shaped the prospects and form of overseas students' collective actions, then mobilising structures influenced the way in which the students sought to organise. The next chapter will examine the overseas students' attempt to shift from an informal network opposing government policy to a formal collective structure through which to mobilise and engage in collective action. In Chapter five, I will examine the students' push to establish a national coordinating body, the National Liaison Committee for Overseas Students in Australia (NLC).