

PHOENIX? PAULINE HANSON AND QUEENSLAND POLITICS



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD	1
INTRODUCTION: THE PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THIS RESEARCH REPORT	3
Hanson in Queensland	4
The structure of this research study	6
1: THE QUEENSLAND ROOTS OF HANSON'S POPULISM	8
Christian fundamentalism under Joh Bjelke-Petersen	10
Continuities and discontinuities: Bjelke-Petersen and Hanson 1998	14
2: ONE NATION'S 'GOLDEN AGE'	17
The 1998 Queensland election	17
Disarray amongst the Queensland One Nation parliamentarians	18
Hanson loses her lower house seat	19
Organisational structure	21
Defectors and the City Country Alliance	22
Sparks rekindling One Nation	23
Hanson remained a presence in national politics	23
3: BOOKS ANALYSING ONE NATION'S APPARENT FAILURE	26
'Two Nations – The Causes and Effects of the Rise of the One Nation Party in Australia' (1998)	26
'The Rise and Fall of One Nation' (2000)	28
'Off the Rails - the Pauline Hanson Trip' (2001)	31
'Please Explain: the rise, fall and rise again of Pauline Hanson (2017)	32
4: 'THE QUEENSLAND RIGHT IN TURMOIL' REVISITED	36
The Liberals	36
The Nationals	38
5: NEW MINOR PARTIES OUTSIDE QUEENSLAND	41
First preference vote share 2016	41
Leyonhjelm's Liberal Democratic Party	42
Bernardi's Australian Conservatives Party	42
Katter's Australian Party	42
The demise of the Palmer United Party	43
A Tasmanian comparison: Jacqui Lambie	43
6: THE ONE NATION PHOENIX RISEN FROM ITS ASHES	46
Candidates, funding and management	47
7: HANSON'S APPEAL - CHARISMATIC POPULIST	51
Why is Hanson where she is?	51
On what is this leadership based?	53
Xenophobia	54
Pauline the 'battler'	55
Gender	55
'Pauline's People': the voters	57

8: HANSON'S POLICIES	61
Conspiracy theories	61
What does Hanson stand for?	63
Racial discrimination	64
Race, immigration and insecurity	65
Broader policy proposals	66
'Is Pauline a communist?'	69
Competing with the conservatives for votes - policy pragmatism	71
9: CONTESTED 'FACTS' AND DENIAL OF EVIDENCE	73
A 'political portal' for the 'fever swamp'?	73
Silencing opposition and challenging 'facts'	74
A 'Fifth Estate'?: the new media and the public interest	77
Volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity	77
10: EXPLAINING THE REBIRTH OF THE PHOENIX	79
The bedrock of charisma and ideology	79
Discord within the other state parties in Queensland	80
Terrorism and the immigration debate	80
Unintended consequences and the 2016 double dissolution election	80
11: CANBERRA POST-SCRIPT: A WEEK IS A LONG TIME IN POLITICS	83
Has Pauline Hanson changed, or has Australia changed?	83
Section 44 - testing the truth	84
Hanson's burqa stunt	85
Queensland repercussions	87
APPENDIX: CONTENT ANALYSIS - ONE NATION'S QUEENSLAND POLICIES	90
Foreword by Steve Dickson	90
'No asset sales' and 'Surplus government assets'	90
Citizen initiated referenda	90
Crocodile management	90
Economic development	91
Firearms	91
Health	91
Law and order	91
Transport and roads	92
Vegetation Management	92
Water Security	92
BIBLIOGRAPHY	93
Books on Pauline Hanson and One Nation	93
Selected books on Queensland political history	94

FOREWORD

Discussions of Queensland politics by southerners often fail to come to terms with the socio-geographic character of the state. Discussions about Pauline Hanson and her One Nation Party tend to suffer from the same defect, even though she has always been a prominent figure in national politics.

In my valedictory contribution to the series of TJ Ryan Foundation Research Studies, I have sought to deal with some of these problems, confident that I have lived here long enough to have outgrown my Tasmanian antecedents. My aim is not to compete with the massive outpourings from journalists and media experts about Hanson but to provide a parochial focus which draws upon the traditions of historical and political science scholarship.

My connection with this topic goes back to the late 1970s when I was first appointed Professor of Public Administration at the University of Queensland (UQ) and has been enriched over the years by the help and encouragement of many fine scholars. These include the range of professors who held posts in what was once called the Department of Government and the senior staff who worked with them to make that department a leader in research and teaching about national, state and local politics and public administration. This era has now passed at UQ, and what is now called a School of Political Science and International Studies, focus on a much wider scene and attract a commensurably wider range of local and international students and scholars.

In retirement, some of us retain our original enthusiasms and join with younger scholars and public administrators as Research Associates to sustain the work of the TJ Ryan Foundation as a source of study material about Queensland politics and public administration. There has also been a constructive relationship with the State Library and the Parliamentary Library and I acknowledge in particular the work of Dr Paul Reynolds which links our time together at UQ with the important resources held in the Parliamentary Library under his general stewardship in an honorary capacity until his recent retirement.

When I accepted appointment by Annastacia Palaszczuk as the inaugural Executive Director of the Foundation, I saw it as a logical extension of the work I was involved in with the UQ History Department on the oral history project called 'Queensland Speaks'.¹ But the Foundation has rapidly outgrown any identification with UQ and the TJ Ryan Foundation's list of Research Associates and the members of the governing board now cover a wide spectrum of institutions.²

The Queensland University of Technology (QUT) has been particularly supportive, both its current and retired honorary staff. It is fitting therefore that Dr Mary Crawford agreed to succeed me. She has already broadened the scope of the

¹ See website at [Queensland Speaks](#).

² See website at [TJ Ryan Foundation](#).

Foundation's activities over the past year, accelerating the scope and frequency of events, both public occasions and in-house policy workshops.

In making my own past contribution, I have relied on a number of co-workers. Dr Howard Guille has been a regular co-author on a number of wide-ranging publications which could not have been completed without his input. John Ford has helped establish the secretariat and our corporate identity (and has read drafts of publications). Among former University of Queensland staff, Dr Paul Rodan has offered rapid detailed and perceptive responses to drafts, despite his isolation in the deep south. More generally, Rob White of 'Toadshow' and current Executive Editor, Dr Chris Salisbury, have helped design and establish the website, operating at a uniformly impressive standard. Chris somehow has found time to make his own scholarly contributions to Queensland studies. His workload on managing the content of the website so quietly and efficiently allowed Ann Scott to retire in May 2017 from the position of Executive Editor that she had held for the first four years of the Foundation's existence, confident of the continual enhancement in the quality and content of the website.

Two other people deserve mention, even though I have never met either of them. Among all those writings about Pauline Hanson and One Nation, two books written 20 years apart stand out and have been liberally acknowledged in our text: one by Margo Kingston and the other by Anna Broinowski. Taken together, they give vitality to our document, supplying flesh and blood to complement the potentially arid analyses of political science.

Ann Scott has been by my side all the way, as far back as books and articles we published together in the late 1970s to the team effort in bringing the Foundation into existence in 2013, then keeping it going to the point where it has a recognisable identity. I am just the fossicker and wordsmith; she makes things happen.

As editor, Ann has displayed the wide variety of technological skills acquired over a lifetime of diverse practice, as well as using her own polished literary skills to contribute a section here on the impact of new media on political behaviour. I thank her for her dedication both to this project and to half a century of joint research activity.

INTRODUCTION: THE PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THIS RESEARCH REPORT

The phoenix is a long-lived bird In Greek mythology that is cyclically regenerated or reborn. Associated with the sun, the phoenix obtains new life by arising from the ashes of its predecessor.

There are complex reasons offered to explain the recent resurgence of Pauline Hanson's One Nation to centre stage in Australian national politics. Hanson's success in acquiring four Senate seats in the 2016 federal election provided her with an influential presence. Her resurgence has attracted the attention of academics, political commentators and public intellectuals within major think tanks, as well as politicians and strategists in all the political parties. The study here has the modest objective of reviewing some of these commentaries and analysing them in the specific context of Queensland state politics.

After a period of high drama, including a potentially influential representation in the Queensland state legislature in 1998, One Nation seemed to have waned over the next two decades. However, since 2016, Hanson has re-emerged at the head of a party organisation with enough electoral clout in Queensland to offer a wide range of employment opportunities for people with serious political aspirations and to pose a challenge to all other parties at the forthcoming state election. She has also used the platform provided by her own election as a Queensland senator to advance her policies at national level. In Canberra, she has been aided by the presence of three other senators aligned with her party to create a bloc which cannot be ignored by the current coalition government in its attempts to build majority support in the Senate on particular issues.³

Political scientists and journalists have also recognised that One Nation is once again an institution worthy of close scrutiny and its leader identified as a celebrity who has successfully shifted from the entertainment spotlight. Parallels were drawn with the success of various parties and causes in Europe which were generally identified as 'populist' in character. These analyses increased in frequency with the Trump victory in the November presidential elections, pointing to similar ideological preferences, media strategies and tactics by which One Nation could mobilise a similar core of disenchanted Australian voters. (Occasionally some commentators lost sight of the different scale of Trump's achievement in actually winning power whereas Pauline Hanson at most might gain a position of influence rather than challenging to form government in her own right.)

A study from one of the leading national think-tanks pursues these international parallels in terms of changing economic, cultural and institutional factors. John Daley, in a report *Populism and Beyond*, to be published in 2017 by the Grattan

³ This was acknowledged by Liberal politicians at national level during 2017. After industry minister Arthur Sinodinos called the late-model One Nation more 'sophisticated', his Queensland cabinet colleague Steven Ciobo also praised the resurgent party. Ciobo argued that the Liberal Party should put itself in the best position to govern and talked up Ms Hanson's right-wing populist party as displaying a 'certain amount of economic rationalism' and welcomed her support for government policy.

Institute, offers a wide-ranging analysis of demographic and economic trends with One Nation as one exemplar of a successful protest party in an era when such parties have become more significant than in the past.⁴ Daley's analysis has shown that the national voting presence of non-major parties has escalated rapidly since the 1970s from 10 percent to 40 percent, with a particular jump in 2013.

Minor parties do well in regional areas, and they're getting stronger. In 2016, minor parties polled roughly 35 percent of Senate first preference vote in the regions, up from 15 percent in 2010. This pattern holds across all states: the minor party vote grows as one travels further from the state's capital.

Political discontent in Australia's regions is not new. As Judith Brett showed in her 2011 *Quarterly Essay*, 'Fair Share'⁵, regions have long resented their lot in Australian politics. Despite the mining boom, cities are growing faster than regions. Many regional areas are losing population, as regional towns grow only by draining population from their hinterland.

But it's not obvious why these economic trends should translate into different politics now. The past decade simply continues the population trends of the previous century. And income growth per capita has been almost identical in cities and regions over the last decade. In contrast to the United States, those remaining in Australia's regions aren't doing too badly.

Nor is it obvious why race should translate into different politics now. Hanson's resurgence, and the continued rise of other minor parties, does not coincide with any obvious increase in concerns about migration.⁶

Daley's final point in the brief but profound commentary (which presaged his longer report) emphasised the significance of changing attitudes towards the institutions of government, an alienation shared across all the states and a major influence causing the groundswell of support for minor parties.

HANSON IN QUEENSLAND

This study has more moderate aspirations: a case study seeking to describe the parochial historical context which may help to provide a fuller understanding of the political significance of Hansonism specifically within Queensland. It thus seeks to complement rather than supplant the extensive body of literature on this subject. Because it is Queensland-focussed, it deals with the national scene only incidentally – although some of these incidents obviously impact at the state level.

⁴ Daley J, '[The rise of protest politics - a comment on David Marr's Quarterly Essay](#)' *The Quarterly Essay*, Grattan Institute, 16 June 2017. See also Marks K, '[The rise of populist politics in Australia](#)', *BBC*, 1 March 2017.

⁵ Brett J, 'Fair share: country and city in Australia', *The Quarterly Essay*, 2011.

⁶ Daley J, '[Post-Trump, Post Brexit, Post Policy: the Rise of Populism](#)', Queensland State Library 'State of Affairs' event, 17 August 2017 (audio-recording available). This was a preliminary discussion of a major report from the Grattan Institute, 'Populism and Beyond' (forthcoming).

Twenty years ago, a group of young scholars submitted a manuscript on Pauline Hanson and national politics to the University of New England Press.⁷ They described their purpose in the following terms:

What has been lacking in the debate surrounding Pauline Hanson, despite the at times quite sound efforts of the liberal press, is an exploration of a resonant political phenomenon at a level that seeks to achieve some critical distance between itself and the subject.⁸

My purpose is to achieve a similar critical distance at state level, drawing upon my long association with Queensland studies since the 1970s. Some commentators have not always shown an understanding of the nuances of Queensland political culture. This has helped create a general perception that One Nation is a reflection of the general backwardness of Queensland political culture, with former Premier Joh Bjelke-Petersen as the direct ancestor.

Her political hero is Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen, who turned Queensland into one of the most illiberal putatively democratic regions not just in Australia but in the world, with the acquiescence and often enthusiastic support of its state's citizens. ... Hanson is self-appointed heir to this political tradition, and her regional fans are unapologetic about this.⁹

From a range of vantage points over the past forty years, I have worked with others to dispel this type of over-simplification. Most of that work has focussed, almost incidentally, on the complexity of the non-Labor side of the political spectrum where most observers place One Nation.¹⁰

It is my contention that Pauline Hanson represents a unique phenomenon, although with deep populist local roots. She may or may not have long-term effects on Queensland politics, depending on the responses of the other political parties and the wider electorate. What is obvious, however, is that the existence of her party has touched enough raw nerves to require a response. Even back in 1997, it was clear to outside observers that, within the Liberal, Labor and National parties, acting in a populist way had become acceptable as a result of Pauline Hanson.¹¹ This remains true in 2017, when populist forces have come to enjoy greater prominence as the electorate shifts its loyalties away from the major parties.

John Daley offered a national overview of the recent rise of minor parties. He mapped their voting support and overlaid it with distance from the major metropolitan centre in each state, levels of migrant population, income levels and

⁷ Grant Bligh (ed) *Pauline Hanson: One Nation and Australian Politics*, University of New England Press, 1997. Three years later, a group including senior scholars from within the University of Queensland provided a similar contribution at greater depth: Michael Leach, Geoff Stokes and Ian Ward (eds), *The Rise and Fall of One Nation*, University of Queensland Press, 2000. See especially the chapter by Rae Wear, 'One Nation and the Queensland Right'.

⁸ Grant B, p.7.

⁹ Cooke R, ([Alt-wrong: the Australian Right is startling for its incoherence](#), *The Monthly*, April 2017.

¹⁰ See Bibliography for a list of earlier publications.

¹¹ Grant B, p.8.

rates of change of income levels.¹² In his presentation, he used the metaphor of a dart board, with concentric circles constituting geographic groupings with common socio-economic and voting characteristics, with the bulls-eye at the centre of the board located at the GPO in the capital city of each state. He also suggested that the acceleration in voting support since the 1970s occurred simultaneously across the country around 2013. Both these propositions need to be adjusted significantly to fit the Queensland political landscape, both its geography and its history.

This study begins with that history and the roots of a populism which co-existed with a rural and regional group successively called the Country Party and then (misleadingly) the National Party.

The 'Golden Age' for One Nation started with Pauline Hanson's unexpected 1996 win in the federal seat of Oxley, formerly regarded as part of the ALP heartland, and after she had been disendorsed by the Liberal Party shortly before the election for a letter she wrote to the *Queensland Times*. This letter has been identified by a student of comparative populist organisations as aiming at a wider audience than racists:

The letter contained all the elements usually found in radical right propaganda, the most obvious being the victimisation of a weak minority, the Aboriginals, and the supposed victimisation of the well-off majority, the white Anglo-Saxons. In addition, the letter implied that the Indigenous people did not act alone, but with the help of politicians and the elite, the loathed intelligentsia.¹³

The Golden Age peaked when eleven members of her party won seats at the state election of 1998 and constituted a key bloc in negotiations to form a minority government. They were only excluded from becoming a party inside government by the swinging vote of a single independent, Peter Wellington, someone who had once been a member of the National Party but chose to side with the ALP.

Like another Golden Age, this one ended very suddenly, not from a Minoan volcanic explosion but by internal combustion once the group was exposed to the magnifying glass of public performance in parliament. Then, equally unpredictably, One Nation's leader spent two decades in the political wilderness without losing her celebrity status, eventually acquired an entirely new team, and made a spectacular recovery to capture four Senate seats across three states in the 2016 double-dissolution election called by prime minister Malcolm Turnbull.

THE STRUCTURE OF THIS RESEARCH STUDY

This research study starts by reviewing the history of populism in Queensland that preceded Hanson, noting continuities and discontinuities with One Nation. There is then discussion of the wider political context. The study then seeks to identify the unique nature of Pauline Hanson's appeal as a charismatic leader. It also considers

¹² Daley J, '[Post-Trump, Post Brexit, Post Policy: the Rise of Populism](#)'.

¹³ Marcus A, '*Race: John Howard and the Remaking of Australia*, Allen & Unwin, 2001, cited in Mondon A, *The mainstreaming of the extreme right in France and Australia : a populist hegemony?*, University of Bath, 2013, p.63.

the characteristics of One Nation's activists, sympathisers and voters – 'Pauline's people' - particularly in her home state of Queensland.

The next section deals with the specific policies pursued by One Nation at both state and national levels which is presumed to have attracted this support. These policies are framed in terms of: (1) endorsing conspiracy theories about elite privilege undermining legitimate popular control; (2) resisting policies which confer privileges on racial minorities, thereby being seen to undermine national cultural values; and (3) protecting groups suffering from the inequitable economic effects of neo-liberalism and the social problems created by 'political correctness'.

The study concludes with an analysis of this extraordinary history. A unifying theme throughout the case study is the problem of managing relationships between the leader, her immediate coterie of advisers and administrators, and the One Nation candidates. This was the explanation offered for the initial disintegration by insider Scott Balson.¹⁴ Similar internal problems have continued to dog the organisation in its attempt to create a smoothly-functioning management and a credible panel of candidates.

It is also relevant to review what academics at the time believed had caused the apparently irremediable failure of One Nation by 1999 and to assess whether lessons might be learnt from this relatively recent history. 'Authenticity' is one part of the explanation offered for One Nation's emergence, with the party and its leader giving the appearance of saying what 'ordinary people' would like to hear said. Alienation is a closely-related element, with these same 'ordinary people' feeling that they have been left out in the formulation of government actions by the major parties. Conventional party leaders and their urban supporters - sometimes labelled collectively as 'cosmopolitans' - were seen to be cut off and isolated from 'the real world'. This may help explain why One Nation gained credibility and influence in 1998.

The puzzle remains in explaining what happened between 1998 and 2016. A number of influences are identified which may have been interacting to cause the cycle of disappearance and reappearance. Some relate to the internal characteristics of its leadership and organisation. Others were outside the direct control of the party: the responsiveness of the media; the incipient chaos within the major parties; the rise of terrorism associated with Islam on the international scene; the misguided strategy of amending the electoral rules to the apparent disadvantage of minor parties; and the tactical miscalculation of calling a federal election which unnecessarily involved a double dissolution.

I suggest Pauline Hanson's One Nation party has uniquely Queensland characteristics in terms of a combination of ethos and policy positions, internal organisational history and potential relationship with other parties across the Queensland political spectrum. Queensland really is different, even in its brand of populism.

¹⁴ Balson S, *Inside One Nation*, Interactive Presentations, Mt Crosby, 2000.

1: THE QUEENSLAND ROOTS OF HANSON'S POPULISM

A seminar held at the University of Queensland in May 2017 sought to place Hansonism in a wider context. Three people offered the opening contributions, which ranged from the international context to the parochial.

Duncan McDonnell from Griffith University pointed to the existence of populist parties in a large number of European states and their persistence over time. After demonstrating their survival beyond a single electoral cycle, they had ceased to depend on the founding charismatic figure. The parties had been normalised enough to participate in supporting governments, accepted in some cases as coalition partners or able to use their bargaining position to force compromises in the direction of their primary policy objectives. The most dramatic example of this occurred in the 2017 British election, where the Democratic Unionist Party overwhelmed its mainstream conservative opponents in Northern Ireland and commanded a key voting bloc at Westminster, able to negotiate a range of policy concessions.¹⁵

McDonnell was able to point out that this evolution over the past decade was seen to contradict the model articulated in earlier writing about populism. Conventional analyses at that time had emphasised the instability of parties that depended on a charismatic leader and adopted a relatively limited manifesto focussed on alienation from the prevailing political elites¹⁶.

Frank Mols (drawing on his book with Jolande Jetten¹⁷) offered a socio-economic analysis of voting behaviour and populist European parties. Again, this contradicted previous assumptions. He demonstrated that those sufficiently alienated from the system to shift their vote to populist alternatives were not drawn from the most disadvantaged social strata but those in median positions viewing themselves as under threat from social changes.¹⁸

He also suggested that there is often no correlation between support for populism and sudden economic crises, and that populist parties often thrive in times of economic prosperity, perhaps because of heightened 'status anxiety' among those

¹⁵ This also was not without precedent, as I reported when I lived in Belfast through the troubled 1970s, see Scott R, 'Ulster in perspective – the relevance of non-European experience', *Australian Outlook*, 23, 3, 1969; and 'The British General Election in Northern Ireland', *Parliamentary Affairs*, 24, 1971. See also for recent Northern Irish policy debates: Rajeev S, [From climate denial to abortion: six DUP stances you should know about](#), *Guardian Australia*, 10 June 2017.

¹⁶ Albertazzi D and McDonnell D, *Populists in Power*, Routledge, 2015.

¹⁷ Mols F and Jetten J, *The Wealth Paradox*, Cambridge University Press, 2017.

¹⁸ Findings from the recent Grattan Institute survey appear to confirm the Mols-Jetten study, cited earlier, albeit from a slightly different angle. More specifically, the finding of this report showed that the most serious pockets of poverty are in urban areas with relatively moderate levels of One Nation voting (mostly along rail and road transport corridors out of the city), and, conversely, that rural areas where One Nation performs well have not witnessed a significant decline in income or growth in income inequality. See Daley J, [Post-Trump, Post Brexit, Post-Policy, The Rise of Populism](#).

who secured upward social mobility and fear recent gains could be lost. Mols and Jetten examined the 2016 federal election in Australia and reached similar conclusions about the voting support for One Nation not being directly related to low income levels.¹⁹

Paul Lucas, former Queensland deputy premier, who holds an adjunct appointment at the University of Queensland, turned the conversation to Queensland. He commented on the gap between these reflections on European experience and One Nation in Queensland. Patently there was resilience over two decades in the electoral appeal of Pauline Hanson, despite the internal leadership conflicts described elsewhere. Unlike Europe, the party and the leader both survived, or at least reappeared intact. Opinion poll evidence may have tended to understate the level of actual voting support for One Nation because respondents did not regard her policies as respectable enough to mention in polite company. But it is clear that her significant following was overwhelmingly linked to her personal charisma. Deviant behaviour by her candidates and her party activists and officials seem not to have weakened her initial appeal.²⁰

To explain her apparent demise and then revival, Lucas pointed to the simplistic proposition that protest voters were more flexible in their loyalty than 'rusted-on' members of the major parties. They could be likened to worshippers in fundamentalist churches responding to different charismatic evangelists - as tended to occur in southern parts of the USA. So 'oppositionists' moved from Hanson in 1996, to Katter's Australian Party in 2009, to the Palmer United Party in 2012, and back to Hanson when Clive Palmer fell out of favour. Detailed voting analysis does not support that simplification. It seems more likely that when her voting support declined, some supporters moved back to the National Party, others to the Australian Labor Party and only a few directly to other minor parties. And former Liberal Party voters who had left because of their party's dalliance with Hanson might have returned once this was no longer a major concern.

The big difference between politics in Queensland and that of other states (and nationally) is that the forces of demography and economic geography have created a non-Labor alternative which has been dominated by interests from outside Brisbane. The National Party (formerly and more accurately called the Country Party) has operated in other states as a minor partner in any non-Labor coalition, and not at all in Tasmania²¹, but it was clearly the dominant force in Queensland conservatism from the 1950s.

¹⁹ Mols F and Jetten J, 'One Nation's support: why 'income' is a poor predictor', *Australasian Parliamentary Review*, v 32, no 1, 2017.

²⁰ That presumption may be tested with the continuing inquiries about the financial juggling attributed to her chief adviser and her own lax reporting behaviour.

²¹ Tasmania's exceptionalism, like Queensland's, was a product of scale as well as political geography. 'Town' and 'Country' capitalism could be accommodated within a single Liberal party in a society where politics was seen as a part-time profession capable of being pursued by primary producers and their dependents. Even the ALP historically drew most of its parliamentarians from the same historically dominant occupational group identified as 'farmers'. See Roger Scott, 'Parties and Parliament: The Tasmanian House of Assembly, 1909-1959', *Politics* (now *Australian Journal of Political Science*) 1, 1, 1967.

Premier Joh Bjelke-Petersen pursued the interests of primary producers, property developers and miners rather than the relatively small corporate elite based in Brisbane. He pursued a policy of globalisation and growth that, while linked to Asian and particularly Japanese investment in the state, nevertheless maintained protectionist barriers for primary producers. Income from the mining boom and the favourable federal funding allocation of the time, helped to shield voters from the inherent budgetary contradictions and the Country/National Party built itself into a formidable machine. This political strength first allowed the party to invade the traditional suburban territory of its minor coalition partner, then rule briefly without Liberal Party members until the Premier's overweening ambition to strut the national stage coincided with exposure of corruption at the core. This non-urban dominance was ended by the frustrations of a subsequent long period out of office, causing rural and regional power-brokers to accept a city-based leader in former Brisbane Lord Mayor Campbell Newman.²²

Up until 1996, groups which would these days be identified as 'alt-right' populists focussed primarily on gaining influence within the Country/National Party. Their appeal was framed in terms of resisting the impact of modernisation and urbanisation on traditional values, particularly Christian fundamentalism. Some of these groups had a presence outside Queensland but core support tended to exist in Queensland, particularly in the relatively prosperous southern regional areas. Some groups fought as minority candidates in rural electorates (the Citizens Electoral Council for example); others were omnipresent as pressure groups inside the party (such as Eric Butler's long-lasting anti-semitic League of Rights which believed there was a conspiracy aimed at establishing a one-world government).²³

There were three characteristics common to all these groups. One of these, the embrace of a stern family-focussed morality drawn from evangelical and fundamentalist versions of Christianity, was not shared by the One Nation leadership. For those whose political values were shaped by this moral compass, the Family First Party offered a more attractive alternative and this party was relatively successful nationally in winning Senate seats outside Queensland and getting a significant vote in some single-member constituencies within Queensland.

The other two characteristics, shared with One Nation, were the inspiration and resources provided from like-minded organisations in the United States, and, drawing on those resources, the promotion of conspiracy theories to explain the currently perceived failings of public policy and alienation from mainstream politicians.

²² This tortuous tale, complete with live quotations from many of those involved in the key decades of change, is told in Scott R and Ford J, [Queensland parties: the right in turmoil 1987-2007](#), Apple iBook, 2014.

²³ For further discussion on precursors of One Nation see Scott R and Scott A, [The Queensland origins of One Nation](#), TJ Ryan Foundation, and Wear R, 'One Nation and the Queensland Right' in Leach M et al (eds), *The Rise and Fall of One Nation*, University of Queensland Press, 2000.

The heyday of this fundamentalism was during the Bjelke-Petersen era, in a Queensland described by Richard Cooke as ‘this sub-blasted stretch of Lutheran curtain-twitchers’.²⁴ The Society To Outlaw Pornography (STOP) and the Campaign Against Regressive Education (CARE) were the brainchildren of Mrs Rona Joyner, who seems to have enjoyed unparalleled influence with the Education Department as a result of direct endorsement by the Premier and his wife. The measure of her success was the banning by the Queensland Cabinet of two curriculum programs approved by the Education Department, one imported from America and associated with the eminent sociologist Jerome Bruner ‘*Man: a Course of Study*’ (MACOS) and one developed by the Australian Curriculum Development Centre: the *Social Education Materials Project* (SEMP). STOP and CARE also managed to get multicultural education banned by State Cabinet.

The following page provides the front cover of a newsletter published jointly for STOP and CARE by Mrs Joyner. The central cartoon (the ‘Stop Strip’) celebrates Mrs Joyner’s success in ‘running the government’ in contrast to the (teachers) unions. On the right side, the MACOS-SEMP event is discussed under the heading ‘From the Churches’. On the left, there is a letter exulting in the dismissal of the president of a Parents and Citizens Association when he sought to protest against the government’s decision to ban the materials.²⁵

²⁴ Cooke R, [Alt-wrong – the Australian right is startling for its incoherence](#), *The Monthly*, April 2017.

²⁵ See Gowers [Scott] A and Scott R, *Fundamentals and Fundamentalism: a case study of education and policy-making in Queensland*, Australasian Political Science Association Monograph 22, 1979; Scott A and Scott R, *Reform and Reaction in the Deep North*, Centre for Higher Education, University of Melbourne, 1980; Scott A, [The Ahern Committee and the education policy-making process in Queensland](#), PhD thesis (on education policy-making under Bjelke-Petersen in the 1970s and 1980s), University of Queensland, 1984.

FUNDAMENTALS AND FUNDAMENTALISTS

A Case Study of Education and Policy-Making in Queensland

Ann Gowers
Roger Scott

APSA MONOGRAPH NUMBER 22

Should consult parents

Just what sort of logic prompts M. Lynam (T.C. 10-10-77) to suppose that Mrs Joyner and the Society to Outlaw Pornography run the country and not the unions?

In view of the recent power strike in Victoria, which has resulted in literally thousands of people being put out of work, it is abysmal ignorance to put on the same plane concerned parents and citizens who are prepared to speak up over a vital issue which concerns their children's education.

If unions were to employ the same non-violent means of getting their message across, Australia wouldn't be in the mess it is today, and workers might not be so afraid to speak their minds and vote for what they feel is right when a show of hands is called for.

As to the waste of public money, it's a pity the Education Department didn't consult a few parents before they rushed in and bought MACOS in the first place.

God help Australia if the day ever comes when parents sit back tongue-tied, and watch helplessly while their children's minds are perverted in the name of education.—(Mrs) J. CRASE, Ipswich Street, Toowoomba.

T'mba Chronicle
13/10/77

SUNDAY SUN, MARCH 12, 1978

Brisbane man elected president of a parents and citizens association at annual meeting launched attack on State Government which other parents objected to. A motion of no confidence was carried and he was out of the presidency within the hour. It must rank as some type of record.

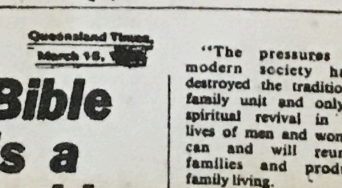
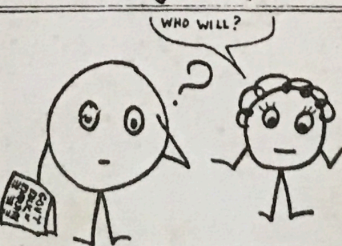
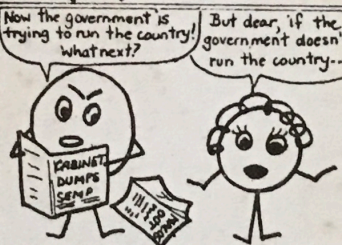
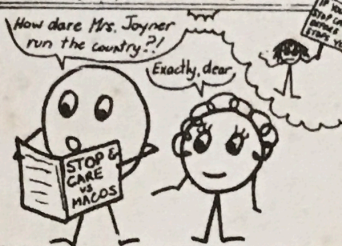
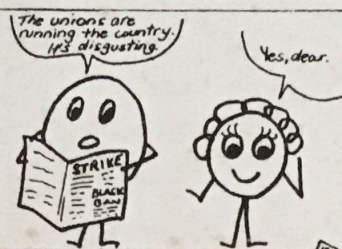
NOT FLAYTHINS
May I reply briefly to R. Moon's hysterical outburst (T.D.B. 8th Feb.).

As a parent and a lecturer, he appears to be blissfully oblivious to the furore that MACOS has provoked even in its country of origin as well as interstate.

It is not an Australian kit. It is not remotely connected with Australian manners and mores.

I repeat that on the basis of extensive experience I would not use the MACOS kit in my primary school because of

STOP STRIP



Order from STOP & CARE, PO Box 162, Margate:

"Creation Leaflets" (anti-evolution) 5¢ each
"Why Johnny Can't Learn" \$2.95
"Why Are You Losing Your Children?" 3.00

9 can be commended for its good family shows:

"Donny & Marie" and
"Little House on the Prairie"

From the Churches

MACOS AND SEMP

Prevalent in the news, and current affairs these days is a discussion on education and bound with moral standards in our community, and often referred to as 'The whole new Life style'.

Exponents of this 'Life style' are often termed 'Left wingers'. A statement recently proclaimed that the Government's bar on the curriculum of M. A. C. O. S. and S. E. M. P. was influenced by I quote 'a small group of right wingers'.

If this statement refers to members of the Christian faith, let me point out some simple facts.

A knowledge of aeronautics will show that the wings of a plane or a bird do not control its direction but only its height, for in case of controversy, its standards of morality.

Christian standards are of the highest order. And these are maintained by both wings.

Direction is controlled by the tail, of either plane or bird, and is directed by the head or controller of the plane.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is the head of the Christian faith, and he fiercely attacked all doubtful moral standards, even the thought of them, let alone action.

Another accusation levelled at Christians is that the 'New Life style' can be found in the Bible.

The first thing is to understand what the Bible is.

It is THE STORY OF GOD REVEALING HIMSELF TO MAN, AND MAN'S mind growing in his conception of god.

When man had advanced far enough, then God revealed himself in the BEING OF JESUS CHRIST.

The 'New Life Style' they speak was the process of man's progress 3,000 years ago. If this is to be accepted as a standard, then we are backsliding 3,000 in our outlook and moral standards. Radio and television take every advantage to belittle the Christian Faith, and should be soundly resisted by all who believe in the sacrifice of Christ on Calvary.

Reproduction of STOP-PRESS newsletter, vol 7, 1, February 1978.

It was unfair to label the 'curtain-twitchers' as Lutherans because most of those active at this period were members of the burgeoning alternative Christian sects on the edges of the theological mainstream. Lutherans and Anglicans were mainly part of the established political organisations and patently embarrassed by those fundamentalists who gained the confidence of a somewhat erratic Premier, and then of more recent city-based leaders of the LNP.

It is important to recognise that the 1970s and 1980s version of populist processes promoted within the National Party were, like the current manifestation, heavily influenced by attitudes and organisational strategies borrowed from non-urban USA. The mainspring remained the same – the need to resist modernism and defend traditional values, especially religious values which differentiated fundamentalist Christians from other religious groups as well as from the undermining effects of secularity and agnosticism.

At that time, the most obvious area of conflict was over subjects offered in the school curriculum, including multiculturalism. This conflict has never gone away. One Nation now argues about the perversion of climate science to serve a variety of external masters such as the UN or NASA; in the 1970s the villain was the theory of evolution. For populists there was unquestioned certainty - then and now - that the Bible was literally true on this matter and schools were undermining the social fabric of family authority if they called this truth into question.²⁶ The central theme of these activists was that a 'social engineering' conspiracy was occurring in schools, aimed at weakening the authority of the family, the churches they attended, and the moral certainty of creationist approaches to education.

The American connections in those decades came from bodies such as the John Birch Society, the equivalent then of the current 'alt-right' Republicans, and fundamentalist theological institutions from the collection of southern American states identified as 'the Bible belt'. Mrs Norma Gabler from Texas, from a school textbook 'vigilante group' was the main speaker at a conference run by STOP and CARE and chaired by the Premier's wife Florence Bjelke-Petersen. Gabler toured Queensland, under the auspices of STOP and CARE.²⁷

Training institutions were founded in Queensland to produce local clergy and teachers in colleges offering the creationist Accelerated Christian Education (ACE) curriculum package that had been developed by a small family company in Tennessee in 1970, and gradually marketed worldwide.²⁸ The package was also available to parents who wanted to 'home school' their children. With the sponsorship of the Bjelke-Petersen regime and judicious land grants, the ACE institutions formed the basis of what became the Christian Heritage University.

In addition to seeking the advancement of Bible study in school, fundamentalists advocated - then and now - resisting compulsory vaccination of children, resisting

²⁶ See Scott A, 1984.

²⁷ See Scott A, 1984.

²⁸ See [Accelerated Christian Education](#) website.

fluoridation of the water supply, and resisting liberalising legislation on issues such as gay marriage, abortion, legalised marijuana use for medical purposes and, at the end of that spectrum, medically-assisted suicide. There was constant recourse to 'the slippery slope' argument: the undermining of individual choice by intrusive government. This included defending the 'right to bear arms' held fallaciously to be implicit in the Australian constitution, as well as the right to clear land of native vegetation, use pesticides, and extract reef fish without restriction.

In the populist view of the world, primacy was accorded those pioneers who owned and worked the land. This translated into resistance to native title determinations and other policies seen to unequally privilege the original inhabitants of that land.

Finally, there was an exclusive definition of national identity, symbolised by the use of the Australian flag. 'True Australians' would respect the flag as the embodiment of a nationhood won in bloody conflicts by white soldiers memorialised by glorious defeats by Turks and Japanese. The appearance of potentially disloyal immigrants from various Asian countries after the Vietnam war underscored the need for rigorous defence of borders to preserve this national identity.

CONTINUITIES AND DISCONTINUITIES: BJELKE-PETERSEN AND HANSON 1998

It will become clear from a discussion of current policy positions taken by One Nation, that there are both continuities and discontinuities with Queensland populism in the Bjelke-Petersen era. Earlier political parties and interest groups promoting Christian fundamentalism failed to establish themselves because the values they promoted were either alien to a changing population or they resonated within the more conservative factions inside the Liberal and National parties.

As Marr observed, Hanson was not a prisoner of Queensland's fundamentalist past:

Her ignorance was an advantage: she came to politics without baggage. Hanson wasn't a daughter of the lunatic fringe. She was neither nakedly paranoid nor preaching the anti-Semitic gospel of the League of Rights.²⁹

This was underscored in the range of policies where she initially had more permissive attitudes than many of those who opposed her. She was in no sense a 'wowsler' but she had a homespun capacity for what her admirers perceived as straight talking. Nor was she overtly religious herself. Broinowski reports the following exchange that starts with Hanson's complaint about Muslims:

'This is a Christian country and they [Muslims] must be tolerant of *our* society and stop trying to change it.'

Are you a Christian?' I [Broinowski] ask, exasperated that she's playing the religion card when I already know, from David Oldfield, that she's an atheist.

²⁹ Marr D, 'The White Queen: One Nation and the Politics of Race', *Quarterly Essay* 65, Schwartz Publication, May 2017, p 34.

‘My beliefs are my own business. I don’t go out there wanting to cause people harm or murder. I’m not answering your questions of what I believe in. That’s a different topic.’³⁰

A scholar at the Australian Catholic University illustrates how Hanson’s views define Christianity as intrinsically connected to secularity:

One Nation’s arguments against multiculturalism and immigration – like those of similar right-wing populist parties around the world – do not preclude the idea that people of different ethnicities can live together. Rather, they tout a vision of Western civilisation that is founded upon Judeo-Christian values and under siege by the alien force of Islam.³¹

The opening page of the One Nation website (at the time of writing) illustrated this point:

Australia is a country built on Christian values. Our laws, way of life and customs enforced in the Australian Constitution were based on a secular society. Secularism is asserting the right to be free from religious rule and teachings or, in a state declared to be neutral on matters of belief, from the imposition by government or religion or religious practices upon the people.

Christianity thus serves as a relatively unexamined category linked to notions of ‘Western civilisation’ and European racial origins. This advanced an exclusive claim to national identity readily accepted by large sections of the population, even those who rarely visit churches. It excludes those of different races and religions unless these people seek to integrate into this identity and reduce the sense of difference.

Many of these earlier evangelical fundamentalists, driven from the bush by the rural recession, had relocated into Brisbane suburbs and attended churches which catered for their style of Christianity. Margaret Cribb had anticipated this sort of transition, given her inside knowledge, based in part on having been commissioned to undertake an organisational review of the National Party in 1990.³²

As early as 1982, the National Party included cabinet ministers, such as education minister Lin Powell, who identified themselves with local evangelical churches.³³ This is also true of several of the current LNP front bench. It has been noted that there is a nationwide disjunction between politicians becoming more closely

³⁰ Broinowski A, *Please Explain: the Rise, Fall and Rise Again of Pauline Hanson*, Viking, Penguin Books, 2017, pp.273-4. Extracts of her book have appeared in several places. See, for example, Broinowski A, [‘Backstage with Pauline Hanson: a cocktail of righteous patriotism, vitriol and fear’](#) *Guardian Australia*, 27 August 2017.

³¹ Morieson N, [‘By framing secular society as a Christian creation Hanson’s revival goes beyond simple racism’](#), *The Conversation*, 8 December 2016.

³² Cribb M, ‘The Queensland Nationals in Opposition: the Cribb Report into the future directions of the party’, 1990, unpublished. See McCoy E & Wanna J, ‘The Queensland Nationals in Opposition: the 1990 Cribb Report into the Future Directions of the Party’, *Australian Quarterly*, 1991, 63, 2, Winter, pp.178-86.

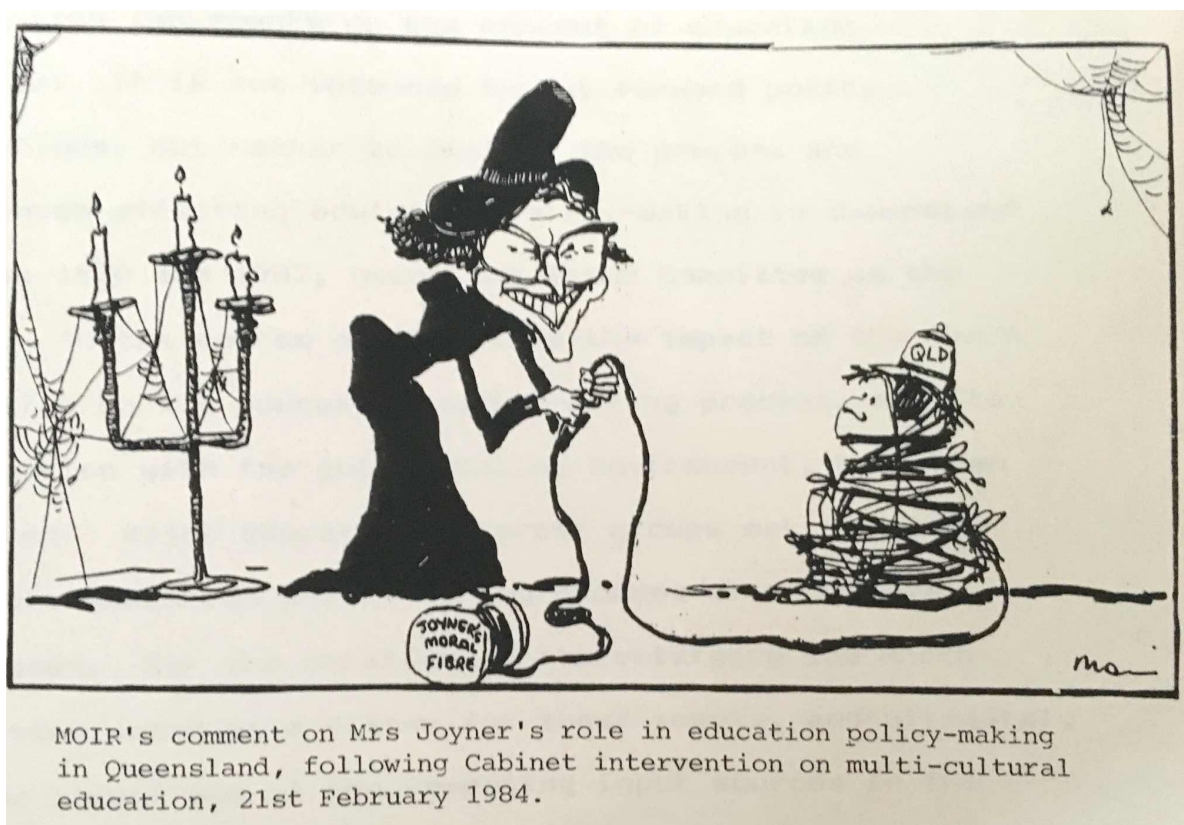
³³ Powell himself strongly promoted the ACE program. See Scott A, 1984.

identified with branches of Christianity while the most recent census revealed that the population has moved sharply in the other direction. As one commentator noted:

The 'secularisation' of Australia seems to be counter-balanced by a strong Christian political foundation. Arguably, politicians are generally motivated by pragmatism; however, faith's place in Australian politics invited further investigation. ... In a nation labelled secular, many of our elected representatives have strong religious ties and this affects the way they run the country.³⁴

This brand of secularity would be anathema to 'true believers' in the earlier breed of Queensland populist. The religious fundamentalists who were so prominent in the Bjelke-Petersen era, and remain significant in public life within the LNP, might privately view One Nation supporters with distaste, even while seeing the political advantage of embracing some of their policies.

There is clear continuity between 1978 Joyner and 2017 Hanson in their agreement about the need for governments to enforce a set of common values and 'moral fibre' derived from an anglo-celtic past and to reject 'multiculturalism'.



³⁴ In the first of a series of articles in *The Conversation*, Jonathan James writes '[As Australia becomes less religious, our parliament becomes more so](#)' 21 August 2017.

2: ONE NATION'S 'GOLDEN AGE'

Hanson established her political identity by winning the lower house seat of Oxley in the national parliament in 1996, a seat she held until 1998. One Nation's prospects in Queensland looked bright, but Hanson herself lost her seat in the lower house in Canberra when the seat of Oxley was redistributed and a new seat of Blair created before the 1998 federal election. She could have chosen to run for the Senate and it was clearly a path she considered. Her choice to run for the lower house was announced at a public meeting in Toogoolawah:

Oldfield spoke about the challenges ahead, the background behind Pauline wanting to continue in the lower house so that she could show the way for other One Nation candidates.³⁵

Hanson fought and narrowly lost the federal seat of Blair.

THE 1998 QUEENSLAND ELECTION

The challenge for Hanson was to move beyond the status of a solitary disruptive voice as an independent member of the national lower house to form a support base which could not be ignored by the major parties. She first achieved this transition with stunning success in 1998, not in Canberra but in Brisbane, having formed the One Nation party in 1997. Winning eleven One Nation seats at the state election gave her an important role in influencing who would form government. In the end, she narrowly missed out on sharing government with the Liberals and Nationals.

The details of this success were provided in a report by the Australian Parliamentary Library:

The three major political parties all suffered a decline in voter support with the advent of One Nation. The Coalition partners were the biggest losers with the National Party's support falling by 11.1% to 15.2%, their lowest first preference vote since the Second World War. The Liberal Party vote fell by 6.7% to 16.1%. The Labor Party was best able to withstand the One Nation onslaught and suffered only a 4.0% fall in support. For the other parties contesting the election the results were disappointing, particularly so for the Greens who contested 18 more seats than in the 1995 election but saw their vote fall by 0.5%.

Across the State the One Nation Party received 22.7% of the first preference vote to be clearly the second largest party in Queensland. One Nation's ascendancy over the Coalition parties was amply demonstrated in three seats where One Nation received over 40% of the vote (Barambah 43.5%, Maryborough 42.6% and Tablelands 42.1%).³⁶

³⁵ Balson S, p.221.

³⁶ Source: Newman G (Statistics Group), '1998 Queensland Election', [Current Issues Brief 2 1998-99](#), Parliamentary Library, Parliament of Australia, 8 December 1998.

Zareh Ghazarian provides a valuable summary in a book which sets Hanson's career in its national context:

One Nation's strongest performance was in rural and regional seats where its primary vote was just under 30 percent. In the Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast regions the party's primary vote was 23 percent, while its weakest performance was just under 17 percent. These Queensland results suggested that the Coalition, in particular the National Party, was under siege from the nascent One Nation party.³⁷

DISARRAY AMONGST THE QUEENSLAND ONE NATION PARLIAMENTARIANS

Parties built around a single charismatic leader can become unstable if they do not succeed in attracting continuing support at three levels: a core organisation cadre, a wide range of candidates in multiple constituencies and a sustained body of electoral support. This third group, central to the whole purpose of the organisation, will be influenced in their voting choices by their perception of the efficiency and effectiveness of the first two.

The suddenness with which One Nation had been catapulted into the Queensland parliament in 1998 carried with it the seeds of its own destruction. With its spiritual leader and charismatic force outside the state parliament, and quickly outside all elected office, the One Nation parliamentarians found it hard to function effectively in an environment where they had few friends. The other parties either shunned and ridiculed them or schemed to win over their electoral sympathisers.

One close observer and former politician suggested that the dearth of any experienced politicians, even at the local level, reduced the Hanson management team to accepting anyone prepared to offer the time and the money needed to participate in her campaign, provided they subscribed to her core values. This meant endorsing anyone wanting to pay the entry price to gain access to an audience, even if they lacked obvious qualifications and might want to promote 'risky' views not widely shared by the general public.

The unanticipated victories in 1998 led to a One Nation caucus of people from many walks of life who had little in common with each other, and were unable to cope with the stresses of an unfriendly environment. Their conduct as MPs sometimes showed little understanding of the relationship between the justice system and the constraints it placed on their freedom of action inside parliament.³⁸

Ray Evans described the debacle:

One Nation's 11-seat grasp quickly slipped, as political immaturity and infighting took their toll. ONP's presence was all but ignored by both sides as the group self-destructed in its first year – testimony to its gerry-built electoral foundations,

³⁷ Ghazarian Z, *The Making of a Party System: Minor Parties in the Australian Senate* Monash University Publishing, 2015, p.124.

³⁸ By 2017, this problem may not have gone away, as discussed later, but there is now a leavening of former politicians, particularly those whose aspirations had been blocked inside the LNP.

manifestly inadequate political structure and the abysmal parliamentary performance of most of its elected members.³⁹

Paul Lucas, who was elected as an ALP member to the Queensland parliament in 1996, saw at first-hand from the government benches the immaturity and infighting noted by Evans. Lucas was able to contrast the level of experience in political environments which typified both of the major groups: Liberals and Nationals resembling the ALP in creating youth-wing style organisations engaging the attention of university graduates and what amounted to internships in party employment plus, in the ALP case, similar experience inside trade unions. There was also a strong sense of party discipline as well as structures for discussion at branch- and state-level conferences.

None of this type of experience could be found among the diverse occupational experiences of the 11 One Nation representatives and the stress of public performance soon showed. The group rapidly splintered into factions who abandoned the banner of One Nation. One can only speculate what might have happened if the one key Independent Peter Wellington, the current Speaker, had decided to throw his weight behind the National Party to which he had once belonged and allowed the formation of a minority government beholden to the One Nation contingent.

HANSON LOSES HER LOWER HOUSE SEAT

Hanson chose to contest Blair in 1998 and easily led the count with 36.0% of the first preference vote. However Labor had decided to preference both Coalition candidates ahead of Hanson. Liberal candidate Cameron Thompson finished third with 21.7% of the first preferences vote. National preferences put him into second place ahead of Labor. Labor's preferences allowed him to defeat Hanson.

This is Hanson's own recollection of the election that lost her her seat in the lower house:

Going into the 1998 election was an absolute disaster. Some of the elected Queensland members made stupid statements and the media seized on every word they said. Tony Abbott attempted to stop the election funding. Terry Sharples challenged the Queensland registration and the Australian Election Commission cut my electorate of Oxley in half and introduced the new seat of Blair. Preferences would not be flowing my way and the media were out to stop me in my tracks. ...

I chose to stand for the seat of Blair because my home was situated in the electorate and because it was more rural based and this is where most of my support came from. The media had a field day with me. They were keen to follow my campaign purely for the fact mine was not orchestrated like Howard's or Beazley's.⁴⁰

³⁹ Evans R, *A History of Queensland*, Cambridge University Press, 2007, p 254. pp.260-1

⁴⁰ Hanson P, *Untamed and Unashamed: the autobiography - time to explain*, JoJo publishing, 2007, pp.129-30.

After this the core cadre around the leader started splintering. With her party support in Queensland disintegrating without the stimulus and discipline of her charismatic presence, Hanson faced a split with her adviser, David Oldfield. Oldfield perceived that the best opportunity for his own political advancement would lie with the opportunities afforded by the proportional electoral system which operated in the NSW upper house, where only a small percentage of voter support was required to 'cash in' on the Hanson brand. 'One Nation' had been launched by Hanson in April 1997. Oldfield's electoral success in NSW allowed him to set up a competitive claim to the title 'One Nation'.⁴¹

It took several years (and legal actions) before the Hanson's party adopted its current nomenclature of 'Pauline Hanson's One Nation' in 2015.

The disintegration, and Oldfield's move, resulted in acrimony within the Hanson organisation and its defectors. Hanson quotes an email sent by Oldfield (to an unattributed recipient) after he was dismissed from One Nation in 2000:

As you know, the concept of One Nation was mine - I started the party through the use of Hanson as a vehicle. She didn't have a clue from the start and as we all know probably didn't ever care about Australia or any person other than herself.

Put simply, One Nation was effectively destroyed by self-interest and the political errors of amateurs - that process has likely been more personally hurtful to me than any other as I was an unwilling witness at each step to the decline of what I had initiated.⁴²

Oldfield was one of a passing parade of principal advisers, all attracted by the charisma of Hanson and thus motivated to help her advancement based on their experience of political organisations (and thus their own political influence). The first, John Pasquarelli, was displaced in December 1996 by Oldfield who had been working for Tony Abbott until he moved across to work with Hanson. With Oldfield's departure, David Ettridge, the party's administrator and co-founder, had carriage of the legal issues which arose over the claims that One Nation was not a legitimate political party and thus had falsified its claims to public electoral funding.⁴³

The basis of the action against Hanson and Ettridge was that they had deliberately deceived the fee-paying membership and had not created an organisation which met the definition in membership terms of a political party legally able to participate in elections (and gain access to public funding for its campaign costs). The

⁴¹ Although Oldfield won a seat in the New South Wales parliament, his breakaway One Nation party also gradually disintegrated,

⁴² Email attributed to David Oldfield, cited in Hanson P, *Untamed and Unashamed*, p.135. She writes that it was 'sent from Parliament' but it is not clear who the recipient was.

⁴³ Many of the protagonists published accounts of events and their fallings-out from their own perspectives: Pasquarelli wrote 'The Pauline Hanson story from the man who knows' (New Holland Books 1998), Ettridge wrote 'Consider your verdict' (New Holland Books 2004), Bruce Whiteside (who helped establish the Pauline Hanson Support Movement in October 1996, wrote 'Destiny aborted – how they eliminated the people's politician' (Pauline Hanson Support Movement website 1996), and a bit later another rejected staffer, Scott Balson, wrote 'Inside One Nation' (Interactive Publications 2000).

conviction and imprisonment of the two accused was perceived by many in the community as malicious overreaction and publicly-funded campaigns eventually led to both Hanson and Ettridge being freed on appeal.

Broinowski devotes a full and wholly sympathetic chapter, 'Rock Bottom' to this topic. She concludes:

Hanson and Ettridge may have been flouting the rules when they used 'Pauline Hanson Support Movement' members to register the party in Queensland, but I have no doubt that Hanson had no conception that what they were doing was wrong.⁴⁴

A more hard-headed academic lawyer suggested that it was a misjudgment by the electoral authorities to take the legal action alleging fraud against the public when it was only the members of her movement who were allegedly being 'defrauded'.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

A recent comparative study of minor parties in the Australian Senate reports that Oldfield and Ettridge persuaded Hanson to move away from a less formalised structure to be entitled 'Pauline Hanson's Movement'. The final structure had three distinct components, as illustrated in Ghazarian's table on the following page.

The party in Queensland was created as a separate entity, consisting of just three members, who held wide powers of expulsion over the membership and, according to one insider used this power to crush internal dissent.⁴⁵

Ghazarian cites a letter from David Ettridge to the President of the Ipswich branch explaining the rationale behind this closed structure:

In the letter Ettridge reasoned that the party was structured in this compartmentalised manner 'to provide protection of the political party and make each self contained entity, which if attacked by unfriendlies ... not contaminate other modules'. ... Ettridge also gave clear directions that details of the party's structure were not to be shared and forbade the reproduction of the letter for distribution. The architects of the party's organisation were determined to avoid anyone outside of their immediate circle gaining insight into the party's operation as they feared they would lose control over the party.⁴⁶

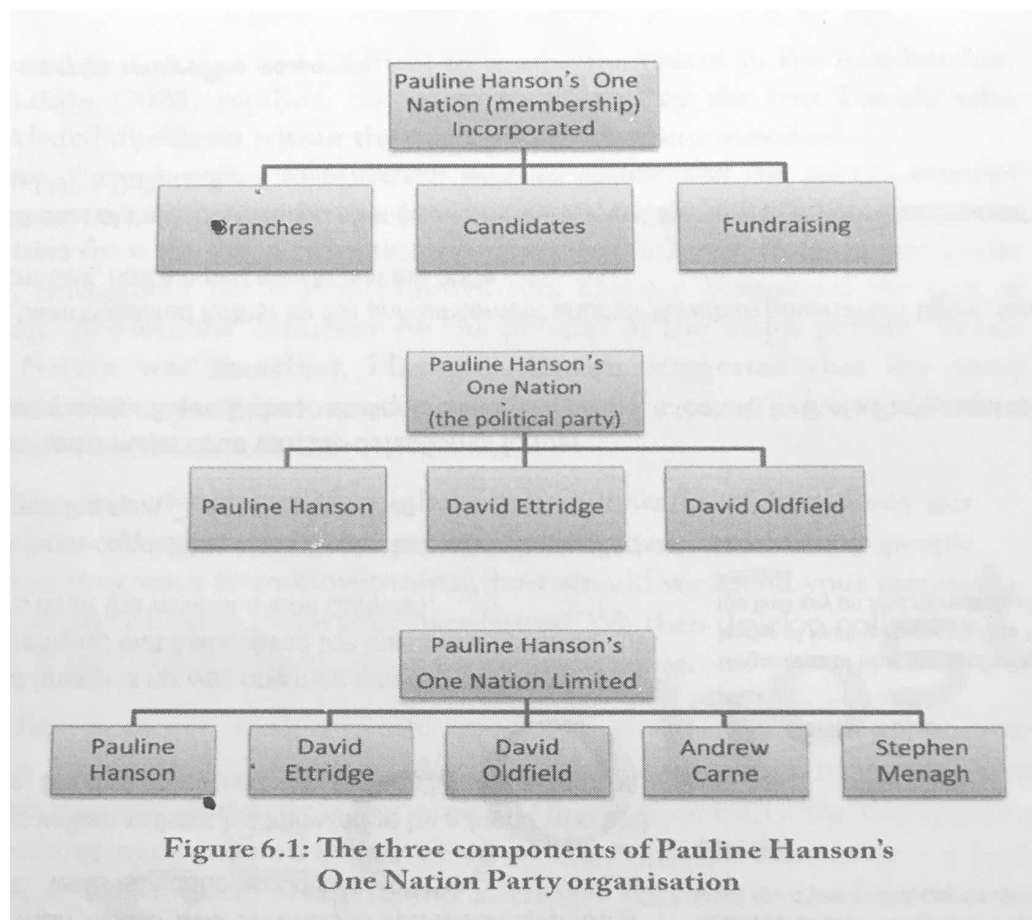
State members of parliament met as a caucus but had no representation in the party itself. This arrangement remained private, known only to a few activists and apparently of little concern to the influx of new members which preceded the 1998 election. Their focus was clearly on identifying with the leader herself and communicating any views directly to her. Once Hanson was off the scene, the

⁴⁴ Broinowski A, p.256.

⁴⁵ Balcon S, 2005.

⁴⁶ Ghazarian Z, p121.

publicity about the organisation acted as a deterrent and this was reflected in the plunging party membership figures quoted in Ghazarian.⁴⁷



The three components of Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party organisation ⁴⁸

DEFECTORS AND THE CITY COUNTRY ALLIANCE

One Nation members Shaun Nelson, Dorothy Pratt, Ken Turner, John Kingston and Jeff Knuth left the party in February 1999 to become independents. The five remaining One Nation members, Harry Black, David Dalgleish, Bill Feldman, Jack Paff and Peter Prenzler abandoned the party in December 1999, founding their own alternative, the City Country Alliance (the five were later joined by Knuth in February 2000).

One of the activists advocating this shift to the City Country Alliance was Heather Hill, who had contested and won the Senate seat for Queensland but was then disqualified over the same citizenship issue which was later to bedevil and distract other national politicians in 2017, most notably One Nation Senator, Malcolm Roberts.

⁴⁷ Ghazarian Z, p.132.

⁴⁸ Ghazarian Z, p.121.

In 1998 Hill was replaced by the number two on the One Nation ticket, Len Harris. At a three-way meeting between Hanson, Harris and Hill, it was anticipated that Harris would agree to step down once Hill had regularised her citizenship and Hill would be nominated to replace him. Harris declined to do so but recruited Hill to work on his parliamentary staff.

Ghazarian reports that:

One Nation's membership was haemorrhaging as swathes of branches left the party to join the City Country Alliance. Hanson and Harris went to branch meetings in an attempt to appease the dissenting members. However, most of these meetings ended in farce as both stormed out of discussions claiming that branches were trying to railroad them. The party's loss of members were almost as fast as the rate at which had attracted them in the first place.⁴⁹

SPARKS REKINDLING ONE NATION

As will be seen later, most political analysts wrote her off as a political force after 1998 when her bloc of representatives among MPs in the Queensland parliament disintegrated. However, after her release from prison she continued to contest elections with increasing success until she was able to command enough support to resume her political career in federal politics with the 2016 double-dissolution election. Broinowski writes:

Hanson wore her post-prison martyrdom like a well-cut suit, embarking on a five-star celebrity junket.⁵⁰

This low point was followed by a period when Hanson was isolated from a One Nation which no longer bore her name. She out-pollled her own party by standing as a Senate candidate in 2004 and 2007 and boosted the party's primary vote when she returned to the field in 2013. As Ghazarian observed at the end of his chapter written in 2015:

This affirms the notion that a significant portion of One Nation voters were attracted to the party because of Hanson. But this also suggest that perhaps Hanson could have remained an influential figure in Australian politics as an independent with some extra-parliamentary support, as she originally planned to do so before being associated with Ettridge and Oldfield who led her to create One Nation.⁵¹

HANSON REMAINED A PRESENCE IN NATIONAL POLITICS

Hanson remained on the national scene despite the debacle played out in the Queensland parliament. She was able to attract sufficient support in those elections using preferences or proportional representation to remind people she still existed (and reclaim election expenses).

⁴⁹ Ghazarian Z, p.132.

⁵⁰ Broinowski A, p.264.

⁵¹ Ghazarian Z, p.142.

One Nation was reduced to three seats in the Queensland parliament in the 2001 elections. After her release from prison, Hanson herself raised her public visibility from appearances on the popular television series 'Dancing with the Stars'.

In 2007 Hanson launched Pauline's United Australia Party to take advantage of ballot paper arrangements. She stood for the Senate in the 2007 federal election, receiving 101,461 first preference votes (4.2% of the statewide vote). In the 2009 Queensland election Hanson stood unsuccessfully as an independent in the seat of Beaudesert. She deregistered the Pauline's United Australia Party in March 2010 (transferring \$200,000 out of its account) after announcing her plans to relocate to the United Kingdom.⁵² Her plan to move did not go ahead, but the party remained deregistered.

In 2013 Hanson announced that she would stand in the federal election to be held that year. She rejoined the One Nation party and was a Senate candidate in New South Wales. She did not win a seat, attracting 1.22% of first preferences.

Her autobiography records her subsequent refocussing on Queensland, where she had remained prominent in popular memory from the halcyon days between 1996 and 1998.

In November 2014, Hanson announced that she had returned as One Nation leader, prior to the party's announcement, following support from One Nation party members. She announced that she would contest the seat of Lockyer in the 2015 Queensland state election (a seat held by One Nation from 1998 to 2004). In February 2015, Hanson took the lead in early vote counts for the seat, before losing by a narrow margin.

Yet, even as late as 2015, academic observers had written her off as no longer a feature of political significance, more a residual curiosity.

Writing as recently as 2013, Aurélien Mondon, a scholar of comparative populism, was still underestimating the potential for Hanson to play a significant role.

Since 2004, the Australian extreme right has been moribund and Pauline Hanson's return to politics in 2005 and 2011 did nothing to revive it. Not unlike France in 2007, the threat seemed to have been eradicated, or at least rendered dormant, an echo of the extreme right's past experience. 'Normal' electoral results reappeared and returned the country to a mostly bipartite structure.⁵³

⁵² For an account of the amount of money that Hanson has received, both in 2010 and from other elections see: Walker J, 'Pauline Hanson took \$200,000 from the former Australia United Party', *The Australian*, 17 June 2017. The article cites the following figures. From federal elections: in 1998 Pauline Hanson's One Nation M1 received \$2,860,405; in 2001 \$1,471,549; in 2004 Pauline Hanson (independent) \$199,886; in 2007 Pauline's United Australia Party \$213,095; in 2016 Pauline Hanson's One Nation M2 \$1,623,827. In Queensland elections: in 2009 Pauline Hanson (independent) \$21,649; in 2015 Pauline Hanson's One Nation Mk2 \$65,152. In New South Wales in 1999, One Nation received \$679,251.

⁵³ Mondon A, *The mainstreaming of the extreme right in France and Australia: a populist hegemony?*; University of Bath, 2013, p.3.

The challenge remains to explain why Mondon was wrong, as were those closer in place and time to the initial political incandescence between 1996 and 1999.

3: BOOKS ANALYSING ONE NATION'S APPARENT FAILURE

One Nation's success in the 1998 state election remains the powerful emotional support needed to energize Hanson's current followers across the state. She can point to a record of rising like Phoenix from the ashes. Alternatively, her detractors can draw solace from the events following 1998 and hope instead that history will repeat itself, that One Nation will go from ashes to ashes. Strategists in the Queensland LNP and the ALP – and minor parties - will have the challenging task of devising electoral tactics which can cope with both possibilities.

It is relevant therefore to see what political analysts, journalists and political actors offered at the time, initially as explanations for Hanson's success and then in more depth after her apparent political demise. Many of the books listed in the bibliography here essentially serve as annals of events and discuss short-term issues, often from the particular perspective of participant observers.

- ***'Two Nations – The Causes and Effects of the Rise of the One Nation Party in Australia' (1998)***

One book, published in 1988, had a Foreword by Robert Manne in which he posed the following question: 'How is something so strange as the emergence of Pauline Hanson and the One Nation Party at the centre of our politics to be understood?' His answer was 'by drawing together the views of many of our most significant politicians, journalists and academics'.⁵⁴

The resulting collection of short essays provides the required breadth of opinion. Authors include politicians from across the political spectrum (Abbott, Fraser, Richardson and Wooldridge), journalists with diverse ideological viewpoints (Adams, Brunton, Grattan, Kelly, Kingston, McGuinness, Rothwell and Sheridan) and four academics (Brett, Goot, Lake and Henry Reynolds). Most of the contributions from politicians have not stood the test of time, with their focus on views about the current strategies of their fellow politicians, Keating and Howard. The same is true of the journalists and commentators, with the exception of Paul Kelly and Nicholas Rothwell, both from *The Australian*.

Kelly points to the profound cultural revolution which has occurred in Australia in both economic and social attitudes and sees Hanson as leading a counter-revolution, 'vulgarising' resistance to political correctness and economic rationalism:

Hanson represents a flawed image of our history and of ourselves, distorted but authentic. That is deeply disgusting to many Australians yet also a source of secret support among others. Hanson shakes the cage into which Australia has consigned its history. ...

⁵⁴ Davidoff N (ed), *Two Nations – The Causes and Effects of the Rise of the One Nation Party in Australia*, Bookman, Melbourne, 1998.

Hanson is a nightmare that survived the dawn by bringing to life the ghost Australia had consigned to its past – that our nationhood, our pride, our federation, lay in the fusion of racism and nationalism which is why for so long we treated the Aborigines with injustice and our Asian locale with such apprehension.⁵⁵

Kelly also argues that it is the media which are to blame because they made, and kept, Hanson a national celebrity. He blames the quality press (which inferentially excludes *The Australian*) because its outrage about Hanson was matched only by its outrage at Howard's refusal to campaign against Hanson. He also notes the impact of changing technology which represented a convergence between the media, entertainment and political industries and empowered Hanson's champions among 'the populist talk-back jockeys'. Twenty years on, both these propositions still have currency, magnified by the twittersphere offering a capacity to choose from a wider variety of jockeys to reinforce individual preferences.

The second contribution by a journalist came from Nicolas Rothwell.⁵⁶ His opening words raises an interesting parallel, identifying her as 'the Evita of Ipswich'. Among his 'thirteen ways not to think about Pauline Hanson', he points to a central lesson not learnt by the media or by her opponents:

Her notoriety is self-sustaining ... Public careers of this kind are out of the ordinary. They run their course and contain at their birth the seeds of their own inevitable destruction. They are not easily undone by others.⁵⁷

Rothwell starts by making the same point as one of the academic contributors, Marilyn Lake,⁵⁸ that Hanson has immense visceral sex appeal which transcends normal political debate. In an era of feminist sensitivity, this is more frequently remarked upon by women commentators than by men and is particularly obvious to cartoonists and producers of media programs. In Rothwell's words:

There are men who find her public manner, combining brave vulnerability and explosive temper, curiously intoxicating. There are women who admire her attempts at elegance, her air of independence and her success in upsetting the male dovecotes of national politics.⁵⁹

Lake's whole chapter is devoted to this theme, noting that 'explanations that don't attend to the gendered nature of her support miss an important dimension of this political phenomenon'. Lake qualifies Rothwell's comment about Hanson's 'air of independence' by noting the changing guard of her male protectors during the brief period Lake is describing in 1998.

⁵⁵ Kelly P, 'Hanson – symptom of a deeper problem', in Manne R, pp.92-3.

⁵⁶ Rothwell N, 'Thirteen ways not to think about Pauline Hanson', Manne R, pp.161-8.

⁵⁷ Rothwell, p.166.

⁵⁸ Lake M, 'Pauline Hanson: virago in parliament, viagra in the bush', Manne R, pp.114-22.

⁵⁹ Rothwell N, p.162.

Other academic contributors to the 1998 volume identify the underlying issues of political alienation and perceived economic hardship as creating the conditions for the emergence of One Nation as dominant among a series of protest parties. Brett sees One Nation's emergence as a result of the failure of the major parties to offer effective representation for interests outside the narrow and increasingly narrowing range of unions, big business and professional groups.

Brett contrasts this with the occupational backgrounds of the eleven One Nation state parliamentarians, by definition amateurs as politicians: all except two coming from occupational groups that have been shrinking in terms of federal representation. The 1998 list includes three tradesmen (mechanic, fisherman, house painter), three small business owners, one policeman, one army officer and two rural-based veterinarians.⁶⁰

It has already been noted that the list of candidates for the forthcoming Queensland state election is significantly different. Led by a former LNP cabinet minister and including several former members or candidates from the LNP, the exact percentage of amateurs remains uncertain, but will be much smaller than in 1998.

Henry Reynolds identifies Queensland's political culture as the underlying explanation for One Nation's greater strength and success. Viewed in the context of 1998, he suggests that One Nation voters had little interest in specific policies apart from the racist assumptions which had underlined the approaches of successive right-wing movements dating back to the Bjelke-Petersen era.

He suggested that many of those who voted for Bjelke-Petersen and his non-amalgamated Country/National party were prepared to shift their allegiance in 1998 because of their distrust of Borbidge's short-lived Coalition government and its economic and social liberalism: 'Deserting Borbidge for Hanson was like a homecoming for many conservative voters'.⁶¹

- ***'The Rise and Fall of One Nation' (2000)***

A second book, published in 2000, consisted of papers from local academics presented at a publicly advertised conference in Brisbane in November 1998.⁶² Significant numbers of One Nation sympathisers attended and apparently offered such a strident counterpoint of views that the organisers feared the event might turn violent.

The event itself is described in detail by Scott Balson, one of One Nation's active supporters, as part of his mammoth contribution on the history of the party. Balson was quite clear in his editorial tone that he thought 'the party was over': his

⁶⁰ Brett J, 'Representing the unrepresented – One Nation and the formation of the Labor Party', in Manne R, p.30.

⁶¹ Reynolds H, 'Hanson and Queensland's political culture', in Manne R, p.143.

⁶² Leach M, *The Rise and Fall of One Nation*, University of Queensland Press, 2000.

collection of web pages and commentary in a single 375-page tome is entitled *Inside One Nation – the inside story of a people's party born to fail*.⁶³

Predictably, Balson takes a patronising attitude towards unengaged outsiders such as academics who dared to question the veracity of One Nation and the accuracy of his own analysis. His webpage contribution is reproduced at chapter 44 in *Inside One Nation* under the title: 'Where prize turkeys gather'. It excoriates the prejudice of all academics:

Such was their complete and utter hatred of the party's policies that they could not bring themselves to understand what drove their supporters or that there might be even the smallest amount of common sense in some of what Ms Hanson espoused.⁶⁴

The papers from the conference shared Balson's view that One Nation was on an irreversible downward slide. Causes were identified, such as the poor choice and fractious nature of the candidates recently elected to the state legislature, and the internal competition for power within the tightly-constrained authoritarian structures of the party. But several authors did acknowledge that the National Party and the Prime Minister, John Howard, had moved to shift ground on key policy issues in order to undercut One Nation's appeal, thus exporting the worst features of the Queensland political culture. Paul Reynolds also noted that the two dominant political groupings had effectively closed ranks within the talking-shop of the state legislature. The leaders of both sides of the House of Representatives carried on with business as usual, ignoring the presence of a parvenu group too inexperienced to know how to join in and widely perceived as being more interested in getting their snouts in the same trough of benefits afforded to other members.

Several writers acknowledged that the underlying reasons which had attracted a quarter of Queensland voters in 1998 would continue into the future. Even if One Nation was becoming a spent force, political alienation was alive and well. The editors offered a telling quotation written by the Pauline Hanson Support Group:

Ordinary Australians do have a common enemy, but it is not Aborigines, Asians or people of any particular colour, race or creed. Our common oppressors are a class of raceless, placeless, cosmopolitan elites who are exercising almost absolute power over us.⁶⁵

⁶³ Balson S, *Inside One Nation*, Mt Crosby News, 2000. See his account of the conference at [Where prize turkeys gather](#), 15 November 1998. Balson attributes blame to insiders: 'An intricate web of deception, lies and greed that destroyed the people's movement from within ... it was not the establishment which destroyed her party but the agenda of her executive. 'Pauline's army' is still waiting anxiously for the right person to rise above and lead the masses.

⁶⁴ Balson S, p.258. In retrospect, it is interesting to note that almost the whole of this 10-page section addresses the dual citizenship issue which had emerged that very day relating to the One Nation senator, Mrs Heather Hill. Like the party itself, the issue had also re-emerged in 2017.

⁶⁵ Leach M, p.27.

Leach warned against merely ignoring this perception:

Hansonite views need to be comprehensively challenged not just glibly dismissed. To simply dismiss Hansonite politics is, in one sense, to align oneself with a neo-liberal elite to silence a real protest against the effects of globalisation.⁶⁶

Other contributors were alert to the continuation of problems which would fester if not addressed by the major parties: Fletcher and Whip pointed to a failure of political leadership among the major parties because of a consumerist/market approach to the distribution of public goods;⁶⁷ and Geoff Dow called for a more interventionist response by governments to address the inequalities created by economic liberalism.⁶⁸

Ian Ward reflected the general perception that it would not be One Nation which would be leading this response, largely because of the internal discord and mismanagement:

The One Nation Party does have a sufficient representation in two Australian parliaments for its name to linger on for several years to come. The disenchantment with globalisation and concerns about the uncertain future facing regional Australians, which Hanson - for a time - effectively tapped, remain. However Hanson and ONP are unlikely to ever again serve as a lightning rod for the discontent with mainstream politics that many Australians evidently feel.⁶⁹

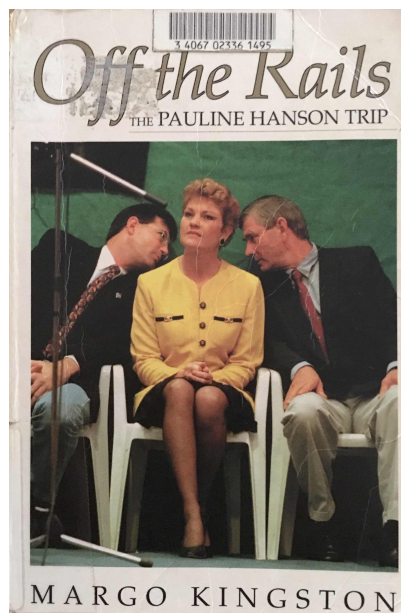
⁶⁶ Leach M, 'Hansonism, political discourse and Australian Identity', p.53.

⁶⁷ Fletcher D and Whip R, 'One Nation and the failure of political leadership', in Leach M, pp.73-88.

⁶⁸ Dow G, 'Beyond One Nation: interventionist responses to economic liberalism' in Leach et al, pp. 248-64.

⁶⁹ Ward I, 'One Nation: organisation, party and democracy', in Leach et al, p.110.

- **'Off the Rails - the Pauline Hanson Trip' (2001)**



In the introduction, I refer to the virtue of establishing a critical distance from the subject matter to establish a wider perspective. The other side of that coin is the danger of depersonalising the significance of particular political actors and missing the significance of personal characteristics and the flavour of events. This is the realm of journalism.

There are two books by journalists which make essential reading for this reason. The first, by Margo Kingston, covers the campaign for the 1998 federal seat of Blair. The second, by Anna Broinowski, published in 2017, covers Hanson's 'Fed Up' campaign around Queensland in 2016.

Kingston's *Off the Rails* covers the campaign for the 1998 federal seat of Blair.⁷⁰ Kingston was at the time a major national correspondent with the Fairfax media group and a member of the national press gallery. The book is written with the clarity of an expert media communicator in close proximity to her subject. Kingston (like Broinowski 20 years later) conveys a sense of ambivalence in her response to the mixture of personal and political attitudes of the Hanson phenomenon.

Kingston is particularly informative about the internal divisions among the reporters and their editors about the extent and tone of the treatment of the One Nation campaign and the speeches of the party leaders. The predominant view was that the values and attitudes being expressed, particularly on issues of race, were too acutely embarrassing to be discussed and the campaign did not deserve encouragement since it had no popular support except from dangerous malcontents.

Kingston was directly engaged with Hanson, travelling with her, and, as someone who was born in Maryborough and grew up in Mackay, shared Hanson's

⁷⁰ Kingston M, *Off the Rails: the Pauline Hanson Trip*, Allen & Unwin, 1999.

understanding of her Queensland context. She also was active in public campaigns supporting Hanson during her period in gaol and in the protracted appeals process. She was willing to take Hanson and her ideas seriously without endorsing her in any way. This integrity had undesirable consequences professionally.

In a column entitled 'A poll to shake the nation' written on the day of the 1998 Queensland election Kingston wrote:

Pauline Hanson is no longer the stumbling, gauche, ordinary woman at whom educated and politically aware Australians can afford to sneer. ... The themes resonating with her people are an anarchistic desire to punish the big parties for their sins, and an energy for political activism generated by the fact that Hanson is speaking their language and expressing their instincts. In an era of the political alienation of the new underclass, Hanson says that rather than wanting experts in charge, 'people like people like them'.⁷¹

- ***'Please Explain: the rise, fall and rise again of Pauline Hanson (2017)***



Two decades later, Anna Broinowski performed the same task as Kingston. The television documentary 'Pauline Hanson: Please Explain' on which she based the book had screened to critical acclaim on the SBS in July 2016. The book has the startling intensity of immediacy that quality journalists can still offer.

The book is largely a political biography, traversing the whole history of Pauline Hanson, taking the reader back through Hanson's childhood and teenage years: a chapter headed 'I don't like it' describes her childhood and teenage years of aggressive independence; then 'The fish and chip shop' and (after a brief foray into local government) 'The member for Oxley'; 'The maiden speech'; 'Please explain' as she asked an interviewer when faced with the term xenophobia; 'The rise of One Nation'; 'The fall of Pauline'; 'Rock bottom'; and, finally 'The rise of Senator Hanson'.

⁷¹ Kingston M, p.xvii.

The opening chapter, 'She's fed up and she's back', sets the scene. Broinowski explains the basis of the relationship she developed with her subject as both a TV star and literary heroine. The author deftly avoids the pitfalls of over-close contact diminishing her sense of the wider perspective of Hanson's growing political significance. Broinowski's comments are threaded through the historical narrative and signal, in particular, the change of the social and political context within which Hanson now functions - 'selfie'-seeking fans replacing placard-waving demonstrators. Broinowski's most challenging conclusion was articulated at the end of the book's Prologue:

Hanson Mark 2 is cleverer and definitely tougher than Mark I. She has always been a symptom, and not the cause, of the bigotry, fear and guilt boiling beneath that sunny confection we call the Australian dream. Whether Senator Hanson, over the next six years, also proves more dangerous is up to us.⁷²

Linking the two books, Broinowski records sympathetically the meeting that she arranged between Hanson and Margo Kingston at the end of 2015, noting the sad discrepancy between the career paths of these two people since they had last met fourteen years earlier.⁷³

The final sentences in Margo Kingston's book record Hanson farewelling Kingston at the end of the unsuccessful campaign for the federal seat of Blair in 1998 with the words: 'You're flying back to Canberra. I'm staying here in Ipswich. Our paths will never cross again.'⁷⁴ These predictions proved inaccurate. Broinowski arranged a meeting between the two women in 2015 during the federal election campaign. At that meeting, it transpired that Hanson had never read Kingston's book.

Broinowski cites Kingston's 'prescient warning' after the 1998 federal election campaign:

Alienation is a dangerous thing, better to have her in parliament as the token voice representing the rednecks rather than leave them outside the political process and have them grow far more dangerous. The asset she's got is she's not evil, she's ignorant. If she goes down and the establishment thinks she's the problem not the symptom, the next Pauline Hanson could be more clever, tougher to crack, far more dangerous.⁷⁵

The media has an important role to play in this. There are large sections of the voting population which feel alienated and want to have their voices heard about elites perceived to be controlling everyone's political destinies. Kingston rightly criticised the supercilious attitudes of the media observers, targeting the woman and not her policies. For example:

⁷² Broinowski A, p.6.

⁷³ Broinowski A, pp.235-7.

⁷⁴ Kingston M, p.234.

⁷⁵ Kingston M, *Off the Rails*, p,223, cited in Broinowski A, p.6.

There was ... an element of class putdown in Hanson commentary which I found extremely unattractive - exemplified by people sneering at her pronunciation of 'Australia', her lack of grammatical correctness. and her 'fish and chip shop' background.⁷⁶ ...

Our fascination was such that she could have been from another planet, but it was also an uncomfortable reminder of the class divide. When was the last time a semi-inarticulate, 'ordinary person' had blundered onto the stage where power is played out, and stayed there?⁷⁷

Kingston identified the One Nation jingle 'Poor Lean People', produced for the party's launch, as focussed on this theme:

Class war, the taboo aspect of Hansonism, set to music, with knives.

Pauline's People were rural poor and fringe city poor clinging to old cultural values they insisted were still central to Australia's identity, because otherwise they felt like white trash. And white trash kicks Aborigines because it makes them feel better.⁷⁸

Towards the end of her book, Kingston described the phenomenon she had witnessed in 1998:

Pauline Hanson had proclaimed for two years that she would have a voice no matter what. Her voice - despite its lack of clarity and outright refusal to adjust to the demands of Australia's political and media institutions - had reverberated around the nation and the world. She'd forced policy change, created fear and insecurity, triggered doubts about our national identity, fractured the National Party, scared the hell out of the Coalition and Labor; and triggered thousands of heated debates on politics and values among Australians who had previously either ignored or disdained such matters.

She'd become a cultural icon and unlikely celebrity who'd forced the big cities to consider the regions, an engagement between the haves and have nots, and a confrontation of the new culture by the old.

Just when racism had largely become socially unacceptable she'd given racists the courage to hurt and humiliate their fellow citizens. And she'd done it all with only a strange and crude former foot soldier of the Liberal Party as her political brain, without funds, and despite the total lack of professionalism which had become part of her appeal. One Nation had let maniacs and fruit loops walk off the street and get preselected in the name of an ill-educated, narrow-minded, hard-working, proud small businesswoman who'd proved a charismatic communicator with Pauline's People.⁷⁹

The extraordinary results of the 1998 state election - One Nation winning nearly a quarter of the vote state-wide - taught bitter lessons to all parties.

⁷⁶ Kingston M, p.47.

⁷⁷ Kingston M, p.55.

⁷⁸ Kingston M, P.213.

⁷⁹ Kingston M, p.232

The major parties had closed ranks and swapped preferences to solve the problem of One Nation's challenge to their power, but now they had to try to address the problem of why so many Australians were prepared to vote for it.⁸⁰

The Labor Party, despite the disarray of its opponents, had only won enough seats to be able to form a minority government dependent on the vote of the single Independent, Peter Wellington, who had taken his seat from the Nationals. The ALP had lost six seats to One Nation, losses which were neatly offset by its gains from the Liberals. The Liberals were punished by voters alienated by the party's association with the National Party, in particular its willingness to favour One Nation over Labor whenever the choice presented itself, including preference allocations as well as policy options. The Nationals, despite this attempt at collaboration, also lost seats: five to One Nation and one to Independent Peter Wellington. Wellington made the crucial decision to decline any engagement with a potential majority including One Nation, providing the basis for Peter Beattie to head an ALP minority government.⁸¹

The lessons from the 1998 election for party strategists and policy-makers were spelled out in a careful quantitative analysis by Brennan and Mitchell. The parties were arrayed along a continuum, with the Liberals at one end and One Nation at the other, cutting across the anticipated Right/Left classification. Voters had moved from the Liberals to the ALP, repelled by One Nation; voters had moved from the ALP, attracted to One Nation; and former National voters were similarly attracted to One Nation. 'In some real sense the party most unlike the One Nation Party in the eyes of the Queensland electorate is the Liberal Party'.⁸²

⁸⁰ Kingston M, p.232.

⁸¹ This process is described by Dr Chris Salisbury in [Dividing Queensland - Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party](#), Queensland Historical Atlas, 2010.

⁸² Brennan G and Mitchell N, 'The logic of spatial politics: the 1998 Queensland election', *Australian Journal of Political Science*, 34,3, 1999, p.389.

4: 'THE QUEENSLAND RIGHT IN TURMOIL' REVISITED

As mentioned earlier, in 2014 John Ford and I published *Queensland Parties: the Right in Turmoil 1987-2007*.⁸³ The current circumstance of parties on the right of the spectrum requires reconsideration in the light of demonstrable voter alienation from the two largest parties.

THE LIBERALS

In 1994 Hanson had been elected as an Independent to the Ipswich City Council but lost the seat in 1995 after a boundary redistribution:

In March 1995, Hanson was booted off the council, the unwitting victim of an internecine preference war with the local Labor faction. ... Hanson joined the Liberal Party in the same year determined to do her bit to help boot 'politically correct' Labor power-brokers out of office for good.⁸⁴

When Hanson was first becoming a force in Queensland state politics, the coalition partners arrayed against the Australian Labor Party (ALP) at the state level plunged to an unexpected defeat in 1998. Hanson's party was able to exploit both general alienation from political elites and specific concerns over Aboriginal land rights and anti-Asian sentiments.

Midway through the long period of ALP rule which followed, the National and Liberal Parties formed a single unit, the LNP. Some prominent Liberals argued against the merger. The drift of population to the south east gave this group more influence, even if the party apparatus overall was still strongly influenced by National Party sympathisers. After a series of defeats under the leadership of a long-serving National Party member of parliament, Lawrence Springborg, the bold experiment was taken to bring Campbell Newman, a former Liberal, directly into the party leadership from a successful career as Brisbane Lord Mayor.

Campbell Newman's overwhelming parliamentary majority when elected in 2012 encouraged him to undertake a series of sweeping reforms as he pursued an economic rationalist agenda, including announcing radical cuts to the public service (after vowing during the election campaign that public servants had nothing to fear) and overturning many of the environmental and other policies of the ALP. This led to a strong backlash, particularly on the part of the trade unions who had been tepid in their support for Newman's opponent.⁸⁵ Then in February 2015 there was an equally stunning reversal of party fortunes, demolishing the LNP's massive majority, enabling an ALP minority government to be formed, supported by non-Brisbane Independents and the Katter's Australian Party (KAP).

⁸³ Scott R and Ford J, [Queensland parties: the right in turmoil 1987-2007](#), Apple iBook, 2014.

⁸⁴ Broinowski A, p.90.

⁸⁵ Scott A (ed), [The Newman Years: Rise, Decline and Fall](#), TJ Ryan Foundation, February 2016.

As described earlier, One Nation was absent from the Queensland political scene after its 11-seat presence in the 1998 state parliament gradually evaporated as a result of internal discord. There was clearly a price to be paid for endorsing candidates wishing to make themselves heard on a wide variety of topics but with no sense of common purpose. The first clue to One Nation's future challenge was in the performance of Hanson in Lockyer, a state electorate that lies beyond Ipswich West (and a less safe seat for the ALP than her old Ipswich seat as it incorporates part of the Lockyer Valley). The LNP candidate scraped home against her in 2015, with his survival dependent on the preferences of the ALP candidate.

In 1997 the Coalition had adopted a policy of preferring One Nation to the ALP in its preferencing arrangement, a decision made at the grass-roots level despite the advice of the leader Rob Borbidge. Six seats held by Liberals in urban areas were lost to the ALP as a result. Even though there were compensating outcomes when ALP lost seats to One Nation, the Coalition realised that being seen to support One Nation and its racist agenda was electoral poison within Brisbane.

The lessons for the Liberal Party from the Queensland result were harsh. One Nation had identified a voting base which might have been regarded as not-quite respectable in its attitude towards race. Existing policies of the major parties were regarded as too generous towards the interests of both Indigenous and migrant populations. Strategists at national level realised that these views could be comfortably accommodated as part of a general strengthening of border protection needed to cope with a rising tide of refugees. One Nation could be defeated by undermining some of the planks in its main platform.

As one of the Liberals' more genuine liberals noted:

Under John Howard, the Liberal Party went where it has never gone before - to the underbelly of Australian culture, an underbelly that Pauline Hanson and One Nation turned over for all to see in 1996. And Howard's tactics have gone down a treat in the bush.⁸⁶

This meant that the progressive voters in Queensland who had left the Liberal Party over the One Nation issue had no incentive to return and ALP Premier Beattie was able to stabilise and expand his electoral base. It would be another decade before the non-Labor parties worked out how to deal with the local consequences of the Liberals' shift to the right.

The continuing validity of this judgment is now up for consideration, by an urban-based leader (and former deputy to Campbell Newman). Tim Nicholls has not ruled out adopting the same position as that imposed on Borbidge, allowing each branch to work out its own preferences and thus leaving open the possibility of mass voter defections away from the LNP, particularly in the urban areas of the south-east. Already Nicholls has said he would be willing to govern in a minority government with One Nation support, while rejecting the prospect of any One Nation member holding ministerial office. It is yet to become clear whether this important distinction will reconcile ex-Liberal voters to a prospect they rejected so decisively in 1998 or

⁸⁶ Barns G, *What's Wrong with the Liberal Party?*, Cambridge University Press 2004.

just how much Nicholls would be prepared to concede to One Nation in order to gain access to the reins of power.

THE NATIONALS

The ex-Nationals in the LNP are less inhibited by the need to take any account of 'the latte drinkers in leafy suburbs'. They can face One Nation on policy grounds where there may be only fine lines of distinction. In many constituencies outside Brisbane, there may be complex multi-party voting tickets in which preferences for One Nation will be significant for the final outcome. In seats that they held twenty years ago, One Nation might even be seen as the leading contender.

Chris Salisbury has pointed out that this has a particular danger for the National Party component of the integrated LNP and for National Party members inside the federal coalition. If Liberal Party leaders were prepared to do deals with One Nation, the National Party could lose federal seats to One Nation and former National Party members could be replaced at state level.⁸⁷

The need to confront One Nation directly explains the proposal from within the LNP for ending the structural merger. This would allow the component parts of Liberals and Nationals to pursue their own separate destinies, being able to contradict each other to satisfy the very different policy preferences of city and rural constituencies, particularly the attitude towards One Nation. There has also been the sort of leadership speculation which follows pessimistic polling data, querying whether it was now necessary to replace a leader inextricably associated with the unpopular Newman regime and self-identified as an economic rationalist.

To understand the unique shadow cast on the non-Labor parties by 'One Nation' it is necessary to appreciate the various policy and ideological components which contribute to the political base of these parties as they operated in Queensland. The Nationals based their appeal on respect for traditional social and religious attitudes combined with a healthily amoral approach to government intervention and encouragement of entrepreneurship to maximise the benefits of its predominantly rural and regional power base. The Liberals incorporated policies which emphasised individual rather than collective or communal choices on both social and economic issues, preferring the market rather than government intervention as an allocative mechanism. The tension between these two sets of values explained the absence of full amalgamation at federal level and an 'agreement to disagree' in coalition, tilted towards the Liberals.

At the state level, the dominance of the Nationals allowed their preferences to prevail, to the satisfaction of their core constituents in rural areas and among urban social conservatives. These preferences were increasingly out of step with the

⁸⁷ Salisbury C, [One Nation's clear and present danger to the 'conservative establishment'](#), The Machinery of Government website. See also McAuley I, ['The National Party's Dämmerung – an awakening for representative democracy?'](#), *John Menadue's Pearls and Irritations*, 19 July 2017; Hogan M, 'It's goodbye to the Nationals unless they become a genuine country party', *Guardian Australia*, 16 February 2017; and Abjorensen N, ['The Coalition's restless bedfellows'](#), *Inside Story*, 7 April 2017.

wider urban middle classes and they were isolated on economic management issues when the Labor Party at the national level shifted away from its own preference for protectionism.

To pursue a policy of entrenching the Queensland Nationals as the dominant non-Labor party, it was necessary to make concessions at odds with the views of some of the party's core constituents. To pursue the alternative of a close working relationship with the Liberals in government, some concessions were needed, such as avoiding three-cornered contests around the rural/suburban frontier. To pursue the biggest prize of all - full amalgamation - further concessions were necessary, including a policy retreat from elements of rural socialism. But the risk was that another organisation might emerge with no wider aspiration than satisfying the core constituents.

These organisations did appear after amalgamation, almost as soon as the Nationals sought to broaden their appeal in urban areas or were implicated in the policies of national coalition governments led by Liberal prime ministers. Rae Wear discusses this at length in her biography of Joh Bjelke-Petersen⁸⁸ and specifically with respect to One Nation in her contribution to the edited collection, *The Rise and Fall of One Nation*.⁸⁹ She notes that 'rightist fringe groups sought with considerable success to influence the Queensland National Party rather than to compete against it.'⁹⁰ The strategy of secretive bodies such as the League of Rights and more specialised public interest groups was to infiltrate party membership or conduct public campaigns aimed at the party faithful.

This changed under subsequent National Party leaders and, in the heartland seat of Barambah, a representative of one of these ephemeral groups won the seat in 1988 after Joh Bjelke-Petersen vacated it in 1987. The victor quite swiftly rejoined the National Party fold and advanced his career as a result. When he was forced to resign as a minister a decade later, 'after adverse publicity over his relationship with a prostitute'⁹¹, the seat was won in 1998 by Dorothy Pratt, campaigning as a One Nation candidate. She proved more durable than her fellow parliamentarians, holding the seat for One Nation and then as an Independent until she retired in 2012.

Pratt was just one of 11 candidates elected in 1998 under the One Nation banner. Her appeal, like that of her predecessor Joh Bjelke-Petersen, was to a heartland of National Party supporters who felt abandoned by the developments in social and economic policies introduced during the 1990s under the ALP government led by Wayne Goss, often perceived as contrary to the values of the bush. On social issues such as opposing abortion law reform, resisting homosexual rights and promoting a monopolistic role for Christianity in education, there was little to choose between One Nation and the Nationals. Indeed, Hanson's views on

⁸⁸ Wear R, *Johannes Bjelke-Petersen: The Lord's Premier*, University of Queensland Press, 2003.

⁸⁹ Leach M et al (eds), *The Rise and Fall of One Nation*, University of Queensland Press, 2000.

⁹⁰ Wear R, 'One Nation and the Queensland Right', in Leach M, p.57.

⁹¹ Wear R, 'One Nation and the Queensland Right', in Leach M, p.66.

abortion and gay rights, rarely articulated to rural audiences, aligned her with a brand of feminism antithetical to social conservatives.⁹²

In 2017 opinion polls are showing that Hanson's voting support in Queensland continues to be substantial enough to warrant engagement by the LNP in deals and notionally 'off-the-record' discussions about preferences and legislative priorities. The present position of the LNP is that they would accept minority government support if One Nation held the balance of power (as it almost did in 1998) but would not offer cabinet appointments. However, positions have been known to shift if the rewards are high enough.

Distrust of LNP intentions was entirely justifiable, given the experience of the Newman-Nicholls government. It arrived in office feeling its huge majority meant it could ignore its previous commitments on a wide range of issues, including civil liberties and environmental protection, which appealed to many of its urban middle-class supporters. This time around, the spectre of Hansonism which led to the fall of the Borbidge LNP government will be around to haunt these same supporters.

George Megalogenis summed up a similar dilemma facing the National and Liberal parties in Canberra:

The lesson of her previous term in politics, between 1996 and 1998, hasn't changed: One Nation is a direct competitor to the National Party, but it poses the greatest threat to the Liberal Party's standing as a governing party. If the Liberal Party preferences One Nation ahead of Labor, it loses more primary votes to Labor than it saves for the Coalition cause.⁹³

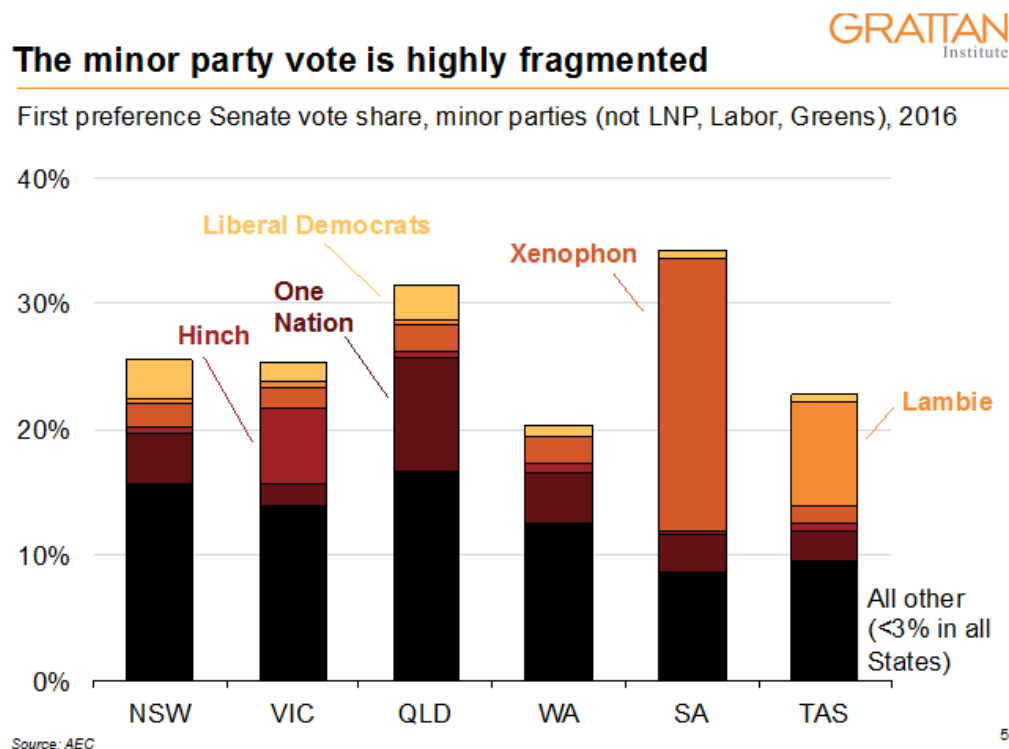
⁹² Margo Kingston reported in 1999 that she had suggested to Hanson that she had lived a feminist life: 'Single mother, started your own business on your own, pro-abortion, no wish to marry again, you believe men are just for sex, you *are* a feminist. ... (She'd mentioned her aversion to remarriage and her current preference for the occasional fling)'. Kingston M, p.43.

⁹³ Megalogenis G, 'The Nation reviewed: our ethnic face', *The Monthly*, April 2017.

5: NEW MINOR PARTIES OUTSIDE QUEENSLAND

FIRST PREFERENCE VOTE SHARE 2016

Daley's analysis, discussed earlier, offered the following valuable summary of the national scene:



First preference Senate vote share, minor parties (not LNP, Labor, Greens), 2016⁹⁴

In the 2016 federal election, minor parties - that is, not counting Labor, the Liberals, the Nationals and the Greens - gained 26 percent of first preference votes in the Senate, up from 11 percent in 2004. A good chunk of the electorate is manifestly unhappy and increasingly voting for 'anyone but them'.

Hanson is benefiting from this rise in support for anyone other than the mainstream parties. But she is a relatively small part of the trend. Nationwide she picked up only four percent of the Senate vote. Even in her power-base of Queensland, Hanson won less than a third of the minor party vote.⁹⁵

Part of the minor party vote depends on name recognition. In Victoria the lion's share went to Derryn Hinch; in South Australia to Nick Xenophon, and in Tasmania to Jacqui Lambie. These parties were barely visible outside their 'home' state. Nevertheless, One Nation's emergence has largely pushed aside other right-wing organisations which had previously competed for support in Queensland. The rural

⁹⁴ The graph from Daley's article.

⁹⁵ Daley J, '[The rise of protest politics – a comment on David Marr's Quarterly Essay](#)' Grattan Institute, 16 June 2017.

and crypto-fascist organisations had faded away with their adherents presumably being accommodated in the National Party or accepting Hanson as their replacement leader.

LEYONHJELM'S LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY

David Leyonhjelm's Liberal Democratic Party had a strong following in New South Wales where it appealed to a variety of interest groups, both professional and recreational, who sought to escape constrictions imposed by government regulation. This lined them up with the implications, if not the irrationality, of the evidence accepted by One Nation conspiracists.

However, One Nation's advocacy of protectionist intervention into economic management, including government regulation to curb the banking system to help farmers or to protect cane farmers against monopoly capitalists, places Hanson outside the libertarian philosophy of the Liberal Democrats but closer to the equally protectionist economic policies of Nick Xenophon. Her admiration for strong authoritarian leaders like Putin also cuts across notions of placing trust in democratic majorities, even though she favours the use of citizens' referenda as a more reliable source of legislation than parliaments.

BERNARDI'S AUSTRALIAN CONSERVATIVES PARTY

On the other side to David Leyonhjelm, the non-permissive right flank is either represented by the Australian Conservatives Party led by Cory Bernardi or is still inside the Abbott faction of the Liberal / National coalition. Unlike Hanson, these conservatives aspire to resurrect a more moral and specifically Christian past and advocate greater censorship and government action to uphold traditional standards and behaviour. The viability in political terms of Bernardi's party in South Australia will be tested by Nick Xenophon's Team (NXT) and it seems likely to be repeated in Queensland, given the presence of an active church membership prominent inside the National Party.

KATTER'S AUSTRALIAN PARTY

Katter's Australian Party is more authentically 'Queenslandish', with three generations of the family active in local, state and federal politics. It is this party rather than One Nation which can trace its antecedents to the Joh era, where Robbie Katter's father, Bob Katter jnr, served as a cabinet minister. KAP has many of the rural protectionist policies common to the aspiration of One Nation, with well-constructed legislative and administrative details. It can point to a series of successes in state legislation and public service activity as a result of a generally amicable working relationship with the ALP minority government and a few occasions when it has successfully sided with the LNP on core rural issues.⁹⁶ In February 2017 Robbie Katter said KAP would not be bound to any policy positions

⁹⁶ An example of this was KAP's siding with the LNP to prevent the ALP from reversing the legislation passed by the Newman government (just before leaving office) to facilitate land clearing. See '[LNP and KAP vote down legislation to restore Queensland's tree-clearing laws](#)', TJ Ryan Foundation website.

or support in Queensland's Parliament if it agreed to a deal with One Nation and predicted that the KAP would 'weather the One Nation storm'.⁹⁷ KAP's problems for the future may be that its success in collaboration with the ALP in the Queensland Parliament may not be regarded as a positive by voters in the bush.

THE DEMISE OF THE PALMER UNITED PARTY

Finally, in reviewing the minor parties, it is important to note that the demise of the Palmer United Party was due both to its internal instability during PUP's time in the national parliament, and to its limited policy range.⁹⁸ William Bowe in *Crikey* drew an important distinction between the two stories of organisational disintegration by One Nation and PUP.

Opinion polls consistently indicate that Pauline Hanson's supporters have been little troubled by her party's internal problems...there's very little sense that the Culleton fiasco foreshadows a march down the same path to political irrelevance that was followed by the Palmer PUP and the earlier incarnation of One Nation. Palmer's credibility as a people's champion was undermined when his business interests hit the sharp end of the resource industry downturn, and his political agenda proved fatally lacking in the new populism's crucial active ingredient of xenophobia.⁹⁹

A TASMANIAN COMPARISON: JACQUI LAMBIE

Cooke's analysis of the incoherence of the 'alt-right' in Australia draws a direct line between Bjelke-Petersen and Pauline Hanson as iconic examples of Queensland political culture. It is more plausible, if unusual, to compare Pauline Hanson not with Joh Bjelke-Petersen but with Tasmania's Jacqui Lambie.

Lambie is an independent-minded female battler who tried out for several parties before ending up linked with Clive Palmer and winning one of Tasmania's Senate seats, notionally on his coat-tails. The rapid demise of the Palmer United Party is often cited as a comparable morality tale similar to optimistic speculation about the past and future of One Nation. But Lambie has been the sole survivor of those who

⁹⁷ Caldwell F, '[Robbie Katter says the KAP will weather One Nation storm](#)', *Brisbane Times*, 18 January 2017. Caldwell F, '[One Nation deal would not bind us to policies: Robbie Katter](#)', *Brisbane Times*, 8 February 2017.

⁹⁸ The Palmer United Party (PUP) fielded candidates in all 150 House of Representatives seats in September 2013. Clive Palmer himself was very different to Hanson: a protege of Joh Bjelke-Petersen, he had been a life member of the National Party before breaking away to form his own party. In 2013 he was elected to the seat of Fairfax. Two candidates, Glenn Lazarus (Queensland) and Jacqui Lambie (Tasmania) were elected to the Senate. Australian Motoring Enthusiast Party senator-elect Ricky Muir of Victoria later agreed to enter into an informal alliance with the PUP. Dio Wang of Western Australia was elected to the Senate at a special election held in April 2014, after the original Senate election in the state was voided by the Court of Disputed Returns. The PUP bloc thus had four senators (3 PUPs plus Muir) when new members took their seats in July 2014. However, Muir soon left the alliance, followed by Lambie who resigned to sit as an Independent in November 2014 and, similarly, Lazarus in March 2015.

⁹⁹ Bowe W, *Crikey*, 31 December 2016.

abandoned Palmer and she continues to exercise an influence in the evenly-balanced Senate elected in 2016. Her performance suggests she has successfully transferred her visibility as a senator into a personal following.

This survival through the double-dissolution Senate election, in contrast to her mainland PUP running mates, might be attributed to the way she mirrors the charisma and outspoken style of Hanson and, less obviously, to the systemic similarities between the political environment in Queensland and in Tasmania.

Australian politics is frequently viewed through a myopic triangular lens. Power is increasingly centralised in Canberra; state politics in Victoria and New South Wales seem to consist of deals done by the power-brokers in the capital cities which contain the bulk of the voting population. Looking after the interests of voters and union or business financial backers in Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth is sufficient to control each of those states. Side deals may need to be done with rural interests by incorporating them in coalitions and sharing the spoils of office but the main action is in the capital cities and the nearby transport hubs.

Queensland and Tasmania are wholly different in terms of economic geography and political sociology. Federation created each as single-state entities but within each state, Queensland and Tasmanian communities remained with their own policy preferences and styles of doing business¹⁰⁰. One historical indicator is the local newspaper proliferation: people in Townsville, Rockhampton and Cairns usually do not read the Brisbane *Courier-Mail* but prefer their local newspapers; people in Launceston read the *Examiner* and those living on the north-west coast read the *Advocate*, not the Hobart *Mercury*. Sporting and educational institutions are similarly diversified in both states and political machinery is similarly decentralised.

It is not too fantastical to see Jacqui Lambie as a micro-version of Hanson in her capacity to demonstrate her battler/'rough diamond' persona to an admiring Tasmanian sub-group of sufficient size to keep her secure in the Senate. For many, she offered an attractive alternative to the arch-conservatism of the Liberal Party's Eric Abetz. There are even parallels to Hanson in Lambie's problems with internal staffing relationships when she has sought insiders with more political experience.¹⁰¹

However, Lambie draws on a different social context which lacks the overtones of racial discrimination, namely time spent in the non-commissioned ranks of the army. Based on her Senate voting record, there are distinct policy differences from Hanson. The National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) believes that it always gets a fair hearing from her and her attitude to education appears to be based on an

¹⁰⁰ On Queensland, see Reynolds H, *North of Capricorn – The Untold Story of Australia's North*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 2003.

¹⁰¹ Lambie's former chief of staff, Rob Messenger, and his wife who was also on her staff had an acrimonious split with Lambie early in 2017. Messenger was originally a member of the National Party, then the merged LNP in 2008. He resigned from the LNP in 2010 and became an Independent. He lost his seat to the LNP at the 2012 election. He then became involved in the Palmer United Party.

appreciation of its transformative power, unlike Hanson who views universities as just another elite institution to be bashed.¹⁰²

Linked to this is her record on industrial relations issues. Labor activists in Victoria think there is always a chance of winning her over (which echoes the record of Australian Motor Enthusiasts Party ex-Senator Ricky Muir who had been a timber industry shop steward in a previous life). This contrasts with Hanson who is predictably anti-union most of the time (obviously not enough 'ordinary' people in the unions) and sided with the Turnbull government on the talismanic issue of reinstating the Australian Building and Construction Commission (ABCC), which Lambie opposed.

But there are obvious and significant differences between Queensland and Tasmania.¹⁰³ In Queensland, Hanson clearly has a number of barriers which Lambie does not face in the micro-political environment of Tasmania. One barrier is the sheer complexity of the array of political parties and past attitudes. A second barrier is structural. Lambie has a very small canvas on which to paint her image: as a senator, she only needs a few thousand votes to secure her position as one among twelve; if she wanted to create a local base, there is a similar proportional representation election system operating in the Tasmanian lower house, and there is even an upper house where partisan affiliations are more fluid.

By contrast, Hanson needed good fortune/LNP miscalculation to build a multi-member presence in the national Senate and the electoral calculus remains loaded against her at state level: single-member constituencies; compulsory preference allocation; and no upper house. Paul Lucas pointed out that Queensland is at the extreme end of any spectrum aimed at encouraging new entrants into politics.¹⁰⁴

This then constituted the complex party and partisan environment, the rough sea, in which One Nation sought to sail when reviving its activity in 2015.

¹⁰² Observation by Paul Rodan, former NTEU national vice-president (email 23 August 2017). See also 'Federal election 2016: \$100,000 degrees? No Way', *Advocate*, National Tertiary Education Journal, June 2016, pp.26-8.

¹⁰³ Not least, in their geography. Queensland population = 4.6 million; area 1.853 million sq km. Tasmania = population 515,000; area 68,401 sq km.

¹⁰⁴ Proportional representation in upper houses is provided through whole-state constituencies in NSW and South Australia and large 'provinces' in Victoria and Western Australia.

6: THE ONE NATION PHOENIX RISEN FROM ITS ASHES

As noted earlier, Hanson has worked with a variety of senior advisers and enjoyed different levels of satisfaction with their performance. Hanson's current renaissance has been assisted by recruiting James Ashby as her party's chief-of-staff. Ashby offered the depth of experience in Canberra political staff circles that was lacking in most of her earlier advisers. His curriculum vitae included time working with Tony Abbott but, more spectacularly, as an intimate adviser to the then Speaker, Peter Slipper. Slipper's own career was characterised by strategic choices such as leaving the Liberals to back the ALP minority governments of Rudd and Gillard. Ashby had launched, then later dropped, a legal action alleging he had been the victim of sexual harassment by Slipper.¹⁰⁵

Ashby soon emerged as a powerful figure but also a source of discord within One Nation because of his closeness to Hanson and because some of the organisational requirements he imposed on candidates raised their hackles because they were perceived as self-aggrandising. His single-mindedness added to the difficulty of finding suitable candidates: first in Western Australia and later in preparation for the Queensland state elections.

Hanson also had to cope with the sometimes bizarre behaviour of her Western Australian fellow-senator, elected in 2016. Rod Culleton was ultimately ejected from the Senate when his qualification to stand was ruled invalid, but not before he had personally conducted appeals all the way to the High Court.¹⁰⁶ By then, he had left the party because of his perception that he was not receiving any support from his fellow One Nation senators. His brother-in-law, Peter Georgiou, took his Senate seat, as a member of One Nation.

Hanson's performance in the 2017 state election in Western Australia was not as encouraging as the media tended to promise during that election campaign. Very senior figures in the national Liberal Party negotiated a deal with her because, it is alleged:

They feared that they were leaking votes to One Nation, especially in Queensland. They were also keen to secure One Nation support for their legislative agenda. ... The deal was seen as a 'litmus test' for other deals between the two parties at state and federal level.¹⁰⁷

From the Liberal Party viewpoint, the benefits proved non-existent and Hanson's own testimony suggested that 'doing the deal with the Liberals has done damage to

¹⁰⁵ Hall L, '[James Ashby drops sexual harassment suit against Peter Slipper](#)', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 June 2014.

¹⁰⁶ Byrne E and Doran M, '[Rod Culleton's election invalid: High Court orders special recount of WA Senate vote](#)', *ABC*, 3 February 2017.

¹⁰⁷ Drum M and Bourne G, 'Western Australia's state election of 2017: what were the implications?', *Australasian Parliamentary Review*, 32, 1, 2017.

us'.¹⁰⁸ Clearly it weakened the appeal of One Nation being a party of 'outsiders'. Commentators noted the poor quality of the campaign and campaigners and there was publicly-aired dissent from independently-minded One Nation candidates. After the Western Australian election, several of the older candidates and local honorary officials went public about their concerns that Ashby and Hanson were too self-centred, and complained about financial burdens imposed upon them as candidates.¹⁰⁹ Yet Hanson still continues to be a force in the West's state politics, particularly in the upper house, where it gained three seats with the help of Liberal preferences.

CANDIDATES, FUNDING AND MANAGEMENT

Ashby was similarly singled out by disgruntled Queensland candidates for his alleged requirement that all candidates' election materials must be printed through his own firm.¹¹⁰ Ashby received further unwanted national publicity with questions being raised in the national parliament about two matters: the absence of clarity on who had owned/donated the light plane being used as a major campaigning tool by Hanson; and the recording of several conversations in which Ashby appeared to be advocating payment schemes which would have defrauded the taxpayers or the candidates or both.¹¹¹

As Michelle Grattan, a long-serving national journalist remarked in her review of Ashby's career and his central role, 'Pauline Hanson's strategist James Ashby can be a risky guy to have around'.¹¹² But Hanson made it clear at the party's national AGM in Brisbane at the end of August 2017 that she was prepared to take this risk while publicly disowning all advisers who had gone before him.

The *Courier-Mail* reported that:

She distanced herself from previous incarnations of the party, which she admitted were controlled by others, saying she wanted to build a foundation for the future. ...

One person in particular she had 'total faith and confidence in' was adviser James Ashby. ... He was no 'Oldfield or Pasquarelli'. ... 'He is not interested in anything to gain from it (The Party) personally.

¹⁰⁸ ['Hanson cops out in deal denial'](#), *The West Australian*, 14 March 2017.

¹⁰⁹ Meldrum-Hanna C, Richards D, and Drum P, ['One Nation insiders reveal Pauline Hanson's 'brutal dictatorship'](#), *New Daily*, 3 April 2017. A detailed record including interviews with most of the actors was provided by Middleton K, ['One Nation's Business Model Questioned after WA Election Failure'](#), *Saturday Paper*, 10 June 2017.

¹¹⁰ Karp P, ['One Nation disendorses candidate for not paying \\$2,400 upfront fee'](#), *Guardian Australia*, 10 February 2017.

¹¹¹ ['Let's Make Some Cash' and 'Cashby Deception: One Nation official caught in bid to milk candidate cash cows'](#), *Courier-Mail*, Brisbane, 22 May 2017.

¹¹² Grattan M, ['Grattan on Friday: Pauline Hanson's strategist James Ashby can be a risky guy to have around'](#), *The Conversation*, 25 May 2017.

One Nation had cleaned itself up administratively because of the efforts of talented staff, and political opponents and the media would struggle to find anything wrong with the party's inner workings.¹¹³

Hanson's relationship with Ashby was not the only topic of concern for One Nation candidates. The problem of dissonance between the views of individual candidates and those of the leader surfaced even before the Queensland election campaign started. In some cases, Hanson felt that her general credibility was placed at risk by the eccentric views held by her standard-bearers, so they should be disendorsed; in others the value of the candidate and the strength of her or his local following meant that Hanson allowed contradictory opinions to stand as either an exercise of free speech or were inaccurate 'fake news'. This latter slur on reporters came to wear thin when accurate verbatim records were available.

For example, the One Nation candidate for the Ipswich seat of Bundamba was axed for homophobic posts on social media and the candidate for the Gold Coast seat of Currumbin was also disendorsed for a similarly offensive joke about the LGBTI community.¹¹⁴ By contrast, the candidate for the Sunshine Coast seat of Glasshouse escaped such punishment for similar anti-gay posts on social media. Hanson said that the candidate's remarks were taken out of context and the candidate herself told the media that she would not respond to any questions from the *Courier-Mail* unless Hanson and Ashby were also present.¹¹⁵

Some of the mistakes attributed to Hanson and her management team included lax financial arrangements, such as using a personal bank account to receive website donations and poor record-keeping to meet the Electoral Commission requirements. There was also the continuing public airing of damning tape-recorded in-house discussions provided by an alienated office-bearer, culminating in an injunction being issued to prevent the series of revelations continuing.¹¹⁶ This led one journalist writing for *Crikey* to assert that while there may be no certainty that any crime had been committed, the constant flow of financial issues being raised meant that Hanson was finished.¹¹⁷

¹¹³ Madigan M, 'One Nation annual general meeting in Brisbane', *Courier-Mail*, Brisbane, 24 August 2017.

¹¹⁴ ['One Nation candidate Tracey Bell Henselin under fire'](#), *ABC*, 11 January 2017.

¹¹⁵ 'Third Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party hopeful rages at gay 'bigots'', *Courier-Mail*, Brisbane, 11 January 2017. Hanson's generalised sympathy for gay rights could not be sustained when a specific policy position was required in her role as a senator. She offered various positions in 2016. Her first piece of advice to people wishing to enter into a same-sex marriage was to leave the country. She then contributed to the delaying tactics advocated by opponents of same-sex marriage telling voters to wait until after the next election. Then, if the people had spoken clearly in favour, she would accept their advice and support same-sex marriage. By 2017, her views had hardened and she seemed to be aligning herself with the Tony Abbott nay-saying campaign after the plebiscite idea had been replaced by a mail-out survey.

¹¹⁶ Robertson J, ['Pauline Hanson secures gag order to stop release of secret One Nation recordings'](#), *Guardian Australia*, 8 June 2017.

¹¹⁷ Bradley M, ['Whether she broke the law or not, Hanson's done for'](#), *Crikey*, 1 June 2017.

Peter Beattie formed a similar view, suggesting that Hanson supporters are honest, and hate dishonest, gouging politicians who are just out for themselves and their party:

That is why Ms Hanson and One Nation are at the crossroads. A significant percentage of their supporters will hate the fact that One Nation even discussed making money out of the Queensland election, soliciting donations to a personal bank account and failing to properly disclose the use of an aircraft bearing One Nation signage but which supposedly had 'nothing to do with the party'. She is proving to be just another politician and One Nation just another political party.¹¹⁸

In 'Pauline Hanson, proves she's just another politician', Beattie writes:

All political parties are the same, it seems, except Pauline Hanson and her party pretend to be something different; she appeals to voters on the platform of being the anti-politician who speaks her mind.

That claim is rapidly proving to be political fraud. Until recent questionable unethical behaviour, I believed that the revived Pauline Hanson One Nation party would determine who would win the next Queensland election due later this year.

Indeed, I thought that over the next two federal elections they could end up holding the balance of power in the Senate. I don't believe that any more. They are slowly but surely undermining themselves from within like a Greek tragedy.¹¹⁹

Beattie's assertions tend to be contradicted by Broinowski's observation, written after travelling with Hanson, that Hanson still has 'visceral godlike appeal'.¹²⁰

The dismal tale of multiple failings among candidates who won office in 1998 as One Nation standard-bearers in parliament has already been told. However, it is not necessarily an augury for the future. A major difference between then and now is that One Nation is given a chance of exerting political influence and winning some seats in a finely-balanced state legislature. The party can thus be more particular about its candidates than in 1998 and even offer better career prospects for those on the outer with the major parties.

As noted earlier, Brett identified the following spread of occupations among the eleven successful candidates in 1998: five small business owners, three self-employed tradesmen, two country vets, one policeman and one army officer.

By mid-October 2017 53 candidates had been endorsed.¹²¹ There was surprisingly little change in the occupational categories apart from the addition of four from the farming sector. The majority of candidates were employed in the private sector, mainly managing small businesses (32 out of the 52) with real estate, finance and engineering being the main areas of activity; one was a nurse and five had

¹¹⁸ Beattie P, '[Pauline Hanson proves she's just another politician](#)', *The New Daily*, 5 June 2017.

¹¹⁹ Beattie P.

¹²⁰ Broinowski A, p.21.

¹²¹ [Candidates: Pauline Hanson's One Nation](#), accessed 10 October 2017.

experience in the police or the military. Several did not identify their current occupation.¹²² One was a former LNP current member of parliament and another sat in parliament as an LNP member between 2012 and 2015.

The most important candidate One Nation has secured was a sitting LNP member and ex-minister, Steve Dickson, who joined in January 2017 to become One Nation's sole representative in parliament and leader of the state branch of One Nation. Two other former members of the Newman-controlled LNP majority who were not re-elected in 2015 also signalled their intention to stand as One Nation candidates.

The gamble for Dickson, who occupies a Sunshine Coast seat with a comfortable LNP majority, is whether his current hold on that seat relates to his previous party affiliation or to the appeal of his personality and potential One Nation converts. He was a prominent member of the Newman cabinet but had been left out of the Opposition shadow cabinet by both of Newman's successors. He praised the support he had received from Hanson for his particular enthusiasm for the legalisation of medical marijuana, another example of One Nation's unexpected burst of liberalism. But local opinion polls were not encouraging for One Nation after the LNP endorsed a strong local candidate.

Journalist Steve Wardill, writing in the *Courier-Mail*, surmised that just like Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet, political star-crossed lovers Dickson and Hanson may have found a way to be together. However, as in the play, this political drama might end in tragedy.¹²³ Only an election will decide whether or not there will be a happy ending or even perhaps the familiar chaos of uncertainty.¹²⁴ What is clear already is that this will be a different sort of election compared to anything which has occurred in the last twenty years. It will be a measure of the extent to which Hanson's appeal can survive in an era of much closer scrutiny, examining both the quality of her candidates and the quality of her policies, as well as her own credibility.

¹²² The count is fluid. Following a familiar pattern, Troy Aggett resigned in October on the grounds of the printing costs One Nation was demanding of him. See Moore T, '[The eight One Nation candidates who fell before the first hurdle](#)', Sydney Morning Herald, 10 October 2017.

¹²³ Wardill S, 'Was Steve Dickson's defection from LNP payback against Tim Nicholls' leadership?' *Courier-Mail*, Brisbane, 21 January 2017.

¹²⁴ Dr Paul Williams, a frequent columnist in the *Courier-Mail*, writing in mid-February 2017, provided a dystopian satire on the consequences of an election result which placed One Nation in a dominant position, entitled: 'Step Through the Looking Glass for State Run By One Nation'. In it he speculated about an election on 28 October, One Nation winning 15 seats from Labor in central and northern Queensland and Tim Nicholls presiding over a regime sufficiently dependent on One Nation support to reject all forms of political correctness in major policy areas such as education and environmental science.

By mid-July, Williams was reporting on the LNP state conference, considering the consequences for the LNP's enthusiasm for discussing ultra-populist motions. The article was headline: 'LNP act like "One Nation-Lite', *Courier Mail*, 18 July 2017.

7: HANSON'S APPEAL - CHARISMATIC POPULIST

WHY IS HANSON WHERE SHE IS?

To understand this appeal which brought success in 1996, 1998 and again in 2016, it is useful to examine the populist nature of the leadership provided by Hanson and identify those who voted for her, then and now.

Concern over the anti-intellectual aspects of 'populism' has been long-standing in both the USA and Britain, dating back to the middle of the nineteenth century. Populism has been most accurately defined by one of the greatest interpreters of the practice of political science, Bernard Crick. He described populism as:

... a style of politics and rhetoric that seeks to arouse a majority, or at least what their leaders passionately believe to be a majority ... who are, have been, or think themselves to be outside the polity, scorned and despised by an educated establishment.¹²⁵

In its American manifestation in the mid-twentieth century, as now, populism was particularly strong in promoting rural and regional interests against those of the cities. Common enemies were the government, the bankers, the capitalist system and apparently privileged minorities such as the Catholic church, the Jews and the indolent blacks.¹²⁶

Tiffen argues that the main animating force of populism is anger. Its proponents are determined to confront forces that threaten or betray 'the people':

Betrayal by 'the elites' - the perfidious and corrupt wielders of self-seeking power - is an ever-present motif. ... While disgust with elites is a recurrent motif in populism, at least as important is hostility to outsiders, especially immigrants.¹²⁷

And Tiffen adds a comment which is highly relevant to the Australian, and more specifically, the Queensland context:

Less obvious than upward and outward resentment is downward resentment. Supporters of populism are not usually from the very poorest sectors of society, and while many populists support the welfare state, they are often also hostile to those they see as undeserving recipients, including unemployed people and refugees.

David Marr reaches a similar conclusion about support for One Nation coming from those who are economically relatively well placed, not failures in life, but he adds

¹²⁵ Crick B, *A Very Short Introduction to Democracy*, Oxford University Press, 2002, p 77.

¹²⁶ Crick B, p.78, citing US historian [Richard Hofstadter](#).

¹²⁷ Tiffen R, '[In the name of the people](#)', *Inside Story*, 27 April 2017. See also Tiffen R, '[The restorationist impulse: why we hanker for the old ways](#)', *The Conversation*, 28 July 2017, and Tiffen R, 'Perils of Populism', *Griffith Review*, 57, 28 July 2017. For a historical perspective on the complexity of sub-national populism see O'Toole F, '[Brexit's Irish Question](#)', *New York Review of Books*, 28 September 2017.

an important dimension: their pessimism about the future. Marr cites the findings of the national demographic analysis by Ian McAllister.

This suggests that One Nation voters are not those most disadvantaged by globalisation, even though they regret the consequences. ... They're not all old. About one-third of the people who voted for Hanson in the last election were under 45. They mostly didn't finish school. That doesn't mean their lives were wrecked; they went on to get other qualifications.¹²⁸

Marr also draws on the late 2016 Ipsos survey which underlines another feature of populism: the widespread appeal of authoritarian styles of leadership, suggesting that many shared Pauline Hanson's widely-reported admiration for Vladimir Putin.

More than 70 percent of Australians believe the nation 'needs a strong leader to take the country back from the rich and powerful' and nearly half believe 'to fix the country, we need a strong leader willing to break the rules'. Over two-thirds (68 percent) believe 'the economy is rigged to the advantage of the rich and powerful' and 61 percent believe 'traditional parties and politicians don't care about people like me'. And it's not just the political elite Australians distrust. Sixty percent believe that 'experts in this country don't understand the lives of people like me'.¹²⁹

Commenting on these results in a Fairfax newspaper, Professor Carol Johnson observed:

While previous surveys have shown some dissatisfaction with traditional politics, these latest findings come at a time of declining primary votes for both Australia's major parties. While there has been distrust before, these are very high figures. I think they are a sign that in economic policy in particular the major parties need to think about whether they have been adequately addressing the concerns of voters'.¹³⁰

All these comments can be seen as identifying the basic political gunpowder in terms of social attitudes towards conventional politicians.

The key ingredient for a successful populist organisation - the match that lights the fuse - is a charismatic populist leader. In discussing populism, Tiffen points to the appeal of reducing the processes of government to simple choices:

Populism transforms the complexities and ambiguities of the contemporary world into a search for enemies and culprits. This allows its proponents to argue that simple solutions championed by strong leaders are the answer. Their policy prescriptions are liberated from the real world of trade-off and compromise, of limited resources and unintended consequences, to the realm of simple solutions obvious to anyone with common sense. All that is needed is strong leadership; further debate is unnecessary, and simply a means of avoiding action. ... Populists also seek to create an aura of drama around themselves, as was on bizarre display

¹²⁸ Marr D, p.34.

¹²⁹ Ting I, '[Ipsos survey: Australians want a strong leader to take country back from rich, powerful](#)', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 January 2017.

¹³⁰ Cited in Chan G, '[Pauline Hanson says Australians want Vladimir Putin's style of leadership](#)', *Guardian Australia*, 5 March 2017.

when Pauline Hanson made a video that included the words 'If you are seeing me now, it means I have been murdered. ... You must fight on'.¹³¹

In the case of Hanson, the structures which have been built around her leadership have proved unstable in the past. But the organisational characteristics remain the same for any populist leader: a small core of activists with mutually-sustained objectives associated with the acquisition and exercise of political power; a periphery of supporters who have faith in the values and policies of the leader, including a willingness to join her party and appear at her functions; and, finally, a fringe of uncommitted voters who recognise her name on the ballot paper as a celebrity alternative to those currently holding political office.

Core activists may have a common faith in her leadership and a generalised aim to share in her exercise of power, even seek to guide the direction of her leadership and make it more efficient. Others, outside this core, will play an active role such as candidates and local officials, sometimes because of specific policy enthusiasms which can be accommodated within the broad ethos of the party. Both types of activists realise that the key component in the organisation is the leader, and her capacity to deliver change through mobilising the periphery is the central ingredient.

ON WHAT IS THIS LEADERSHIP BASED?

David Marr's extended analysis of 'the White Queen' in his *Quarterly Essay* of May 2017 identifies one of five reasons explaining the loyalty of her followers:

Hanson's voters can see she's often outlandish, even out of line, yet brave and speaking for them. One Nation is her following. Without Hanson there is no party.¹³²

Marr's other four reasons are disenchantment with politics, a fierce nostalgia for the values and attitudes which prevailed when the 'White Australia' policy was unchallenged,¹³³ profound hostility to immigration as the great agent of social change and finally, and pre-eminently, the driver of race.

One important populist component is her ability to distinguish herself from 'ordinary' politicians who are regarded as self-seeking and untrustworthy. Her willingness to enter into tactical 'deals' with the ruling Western Australian Liberal Party was seen retrospectively to have caused perturbation among both her core and her peripheral supporters, both in WA and in Queensland. After typical obfuscation, she confessed to her peripheral and fringe supporters that such a deal was inappropriate (all the while wheeling and dealing on the national stage with her voting bloc in the Senate and positioning herself to do the same in Queensland).

¹³¹ Tiffen R. ['In the name of the people'](#).

¹³² Marr D, p.4.

¹³³ Tiffen R, ['In the name of the people'](#).

Hanson's image as an anti-politician is grounded in a lack of intellectual pretension, exemplified in the tag 'please explain'. This is often cited to her detriment as an example of ignorance but it is a powerful tool that identifies her with her less-educated supporters. Anna Broinowski uses 'Please Explain' as the main title of her book about Hanson and the title for the 2016 SBS documentary on which the book was based.¹³⁴ As others have noted, the majority of viewers of commercial TV stations would probably be as flummoxed by a word like 'xenophobia' as Hanson apparently was when interviewed on *Sixty Minutes* in 1996. She could live with derision on the ABC. Her limited vocabulary would commend her to men with traditional values in rural bars or working class clubs as 'a good sort' and to many of their wives as well.

XENOPHOBIA

The term 'xenophobia' - fear of foreigners - is probably more appropriate now than when it was raised in 1996, when hostility towards Indigenous Australians was a primary component of One Nation appeal. The more inclusive term 'racism' is used by Marr, and he cites this as the most significant of the five reasons he gives as the basis of One Nation support. Marr suggests that both major parties baulk at criticising Hanson as racist because they recognise the deeply-entrenched racist attitudes which have pervaded Australian history and social interaction: too many Australians are mildly or even unconsciously racist for mass political parties to risk offending them. Being opposed to immigration historically was not necessarily racist; there might be arguments about over-crowding, educational disabilities and job competition which theoretically could apply to migrants of any race or nationality. To this list can now be added issues of national security and terrorism.

In its current context, the focus is upon the challenges posed by what is perceived to be cultural separatism among Islamic communities for the presumed wider commitment to a more inclusive version of multiculturalism. For previous generations, this has been framed as an expectation that migrants should commit to full integration with the prevailing national ethos.

Australia has a long bipartisan history of institutionalised racism, both in its dealing with its original non-white inhabitants and those seeking to migrate here. Queensland Senator Anthony Chisholm (ALP) alluded to this when his fellow-Queenslander Senator Malcolm Roberts advanced the claim that One Nation was 'the real successor' to the ALP of the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s. The issue arose from a speech to the Australian Industry Group where Roberts asserted that:

Since the 1970s, Labor has undergone a constituency inversion, abandoning workers in favour of leftwing elites and taxpayer-funded freeloaders. ... What makes [One Nation] a 'workers' party' is that the membership and support basis of One Nation is made up of often poorly paid, hardworking Aussies, whose basic decency, quiet patriotism, strong moral compass and fierce work ethic define them to be the

¹³⁴ [Pauline Hanson: Please Explain!](#), SBS On Demand, aired 31 July 2016.

heart and soul of our nation ... including our commitment to defend the traditional English speaking, predominantly European makeup of Australian society.¹³⁵

PAULINE THE 'BATTLER'

In the intellectually undemanding environment of reality television, Hanson was able to shape her persona as someone without pretensions yet able to 'dance with the stars'. Her 'star quality' was burnished in extended interviews with sympathetic media, such as one that appeared in the Brisbane *Sunday Mail* after she released a comprehensive manifesto headlined in early 2017 as 'How I'd Run the Nation'.

People see me as I could be their sister, their mother, their neighbour next door. They don't see me as a career politician. ... They've seen me running a small business, rearing kids by myself. They see this person, I've had knockdowns, I've been in prison, I've come out of there and guess what? They haven't beaten me. I've got up again. They can throw everything at me and I still keep doing what I believe in. I don't change my tune, whichever the way the polls are going. If you look at what I said 20 years ago, it's exactly what I'm saying today. I'm a type of person who can make a decision. The past makes you aware of what to do in the future.¹³⁶

The reporter commented that 'in her, many voters see a reflection of themselves – a battler, unashamedly unpolished politically and someone who calls a spade a shovel'. The editorial writer in the same paper argued that:

The flame-haired former fish and chip shop owner is about to take advantage of a disaffection with mainstream politics never before seen in this country ... she has struck a chord with those who say they are being ignored.¹³⁷

Broinowski's book is based on the extended period of close personal contact she had with Hanson and her entourage during the making of the documentary. She comments:

Not since the true believers handed Gough Whitlam their unconditional loyalty on a platter have I seen an Australian politician display such visceral godlike appeal.¹³⁸

GENDER

An important dimension in identifying the basis of Hanson's appeal is specific to her gender. Broinowski has this as a recurrent theme to explain the devotion she inspired among her core activists and particularly those who worked directly for her as organisers and advisers. It also sustained her celebrity status in the gaps

¹³⁵ Karp P, '[Labor Senator says One Nation represents his party's 'old racist' voters,](#)' *Guardian Australia*, 1 May 2017.

¹³⁶ *Sunday Mail*, 5 February 2017.

¹³⁷ *Sunday Mail*, 5 February 2017.

¹³⁸ Broinowski A, p.21.

between her political notoriety, identified as an inflammatory populist irresistible to popular chat shows and the tabloid press.

Broinowski speculates that her period as a dining-room hostess aged 22 might have been where 'she developed her taste for public attention, ensnaring her first male fans with her intoxicating mix of vulnerability and steel'.¹³⁹ In 1997, two female academics based at the time at Melbourne University, contributed a symposium chapter entitled 'Men Only – Pauline Hanson and Australia's Far Right'.¹⁴⁰ One of the authors, Iva Deutchman, was able to draw on her American experience to make comparisons with the contemporary scene in the USA. The authors noted that Pauline Hanson was unique as the only female in either the US or Australia playing a leadership role in organisations the authors identified as 'far right'.

This conferred on her the benefits of media coverage (which has continued non-stop to the present day). But the authors also argued that, in order to appeal to the Right, Hanson has adopted a masculinist agenda, citing the definition used by Michael Leach: 'the political expression of specifically male gender interests and practices, analogous with but diametrically opposed to feminism'.¹⁴¹

Ellison and Deutchman offer primary source material which provides a fascinating insight into the relationship between Hanson and her exclusively male advisers as far back as 1997, as well as her policy and linguistic appeal to the colloquial 'Aussie battler' envisaged as the traditional working class male breadwinner. The authors also mention Hanson's predominantly masculine activist and electoral support base. Comparison with recent opinion polls suggests that this has clearly been modified over time although the gender of the central cadre of advisers remains largely unchanged.

The authors also provide an extended discussion on the mutual dependence between Hanson and her closest advisers, particularly the attraction generated by 'her seeming lack of sophistication and femininity', 'an endearing quality which undermines the aggression often directed towards her'. The manifest hostility between the changing retinue of advisers is contrasted with their unquestioned commitment to protect as well as advance the interests of Hanson herself. Rothwell suggests that the 'puppet and puppeteer' image undermines her claim to be unlike ordinary politicians.¹⁴²

Anna Broinowski provides further testimony to Hanson's continuing magnetic personality. Hanson is depicted by Broinowski as easily distracted by attractive men of a wide range of ages, just as they in turn offered unquestioned admiration.

¹³⁹ Broinowski A, p.55.

¹⁴⁰ Ellison A and Deutchman I in Grant B (ed) *Pauline Hanson: One Nation and Australian Politics*, University of New England Press, 1997.

¹⁴¹ M.Leach, 'Manly, true and white: masculine identity and Australian socialism', in G.Stokes (ed) *The Politics of Identity in Australia*, Cambridge University press, 1997, p.65.

¹⁴² Rothwell N, pp.164-5.

Broinowski expands on this analysis by noting the essentially masculinist character of many of her policy positions.

As a politician, she has railed against domestic violence survivors, accusing them of making 'frivolous' claims to rot the system. Despite the fact that one Australian woman, on average, is killed every week by a close relative or partner, Hanson insists that men are the real victims of the epidemic: 'Men have nowhere to go - [domestic violence against males] is very widely spread. I want to ... give them a voice, because they feel like they're not being heard'. One of Hanson's first moves as a senator was to support pension cuts for single parents, the overwhelming majority of whom are women. ... It's clear Hanson sees her abusive husbands as the exception to the dignified Aussie masculinity she cherishes, and not the rule.¹⁴³

'PAULINE'S PEOPLE': THE VOTERS

Who are these voters who see Hanson as a reflection of themselves? David Marr draws on several social surveys and polls to offer a thumbnail sketch of 'Pauline's people'.¹⁴⁴ One of the longest-running of these is the Scanlan survey which analysed those respondents within a national database who identified themselves as One Nation voters. As mentioned earlier, they are not losers at the bottom of the social hierarchy, even if relatively under-educated. Many had left school early but acquired proficiency in trade qualifications, become financially successful but identified themselves as working class rather than middle class. In terms of attitudes to specific social issues, they were not especially moralistic: they favoured social change advancing personal autonomy including gay rights, access to euthanasia and marijuana, although they shared the enthusiasm of many in the wider population for reintroducing the death penalty.

Ian McAllister also provided an analysis for Marr which examined electoral data in more depth and added a focus on regional and demographic elements derived from focus groups. This indicated that One Nation Senate voters in 2016 were almost entirely native-born Australians, with a wide age distribution skewed towards the elderly and, compared to 1997 when it was established as a party, more evenly balanced between men and women. The party had increased its support in the suburbs and coastal cities despite its bush image, with school drop-outs and tradespeople strongly represented among One Nation voters' occupations but few university graduates.

Ian McAuley, another close observer of voting behaviour in Australia recognised the importance of these rural and regional interests:

In Australia there is certainly a regional dimension to our voting, revealed in Australian Electoral Commission data. The further one lives from our coastal capitals the stronger is the support for non-establishment parties. Figures I have presented on this same blog show that in our federal election last year, while established parties - the Coalition, Labor and the Greens - held 90 percent of the vote in urban areas, in 'provincial' electorates (as defined by the Electoral

¹⁴³ Broinowski A, pp.68-9.

¹⁴⁴ Marr D, pp.46-52. See also Grant S, [Pauline Hanson's One Nation 'wouldn't last a week without her', David Marr says](#), ABC, 31 March 2017.

Commission) their vote was down to 87 percent and in 'rural' electorates 81 percent, where a Melbourne Cup field of independents and small parties gained the balance.¹⁴⁵

McAuley also commented in the same article on a more recent survey focussed on a specific North Queensland constituency centred on Mackay:

Headline-grabbing figures (30 percent support for One Nation) obscured another strong finding in the ReachTEL Survey, which broke down the One Nation support by age. The generally-accepted view, drawing on the Brexit and Trump votes, is that older people who have seen the world they once knew fall apart are more likely to support parties such as One Nation. But in Dawson among people aged 18-34 One Nation support is 44 percent and it falls away among older age groups. (It is only 24 percent among those aged 65 and over.) The same survey finds that the 18-24 age group had highest support for the Greens at 6 percent.

One probable explanation for this discontent with the established parties lies in a high level of youth unemployment. A Brotherhood of St Laurence survey last year found rates of youth unemployment in excess of 20 percent in large areas of non-metropolitan Queensland. Undoubtedly these rates are elevated by a loss in these regions of young people who have left to study or to work and have never come back.

In contemporary Australia the cards are stacked against younger people – high housing costs, high fees for university and other avenues of higher education, private health insurance 'lifetime cover', generous tax provisions for 'self-funded' retirees. If one lives in a remote region there are often prohibitive relocation costs impeding access to higher education (no living with mum and dad, and even if accommodation is available the young people would be risking their lives on the criminally underfunded Bruce Highway), and if one is unemployed in a remote region there is a threatened further weakening of the Newstart allowance. No wonder young people left behind in remote regions are angry enough to support One Nation.¹⁴⁶

There is also anecdotal evidence about the generalised distrust of politicians among sections of the Queensland voting public, a view widely shared across the nation and by supporters of other minor parties.¹⁴⁷ A number of journalists have visited areas outside Brisbane which have been identified as hotbeds of 'Hansonism', a process which is probably unscientific but adds to the broad perception of politicians about the significance of One Nation.¹⁴⁸

One of the more valuable contributions came from a *Courier-Mail* journalist tasked early in 2017 with taking the political pulse of south-east Queensland non-metropolitan voters outside Brisbane. Jed Smith offered his readers vignettes of the inhabitants of country towns stretching from Canungra to Ipswich:

¹⁴⁵ McAuley I, 'Pauline Hanson's youth support', published on John Menadue's website *Pearls and Irritations*, 2 March 2017. This is the blog McAuley refers to.

¹⁴⁶ McAuley I.

¹⁴⁷ Hanrahan C, '[Who elected the One Nation, Xenophon and Lambie senators?](#)', ABC, 28 October 2016.

¹⁴⁸ Gribbin C, '[Meet Pauline Hanson's Queensland supporters](#)', ABC, 30 January 2017.

Canungra: Gunshop owner and local landowner: His political opinions are limited, other than to say, 'Generally they're all a bunch of lying pricks. And the government trying to change all the gun laws to take the guns off people if the opportunity comes along and (the public) need to defend themselves they're not going to be able to and the military and all that are not around in all suburbs nor is the police force.'

Beauresort: 'I think (politicians) are running the country into the ground myself. With the wars going on, the refugee problem, always trying to take money away from the people that need it,' says Jerry, an ex-serviceman and One Nation voter who works as a volunteer at the war museum in Beauresort. He voted for Hanson's party to 'keep 'em honest. ... People want someone to talk to them and One Nation seems to be listening to what the common person wants done,' he says.

Country dweller Greg Dennis, dairy farmer: He has been suffering from depression lately, which he says is in no small part related to his ailing business interests and our broken political system. 'We're experiencing a lot of downward price pressure towards the farmer because of supermarket wars and it's becoming increasingly difficult to make a profit as a farming business across different agricultural sectors,' he says. 'It's something I'm having a bit of a challenge with right now because I'm actually getting to a point of giving up on Australians. The Australian people don't get it and they don't care. Dennis blames a political system corrupted by the profit motive of multinational corporations. (Later on in the interview he rejects voting for One Nation because of its social divisiveness despite its many good ideas.)

Rosewood: Publican Bernie says support for One Nation is strong among his customers and while he was impressed by her personally he doesn't much care for politics. 'I've got enough problems with me wife, let alone politics,' he says.

Next door we meet Cathy, 46, a mother of four and grandmother of one, who was born in Ipswich, Pauline Hanson's hometown. Today she holds down a gig as a body-piercing specialist at the tattoo parlour across the road from the pub. Prior to that she spent her life in the air force serving on bases around the country. Personally, she finds Pauline Hanson offensive. She was turned off by how mean spirited she was toward immigrants on her first go round in 1997. 'I mean, good on her, giving it a go and stuff like that but when she first hit the political scene I was a little bit offended with all the 'get the immigrants out',' she says. As for her appeal today, Cathy says it's likely because 'she's a bit more down to earth. When you speak to her she's not full of herself, so that helps'.¹⁴⁹

All of this suggests that racism as an issue has been greatly overrated by Marr and that he may be generalising from his own metropolitan perceptions. An extensive critique of the reliability of Marr's survey methodology was provided by Tim Colebatch in *Inside Story*, incidental to a discussion on the policy challenges posed by economic inequality. Colebatch suggests that the sort of people willing to fill out extensive survey forms would be atypical - more likely to be middle-class, middle-aged enthusiasts not typical of the wider group of One Nation voters:

The truth is that we don't know how much Pauline Hanson's support is driven by economic factors, and how much purely by racism. If her supporters are overwhelmingly working-class, and disproportionately underemployed, or

¹⁴⁹ '[Jed Smith travels deep into Pauline Hanson country and sees a different side of Australia](#)', News.com.au, 16 April 2017.

unemployed, or struggling small-business owners, economic factors could well be playing a crucial role.¹⁵⁰

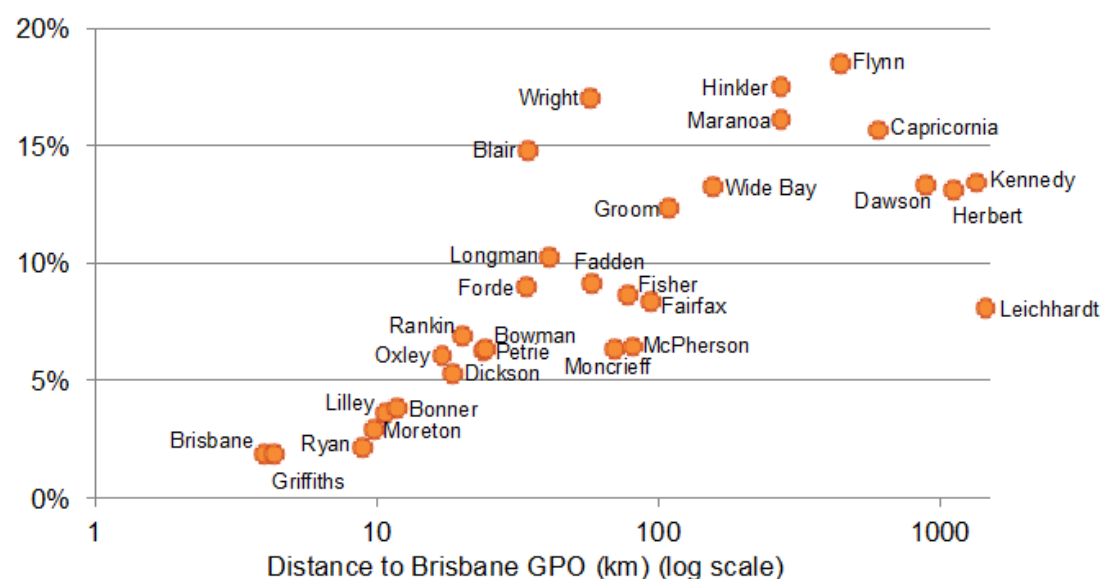
All the views cited above came from rural and conservative areas of Queensland. Polling evidence suggests that One Nation also offers an increasingly attractive alternative for Labor voters in areas such as north Queensland, hardest hit by rising unemployment. The voters of Mackay who indicated support for One Nation gave voice to their reasons for alienation in a video discussion with Mark Fennell on the SBS program 'The Feed'. There is marked similarity in terms of the alienation from Brisbane as the political hub and the search for solutions to the unemployment created by the end of the mining boom. They too wanted solutions to jump at irrespective of which party was offering them.¹⁵¹

The Grattan paper by Daley cited earlier illustrates the significant regional variation in Hanson's electoral support by comparing distance from Brisbane with percentages of voter preferences.¹⁵²

There is a strong regional element to the electoral appeal of Pauline Hanson

GRATTAN
Institute

Pauline Hanson One Nation Party first preference Senate vote share by electorate division, Queensland, 2016



Source: AEC, Grattan Institute analysis

30

¹⁵⁰ Colebatch T, '[Tackling inequality good for the Party](#)', *Inside Story*, 26 July 2017.

¹⁵¹ Fennell M, '[Pauline's People: One Nation's new supporters](#)', *SBS*, 8 June 2017.

¹⁵² Chart from Daley J, '[The rise of protest politics](#)', Grattan Institute, June 2017.

8: HANSON'S POLICIES

The next section considers what solutions are offered for One Nation sympathisers to jump at. These range across three levels of generality: sympathy for their sense of powerlessness; a more specific explanation linked to race; and, finally, specific examples of social and economic policies seen as having been imposed by the elite establishment which run counter to the values and interests of One Nation sympathizers.

CONSPIRACY THEORIES

Conspiracy theories have been promoted across many nations and have retained their currency across centuries. Jan-Willem van Prooijen, a Dutch psychologist, has studied why people believe in such theories and what personality and situational factors contribute to those beliefs:

A conspiracy theory is the belief that a group of people - often powerful people - collude in secret in order to make plans that are widely seen as malevolent or evil. ...

Belief in conspiracy theories arises from a combination of anxiety, pessimism and over-reliance on using simple answers to explain complicated problems. And because - occasionally - there truly are conspiracies and bad actors trying to manipulate the world to their advantage, belief in these theories persists.¹⁵³

Allan McConnell has pursued this important point about the real rather than imagined existence of hidden policy agendas by examining an Australian case study. He noted that 'allegations of hidden policy agendas are a perennial feature of public policy making but there are no works in existence dealing directly and systematically with this crucial phenomenon'.¹⁵⁴ Nevertheless, there seems enough consensus among observers from across the political spectrum that hidden policy agendas do sometimes exist and that their existence weakens public trust in public institutions. It is this lack of trust which feeds those who embrace the full gamut of conspiracy theories as a basis for a comprehensive explanation of all policies that they wish to resist.

This is often linked to scepticism about the truth of reports in the more traditional mass media which cast doubt on the validity of these conspiracy theories. Increasingly people rely on social media that reinforce their prejudices and reject hard evidence or the opinion of recognised experts. Communications experts

¹⁵³ Resnick B, [‘The dark allure of conspiracy theories, explained by a social psychologist: believing in them is a coping mechanism to deal with an uncertain world.’](#), Vox.com, 25 .May 2017.

¹⁵⁴ ‘Actors may pursue hidden agendas – often in a routine way - and they may hide many different things (from personal financial gain to managing crowded policy agendas). They may also use numerous tools and techniques in an attempt to “hide”, including deliberate strategies to “mobilise” existing institutional biases.’ McConnell A, A. (2017) [‘Hidden Agendas: Shining A Light on the Dark Side of Public Policy’](#), *European Journal of Public Policy*, published online 3 October 2017.

identify this phenomenon as 'channel formation' which creates close links among strangers from diverse backgrounds and locations.

Conspiracy theories have been especially prevalent in the USA for many years. Hofstadter, a widely-regarded analyst of the 1960s, thought that fringe conspiracists should be contrasted with 'normal' politics which encompassed major parties, the liberal-democratic State, and the liberal press. Interest groups that negotiated within these institutions were healthy; groups exhibiting the paranoid style were a disease.

As Jason Wilson, a recent commentator on the Australian scene noted:

Times have changed. Conspiracy thinking and paranoia are highly visible, durable and institutionally sanctified in a range of liberal democracies, not least in Australia. Hofstadter's distinctions between mainstream and fringe thinking are more and more difficult to maintain. Conspiracy thinking is increasingly 'normal'.¹⁵⁵

It is not surprising therefore that One Nation should attract supporters, and in particular candidates, who subscribe to particular varieties of conspiracy theories, such as: the medical profession, university scientists and pharmaceutical companies have conspired to force mass medications like vaccination of children or fluoridation of water supplies; the Port Arthur massacre did not occur but was invented to disarm the general population through punitive gun laws; anti-Christian groups, and in particular the pervasive influence of secret gay organisations, are conspiring to undermine respect for the family as the key social unit. And, of course, climate change is a conspiracy: the scientific consensus on global warming, these groups believe, is based on conspiracies to produce false data or suppress dissent.

Becoming a One Nation candidate, whatever the likelihood of failure, provides an open microphone to promote theories and policy explanations which are rejected in the conventional party discourse and mass media. (As discussed elsewhere, the party leader then has the somewhat awkward choice of embracing ideas from what otherwise would be regarded as belonging on the unacceptably lunatic fringe or disendorsing the candidate.)

¹⁵⁵ Wilson J, '[Conspiracy theories used to be a fringe obsession. Now they're mainstream](#),' *Guardian Australia*, 13 April 2017.

WHAT DOES HANSON STAND FOR?

There are two books attributed to Hanson, *Pauline Hanson: the Truth*¹⁵⁶ published in 1997 and *Untamed and Unashamed: the autobiography*¹⁵⁷ published in 2007, which may provide guidance on her policy positions. However, accounts in these books have since been contested by insiders.

According to the French scholar, Aurélien Mondon:

Hanson admitted later that the book, which she launched and copyrighted was written by some other people who actually put [her] name to it, further highlighting the amateurism of the party.¹⁵⁸

Mondon provides details of what he considered 'the conspiratorial tone of *The Truth* which often bordered on the ridiculous in its extremist claims' including Aboriginal cannibalism and 'an Australia populated by 1.8 billion Chinese of Indo-Chinese background, part of a United States of Asia governed by a lesbian half-cyborg president'. Mondon noted that these particular references were excised from later editions of the book.¹⁵⁹ The book also had a passage opposing the National Firearms Agreement, which was passed by the Howard government in 1996 following the Port Arthur massacre, asserting Sigmund Freud had said that gun-control advocates were 'retarded sexually'. After the huge backlash to the book, Hanson claimed it had been compiled by 'four anonymous authors and not herself'. Footage uncovered in an SBS documentary on her life shows Hanson proudly promoting the sale of her 'very informative' book.¹⁶⁰

The Truth does give evidence of Hanson's continuing world-view of politics dominated by elites:

Ordinary Australians do have a common enemy, but it is not aborigines, Asians, or people of any particular colour, race or creed. Our common oppressors are a class of raceless, placeless cosmopolitan elites who are exercising almost absolute power over us; like black spiders above the wheels of industry, they are spinning the webs of our destiny.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁶ Hanson P, *Pauline Hanson: The Truth*, (ed George Merritt) Parkholme, St George Publications, 1997. Hanson's name was dropped as author in the second edition, as well as some of the original content. Listing the book as unavailable, the Eureka Australiana online bookstore site states: "'The Truth' was assembled by members of Pauline Hanson's 'One Nation Party' and released in a limited edition print run on April 11th, 1997. However, within days of its release one of the greatest media onslaughts against a book, possibly anywhere in the world in modern times, occurred'. Copies, signed by Hanson, are held in the Balson collection in the Fryer Library, University of Queensland.

¹⁵⁷ Hanson P, *Untamed and Unashamed: the autobiography* Jojo Publishing, 2007.

¹⁵⁸ Mondon A, footnote, p.65.

¹⁵⁹ Mondon A, footnote, p.65.

¹⁶⁰ See '[Asian lesbian cyborg ruler': Hanson backflip over ludicrous book claims](#), Yahoo News, 2 August 2016.

¹⁶¹ Hanson P / Merritt G, *The Truth*, 1997.

There was certainly consistency in the analysis provided in a second book, *Untamed and Unashamed*, an altogether more conventional autobiography, published in 2007 as she announced her re-entry into Senate politics. Part of Hanson's motivation was to settle some personal scores with various members of her own management team:

The book is also about the dirty tricks, the 'bludgers' who, in my own naivety, I let hang on to me and manipulate me and my thoughts. They used One Nation and me to promote their own interests.¹⁶²

RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

As noted by several writers, including Marr,¹⁶³ Hanson's career was launched when she wrote her letter 'Equal Justice for all' to the *Queensland Times* complaining about the welfare benefits available to urban Indigenous Australians 'Until government wake up to themselves and start looking at equality not colour then we might start to work together as one'.¹⁶⁴ This came at the same time as concerns were being expressed by mining interests over Indigenous land rights and other regional candidates had also voiced racist complaints. Hanson's disendorsement was perceived as necessary to assuage urban Liberal voters and party activists. It also reflected the Liberal Party's unease at her comments being made in Ipswich with its large Indigenous population. Her subsequent electoral success was seen as pointing to the harsh reality identified by Senator Neville Bonner, the first Indigenous Australian to become a member of the Parliament of Australia, also from Ipswich: 'There are a lot of people who quietly applaud racist attitudes without having to declare themselves'.¹⁶⁵

In her maiden speech, Hanson widened the focus of her concerns from inside to outside Australia, conjuring up the threat of Australia being swamped by unrestricted Asian migration. This was perceived at the time to relate in particular to the expanding Chinese ethnic community.

When Hanson returned to the Senate 20 years later, the target had shifted because the Chinese by then had been widely dispersed, albeit sometimes in local concentrations. Chinese children had become visible as high achievers in scholarship, the professions and industry and China itself was now a major trading partner and a respected player on the international stage. Hanson even endorsed a candidate of Taiwanese origin, Shan Ju Lin, who believed that her staunchly anti-communist position would attract the votes of 'good Asians'.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶² Hanson P, *Untamed and Unashamed*, p.xi.

¹⁶³ Marr D, pp.22-4.

¹⁶⁴ Hanson P, '[Equal Justice for all](#)' letter to the *Queensland Times*, 6 January 1996.

¹⁶⁵ Marr D, p.28. Bonner was the first Indigenous member of the national parliament.

¹⁶⁶ Silva K, '[One Nation candidate Shan Ju Lin defends Pauline Hanson](#)', *ABC*, 21 December 2016. Ms Lin was ultimately disendorsed when she articulated strongly anti-homosexual views out of line with the more permissive position taken, at that point, by her party.

International security concerns have always been a rallying point for those defending the existing regime - embracing ALP as well as non-ALP parties. In September 2001 the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States introduced a new race enemy through the political activism of extremist Islamic groups.¹⁶⁷

In Australia, the security threat became localised into concern for the trustworthiness of other immigrant groups driven out of Asia and Africa by growing political instability in their homelands. Not all these migrants were Muslims, and not all refugees were Muslims, but fine distinctions were not drawn in the popular press or in Hanson's rhetoric.¹⁶⁸

And not many of them were Christians. Islam could be used as a surrogate for race, allowing a range of public policies to be framed to protect 'the Australian way of life'. Hanson's policy manifesto issued as a preliminary to her party's re-entry into Queensland state politics contains both general and specific references to the challenges posed by the practices of Islam in Australia.

At the general level, One Nation has called for a royal commission into whether Islam is really a religion at all, or merely a political ideology, echoing American concerns over the issue despite its constitutional irrelevance in the Australian context. The location of mosques as potential centres of radicalism (and a threat to neighbouring property values), she said, also required special approvals and property zoning. One Nation articulates concerns over the rights of Muslim women to enjoy the same marriage equality as other Australian women, and over the dangers to the rest of society in their wearing the traditional garments designed to protect their privacy.

As is often the case, the underlying sentiments behind Hanson's policy proposals surfaced when she sought to reinforce her charismatic appeal directly, through appearances on mass media where she clearly believes she reaches a wider and potentially more sympathetic audience. Although this sometimes backfires, as with an interview on the ABC's *Insiders* when she voiced support for the 'anti-vaxxers' movement in an interview with Barrie Cassidy, repeating a report, long-discredited as an elaborate fraud, that autism was linked to vaccinations.¹⁶⁹ After an outcry by the medical profession she was forced to retract.

Her attitudes towards the Muslim community were made clear in an interview on *A Current Affair*, a commercial TV channel:

¹⁶⁷ The rationale for the dispatch of the First Fleet included a security concern about French occupation. In the nineteenth century, Russia was taken to be a serious enough enemy to invest in protective infrastructure. The defence needs to preserve White Australia were emphasised from the time of federation until the 1970s.

¹⁶⁸ In May 2017, Hanson questioned the head of ASIO about an asserted link between refugees and terrorism. His reply was in turn closely scrutinised by LNP politicians not totally convinced by his reassuring answer.

¹⁶⁹ [Insiders](#), ABC, March 2017.

One Nation leader Pauline Hanson has claimed Muslims are taking over Australia's suburbs by offering people 'suitcases full of cash' to move out, and questioned whether there are any 'good ones' living here.

In an extraordinary interview that appeared to leave even 'A Current Affair' host Tracy Grimshaw stunned at times, Senator Hanson denied her views were extreme and said she was speaking for ordinary Australians when she voiced fears the country was being overrun by Muslims.

'I hear Australians that have lived just nice, quiet lives in their suburbs and then they've had Muslims come in there who have changed their suburbs,' Ms Hanson told the program. ...

Asked if she believed there were any 'good Muslims' living in Australia, Ms Hanson suggested they were difficult to spot.

'I believe there are some that want to live a good life and a quiet life,' she said. 'But you tell me — you line up a number of Muslims, who's the good one?'¹⁷⁰

Her anti-Muslim message was epitomised in her exploitation of terror attacks in Britain by placing on her website an amendment of a British government advertisement framed in tones evocative of World War II:¹⁷¹ Then, amid scenes in parliament of utter chaos and confusion created by the Liberal Party itself over issues of dual citizenship and its resort to the delaying tactic of a mail-out on same-sex marriage, Hanson sought to regain public attention for herself and her anti-Muslim message. The burqa stunt is described in the final chapter.

BROADER POLICY PROPOSALS

Hostility to Muslims may not be a sufficient basis for One Nation being recognised as the only home for anti-Islamic voters, particularly with several other overtly anti-Muslim minor parties available to choose from, such as the Liberty Alliance and 'Rise Up Australia'. Any political party needs to build its credibility by having a response to current issues in the press or in parliamentary chambers, however ambiguous or even meaningless. These other ideas might represent an appeal to a wider audience or offer reinforcement of its core support attracted by its central message.

Ann Scott provides a content analysis of the One Nation policy platform for the imminent Queensland election as an appendix at the end of this document.

As has been noted, these economic and social issues may be as significant in practice as the more heavily publicised and heavily criticised issue of opposition to

¹⁷⁰ ['Pauline Hanson's latest attack on Islam: 'Line up a number of Muslims, who's the good one?'](#) [\$] *Courier-Mail*, Brisbane, 17 March 2017. (The [\$] sign denotes that the link is behind a paywall.) Broinowski records confronting Hanson over her refusal to meet Muslims, and experiencing Hanson's 'full blast of Hanson's rage' (Broinowski, p.299).

¹⁷¹ Killoran M, ['Pauline Hanson mimics Metropolitan Police advice in anti-Islam tweet'](#) [\$], *Courier-Mail*, Brisbane, 4 June 2017.

Muslims as a race and religion. Voters and activists uncomfortable with being labelled racist needed another rationale to justify their commitment to One Nation. Those conducting an election campaign needed additional policies aimed at protest voters not primarily motivated by racial hatred.

A key theme of One Nation's wider policy claims is unfairness. This unfairness may be seen to exist in the treatment of small businesses compared to big business and multinational companies, towards local farmers and rural communities in general, towards the treatment of dissident opinions like Hanson's in the media (especially the ABC), and, generally, official disdain towards 'the battlers' in their dealings with financial and also legal authorities.

When fighting elections in Western Australia in 2016, Hanson joined the Liberals in complaining about the unfairness to Western Australia of the distribution of national GST funding; when gearing up for elections in Queensland, she disowned the idea as 'fake news', despite the hard evidence of her media pronouncements, because any change would be unfair to Queensland.¹⁷²

In February 2017, she published her 'Blueprint for the Nation'.¹⁷³ The headline items related to discouragement of immigration in general and a specific ban on Muslim immigrants, reinforced by a Royal Commission into Islam to reduce its access to the benefits available to all religions for educational and taxation purposes.

At the macro-level, the power of big business corporations making use of tax avoidance schemes featured strongly in the manifesto. International corporations which owned critical infrastructure assets would be required to sell them back into government ownership. The GST would be replaced by a flat income tax of 2%, restating her policy from two decades earlier for an idea which had first been floated by Bjelke-Petersen. Further public funds would be derived by cutting welfare payments to those undeserving of public support, with single mothers in particular being targeted for exploiting the current child support arrangements. A national identity card linked to fingerprints would be introduced to help crack down on tax cheats and welfare cheats and this would also assist security organisations in their fight against terrorism and crime.

Under One Nation policies, there would also be structural changes in the direction of public sector spending, with more dams and infrastructure to assist the rural sector and job creation through apprenticeship schemes and loans to small business. Costs to taxpayers would be offset by cutting back on the number of politicians as well as reducing their workload by instituting 'citizen-led referenda'.

¹⁷² ['Queensland Government radio interview proves Pauline Hanson willing to strip Queensland of GST'](#), [5] *Courier-Mail*, Brisbane, 8 March 2017.

¹⁷³ ['Pauline Hanson outlines her Blueprint for Australia'](#), News.com, 5 February 2017

Some policies were specifically targeted to meet the complaints of groups of supporters frustrated by the inactivity of the major parties, particularly it seems unhappily married men:

Senator Hanson said one of her priorities was changing the family law system to ease the burden on the courts. She would force couples into pre-nuptial agreements outlining how they deal with their children and assets if a relationship broke down. Family Law is high on my agenda. I think it needs a complete overhaul. It needs court-approved premarital agreements on finance and parental issues.¹⁷⁴

Newly-arrived One Nation Senator Georgiou¹⁷⁵ later articulated in further detail the grievances of divorced men in relation to the family court system, reporting on the details of a charter devised by their interest group, the Australian Brotherhood of Fathers:

Our policies relate to the main issues arising from the break-up of relationships with children and reflect a common thread found among families dealing with access problems:

- Equal shared care on separation with mandatory enforcement.
- Remove the CSA calculations and replace with a flat rate child payment.
- Introduction of heavy penalties for unfounded abuse allegations.
- Capped cost outcomes associated with family court access.
- Establishment of a family access tribunal for child access issues.
- Criminalize parental alienation as child abuse.
- Provide gender neutral access to crisis support.¹⁷⁶

In late August 2017, after the end of a particularly chaotic parliamentary sitting, the Turnbull government quietly responded to Hanson's emphasis on these reforms, doubtless part of a quid pro quo over the media reforms, in which Hanson had been a major player.

An article in the *Australian Financial Review* reported on the continuing interest shown by Hanson in Senate hearings on the revised Family Law Act and her complaints about delays. It noted that 'Pauline Hanson's One Nation party went to the last federal election with a policy of abolishing the Family Court and replacing it

¹⁷⁴ 'How I'd Run Nation', *Sunday Mail*, Brisbane, February 2, 2017.

¹⁷⁵ When a previous senator from Western Australia was declared ineligible for election, he was replaced by his brother-in-law, Peter Georgiou. This reliance on relatives in a small-scale and tightly-controlled organisation was repeated when One Nation senator Malcolm Roberts was ensnared by the citizenship imbroglio and it seemed possible that the replacement Queensland senator could be Pauline Hanson's sister. See Yaxley L and Green A, '[One Nation: Will Pauline Hanson's sister replace Senator Malcolm Roberts if he is disqualified?](#)' ABC News, 31 July 2017.

¹⁷⁶ [Australian Brotherhood of Fathers website](#).

with a tribunal of mainstream Australians', although a link to this policy is no longer on its website.¹⁷⁷

Policies like those above have been entrenched in the foundation documents of One Nation. Other policies evolved as Hanson herself and her co-senators were pressed to respond to current issues in the press or in parliament.¹⁷⁸ One Nation generally echoed anti-evidence, anti-science claims by the alt-right in the US, including asserting that alarm about global warming and the need for carbon reduction was motivated by specific agencies, including the Chinese government, the UN, NASA, the CSIRO, the Australian Bureau of Meteorology, and several other agencies.

Other policies evolved in response to particular incidents which offered the opportunity for the party to identify with the perceived 'battlers'. When there was an impasse in negotiations between monopolistic overseas sugar-mill owners and local sugar farmers, Hanson threatened that all One Nation senators would go on strike and refuse to pass any Turnbull government legislation until the impasse was resolved. When that government supported an Australia Defence Force plan to acquire property in central Queensland for a training ground to be used by the Singaporean army, One Nation sided with the Palaszczuk ALP state government to force a reconsideration and revision of the plan.

'Is PAULINE A COMMUNIST?'

More generally, One Nation wished to be identified with opposition to foreign investment in local property, both farms and urban real estate, as well as the general effects of migrant-driven population growth in the major urban centres, which made One Nation odd bedfellows with the Greens. The parties were similarly aligned in opposition to the interests of mining giants when Hanson proposed during the debate on the 2017 federal budget a tax identified in the media as 'One Nation's \$10 Billion Mining Hit'.¹⁷⁹ This set of policy preferences – higher taxation, attack on free flow of investment from overseas and expanding public ownership of infrastructure – led her ultra-libertarian senator colleague, David Leyonhjelm, to pose the question, 'Is Pauline a communist?'¹⁸⁰

An unequivocally negative answer to that question was offered from a blogger group at the other end of the political spectrum:

Pauline Hanson talks a great deal about battlers and people who are left behind and are fed up with the major parties. But she invariably sides with

¹⁷⁷ ['Turnbull Government orders first ever review of the Family Law Act'](#), [5], *Australian Financial Review*, 20 August 2017.

¹⁷⁸ O'Malley N, ['Pauline Hanson's populist distrust of experts runs deeper than vaccines'](#), *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 March 2017.

¹⁷⁹ *Courier-Mail*, Brisbane, 15 May 2017.

¹⁸⁰ Leyonhjelm, D, ['Is Pauline Hanson a communist?'](#)

the wealthy and powerful. Powerful commercial interests, banks, multinational companies and political apologists for the neo-liberal economic system have spawned growing inequality and a sense of alienation around the world.

Yet Pauline Hanson exploits the legitimate concerns of the vulnerable by encouraging us to focus, not on those really responsible for our problems, but those that are even more vulnerable and at risk – the so-called welfare cheats, trade unions, refugees and Muslims. She won't call out the real culprits. Instead she deliberately appeals to prejudice against the most vulnerable.¹⁸¹

This harsh judgment is backed up by facts and figures. One Nation has been a more reliable ally than many of the other non-government senators. This was demonstrated in an analysis of the One Nation voting record in the Senate, provided by Matthew Knott for readers of the *Sydney Morning Herald*:

Pauline Hanson's One Nation has emerged as the Turnbull government's most reliable voting partner in the Senate, defying early predictions that the upper house in this term of parliament would be even less manageable than before. ...

One Nation has supported the Turnbull government on 74 percent of votes from August to December last year. There were 183 votes over this period.

By contrast, Derryn Hinch voted with the government 61 percent of the time, Liberal Democrat Senator David Leyonhjelm 60 percent and the Nick Xenophon Team (NXT) 54 percent. On issues where the Coalition and Labor were divided, One Nation voted with the government 85 percent of the time, compared with 77 percent for Senator Leyonhjelm and 66 percent for the NXT senators.

On the 66 substantial votes on legislation – not including procedural votes or symbolic motions – One Nation voted with the government 88 percent of the time, topped only by Senator Hinch on 89 percent of votes. Most significantly, One Nation voted with the Turnbull government on double dissolution trigger bills to restore the Australian Building and Construction Commission and introduce tougher governance standards for unions. Although described as a populist, Ms Hanson has also emerged as a champion of reduced welfare spending and tackling government debt.¹⁸²

At the conclusion of her 2007 autobiography, Hanson answered Leyonhjelm's question about her suspected Communism, which he based tongue-in-cheek on her protectionist policies towards various interest groups, by endorsing what she presented as the epitome of her own thinking:

This paragraph was sent to me. I don't know who said these words or when. Reading the passage would indicate it was spoken by a Member of Parliament. How true it is:

¹⁸¹ Menadue J, '[Pauline Hanson sides with the powerful while pretending to speak for the weak](#)', *Pearls and Irritations*, 22 March 2017.

¹⁸² Knott M, '[Pauline Hanson's One Nation emerges as government's most reliable Senate voting partner](#)', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 7 March 2017.

‘It was the job of government to establish a framework of stability whether constitutional stability, the rule of law or the economic stability provided by sound money within which individual families and business were free to pursue their own dreams and ambitions. We had to get out of the business of telling people what their ambitions should be and how exactly to realise them. That was up to them.’

This perfunctory acknowledgement points to the shallowness of analysis undertaken by Hanson.¹⁸³ Consigned to anonymity, Baroness Thatcher would have offered a patronising smile.

COMPETING WITH THE CONSERVATIVES FOR VOTES - POLICY PRAGMATISM

Despite this record, Hanson seeks to be regarded as more than an automatic supporter of the conservative parties. This desire for an air of independence was manifested on issues such as resisting the effort to implement cuts to some forms of welfare. Occasionally, the desire to be seen to be different from government spokespersons created problems even when she voted with them. Her lack of engagement with social issues and the party’s refusal to accept the opinion of experts caused a storm when she spoke in support of the government’s reforms to school education funding mechanisms.

In her Senate speech in support, she justified the need for reform in terms of the current low quality of school performance and singled out in particular the problems for teachers and the parents of other students in classes which included autistic students. She advocated instead the creation of separate classrooms or even separate schools to remove this distraction from mainstream classrooms to prevent holding other children back.

This may have struck a chord with some parents and teachers who see a range of special needs and disruptive behaviours making classrooms hard to manage, but her miscalculation was to single out autism. Predictably she was disowned by almost everyone in sight given the wide spectrum of behaviours which can be grouped as autism — professional organisations, educational experts, aggrieved parents including those holding public office, her political opponents and her own conservative colleagues. She refused to climb down, apart from asserting erroneously that she had been quoted out of context and then, when her verbatim words were replayed, blaming the fake media in the best traditions of Trump.¹⁸⁴

The Australian newspaper is not noted for its criticism of many of the causes embraced by One Nation but on this occasion its influential cartoonist, Jon Kudelka, captured the popular mood and possibly that of her principal adviser

¹⁸³ And perhaps by Jim Blackwell: ‘Among those who helped me most when I thought I would never finish this book is Jim Blackwell’, Hanson P, *Untamed and Unashamed*, ‘Prologue’, p.xi)

¹⁸⁴ Gomes, L, ‘[What have I said that’s offensive?: Pauline Hanson won’t apologise to autistic students](#)’, *New Daily*, 22 March 2017. *The Australian*, 23.6.17. Ashby’s role as chief of staff and tactician is discussed in the next chapter.

James Ashby. Hanson is depicted beside Ashby facing a gambling device, 'Pauline's Wheel of Scapegoats' with sectors labelled:

'Muslims';
'Foreigners in general';
'People who ask about planes';
'Asians, for old times' sake';
'Gays';
'Indigenous People';
'Muslims' (again) and
'Anyone on Welfare'.

The winning sector is labelled 'Autistic Kids'. Ashby is thinking (but not saying) 'Probably should have taken that one off'.¹⁸⁵

Hanson has an impressive record of political pragmatism, which is sometimes used as a euphemism for shifting ground to chase votes. Anna Broinowski's biography is redolent with examples: most clearly illustrated in Hanson shifting her position on environmental issues when campaigning alone in Beaudesert for a state seat where rural constituents were concerned about issues such as coal seam gas and when being advised by Ashby in the Senate campaign later the same year.

The fierce environmentalist we'd glimpsed on the Lockyer campaign was nowhere to be seen. In her place was a vigilant, money-focussed nationalist, with rapacious Chinese investors in her sights. With Ashby by her side, it was obvious that Hanson's platform had been carefully honed to inflame the populist resentments that were most likely to win her votes.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁵ Kudelka J, cartoon in *The Australian*, 23 June 2017.

¹⁸⁶ Broinowski A, p.284.

9: CONTESTED 'FACTS' AND DENIAL OF EVIDENCE¹⁸⁷

A 'POLITICAL PORTAL' FOR THE 'FEVER SWAMP'?

In echoes of the Bjelke-Petersen era, many of the conspiracy theories espoused by One Nation seem to have been derived from the US. Media coverage of 'fake' massacres and terrorist events could easily be translated into the Australian scene. The promotion of vaccination and the fluoridation of water supplies were attributed to the fake news generated by a conspiracy of doctors and pharmaceutical companies. Confected stories casting doubt on former president Obama's citizenship did not translate directly, though in 2017 there was some irony when One Nation's Malcolm Roberts' citizenship was called into question after what Hanson described as a witch-hunt.¹⁸⁸

The claims (most vociferously from Roberts) that climate change evidence was manufactured by vested interests in the scientific community clearly did have antecedents in the US, then echoed in some local media. The retiring head of the Bureau of Meteorology alluded to this in an interview, singling out *The Australian* in particular, shortly after the natural disasters in Houston and across the Caribbean:

We know plenty enough to say that unless there is corrective action in the amount of emissions - very significant corrective action I might add - then we will enter increasingly dangerous times that will be very costly throughout the world to life, food security, water security and to the economic damage wrought by severe [weather] like we have seen in the United States in the last few days.

They [staff of the Bureau of Meteorology] understand that there is an organised climate denial network and that it has a fever swamp that communicates amongst itself and occasionally tries to enter the national debate through the agency of leading newspapers and the like.

The data absolutely confirms that we have already seen consequences from climate change, certainly in the way the climate system is behaving. There's just zero doubt about it any more.¹⁸⁹

Patrick Dorling of the Australian Institute has undertaken a scholarly analysis of One Nation's American antecedents. He examines the full range of One Nation conspiracy theories and concludes that many are derivative. For example, pro-gun lobbyists after the Port Arthur massacre constructed wholly imaginary links between Australian laws and the American Bill of Rights, and even the Magna Carta, to defend an unrestricted right of Australian citizens to bear arms.

¹⁸⁷ Written by Ann Scott.

¹⁸⁸ Yaxley L and Belot H, '[Malcolm Roberts 'choosing to believe' he was never British amid citizenship furore](#)', *ABC*, 27 July 2017.

¹⁸⁹ Redfearn G, '[Bureau of Meteorology attacks pushed by 'fever swamp' of climate denial](#)', *The Guardian*, 21 September 2016.

There is a tendency among populist movements to accept literally as ‘Gospel truth’ ideas which have circulated for long periods among adherents even if they were demolished at the time they were proposed and made even less sense in different circumstances. Writing in January 2017, Dorling concluded that major One Nation policy documents casting doubt on the reality of climate change and the definition of Islam as a religion grew out of similar American propositions advocated for many years in social media.

Although ostensibly an Australian nationalist party, Pauline Hanson's One Nation is in large measure serving as a political portal for the introduction of American and European far-right positions, policies and rhetoric into the Australian political landscape. One Nation has conspicuously celebrated President-elect Donald Trump's victory in the United States. The idea that Islam is not actually a religion is now espoused by people who will occupy positions at the highest levels of the US government. It can be confidently anticipated that One Nation will continue to draw inspiration and adopt ideas and conspiracy beliefs from the US ‘alt-right’ for some time to come.¹⁹⁰

SILENCING OPPOSITION AND CHALLENGING ‘FACTS’

Drawing sustenance from Donald Trump's presidential campaign and its aftermath, media who dare to be critical have been the focus of One Nation's attention: a conspiracy by those in charge of the ABC¹⁹¹ and, to a lesser extent, the Fairfax media have come under the One Nation spotlight. In much of this they have led a fight that the right wing of the Liberal party supports. Included in the focus of their ire is the independent open-source news provider, the *Guardian Australia*.

Early on in Hanson's political career she had shunned critical media. Margo Kingston queried her on this:

I asked about an incident after the Queensland State election, when she'd thrown her local newspaper, *The Queensland Times*, out of a press conference and blackballed it ever since. She'd also blackballed *The Toowoomba Chronicle* because it published pro-abortion comments she'd made at a public meeting, a no-no in ultra-conservative Toowoomba. The ABC had once been denied access for eight months - a bit of a disadvantage for a media group. Why was she so critical of the media?

Hanson's response was a foretaste of Trump's approach to White House media briefings: excluding media which did not support him while at the same time accusing them of confecting falsehoods. Hanson told Kingston why she excluded some media from her press conferences:

¹⁹⁰ Dorling P, [‘The American far-right origins of Pauline Hanson's views on Islam’](#), *Australian Policy Online*, 29 January 2017. The anti-fluoridation movement can be traced back to the US at least as early as 1940s when water fluoridation was seen as a communist plot, see ‘The History of the Water Fluoridation Debate’, *Inquiry into Water Fluoridation in the ACT*, Standing Committee on Social Policy, Australian Capital Territory Legislative Assembly, January 1991, pp.5-14.

¹⁹¹ One Nation also attempted to intervene with SBS management to prevent the airing of Broinowski's SBS documentary after a promotional clip of Hanson asking an Indigenous cameraman whether he was a refugee ‘went viral’ to 1.8 million viewers. (Broinowski A, p.301.

'Because I feel in a lot of cases - although I use the media, by all means, as much as the media uses me - I do not like deceit. I do not like lies.'¹⁹²

Many mainstream conservatives share One Nation's concern about particular aspects of ABC coverage and want its own governing body to intervene. But One Nation regarded the problem as structural and sought, through the televised Senate Estimates hearings, to impose a form of direct financial control, a suggestion which was rejected by government at the time as untenable.¹⁹³ Later the (now former) One Nation senator, Malcolm Roberts, claimed on the TV program *Four Corners* that the ABC itself used techniques of 'Nazi-style mind control' on the issue of climate change.¹⁹⁴

In August 2017, when the Turnbull government sought to change legislation on media ownership at the behest of the main private providers, Hanson was able to make her support conditional on inserting provisions in the ABC's governing statute which would require the broadcaster to remove what she perceived as intolerable left-wing bias in its Australian political coverage.

The bargain involves measures relating to the ABC, including a requirement that its journalism be 'fair and balanced'. At first sight Pauline Hanson's idea of requiring the ABC to be 'fair and balanced' may appear to be a mere semantic re-wording of its charter, which presently requires it to be 'accurate and impartial'. But the difference is profound, because it would cast the ABC into the postmodern void of moral relativism – a void in which there is no truth, no primacy of logic, evidence and reason, but only competing opinions and perspectives.¹⁹⁵

Ian McAuley writes that Turnbull was showing poor political judgment in his desire to please the media proprietors:

In conceding to Pauline Hanson's demands Turnbull shows that he has learned nothing about the cost of doing deals with parties on the far right. As a lawyer he would be well aware of the implications of Hanson's demands. And even if he has lost his moral compass, he should be aware of the political cost of such a deal: as John Scales of JWS Research points out, for every vote the Coalition gains from such deals, it loses two votes from centrist voters.

From Hanson's perspective, Turnbull's support could be seen as endorsing her sense of grievance, if not of the more extreme conspiracy theories embraced by her colleagues.

On 14 September 2017 the media reform legislation passed in the Senate, with the help of Hanson and Xenophon:

¹⁹² Kingston M, p.7.

¹⁹³ Editorial, '[A disgrace: One Nation's ABC blackmail threat](#)', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 June 2017.

¹⁹⁴ Meldrum-Hanna C, Richards D, Drum P, '[One Nation former candidates, party insiders reveal Pauline Hanson's 'brutal dictatorship'](#)', *ABC*, 3 April 2017.

¹⁹⁵ McCauley I, '[Pauline Hanson, Malcolm Turnbull, and the ABC – a Faustian bargain](#)' John Menadue - Pearls and Irritations, 16 August 2017.

Senator Xenophon won a \$60 million Regional and Small Publishers Innovation Fund but this will not be available to large publishers such as News Corp and Fairfax, nor overseas players such as The Guardian and BuzzFeed, or any publisher affiliated with a union, superannuation fund or lobby group.

One Nation's request for an overhaul of the ABC will include a competitive neutrality inquiry, which critics say threatens the broadcaster's free news service and iView website. Senator Xenophon said he would not support the ABC legislation, which will be pursued separately.

The media bill also controversially repealed the two out of three rule that forbids proprietors owning a newspaper, television network and radio station in the same license area. Jacqui Lambie was not impressed by the deal with Hanson.

Firebrand crossbench senator Jacqui Lambie has launched a blistering attack on the Turnbull government and One Nation over media reform, labelling them a 'disgusting bunch of individuals' for 'going after' the ABC and SBS.

"You have no moral values and to go after the public broadcaster is an absolute disgrace," she said. Senator Lambie, who opposes the government's media reform package, said the ABC and SBS were being 'punished' because they were 'one step ahead when it comes to iView and their social media platforms'.

'They're going to punish them for that while the rest of them should have seen this coming 10 years ago, should have got up with the bloody program of the 21st century, and they've got their hand out saying 'help us, government.' ...

'This is crap. This is the worst lot of crap I have seen.' Senator Lambie's fiery speech lit up social media on Thursday as the government's media reform bills were poised to pass the Senate.¹⁹⁶

Michelle Guthrie, Managing Director of the ABC, was also unimpressed by the implications of Turnbull's bowing to Hanson's demands:

Legislation designed to further a political vendetta by one party uncomfortable with being scrutinised by our investigative programs is not good policy-making.¹⁹⁷

It was not only the public broadcasters that were in the firing line. The *Guardian Australia* was not given a waiver from the foreign control test:

If you are a small metropolitan news organisation with a foreign parent company – like, say, Guardian Australia – you do have to meet the control test and are therefore ineligible, but if you are a regional media organisation with a foreign parent company, like News Corp regionals, the control test is suddenly waived. The

¹⁹⁶ [‘Disgusting’: Jacqui Lambie blasts government and One Nation over ABC ‘deal’](#), *The New Daily*, 14 September 2017 (link includes recording of Lambie's two-minute speech). Margot Kingston noted in 1999, in *Off the Rails*, when the Fairfax media were under pressure, that 'despite the institutional democratic responsibilities of the media, both major parties in government had no qualms about a crunching of media ownership. Only the minor parties - the relatively powerless ones - gave a damn' (p.xiii)

¹⁹⁷ Guthrie M, [‘ABC’S Michelle Guthrie hits back at Turnbull and Hanson’s media reform’](#), the *Daily Review*, 8 October 2017.

Greens leader, Richard Di Natale, concluded it was 'hard to escape the conclusion that this was done for anything other than political reasons'.¹⁹⁸

A 'FIFTH ESTATE'?: THE NEW MEDIA AND THE PUBLIC INTEREST

After the 1998 election One Nation's prolific internet webmaster, Scott Balson, commented to Margo Kingston:

With the Internet, it's going to be very interesting in three years' time to see how that election is fought. ... What I've been doing is just a taste.¹⁹⁹

The digital media, these relatively new entrants in the political messaging mix, have the power both to strengthen or undermine democratic institutions. Professor Graeme Turner has considered some of the implications of the digital era for the proper functioning of democracies, with particular attention to the role of journalism, news, and the recovery of the notion of the public interest:

In the mass media era, the role of the media was universally regarded as fundamental to the proper functioning of the democratic state: the media's capacity to provide information to all citizens ensured they had equal access to the democratic process.

There were many, though, who registered concern at the top-down, government led, and highly concentrated structures of power embedded here; it was easy to demonstrate how the flow of information could be manipulated and the power of the media abused. Consequently, the arrival of the digital era seemed to radically change that power relation for the good; we entered the era of consumer choice and 'produsage', as power was transferred to what journalism professor Jay Rosen described in 2006 as 'the people formerly known as the audience' in a process of 'democratization'.

Or, so it seemed; more than a decade later, this looks very naïve. As governments have either lost or relinquished much of their regulatory control over the mediasphere, markets have fragmented and with them, Cass Sunstein suggests, the sense of a common culture; choice is becoming unmanageable and therefore no longer meaningful; most importantly, much of the media content 'produced' by the 'people formerly known as the audience' seems more like a threat to the democratic state than its enablement.²⁰⁰

VOLATILITY, UNCERTAINTY, COMPLEXITY AND AMBIGUITY

Tiffen criticises the media for promoting an idealised image of the past to feed 'pessimism, anger and resentment about the current state of Australia and its bleak future. He asks whether the media and our political processes have adapted to the world of volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity (summed up in the

¹⁹⁸ Taylor L, email to subscribers, 20 September 2017.

¹⁹⁹ Kingston M, p.231. For Balson's views from inside One Nation see: Balson S, *Murder by Media, Death of Democracy in Australia*, January 1999, and Balson S, *Inside One Nation: the inside story on a people's party born to fail*, Interactive Presentations Pty Ltd, Mt Crosby, Queensland.

²⁰⁰ Turner G, '[The Media and Democracy in the Digital Era: Is this what we had in mind?](#)' address delivered in the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities Public Lecture Series, University of Queensland, 10 October 2017 (text taken from pre-publicity).

acronym VUCA²⁰¹): ‘the radical unpredictability of the contemporary world and the need for rapid responses to unforeseen developments’:

We have a news media that technologically has global reach, but where the news values are still often very parochial. A world that is genuinely complex and difficult seems even more threatening and inexplicable by how it is covered in the news.

We have political controversies guided by the narrow logic of party advantage, in a barren spectacle that alienates many. Many citizens find it tempting to disengage.²⁰²

The generation remembering the 1950s embraced a post-war world with relief and welcomed domesticity populated by an array of labour-saving devices, to say nothing of the brave new world of television. By the 1990s another generation had its horizons expanded by the dawning of the internet age. However, compared to 2017 this was an era when the internet appeared to be a new tool primarily for the benefit of its users, not a means of political manipulation. The introduction of iPhone in 2007 heralded another new age, that of social media, with Facebook and Twitter offering direct digital communications between those people choosing to use them. A new generation of alienated citizens has been growing up in this world of digital media: access to instant news raising constant anxieties about the outside world, personal social media with their dark side with its deadly capacity for bullying and viciousness. ‘Public concerns about ‘fake news’, hate speech, online bullying, ‘revenge porn’, phishing scams, ‘online radicalization’ and identity theft occupy our headlines daily’.²⁰³

Added to these media and their seemingly inescapable feeding of anxiety are the threats of a future of limited expectations over home ownership, unaffordable mortgages, the cost of living, job opportunities and the costs of education. These anxieties play out politically in a willingness of voters to abandon previous loyalties to established parties and risk instead the solutions offered by populist alternatives such as One Nation.

²⁰¹ ‘An acronym coined by the US military in the 1990s standing for Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity, to capture the radical unpredictability of the contemporary world. VUCA has now also become part of management jargon to highlight how the need for rapid response to unforeseen developments brings a new urgency to organisational responses.’, [The restorationist impulse: why we hanker for the old ways](#), *The Conversation*, 28 July 2017.

²⁰² Tiffen R, [‘The restorationist impulse: why we hanker for the old ways’](#).

²⁰³ From publicity for a public lecture by Emeritus Professor Graeme Turner delivered in October 2017.

10: EXPLAINING THE REBIRTH OF THE PHOENIX

THE BEDROCK OF CHARISMA AND IDEOLOGY

None of the galaxy of commentators, politicians, academics or even the well-placed insider predicted that Pauline Hanson would re-emerge from her travails and disappointments in 1998 to be a major player again in 2017. With the advantage of hindsight, several explanations need to be melded together.

One is to recognise the continuing subterranean cult-like belief in Pauline Hanson among her long-standing core supporters. She continued to be the epitome of a particular set of values about race, religion and nationality. Her celebrity status barely waned over two decades, and she came close to reviving her career when she was only narrowly defeated when she stood for the upper house in NSW in 2011 and again in the Queensland election in 2015.

A second explanation was the continuing alienation of a much larger group of voters, disappointed by their perceived relative deprivation as a result of globalisation and being willing to punish both major party groupings. Opinion polls showed an escalating trend - compelled to vote, voters were signalling their discontent with the two major groupings.

The problem of organisation chaos, financial scandals and poor quality candidates might have been expected to raise doubts within the wider group of floating voters through lodging a protest against the professional politicians in the major parties. One Nation's established pattern of centralised control, shutting out new recruits, was reinforced when the preference deals during the Western Australian elections made Hanson appear to be 'just another politician'. But how Hanson looked to her potential voters was determined by the media that they chose as their source of facts, ideas and attitudes.

This is linked to the third explanation of the rebirth, the changing nature of mass media, and particularly social media. These new specialised sources of information provided both reinforcement for this alienation and an alternative universe where simple public policy solutions could be divorced from facts and evidence.

The influence of One Nation's treatment by the media can be seen as one of Hanson's strengths rather than as a weakness. This was at odds with the general condemnation of One Nation by many journalist/academics. Murray Goot's careful analysis in 1998 suggested that the evidence was equivocal: that the orthodox media were often credited with helping Hanson when her star was ascending but blamed by her and others when things were going badly for her.

But the big change since Goot was writing has been the emergence over the 20 years between 1998 and 2017 of informal channels created through the growth of the internet and social media - and the speed with which Hanson and her advisers (and her American role models) learnt how to exploit them.

DISCORD WITHIN THE OTHER STATE PARTIES IN QUEENSLAND

Another relevant local factor was the internal tension in the Liberal / National amalgamation and the related emergence of splinter groups. The emergence, towards the end of this period, of internal discord within both the major party groupings also contributed to Hanson's resurgence, as did the presence in Queensland politics of other contenders for the protest vote between 1999 and 2017. After a period of ALP dominance under Peter Beattie and Anna Bligh, the conservative forces were in disarray.

The unification of the Liberal and National parties into the Liberal National Party (LNP) did not eliminate the tensions between the two but provided the springboard which allowed Campbell Newman to leap from Brisbane municipal politics into the state arena with spectacular success. His urban focus and commitment to uncompromising neo-liberal policies allowed the Katter Party to emerge, aimed at protecting rural interests, and Clive Palmer's Palmer United Party to make a temporary impact on the national stage.

One Nation did not find its distinctive voice until 2016 when its major policies from 1998 started to regain traction and alternatives disappeared. None of One Nation's competitors in either state or national politics was active in the international policy arena, where issues of race, religion and nationality were prominent.

TERRORISM AND THE IMMIGRATION DEBATE

There was also the impact of the escalation of international tensions prompted by the combination of terrorism spreading from the heartland of the Middle East into western nations, and the floods of refugees desperate enough to bypass traditional controls. These created dramatic upsurges in the immigration pressures already being driven by famine, economic hardship, political violence in many countries across Asia, Africa and Latin America.

The need to respond to these immigration pressures and to heightened national security demands had major electoral impacts in Britain, continental European countries and USA. This left policy space for One Nation to promote banning all Muslim immigration and restricting the number of refugees.

UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES AND THE 2016 DOUBLE DISSOLUTION ELECTION

Other factors were more temporary and specific. There were the unanticipated consequences of a bipartisan strategic initiative to disarm the influence of 'preference whisperers'. The previous half-Senate election in 2013 had seen a massive increase in the number of micro-size parties, all shepherded through the registration process and then encouraged to entrust their shepherd to negotiate exchange deals on preference allocations. In 'normal' circumstances, these micro-preferences would have flowed back to one or other of the major groupings. Now there was, in effect, a lottery in which each candidate had the choice of a winning ticket.

This stratagem produced a result which favoured local media personalities like Derryn Hinch, but also political nonentities such as Ricky Muir who represented a few hundred members of the Australian Motoring Enthusiast Party and won on a record-low primary vote of 0.51 percent. New rules, agreed by the two major parties, eliminated candidates being elected almost accidentally by harvesting the preferences of burgeoning protest movements with specialist agendas. Then changes in the electoral laws made such results much less likely and effectively favoured the three largest of the protest parties - the Greens, Xenophon, and One Nation.

New rules, agreed by the two major parties, eliminated candidates being elected almost accidentally by harvesting the preferences of burgeoning protest movements with specialist agendas.

Quite independently, the bloc of Palmer United Party senators had dissolved into component units so that Glen Lazarus and Jacqui Lambie formed parties identified with their own names, with most of each Queensland's PUP senators who had been elected in 2013 becoming Independents. This conjunction of events, changing the rules and lowering the fraction of support needed to acquire a Senate seat, paved the way for the resurgence of One Nation.

The immediate catalyst for change (using that term in its narrow scientific sense) was the decision by Malcolm Turnbull to seek to reinforce his newly-acquired authority as leader of the Liberal Party by calling a double-dissolution election in 2016. The failure of Turnbull's strategy left him with weakened authority in the lower house and the need to mobilise support by making concessions to gain policy support from among a more coherent group of senators holding the balance of power. One Nation's four senators were elevated to the role of key actors in the policy process, a position they had never held before, even in the heady days of 1998.

If any one of these influences had been totally absent, the One Nation revival might have been stalled. The continuity of her supporters' belief in Hanson herself was the least susceptible to change, with true believers perceiving Hanson's imprisonment and frequent misguided policy comments and apparent financial mismanagement to be the result of misrepresentation by her enemies, eliciting sympathy rather than condemnation. As suggested by several analysts, attacking Hanson personally was counterproductive. This remains the case. Critics would be better advised to focus on her advisers, her candidates, and the ideas that they and she espoused.

Broinowski elegantly summarises the forces which generated Hanson's phoenix-like resurgence on the national stage:

Hanson's unlikely victory, with three One Nation senators in tow, was variously blamed on the new Senate voting system, which had handed preference selection back to the voters; the demise of the Palmer United Party, which had driven anti-establishment voters Hanson's way; the rise in anti-migrant sentiment, following the successful passage of Brexit; voter backlash against Turnbull for ousting former

prime minister Tony Abbott; and a yawning void in Australian politics for a radical right-wing party, which One Nation 2.0 had easily filled.

But three crucial things are missing from this picture of Hanson's momentous political return: Facebook, celebrity and the woman herself.²⁰⁴

It remains to be seen whether this transformation at the national level can be repeated at the next Queensland election. As explained earlier, a different array of forces exist here. The other party leaders must surely have identified the need to focus on the limitations of her policies and her candidates and thus avoid the counterproductive effect of attacking Hanson herself.

There are echoes of past problems in terms of organisational mismanagement and securing credible local candidates, and some of its national figures were gaining negative press coverage. But it would be surprising if those now running One Nation and the phoenix herself had not learnt from the organisation's near-death experience.

²⁰⁴ Broinowski A, p.32.

11: CANBERRA POST-SCRIPT: A WEEK IS A LONG TIME IN POLITICS

HAS PAULINE HANSON CHANGED, OR HAS AUSTRALIA CHANGED?

At the national level, prime ministers have become more respectful of Pauline Hanson now that she had a sufficient bloc of votes in the Senate who might contribute to specific proposals from a government which could not command a regular majority from within its own ranks.

Senior cabinet minister, Arthur Sinodonis, justified the Liberal Party's shifting position towards Pauline Hanson by suggesting she was now much more sophisticated, upsetting those (in the LNP in particular) whose political memories extended back to 1998.²⁰⁵ An opinion piece in *The Guardian* by Jason Wilson, poured scorn on this claim:

Nothing has changed, nothing has improved. One Nation is, as it has always been, about as sophisticated as a 'Fuck Off We're Full' bumper sticker. Now as ever, their positions are a grab bag of far right enthusiasms, and their ranks full of the kind of folks who scan the sky for black helicopters, or think we're months away from the imposition of Sharia law.

What has changed is the sea they swim in. Australian politics has gradually been remodelled along Hansonist lines. Pauline Hanson is back, and it's still just as hard to counter her rhetoric with fact. It's difficult to see how she would now even be disendorsed as a Liberal for the kind of comments she made back in 1996. Pauline Hanson hasn't changed. Australia has.²⁰⁶

Celeste Liddle, an Indigenous activist and trade unionist, writing in the *Sydney Morning Herald* in July 2016 suggested that we should not be surprised by this change, that the Hanson brand of populism has become entrenched in the political psyche of the nation:

Since Hanson's first election, rather than simply avoiding the backlash, politicians have actively drawn on the racist undercurrents of Australian society to win elections. The deliberate focus on 'stopping the boats' following the Tampa Affair in 2001 is one jarring example of this happening. Worse, it proved successful and has become a standard tactic used by both the Coalition and the Labor Party at subsequent elections. ... Many Australians perceived the downfall of Hanson and One Nation as the end of racism in this country, but that could not be further from the truth. Instead, Hanson's ideas became mainstream politics and we have been trying in vain to undo the damage ever since.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁵ Murphy K, '[Sinodinis ducks query on preferencing One Nation above Nationals](#)', *Guardian Australia*, 12 February 2017. Turnbull also ducked similar questions, see Murphy K, '[Malcolm Turnbull, the incredible shrinking PM, goes mute on Pauline Hanson](#)', *Guardian Australia*, 1 February 2017.

²⁰⁶ Wilson J, '[Australian politics has been remodelled. Hansonists are no longer outliers](#)', *Guardian Australia*, 18 February 2017.

²⁰⁷ Liddle C, '[We shouldn't be surprised by the return of Pauline Hanson](#)', *Daily News*, 4 July 2016.

In August 2017 Broinowski confirmed the mainstreaming and absence of public resistance, comparable to 1998:

Pauline Hanson has not changed. She is just as politically and culturally divisive as she was in 1996 - it is Australia itself that has shifted. When the senator speaks in public these days, she does so free from violent mass protests, and is more likely to be interrupted by selfie-seeking fans than hecklers. She is no longer a heretic but part of the centre.²⁰⁸

By September 2017, these assertions were dramatically justified. All of the multiple factors explaining Hanson's renaissance and 'normalisation' were visible in the Senate during its last sitting week in August.

Off the main stage the Turnbull government was seeking to accommodate Hanson's priority policy choices. It had already allocated scarce parliamentary time to advance a legislative initiative on the Family Law Bill which took into account some of her concerns.

More significantly the Turnbull government was also seeking to build enough consensus within the Senate to get enough votes to pass a series of measures brought forward at the behest of the powerful media interests to allow greater concentration of ownership of press, radio and television services provided by the private sector. It allowed Hanson to tack on to these discussions the same onslaught on the activities of the ABC as she had articulated in her unsuccessful attempts to use the earlier budget Estimates discussions.

But this was also a week when many of the politicians were being subjected to two external forces under the purview of the High Court.

The first of these related to Turnbull's decision to press on with using a mail-out survey, instead of a formal plebiscite which had been rejected for a second time by the Senate, as a means of formally recording the electorate's view on same-sex marriage. The use of a survey was (unsuccessfully) appealed to the High Court on the basis that it constituted a misuse of public funds allocated in the recently-passed budget for other purposes, and it unleashed an ugly public debate, the 'No' case fuelled by the 'Christian' lobby and promotion techniques linked to the US.²⁰⁹

SECTION 44 - TESTING THE TRUTH

The second of these forces related directly to Section 44 of the Australian Constitution which dealt with dual citizens being banned from standing for election. Initially this had called into question the legitimacy of several senators (two Greens and one One Nation, then three Nationals). Of all the parliamentarians accused of inadvertently breaching the Constitution, the explanation provided by the One Nation senator, Malcolm Roberts, was clearly the least convincing, mainly because

²⁰⁸ Broinowski A, p.307.

²⁰⁹ The poll, which was reported by social media users, stated that it was conducted by the Republican-linked American pollster WPA Intelligence: Karp P, '[Robocall claims same-sex marriage may lead to radical gay education, raising push-polling fears](#)', *The Guardian*, 13 September 2016.

press statements seemed to indicate that Roberts kept shifting his ground. This became clear when the High Court started its processes by warning that lack of honesty might constitute perjury.²¹⁰ The High Court decision came down against Roberts, highlighting the fluidity of Roberts', and One Nation's 'facts'.

When questions were raised about Malcolm Roberts' citizenship in July this year ... Hanson's chief of staff James Ashby told Fairfax Media ... 'We learnt from the Heather Hill case so weren't going to fall for that a second time.

Hanson told her 200,000 Facebook followers 'hand on heart' Roberts was in the clear and it was all just a media witch hunt. ...

Here are the 'empirical' facts: Roberts was a citizen of Britain for the first five months of his Senate tenure. Roberts may still be 'choosing to believe' otherwise but not even his lawyer disputes this.

It was always flimsy and just minutes in Thursday's court appearance it fell to pieces: the man who claims he knows better than the world's scientists on climate change had sent his missives to non-existent email addresses.²¹¹

When the deputy prime minister, Barnaby Joyce, came under scrutiny because of his antecedents from New Zealand, chaos ensued as the vital numbers needed for a governing majority in the House of Representatives were called into question. There were signs of government panic with unexpected over-reactions by the Foreign Minister, Julie Bishop, appearing to declare war on New Zealand's Labour Party Opposition.²¹²

HANSON'S BURQA STUNT

One Nation was attracting little positive attention during this turbulence. This changed when Pauline Hanson pulled a stunt which, by her own testimony, had been held in reserve for such an occasion. She appeared in the chamber of the Senate totally concealed under a burqa, the all-enclosing garment which she had campaigned against for so long. This exercise in theatrics was met with an immediate, hostile reaction from Attorney-General George Brandis. Brandis was given a standing ovation from all Opposition senators but with a far more muted response from the ranks of Turnbull supporters who had so recently cherished Hanson's support.²¹³

She did little to add to her reputation as a skilled political operator in a mainstream environment or to broaden her policy platform. But the stunt can also be seen as a malevolent master-stroke which reinforced her image as a populist unrestrained by good taste or parliamentary propriety. She proudly boasted on talkback radio and

²¹⁰ Doran M, '[Dual citizenship crisis reaches the High Court](#)', *ABC*, 24 August 2017.

²¹¹ Gartrell A, '[The Empirical Strikes Back: Malcolm Roberts' difficult day in court](#)' *Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 September 2017.

²¹² Gartrell A and Remeikis A, '[Julie Bishop says she could not trust a New Zealand Labour government after Barnaby fiasco](#)' *Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 August 2017.

²¹³ Taylor L.

on social media about her skill in drawing attention to her policy. And she was strengthened in the opinion polls which showed that many people shared her desire to outlaw the burqa. As a result she expanded on the impact of the stunt by seeking to broaden the mail-out survey questions to include this issue.

Here were all the forces in action which had created her renaissance: a government which gave her credibility inside a Senate where the number of opposing forces had been created by its own ill-judged structural changes; a party system in which internal factions had made the same-sex marriage issue a major source of discord; a media which thrived on supporting the celebrity status of an outsider who was in truth a skilled political operator; an external environment of continuing terrorist threats associated with Islamic fundamentalism (facilitated, it was asserted, by the anonymity of a religious garment); an organisation which promoted banning such a garment as a major tenet of its anti-Islamic ideology given maximum local and international exposure; and a society which remained uneasy about the challenges it was facing in the absence of confident national leadership.

Katharine Murphy summed this up in an article in *The Guardian* entitled 'Brandis stands for decency after burqa stunt, but that's exactly what Hanson wanted'.

Offensive, reckless, dangerous and dumb behaviour from Hanson is, let's be honest, par for the course. It's an art form she has slowly perfected during her fits and starts in public life. But offensive reckless, dangerous and dumb is, sadly, not the worst of it. The worst of it is Hanson got exactly what she wanted. ... The objective is to be at once the centre of attention, and to be mocked and studied and shamed and scapegoated by her parliamentary colleagues.

With the Queensland state election coming up, presumably it would be helpful to the looming campaign to once again hang a giant lantern over her self-styled outsider status, to be spurned by the political mainstream.²¹⁴

The *Courier-Mail's* Dennis Atkins, drawing on his own experience of working in Queensland, recorded his immediate reaction to what Brandis identified as 'an appalling thing to do':

She will achieve her aim - a big run on the broadcast media and in this morning's papers. The fact she was, soon after Question Time, walking jauntily along the Senate corridors with a knowing smile tells us all we need to know. Hanson's One Nation base, which represents 10-20 percent according to the polls, see this as their champion standing up for them and saying things people believe they are not allowed to say. It is seen as a stand against perceived political correctness.²¹⁵

The National Party reacted strongly on this issue, through motions of support at its federal conference in early September, promoted by the Queensland contingent and, more specifically, by George Christensen. The Christensen motion called on

²¹⁴ Murphy K, '[Brandis stands for decency after burqa stunt, but that's exactly what Hanson wanted](#)', *Guardian Australia* 17 August, 2017.

²¹⁵ Atkins D, 'Party Games: Pauline Hanson achieves her aim with burqa stunt in Senate', *Courier-Mail*, Brisbane, 17 August 2017.

the national government 'to implement a ban on full-face coverings in all government buildings and public places, excluding places of worship, where it assists with security and public places'. In reporting on this, Michelle Grattan noted that Barnaby Joyce was put on the spot and declined to express an opinion in advance of the discussion of the motion:

Delegates narrowly rejected the move by Christensen to ban 'Islamic garb' in parliament buildings, government offices and departments. Mr Christensen wanted the matter to be debated at the party's national conference in Canberra on Sunday but failed to convince his colleges to vote against his party leader, Mr Joyce. ...

Mr Joyce urged caution, warning of unintended consequences: 'It could stir the possum out of the tree that you didn't want to toss out' he said. The North Queensland federal MP argued that the ban was needed not only for security reasons but also to stop the party base 'bleeding to the right' and embracing One Nation.²¹⁶

Grattan also noted that the Liberal Party is internally conflicted on this issue, as well as on several other contemporary controversies such as same-sex marriage and climate change. It was another stick with which to beat the small-L Liberals and a prime minister with a past claim to similar tendencies.

Thus Abbott commented on the Christensen motion with only minimal qualifications, identifying himself as 'a reluctant banner', but 'on the other hand this thing frankly is an affront to our way of life, a confronting and imprisoning garment'.

'I think it is worth considering whether there are some places that are dedicated to Australian values such as our courts, our parliaments, our schools - maybe we do need to think about whether this garment is appropriate to be worn in places that are dedicated to upholding Australian values', he told 2GB.²¹⁷

QUEENSLAND REPERCUSSIONS

This study has focussed on Queensland, and burqas are very rare on the streets of Brisbane and almost non-existent outside the urban south-east corner. But the question of a particular definition of Australian values has engaged Queensland voters in the past and will do so again in the forthcoming state election. Abbott's referencing of schools as reminder of populist scare campaigns which echo down the ages in Queensland.

One Nation and the Abbott-style of conservatism within the LNP will require a careful response from those with more liberal tendencies. It is clear that many of

²¹⁶ Belot H and Barbour L, '[Barnaby Joyce persuades Nationals to reject call for 'insulting' burqa ban](#)', *The New Daily*, 9 September 2017.

²¹⁷ Grattan M, '[Tony Abbott: consider burqa ban in places 'dedicated to Australian values'](#)' *The Conversation*, 6 September 2017.

the One Nation policies, like so many conspiratorial explanations, may contain enough of a grain of truth to be plausible.²¹⁸

The burqa and Hanson's theatrical stunt do not stand alone in the political process. The package of policies advocated by One Nation will not withstand careful and specific analysis and the quality of individual candidates needs similar examination in a representative democracy. It would be foolish to pursue personal attacks on the values and attitudes of a leader who seems to enjoy impregnable cult status with a core following. She has a wider but shallower celebrity as a protest brand appealing to otherwise unengaged voters compelled by the prevailing electoral system to have a detailed opinion about the worth of the various parties.

I have been motivated to delve into the extensive literature relating to One Nation because Queenslanders deserve better from its politicians than the One Nation's current array of candidates and potential parliamentarians – admittedly an improvement on 1998. The media have an important role in examining these limitations and the limitations of the policies they espouse, which are often internally inconsistent as well as shallow, apart from the core of appealing to anti-Muslim prejudice.²¹⁹

Interviewing political leaders is beyond my skill set and I have relied on the wide range of written information provided by others with relevant professional skills, just as I did in writing about other leaders such as Joh Bjelke-Petersen, Campbell Newman, and the current Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk.²²⁰ Pauline Hanson poses a special challenge for interviewers with her capacity to avoid in-depth interrogation and to identify instead with the “common-sensical” simplicities of her version of “ordinary people” and their unexamined prejudices. But election campaigns tend to generate unavoidable occasions where skilled interviewers can uncover deeper issues, as was the case towards the end of the brief Newman era. In the interests of genuine democratic accountability, the media has an obligation to create these unavoidable occasions.

It is also up to the politicians to contribute to serious discussions on all the issues raised by One Nation, including the uncomfortable ones related to racism and religious intolerance as well as the perceived inability of governments of either ideological stripe to deal with the pressing problems of economic inequality between classes and between regions. Pauline Hanson's One Nation is a protest

²¹⁸ This is true for example of the now-iconic policy of banning the burqa. Islam, like Christianity, is divided in many ways, including between ‘fundamentalists’ and more mainstream adherents to the faith. In his article ‘Debating the Burqa’, Thakur suggests that reducing the debate to simplistic polarised arguments is damaging, and that, amongst other things, the burqa can be seen as a symbol of repression Thakur R, ‘[Debating the Burqa](#)’ John Menadue - *Pearls and Irritations*, 25 August 2017.

²¹⁹ See Appendix, by Ann Scott, on One Nation's Queensland policies and candidates.

²²⁰ See Scott R and Guille G, [Palaszczuk's First Year: a political juggling act](#) Research Report 45, TJ Ryan Foundation, , and Scott A, Guille H and Scott R, [Palaszczuk's Second Year: An overview of 2016](#), Research Report 52, TJ Ryan Foundation, May 2016.

movement which will only cease to matter when the voting public is convinced that better, fairer alternatives can be provided elsewhere.

APPENDIX: CONTENT ANALYSIS - ONE NATION'S QUEENSLAND POLICIES

There are three sets of policy documents currently on the One Nation site: 'Federal',²²¹ 'State', and a 'Queensland State Policy Booklet'.²²²

Nationally, One Nation rejects the [United Nations Sustainable Development: Agenda 21](#). The Queensland State Policy Booklet is concerned primarily with rural and regional issues reflecting this rejection and the policies listed are a mix of propositions to attract regional and rural voters.

They do not address many of the national One Nation issues relating to immigration, refugees, Islam, the burqa, and Halal certification. The national policy supports higher education at a 'reasonable' cost for all Australians, but there is scant mention of education (apart from apprenticeships) at the State level.

- ***Foreword by Steve Dickson***

The Foreword over the signature of the State leader, Steve Dickson, reiterates One Nation's primary message to an alienated electorate, 'people feel let down by the major political parties - and rightly so'.

The overview below lists the statements in alphabetical order:

- ***'[No asset sales](#)' and '[Surplus government assets](#)'***

A section in One Nation's policy document for Queensland, with no supporting statements, differentiates One Nation from the sins of the Newman government, and the electoral poison in Queensland on the issue of asset sales. There is also a proposal that surplus government assets should be made available for community use.

- ***[Citizen initiated referenda](#)***

Under a [citizen-initiated referenda](#) Queenslanders would be enabled to 'push for an issue to be put to a binding vote of the whole State'.

- ***[Crocodile management](#)***

Crocodile management is a significant issue in north Queensland. The One Nation policy on crocodiles contains considerably more detail than their Health policies.

²²¹ [One Nation's summary of the federal policies](#) cover: Politicians and their perks; Halal certification and Islam; United Nations and trade agreements; Farming and water; Family law and child support; Refugees; Same sex marriage; Immigration; Pensioners; Citizens initiated referenda; Aussie jobs; The ice epidemic; Higher education; Stop the roting of services; Foreign ownership; Taxation; and Firearms ownership. Summaries can be found at the end of this Appendix. The National policy particularly targets the United Nations [Agenda 21](#) 'designed to control people's rights, water, population, health, education, sovereignty, ownership of land and how we choose to live our lives'.

²²² This analysis is based on the policy documents available at the time of writing (October 2017). The date of the forthcoming Queensland election has not yet been declared.

- **Economic development**

A substantial number of the policies inaccurately imply that successive State governments have been inactive over economic development. For example, One Nation states in its Economic Development policy that it would publish a forward program of infrastructure projects to be delivered in regional Queensland, suggesting forward planning does not exist.²²³

The Economic Development policy also contains conventional statements about the need to cut red and green tape.

Another conventional policy is to 'rethink' how government works, and to encourage decentralisation of government services (allied to committing to a 'buy local', policy for government departments for contracts, consultancies, goods and services).²²⁴

One Nation states that it will establish a 5-year moratorium on Payroll Tax for start-up businesses employing up to 40 people, established after 2017. One Nation also states that it would fund an apprentice scheme for business for essential services and trades, including the hotel and catering industries.

- **Firearms**

Compared to the sparse Health policy (see below), One Nation's Firearms policy runs to 21 detailed policy promises attacking the recent National Firearms Agreement and directed on simplifying gun ownership for sporting shooters, primary producers and 'law-abiding' Queensland who use guns for sport and recreation.

- **Health**

The Health Policy is dominated by medical cannabis: the issue which Steve Dickson identified in his decision to defect from the LNP to One Nation. Four of the six One Nation health policies focus on cannabis. One of these strongly promotes the need for local cannabis production. The two which are not related to cannabis consist of a general attack on the burgeoning costs of the health bureaucracy, and a promise to maintain health assets better.

- **Law and order**

The preamble to the Law and Order policy identifies problems relating to crime and drugs, and particularly the 'scourge of ice' which is undoubtedly having such a devastating impact in rural and regional Queensland. But the specific policies that follow bear little relationship to the problems identified.

The first Queensland-specific commitment is to rebadge the Queensland Police Service as the Police Police Force. Two others relate to mandatory sentencing (for criminals caught in possession of illegal firearms; and for assault against police

²²³ There is already a [State Infrastructure Plan](#). This may have been criticised in the past, but a complex planning regime exists. There is also the [Queensland Plan](#), initiated by the Newman government and continued by the Palaszczuk government. The Queensland Plan has a section devoted to [Infrastructure](#).

²²⁴ The author managed a review of regionalisation when working for the Public Sector Management Commission in the early 1990s. These issues were reported on at that time.

officers, emergency service workers, ambulance officers and medical staff). Finally, the policy advocates a public website listing all sex offenders.

- **Transport and roads**

Three of the four policies under Transport and Roads relate to priorities in transport infrastructure planning and the deterioration of inland roads. The fourth focuses on supporting the established taxi industry.

- **Vegetation Management**

One Nation picks up on the problem of Vegetation Management, a hot issue in Queensland after the Newman government overturned land clearing controls just before leaving office. The Palaszczuk government was unable to overturn this relaxation of land clearing constraints in the finely balanced parliament: the KAP voted with the LNP.

- **Water Security**

The Water Security policies are highly specific, relating to particular dams and locations: the Burdekin and Fitzroy catchments, the costings for the Nathan Dam, the Surat Coal Basin and the Dawson-Callide region.

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