The politics of race and immigration in Australia: One Nation voting in the 1998 Election

Rachel Gibson, Ian McAllister and Tami Swenson

Abstract

Much has been written in a short space of time about the rapid rise and equally sharp decline of Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party in Australia. Many of these studies have alluded to the importance of the race issue for One Nation, but argued that ultimately the anti-immigrant and anti-aboriginal sentiments associated with the party failed to mobilize voters. This study examines the debate using a multilevel analysis of One Nation [ON] support in the 148 federal electorates. The competing explanations for ON support are tested using a combination of survey data and aggregate political, demographic and socio-economic statistics. The results show that race and immigration were major factors mobilizing ON supporters, and concerns about economic insecurity were of lesser importance. Conclusions are drawn on the extent to which ON's emergence corresponds to the growth in radical right populism in many continental European nations.

Keywords: Radical Right; anti-immigrant; parties; One Nation; Pauline Hanson.

In contrast to most of the other advanced democracies, until relatively recently Australia had largely avoided the politics of race and immigration that is most closely associated with the rise of the far right. To be sure, Australia has seen brief flowerings of far right, neo-Nazi type organizations (such as the League of Rights), particularly in the late 1960s and 1970s when the White Australia policy was abolished (Moore 1995). But this stream of politics, even in a diluted form, had never attracted significant votes at either the state or federal levels. This enviable record came to an end in 1998, when the fledgling One Nation Party, led by Pauline Hanson, won almost one quarter of the votes in the Queensland state election, and almost one in ten votes in the national election that followed shortly afterwards.

The phenomenon of Hansonism and One Nation represents the first time in postwar Australian politics that race and immigration have

become electoral issues, with important implications for the future of Australian politics. Hanson campaigned on socio-economic populism, directed towards rural workers, primary producers and small business people, who were being disproportionately affected by increased economic competition from Third World competitors. Her vision was of the 'Fortress Australia' of the 1950s: self-sufficient, united and ethnically homogeneous. What explains the unprecedented electoral support for Pauline Hanson and One Nation, and what are its implications for Australian politics? In this article, we use the 1998 Australian Election Study to evaluate the arguments and evidence surrounding the ON vote in the 1998 federal election, and to explore the importance of race-based explanations in accounting for its support.

The rise and fall of One Nation

The formation and initial success of Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party – from its formation in April 1997 through to the Queensland state elections of June 1998 – took many observers of Australian politics by surprise. Hanson herself was a former Liberal Party federal election candidate who had been disendorsed by the party prior to the 1996 election; this followed comments she made in a local newspaper condemning the special benefits available to Aborigines. Notwithstanding her disendorsement, she was elected as an independent with a substantial swing of 19.3 per cent. In her maiden speech in the House of Representatives on 10 September 1996, Hanson continued her anti-immigration and anti-aboriginal stance, decrying 'the reverse racism [that] is applied to mainstream Australians by those who promote political correctness and those who control the various taxpayer-funded 'industries' that flourish in our society servicing aboriginals, multiculturalists and a host of other minority groups'.[1]

Hanson's views about Aborigines and immigrants struck a responsive cord among Australian voters. Opinion polls testing support for Hanson indicated a small but persistent core of potential voters that were responsive to her message.[2] Buoyed along by her evidently rising popularity, Hanson founded the One Nation Party in April 1997. The party's platform was based on social and economic populism, combining support for economic protectionism and state subsidized loans for farmers and small businesses, with opposition to foreign investment, large-scale Asian immigration, and gun control. Not least, the party sought to end the state subsidization of ethnic and aboriginal interest groups, which Hanson and many of her supporters regarded as at odds with Australia's egalitarian ethos. In short, the One Nation Party was seen to embody the politics of 'anger' and the far right in a manner hitherto not witnessed in mainstream national politics (Suter 1998; Deutchmann 2000).

While ON attracted much media attention in 1997 and early 1998, it

Figure 1. *Federal Voting Intention, January 1997-December 1999*
Notes Figures are monthly averages if more than one survey was conducted.
Source Newspoll Market Research at http: //newspoll.com.au.
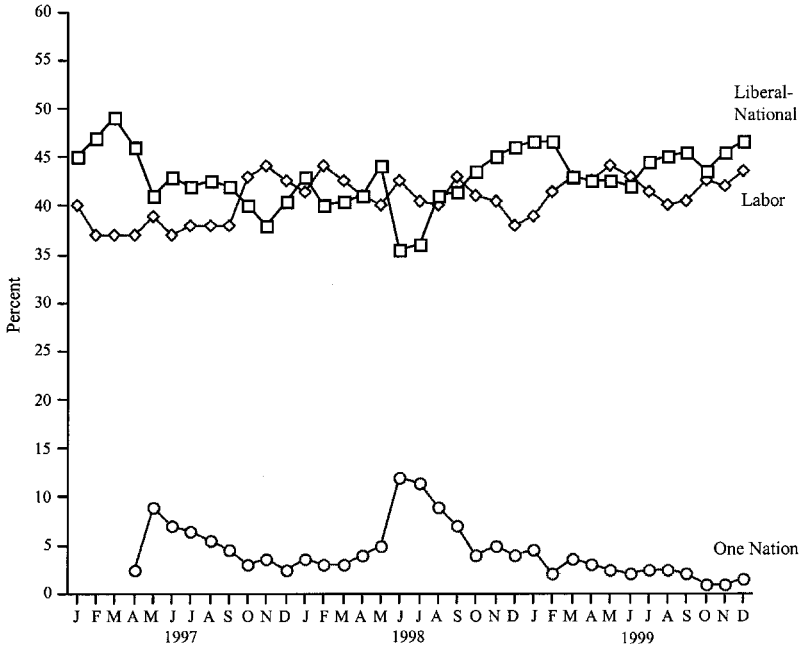
was dismissed as ephemeral by the established parties. Although the party enjoyed an initial surge in support on its formation – attracting the support of nearly one in ten voters according to the opinion polls (Figure 1) – its support declined significantly and remained below 5 per cent for the rest of 1997 and early 1998. This changed at the June 1998 Queensland state elections, when ON won 22.7 per cent of the first preference vote and secured eleven representatives, becoming the third largest party in the chamber. At that time, the party was attracting the support of about 12 per cent of the electorate nationally, a figure which remains its peak of support.

Many predicted greater success for the party in the upcoming federal elections; a similar performance to its Queensland success would result in the ON holding the balance of power in the House of Representatives (Simms and Warhurst 2000). Much domestic media and academic attention focused on the federal race in anticipation of an ON breakthrough, although the polls suggested a much lower level of support, at around 5 per cent. Given the weight of expectation therefore the 8.4 per cent support ON attracted in the lower house and the 9 per cent in the Senate was considered a failure, although better than the polls had predicted.

The party gained only one seat in the upper house, and Hanson failed to win the seat she contested in the Queensland electorate of Blair. These results, it was determined, signalled the beginning of the end for the party, and for the remainder of 1998 the party never managed to attract more than 5 per cent of the vote; during 1999, its support averaged just 2.3 per cent.

The predictions of ON's demise have proved accurate. Shortly after the federal election, the party was engulfed by several high-profile defections among its state representatives, financial scandals about the use of members' donations, and in December 1999 the breakaway of a minority to form a rival organization, the City Country Alliance [CCA]. This pattern of early success and apparent disintegration, however, has meant that most accounts of ON's showing in the federal election have focused on explaining the party's demise. This has tended to obscure the simple fact that a significant minority of Australian voters (about one in ten) did support ON. Translated into the European context, this is a level of support that has generated widespread alarm when achieved by one of the radical right parties, such as the Belgian Flemish Block or the French *Front National*, in a national election. How and why did ON attract such widespread popular support?

Explaining One Nation support

Most studies of ON's support have been largely descriptive, based on commercial opinion polls (Goot 1998), geographic distribution (Reynolds 2000), or election survey data (Bean 2000). These studies have revealed that ON supporters are more likely to be male and in blue-collar or working-class occupations. In addition, older voters (those between 45 and 65) and those living in rural and regional Australia are disproportionately drawn to the party. Despite this evidence of a 'core' constituency, however, the party's supporters are generally considered to be more diverse than those of the other parties. As Bean (2000, p. 150) comments, 'in some respects ON is perhaps best defined in terms of those groups that are least likely to give their support to the party . . . the affluent professional classes with tertiary education and non-English speaking background'. Having such a broad basis of support has meant that ON is often viewed as a party of 'protest' and populism rather than one of ideological conviction (Wells 1997; Stokes 2000).

In terms of support for its policies, Bean notes that ON supporters were clearly angry about the level of unemployment and were more concerned about their own prospects for finding work in the future than about Australia's overall economic performance. One Nation voters also supported the party's opposition to gun control. It was in the area of race and immigration, however, where ON voters were most distinct from other party's voters:

The contrast between ONP and other voters, however, is vastly more marked when we consider the immigration and race-related questions [compared with economic issues]. Whether the question is to do with equal opportunities for migrants, the number of migrants allowed into Australia, links with Asia or Aboriginal issues, time and again the gulf between ONP supporters and the rest of the electorate is huge (Bean 2000, pp. 148–9).

Race-related issues appear to be the unifying theme among the party's supporters. Hanson herself had gained most publicity for her views on Asian immigration, arguing in her maiden speech to parliament that Australia was being 'swamped by Asians'.

Surveys certainly reveal that concerns over immigration were growing during the 1990s. As Figure 2 shows, post-war opposition to immigration actually peaked in 1993, when 70 per cent of survey respondents believed that immigration had 'gone too far'. The subsequent dip in hostility has been explained through a range of factors including public perceptions about a decline in the numbers of immigrants entering the country since the election of the Liberal-National government in 1996, as well as

Figure 2. *Public Opinion Opposed to Immigration, 1950–99*
Notes Question wordings vary between surveys but usually refers to 'too many/reduce' or 'gone too far/gone much too far'.
Sources Goot (1984, 1991); Australian Election Studies, 1990–1998; Australian Constitutional Referendum Study, 1999.
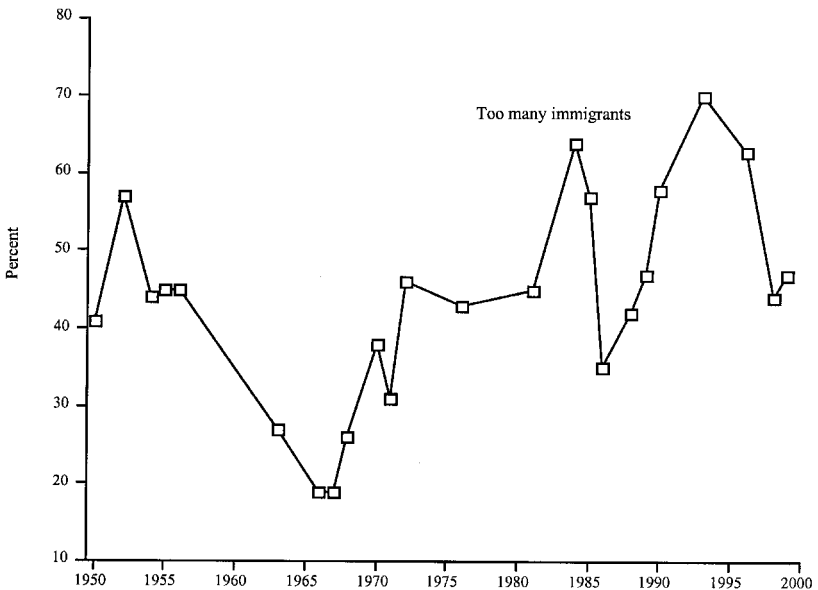
perceptions of the policy shift away from family reunion and towards the attraction of skilled migrants (Goot 2000a). Whatever the causes, however, it is clear that the 1998 election occurred at a time when around 40 per cent of voters believed that too many immigrants were being allowed into Australia. A reduction on views just five years before, but still more than twice the level of the mid-1960s.

Opinions towards Aborigines have remained more stable than those towards immigrants. Survey data from the 1980s and 1990s reveal that a majority of Australians consider government policies towards Aborigines have become too liberal.[3] In 1987, for example, 59 per cent considered aboriginal land rights had 'gone too far', and in 1996, 56 per cent shared this view. Thus, while the period immediately prior to the 1998 election did not herald concerted opposition to government policies towards immigrants and Aborigines, there was clearly a significant amount of negative feeling in the public at large.

In addition to survey-based studies, there have also been a number of studies that have analysed the ON vote using individual and aggregate data. Davis and Stimson (1998) examined ON's vote in the 1998 Queensland election, matching it to census district data. Their results showed that it was electorates on the periphery of regional urban centres, characterized by large numbers of blue-collar workers, small aboriginal populations, and high unemployment, that were most likely to support Hanson. These findings led Davis and Stimson (1998, p. 72) to conclude that the ON vote was an 'urban-fringe phenomenon', caused by 'a reaction to the fear of unemployment and underemployment which has resulted from economic restructuring.' They concluded that such feelings were particularly strong in these areas.

Other models have probed economic explanations in more depth. Hanson's message of economic protectionism is considered to resonate very strongly with small business owners and farmers who have suffered from the opening up of the Australian economy to global competition, initiated by Labour during the 1980s. The consequences of global competition for regional Australia have been major job losses and the withdrawal of many services; the resulting dissatisfaction is considered to be a primary factor in Hanson's support (Moore 1997; see also Brett 1998). Similarly, McAllister and Bean (2000) found that economic discontent motivated defection by major party voters to ON, but that race and ethnic issues were of greater concern.

Money (1999) provides the most extensive analysis of the role of race in the 1998 federal election and for ON's vote. Her analysis finds that ON support in marginal seats with high numbers of immigrant voters was significantly lower than in seats where the immigrant vote was not decisive to the outcome. These findings, she argues, indicate that the major parties, responding to the threat of immigrant votes going against them, downplayed or even delegitimized ON to prevent loss of support.

ON, she concludes, failed to capitalize on the race issue because the major parties (and particularly the Liberals) changed the focus of debate to economic issues. This change in strategy was the result of the Queensland Liberals' humiliating loss in the 1998 state election, which was attributed to the party's leaders pandering to the Hanson vote. For example, the Liberal leader, John Howard, had initially refused to condemn Hanson's criticism of welfare privileges for Aborigines, and both the Liberal and National parties had urged their supporters to give their second preference votes to ON.[4]

In addition to studies of the effects of economic insecurity, political dissatisfaction, and racial prejudice in promoting support for ON, the effects of the media on the party's fortunes have also been investigated (Deutchman and Ellison 1999; Scalmer 1999; Goot 2000b). While the traditional print and electronic media often denigrated ON in their coverage, Goot reports that talk radio and the tabloids played a key role, at least initially, in boosting Hanson's support. This is in line with the role of talk radio in the United States in promoting support for the radical right. Lastly, discussion has also focused on the sociocultural issues that may be at the root of Hanson's success, in her attack on elite-driven political correctness which has come to dominate political debate in Australia, as it has done in most of the advanced democracies (Lynch and Reavell 1997; Ahluwalia and McCarthy 1998).

At the bivariate level, evidence to support the explanations for ON support put forward above find strong support. There were obviously widespread feelings of economic insecurity in the 1998 election, exacerbated by perceptions that there were fewer job opportunities in the labour market, and a reduced social welfare system that might provide a safety net in the event of retrenchment (McAllister and Bean 2000). On three of the four questions relating to economic insecurity, Table 1 shows that ONP voters expressed the strongest opinions of any of the party voters. The sole exception is concern that a family member might become unemployed, where slightly more Labor than ON voters expressed this view. Clearly, economic insecurity was one component fuelling support for ON.

Notwithstanding the importance of economic insecurity, what differentiated ONP voters from any of the other three parties was their views on Aborigines, immigrants, and law enforcement. More than nine out of every ten ON voters believed that government policies towards Aborigines had 'gone too far'; only Liberal-National voters come close to this figure, with about six out of every ten holding this view. Similarly, a large majority of ON voters believed that policies towards immigrants had 'gone too far', again in marked contrast to the voters for the other three parties. Finally, law enforcement in general, but gun control in particular, was a major issue for ON; 56 per cent believed that the government's

control of firearms had 'gone too far', almost three times the proportion of Labor voters who took the same view.

One Nation and the mobilization of racial prejudice

Although a range of explanations for ON support have been identified, there is general agreement that between June and October 1998, the actions of the major parties and of Hanson herself undermined ON's ability to mobilize this new found constituency. Deutchman (2000, p. 50) has summed up this view in her statement that '. . . in two years, we see the spectacular rise and incredible fall of a political movement'. Similarly, although Leach, Ward and Stokes (2000, pp. 4–5) point out that

Table 1. *Voters' Socio-Economic Opinions in the 1998 Election*

	(Percent)			
	Lab	Lib-Nat	Dem	ONP
Economic insecurity				
Very worried family member unemployed	35	15	22	31
Very hard to get job	53	26	47	56
Best jobs definitely in the past	45	28	34	57
Household standard of living fallen since 1996	62	25	49	65
Aborigines ('gone too far')				
Aboriginal land rights	43	63	39	92
Government help for aborigines	44	61	37	93
Immigrants ('gone too far')				
Equal opportunity for migrants	30	32	24	70
Number of migrants allowed into Australia	39	42	36	90
Law enforcement				
Government control of firearms (gone too far)	19	22	14	56
Stiffer sentences for lawbreakers (strongly agree)	37	38	29	72
(N)	(719)	(766)	(100)	(116)

Notes 'How worried are you that in the next 12 months you or someone else in your household might be out of work and looking for a job for any reason?'; 'In your community these days, how easy is it for someone who is trying to find a job to get a good job at good wages?'; 'When it comes to the availability of good jobs for Australian workers, some say that the best years are behind us. Others say that the best years are yet to come. What do you think?'; 'Thinking back to the federal election in 1996, when John Howard won against Paul Keating, would you say that since then the following have increased or fallen . . . your own standard of living?'; 'The statements below indicate some of the changes that have been happening in Australia over the years . . . Aboriginal land rights . . . government help for Aborigines . . . equal opportunities for migrants . . . the number of migrants allowed into Australia . . . government controls of firearms.'; 'Here are some statements about general social concerns. Please say whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree . . . people who break the law should be given stiffer sentences.'
Source 1998 Australian Election Study.

the underlying anxieties stirred up by ON cannot be ignored, they argue that 'failure in the 1998 federal election plunged the party into disorder', and constituted a 'resounding defeat'.

While it is undeniable that the party experienced a major reversal in the federal election, it had still managed to politicize the issue of the race, for the first time in postwar Australian politics. Indeed, the importance of racial prejudice in mobilizing voters is clearly evident from the poll evidence cited above. Furthermore, while Money's analysis (1999) indicates that the size of the ethnic vote was a strong disincentive for the established parties to politicize race, her results also show that in areas where both the aboriginal population and unemployment were high, the ON vote increased significantly. Intriguingly, Davis and Stimson's analysis of the Queensland vote finds that large aboriginal and immigrant populations in an electorate were associated with lower votes for ON. Thus, there is evidence suggesting immigrant and aboriginal population size does form a significant explanatory variable in understanding ON's support. These conclusions, however, have all been based on aggregate data, a feature that weakens their conclusions since it opens them up to the ecological fallacy.

The interpretation of ON's demise as a failure to mobilize voters on racial prejudice corresponds to Jackman's (1998) view that race has been neglected in studies of the ideological make-up of the Australian public. While social scientists have largely overlooked the topic, Jackman shows that racial prejudice forms a core element of popular political views and that parties making anti-immigrant or racist appeals would have considerable potential support. McAllister (1993) supports this interpretation by showing mounting popular concern among the electorate to further immigration, and about its long-term consequences for economic and political stability (see also Betts, 1996a, 1996b). McAllister argues that these views have been stifled by the postwar bipartisan consensus to exclude immigration and race issues from the electoral agenda. This restraint, however, is largely the result of strategic cost-benefit calculations by the parties rather than any great moral deliberations (see also Hardcastle and Parkin 1991; Jupp 1991; Grattan 1993; Rubenstein 1993).

In the decade preceding the formation of ON, there were increasing signs of a breach in this bipartisan consensus. This can be traced to 1984 when a prominent historian, Geoffrey Blainey, criticized the high levels of Asian immigration as running ahead of public opinion. Although politicians criticised Blainey, John Howard (then leader of the Liberal opposition) was seen as picking up on Blainey's theme when he argued for a better balancing of Asian immigration in a speech in 1988 (Ozolins 1994). However, such is the power of the ethnic vote and its importance in any national election, that Howard himself was forced to withdraw his views shortly before the 1996 election. In effect, then, bipartisanship on race and ethnicity remained intact until the formation of ON in 1997.

The key question that we are seeking to examine therefore is how far racial prejudice was a primary motivating factor behind ON support. It is our contention that while the dominant impression of ON's perform-ance in the 1998 federal election is one of failure, due to its inability to sustain its previous success at the state level, this conclusion requires further scrutiny. While the party might appear to have disappeared, if it succeeded in mobilizing latent racial prejudice to new levels in a national election, then its political legacy may be far more subtle and far reaching than is presently acknowledged. Such mobilization would represent a new chapter in Australian politics and one that opens the door to the continued and expanded use of race-based appeals in future elections.

Modelling support for One Nation

Two basic types of attitudinal opposition to immigrants within the national electorates of Western Europe can be identified, derived from the sociological and psychological literature on symbolic racism and real-istic conflict theories of racial prejudice (Allport 1954; McConahay and Hough 1976; Kinder and Sears 1981; Bobo 1983; Knigge 1996; Gibson 2001).[5] The first type of attitudinal opposition – *identity-based opposi-tion* – centres on simple negative stereotypes of immigrants and expresses itself through a dislike of their geographic and social proxim-ity. The second type – *interest-based opposition* – is based on more subtle reasoning about immigrants' impact on jobs, the economy, crime levels and welfare expenditure. While both types of opposition are expected to be linked to anti-immigrant party support, interest-based opposition is expected to be more easily mobilized since its concerns – unemploy-ment, crime, and welfare – are more likely to be considered the province of government action than the identity-based issues such as inter-racial marriage and having an immigrant as one's boss.

To translate these two forms of latent hostility to immigrants into voting behaviour we identify three non-mutually exclusive explanations, derived from political science explanations of far-right voting. First, *grievance intensification* theory argues that individuals will engage in anti-immigrant voting when their feelings of resentment towards immi-grants or an ethnic outgroup intensify to a critical point. The two different types of opposition will be intensified by different factors. Identity-based opposition would need only a greater number of immi-grants to be visible to intensify, whereas interest-based opposition would require an additional perception of a decline in one's own personal socio-economic security or that of the country as a whole.

Second, *political opportunism* contends that while grievances towards immigrants may intensify and lead some to support an anti-immigrant party, for most people the hardening of attitudes, although a necessary precondition for political expression, is not sufficient. Such mobilization

requires the intervention of a political opportunity, in the shape of a 'space' on the political spectrum for the anti-immigrant party to emerge. This opportunity is usually considered greatest when the established parties, particularly the mainstream party of the right, have dropped the issue or are perceived as weak in the area of immigration policy, and there is a left-wing government in power (Husbands 1988; Kitschelt and McGann 1996). The long-standing commitment by both the Australian parties not to politicize immigration, means that this interpretation needs to be modified and, in fact, reversed. It is hypothesized that the political opportunity for an anti-immigrant party to do well in Australia may in fact be greatest when one or both parties *are* talking about immigration. With race-based electoral appeals enjoying new legitimacy, a party such as ON is strategically placed to claim ownership of the immigration issue.

Finally, *the echo chamber effect* is related to political opportunity but argues that voting for an anti-immigrant party is simply a product of individual perceptions of the legitimacy of this type of behaviour. Thus, anyone feeling antagonistic towards immigrants is susceptible to engaging in anti-immigrant voting; it is simply when individuals know of, or hear other people that are prepared to engage in this type of behaviour, that they become more likely to do so. Once again, this type of mobilization might be more common among those expressing interest-based opposition since it exhibits a greater degree of social acceptability in its objections to immigrants than pure identity-based considerations.

The logic of these three arguments means that they are best understood to form a continuum for the mobilization of anti-immigrant voting in society. Core opponents of immigration need only their grievances to intensify for them to become politically active, whereas others, with less rigidly held beliefs, require a political opportunity to emerge before they will seek to express their preferences politically. Finally, those who are more weakly motivated by racial prejudice will act on these views once they perceive it as legitimate to do so, that is, when others around them begin to express similar views publicly. These explanations are not the sole or even the most important factors for understanding ON's 1998 electoral support; we simply isolate them as our principal theoretical focus. As was noted above, there was clearly a range of factors that underlay the party's support and these will be taken into account in the empirical analysis. Our major concern, however, is whether racial prejudice contributed to ON support, and if so, how the mobilization of that prejudice took place.

Data and methods

In order to test these theories of anti-immigrant voting, a multilevel analysis of ON party support in the 1998 election was conducted.[6] The

dependent variable is the reported vote for ON in the House of Representatives election, and the unit of analysis is the individual survey respondent within his/her electoral division. The independent variables include: demographic controls for unemployment, age, working class, hand gun ownership, and gender (coded for male); individual anti-immigrant attitudes, economic vulnerability, immigrant issue salience, and dissatisfaction with democracy; and contextual effects within the electorate such as the unemployment rate, percentage of recent immigrants, aggregated attitudes, percentage rural, and ON political opportunity. In using multilevel analysis we avoid the ecological fallacy encountered in previous analyses, since both aggregate and individual-level data are examined. Thus, any assertions about individual motivation do not have to be inferred.

The *grievance intensification* explanation is tested by examining whether there is a strong and positive relationship between ON support and the two types of opposition to immigrants: identity and interest-based. As these resentments increase are people more likely to vote for ON? The individual level anti-immigrant attitudes are identified using factor analysis (see Appendix). The anti-immigrant opposition is divided into two types conforming to our identity or culturally-based opposition and the interest-based form of opposition. The variables forming the interest-based factor of opposition were: whether immigrants increased crime; whether immigrants were good for the economy; and whether immigrants take jobs from Australian-born citizens. The variables forming the identity-based factor of opposition were: whether one would mind if one's boss was Asian and if a relative married an Asian. In addition, we look at the contextual conditions surrounding ON's vote for more objective evidence of grievance intensification. Specifically, the percentage of immigrants within the electorate during the past five years and the percentage unemployment rate in 1997.

The *political opportunity* explanation centres on the extent to which the major parties' actions are creating a political space for ON. We have argued that if the established parties introduce race and immigration issues to the electoral competition, the chances for ON are improved considerably, since it works to raise people's concerns about the issue and also legitimize ON's appeal. This argument is tested using a variable from Money (1998) that indicates the likelihood of the major parties playing the race card in the election. The variable is a ratio that divides the proportion of the electorate that is immigrant by the vote margin in the 1996 election (Firebaugh and Gibbs 1985). The reasoning here is that candidates in very marginal seats where there is a decisive immigrant voting bloc would be far less inclined to make negative references to immigrants, or be seen to be courting the ON vote. Indeed, in such a situation the major parties might actually engage in strategies that delegitimize ON as racist to prevent mobilization of their vote. Thus, the variable is hypothesized to have a negative and significant relationship

to the vote for ON, if the theory is correct. Higher scores indicate a greater likelihood of immigrants affecting the outcome of the election and thus a lower propensity for the major parties to play on racial fears to gain votes, thereby lowering ON's appeal. Lower scores, by contrast, mean that the immigrant bloc is less decisive to the outcome of the race, the parties therefore would be more likely to play the race card if they thought it would improve their chances, thus increasing the legitimacy of an ON appeal.[7]

Finally, the *echo chamber* or perceptions of legitimacy thesis is examined using contextual evidence. The issue here is whether higher levels of either type of anti-immigrant attitudes across an electoral division actually stimulate more people to engage in ON voting, regardless of their own feelings of resentment towards immigrants. This argument is tested by a variable that measures the aggregate levels of the different types of opposition in the electoral divisions.

Other individual level attitudinal variables that are considered important in predicting the ON vote, in addition to anti-immigrant feelings, include economic vulnerability, anti-aboriginal sentiment and democratic dissatisfaction. Anti-aboriginal sentiment is measured using factor scores from a factor analysis of five questions concerning Aborigines (see Appendix Table B). Democratic dissatisfaction is included in the analysis to gauge the potential degree of protest voting. In other words, an individual may vote for ON as an expression of protest against the current system and dominant political parties. The measurement of this variable is from a question that asks the survey respondent to rate one's satisfaction with democracy in Australia. Similarly, economic vulnerability is an expression of economic dissatisfaction and is coded as a dummy variable for those who feel the best jobs were definitely in the past. In addition, the salience of the immigration issue is measured as a dummy variable coded for those who stated that immigration was a very important election issue. This variable was included as a measure for the more diffuse fears and resentments that people might have about immigrants, that are not captured by the specific types of opposition.

Control variables are included to measure the demographic and socioeconomic traits that have been shown to be strongly associated with extreme-right-party support in Australia and elsewhere. These traits include being male, age, unemployed, working class, and hand gun ownership. In addition, an indicator of geographic residence is also introduced by including the percentage of people classified as rural in a given federal electorate.

Results

The overall model allows for the testing of the three explanations of anti-immigrant voting outlined above, controlling for the other variables

examined in the existing literature as linked to ON support. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 2. Overall it appears that it is the individual level characteristics that have the greatest power in determining the ON vote rather than any contextual effects, other than living in a rural area. More specifically, feeling strongly dissatisfied with the state of Australian democracy and resentful of immigrants due to their negative socio-economic impact, alongside a more diffuse perception of immigration as a problem and hostility towards Aborigines, made one significantly more likely to support Hanson in the 1998 federal election.

The maximum likelihood parameter estimates presented for the model can be interpreted in the same way as one would interpret regular logistic regression parameter estimates (Kennedy 1998). The probabilities discussed in the text are constructed holding the other variables at their corresponding mean and modal categories. In statistical terms these results translate into saying that the average individual in the average electorate has a 0.02 (or 2 per cent) probability of voting for ON. The marginal increase in this probability of voting for ON for each of significant explanatory variables varies. For the average individual with the highest level of interest-based opposition there is a 0.08 (8 per cent) probability of ON vote support. This represents the largest marginal increase in the probability of ON support when compared with the other significant variables in the model. An average person who is dissatisfied with democracy has a 0.06 (6 per cent) probability of ON support, which is the same probability of ON support as the average person with the highest level of aboriginal opposition and the average person who resides in the most rural electorate. The average person who considers immigration a salient issue in the election has a 0.05 probability. Cumulatively these findings indicate that a person who is dissatisfied with democracy, views immigration as a salient issue, resides in the most rural electorate, and has the highest levels of interest-based opposition to immigrants and hostility to aboriginals, has a 0.78 probability (or 78 per cent chance) of supporting ON in the house election.

In terms of our three 'pathways' to anti-immigrant voting, the results translate into support for the grievance intensification against immigrants, particularly in terms of material interests. As an individual's level of interest-based anti-immigrant opposition increases so does their likelihood of support for ON. The same does not apply, however, to a person's increasing symbolic or cultural fears about immigrants. Furthermore, the findings do not support the political opportunity structure and echo chamber arguments – the ratio variable (designed to indicate the likely downplaying of race issues by the major parties) has no significant relationship to the support level that ON receives, nor do higher overall levels of either of the different types of opposition to immigrants within a federal electorate.[8]

Significantly, while socio-economic grievances against immigrants

Table 2. *A Multilevel Analysis of One Nation Support in 1998*

Variable	Parameter	Standard Error	Sig level
Intercept	−3.780	0.186	0.000
Demographic Control Variables			
Male	0.669	0.219	0.003
Age	−0.004	0.007	0.580
Gun Owner	0.225	0.270	0.404
Working Class	0.411	0.219	0.060
Individual Attitudes			
Immigrant Issue Salience	0.942	0.224	0.000
Interest-based immigrant opposition	0.500	0.095	0.000
Identity-based immigrant opposition	−0.098	0.084	0.246
Aborigine opposition	0.309	0.070	0.000
Economic vulnerability	0.128	0.308	0.678
Democratic dissatisfaction	1.336	0.221	0.000
Grievance Intensification			
Unemployment rate	−0.030	0.024	0.222
Recent Immigrants (Per cent)	−0.028	0.071	0.691
Political Opportunity			
Immigrant Per cent/ vote margin, 1996	0.001	0.009	0.905
Echo Chamber Effect			
Aggregate Interest-based opposition	−0.056	0.284	0.845
Aggregate Identity-based opposition	0.203	0.311	0.514
Socioeconomic Context Control Variable			
Rural Percentage	0.018	0.008	0.028

Log Likelihood Ratio −2,554.420
Notes Multilevel analysis predicting ON support in the 1998 federal election. See text and Appendix for details of variables, scoring and method.
Source 1998 Australian Election Study.

played a major role in determining support for ON, higher levels of unemployment or numbers of recent migrants were not significantly related to ON support. Equally, perceptions of economic vulnerability, unconnected to the immigrant population, also proved insignificant in predicting ON support. Thus, it would appear that these grievances against immigrants' impact on jobs and living conditions in general, while providing a strong stimulus to vote for ON, do not need to intensify at a more objective or environmental level in order to spark such behaviour. Or, to argue this another way, a sense of economic vulnerability does propel the vote for ON but only when connected in some way with the immigrant population.

Conclusion

Throughout the postwar years, Australia has avoided the tensions that stem from having a large immigrant population that is racially and

ethnically diverse, together with a historically disadvantaged indigenous population. Three reasons help to account for this. First, Australia's comparative prosperity, arbitrated wages system and the lack of inherited privilege have meant there has been no underclass, and those with the skills and motivation to gain economic advancement can largely do so. Second, successive governments have funded a comprehensive and sophisticated set of programs designed to ensure the smooth settlement of new immigrants. Third and perhaps most importantly, there has been a bipartisan consensus within the political elite to ensure that issues of race and ethnicity are not placed on the electoral agenda. Whatever strong feelings may exist within the electorate on such issues, both sides of politics have agreed not to make them matters of partisan debate (Jupp 1991; Jupp and Kabala 1993).

The rise of Pauline Hanson's One Nation, and the unprecedented electoral support that it attracted, seemed to break this bipartisan consensus. For the first time in the postwar years, the issues of race and immigration were placed on the electoral agenda, in this case the 1998 federal election. That One Nation has subsequently collapsed, or that the main parties refused to enter the electoral debate on these issues, do not diminish the profound consequences this has for Australian politics. Successive polls have indicated that the concerns that One Nation raised, notably those of Asian immigration and special benefits for Aborigines, resonate with very large numbers of voters. Many of these voters decided not to vote for One Nation because they felt that the party's policies to deal with these problems were inadequate. Clearly, then, the potential for a future electoral breakthrough by a similar party with populist goals remains undiminished.

Since the 1998 election a variety of studies have been conducted to analyse ON's bases of support among voters. One interpretation has been that ON support was largely economic in nature, among those who were economically insecure and most affected by foreign competition and globalization. The second interpretation has cast ON support more in terms of the issues of race and immigration. Using multilevel analyses applied to nationally representative survey data collected at the time of the election, the results presented here suggest that the party's support was largely based on race and immigration issues. Specifically, it appears that attitudes towards these issues divided into three separate dimensions – fears about immigrants encroaching on one's material well-being, a more diffuse sense of discomfort with overall levels of immigration, and an anti-Aborigine sentiment. While there is some evidence that economic concerns did motivate ON voters, it seems that they did so only when linked to anti-immigrant feelings.

Comparing these findings with those from Western Europe, a more diverse mix of forces appears to mobilize supporters for the radical-right in European countries than is the case in Australia. While voters in both

regions harbour socio-economic grievances towards immigrants and a high degree of political dissatisfaction, cultural and racial animosities provide a stronger stimulus for those in Europe (Harris 1993; Gibson & Swenson 1999). In addition, broader trends such as the size of the foreign population and downturns in the economy have also been consistently linked with the ebb and flow of radical-right voting. (Jackman and Volpert 1996; Knigge 1998). Of course, there is clearly cross-country variation within this generalized picture: some parties in Western Europe, such as the Scandinavian Progress parties have very clearly avoided exploiting the issues of cultural difference surrounding immigration, preferring to concentrate on the economic dimension instead (Harmel and Svasand 2000). For other parties, such as the Italian Northern League and the Belgian Flemish Block, opposition to immigrants runs as a secondary concern to far deeper and more fundamental intra-national conflicts between ethnic groups.

As with all these parties therefore One Nation clearly exhibits nation-specific features. However, it would also seem that the rationale behind One Nation does correspond to that of far-right groups that are active in Western Europe in regard to material grievances with immigrants and deep frustration with the current political situation. The rise and fall of One Nation was therefore not an Australia-specific phenomenon; like the radical-right in Western Europe, the support that emerged for ON could occur again, and has the potential, under various party labels and linked to different political personalities, to mobilize voters with particular social and economic grievances.

Acknowledgements

Notes

1. Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates, House of Representatives, volume 192, 10 September 1996, p. 3860.
2. Some of the polls were conducted before the formal establishment of One Nation.

For a comprehensive survey of the poll results before and after ON's formation, see Goot (1998).

3.   The sources are the Australian Election Studies, 1987–1998 and the Australian Constitutional Referendum Study, 1999. The question was: 'Please say whether you think the change has gone much too far, gone too far, about right, not gone far enough, not gone nearly far enough. Aboriginal land rights.'

4.   Australia's system of preferential voting for the lower house is based on single member constituencies; voters list their preferences for all of the candidates in order, with the first candidate reaching 50 per cent or more of the vote being elected. In a contest where no single candidate gains 50 per cent or more in the first count, the distribution of second and subsequent preferences is crucial. In general, the system favours the major parties.

5.   The model we advance to explain ON's support in the 1998 federal election is based on theories of anti-immigrant prejudice and voting for the West European far-right by Gibson (2001) and Gibson & Swenson (1999).

6.   The 1998 Australian Election Study survey was a random sample of the electorate, representative of all states and territories, conducted immediately after the October 1998 federal election. The survey was based on a self-completion questionnaire, yielding 1,897 completed responses, representing an effective response rate of 58 per cent. See Bean, Gow and McAllister (1999) for further details.

7.   This variable is based on an assumption that all major parties involved have vote maximization as their primary goal and would therefore be equally disinclined to play the race card in the face of a large immigrant voting bloc. Such an assumption may be compromised in certain electorates where ethnic voting blocs have systematically failed to provide support for certain major party candidates and there would be no expectation of gaining their vote. However, such electorates are assumed to be few.

8.   The findings for the political opportunity variable may potentially be a result of its simple operationalization which may not address some of the complexities discussed in Note 7.

References

AHLUWALIA, PAL and MCCARTHY, GREG 1998. ' "Political Correctness": Pauline Hanson and the construction of Australian identity', *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, vol. 57, pp. 79–85

ALLPORT, GORDON W. 1954. *The Nature of Prejudice*, London: Addison-Wesley.

BEAN, CLIVE 2000 'Nationwide Electoral Support for One Nation in the 1998 Federal Election', in Michael Leach, Geoffrey Stokes and Ian Ward (eds), *The Rise and Fall of One Nation*, St. Lucia, Queensland: University of Queensland Press, pp. 136–52

BEAN, CLIVE, GOW, DAVID and MCALLISTER, IAN 1999 *The 1998 Australian Election Study*, Canberra: Social Sciences Data Archive

BETTS, KATHARINE 1996a 'Immigration and public opinion in Australia', *People and Place*, vol. 4, pp. 9–20

—— 1996b 'Patriotism, immigration and the 1996 Australian Election', *People and Place*, vol. 4, pp. 27–38

BOBO, LAWRENCE 1983 'Whites' opposition to busing: symbolic racism or realistic group conflict?', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol. 45, pp. 1196–210

BRETT, JUDITH 1998 'Representing the unrepresented: One Nation and the formation of the Labor Party', in Tony Abbott (ed.), *Two Nations: The Causes and Effects of the Rise of the One Nation Party in Australia*, Melbourne: Bookman, pp. 26–37

DAVIS, REX and STIMSON, ROBERT 1998 'Disillusionment and disenchantment at the fringe: explaining the geography of the One Nation Party vote at the Queensland Election', *People and Place*, vol. 6, pp. 69–82

DEUTCHMAN, IVA ELLEN 2000 'Pauline Hanson and the rise and fall of the radical right in Australia', *Patterns of Prejudice*, vol. 34, pp. 49–62

DEUTCHMAN, IVA ELLEN and ELLISON, ANNE 1999 'A star is born: the roller coaster ride of Pauline Hanson in the news', *Media, Culture and Society*, vol. 21, pp. 33–50

FIREBAUGH, GLENN and GIBBS, JACK P. 1985 'User's guide to ratio variables', *American Sociological Review*, vol. 50, October, pp. 713–22

GIBSON, RACHEL K. 2001 *The Growth of Anti-immigrant Parties in Western Europe*, Lampeter, Wales: Edwin Mellen Press (forthcoming)

GIBSON, RACHEL K. and SWENSON, TAMI 1999 'The Politicization of Anti-Immigrant Attitudes in Western Europe: Examining the Mobilization of Prejudice Among the Supporters of Extreme Right-Wing Parties in EU Member States, 1988 and 1994', Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association. Boston, MA

GOOT, MURRAY 1998 'Hanson's heartland: who's for One Nation and why', in Tony Abbott (ed.), *Two Nations: The Causes and Effects of the Rise of the One Nation Party in Australia*, Melbourne: Bookman, pp. 51–73

—— 2000a 'More "Relaxed and Comfortable": Public opinion on immigration under Howard', *People and Place* vol. 8, pp. 32–49

—— 2000b 'Pauline Hanson and the power of the media', in Michael Leach, Geoffrey Stokes and Ian Ward (eds), *The Rise and Fall of One Nation*, St. Lucia, Queensland: University of Queensland Press, pp. 115–35

GRATTAN, MICHELLE 1993 'Immigration and the Australian Labor Party', in James Jupp and Kabala, Marie (eds), *The Politics of Australian Immigration*, Canberra: Australian Government Publication Service, pp. 127–143

HARDCASTLE, LEONIE and PARKIN, ANDREW 1991 'Immigration policy' in Christine Jennett and Randall G. Stewart (eds), *Hawke and Australian Public Policy*, Melbourne: Macmillan, pp. 315–38

HARRIS, GEOFF 1993 *The Dark Side of Europe*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press

HARMEL, ROBERT and LARS SVÅSAND 2000 *The Institutionalization of Protest Parties: Rightwing Parties in Denmark and Norway*, unpublished book manuscript

HUSBANDS, CHRISTOPHER T. 1988 'The dynamic of racial exclusion and expulsion: racist politics in Western Europe', *European Journal of Political Research*, vol. 16, pp. 688–700

JACKMAN, SIMON 1998 'Pauline Hanson, the mainstream, and political elites: the place of race in Australian political ideology', *Australian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 33, pp. 167–86

JACKMAN, ROBERT W. and VOLPERT, KARIN 1996 'Conditions favouring parties of the extreme right in Western Europe', *British Journal of Political Science*, vol. 26, no. 4, pp. 501–22

JUPP, JAMES and KABALA, MARIE (eds) 1993 *The Politics of Australian Immigration*, Canberra: Australian Government Publication Service

JUPP, JAMES 1991 *Immigration*, Sydney: Sydney University Press

KENNEDY, PETER 1998 *A Guide to Econometrics*, 2nd edn, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press

KINDER, DONALD R. and SEARS, DAVID O. 1981 'Prejudice and politics: symbolic racism vs. racial threats to the good life', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol. 40, pp. 414–31

KITSCHELT, HERBERT with ANTHONY J. MCGANN 1996 *The Radical Right In Western Europe: A Comparative Analysis*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan

KNIGGE, PIA 1996 'Attitudes Toward Immigration Policies Among Four Western European Publics: A Case for Ethnic Prejudice or Group Conflict', Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, IL

—— 1998 'The ecological correlates of right-wing extremism in Western Europe', *European Journal of Political Research*, vol. 34, pp. 249–79

LEACH, MICHAEL, STOKES, GEOFFREY and WARD, IAN 2000 (eds), *The Rise and Fall of One Nation*, St. Lucia, Queensland: University of Queensland Press

LYNCH, TONY and REAVELL, RONNIE 1997 'Through the looking glass: Howard, Hanson and the Politics of "Political Correctness" ', in Bligh Grant (ed.), *Pauline Hanson: One Nation and Australian Politics*, Armidale, NSW, Australia: University of New England Press, pp. 29–49

MCALLISTER, IAN and BEAN, CLIVE 2000 'The electoral politics of economic reform in Australia: The 1998 Election', *Australian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 35, pp. 383–400

MCALLISTER, IAN 1999 'Tax reform not race debate: the October 1998 Australian Federal Election', *Government and Opposition*, vol. 34, pp. 44–58

—— 1993 'Immigration, Bipartisanship and Public Opinion', in James Jupp and Marie Kabala (eds), *The Politics of Australian Immigration*, Canberra: Australian Government Publication Service, pp. 161–80

MCCONAHAY, J. B. and HOUGH, J. C. 1976 'Symbolic Racism', *Journal of Social Issues*, vol. 32, pp. 23–45

MONEY, JEANNETTE 1999 'Xenophobia and xenophilia: Pauline Hanson and the counterbalancing of electoral incentives in Australia', *People and Place*, vol. 7, pp. 7–19

MOORE, TOD 1997 'Economic rationalism and economic nationalism', in Bligh Grant (ed.), *Pauline Hanson: One Nation and Australian Politics*, Armidale, NSW, Australia: University of New England Press, pp. 50–62

MOORE, ANDREW 1995 *The Right Road? A History of Right-Wing Politics in Australia*, Oxford: Oxford University Press

OZOLINS, ULDIS 1994 'Immigration and Immigrants', in Judith Brett, James A. Gillespie and Murray Goot (eds), *Developments in Australian Politics*, Melbourne: Macmillan, pp. 202–16

RUBENSTEIN, COLIN 1993 'Immigration and the Liberal Party of Australia', in James Jupp and Marie Kabala (eds), *The Politics of Australian Immigration*, Canberra: Australian Government Publication Service, pp. 144–60

SCALMER, SEAN 1999 'The production of a founding event: the case of Pauline Hanson's Maiden Parliamentary Speech', *Theory and Event*, vol. 3.2 <http: //direct. press.jhu.edu/journals/theory_&_event/v003/3.2scalmer.html>

SIMMS, MARIAN and WARHURST, JOHN 2000 (eds), *Howard's Agenda*, St. Lucia, Queensland: Queensland University Press

STOKES, GEOFFREY 2000 'One Nation and Australian populism', in Michael Leach, Geoffrey Stokes and Ian Ward (eds), *The Rise and Fall of One Nation*, St. Lucia, Queensland: University of Queensland Press, pp. 23–41

SUTER, KEITH 1998 'Politics with a Dash of Vinegar', *The World Today* July, pp. 188–90

REYNOLDS, PAUL L. 2000 'One Nation's electoral support in Queensland: the 1998 State and Federal Elections compared', in Michael Leach, Geoffrey Stokes and Ian Ward (eds), *The Rise and Fall of One Nation*, St. Lucia, Queensland: University of Queensland Press, pp. 153–169

WELLS, DAVID 1997 'One Nation and the politics of populism', in Bligh Grant (ed.), *Pauline Hanson: One Nation and Australian Politics*, Armidale, NSW, Australia: University of New England Press

RACHEL GIBSON is Deputy Director of the ACSPRI Centre for Social Research in Canberra Australia.

ADDRESS: ACSPRI Centre for Social Research, Research School of Social Sciences, The Australian National University, Canberra ACT 0200. E-mail: rachel.gibson@anu.edu.au

IAN MCALLISTER is Director of the Research School of Social Sciences at the Australian National University, Canberra. E-mail: ian.mcallister@anu.edu.au

TAMI SWENSON is a Research Associate at the Center for Demographic and Socioeconomic Research and Education, Texas A&M University.

ADDRESS: Department of Rural Sociology, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843-2125, USA. E-mail: tswenson@msocsun.tamu.edu

Appendix

To derive the attitudinal scales used in the multilevel analysis, an oblique rotation factor analysis was used. Table A presents the immigration factors, and Table B is the aboriginal factor. The questions are re-coded to indicate opposition to immigrants or aboriginal people as the highest values. The factor-scoring coefficients are based on the assumption that the items or variables are intrinsically related in some degree to other factor dimensions as well as interrelated with the other variables in the factor. The immigrant opposition analysis produced two factors with eigenvalues greater than one and each individual factor accounted for a large percentage of the total variance. The aboriginal opposition analysis resulted in one factor.

Table A. *Factor Analysis Results for Immigration Attitudes*

Variables	Interest-Based Factor	Identity-Based Factor
Immigrants increase crime	0.793	0.027
Immigrants are good for the economy	0.743	0.057
Immigrants take jobs	0.834	0.078
Would mind if relative marries an Asian	0.071	0.848
Would mind if boss was an Asian	0.045	0.849
Eigenvalue	1.883	1.450
Proportion of variance explained	0.381	0.283

Table B. *Factor Analysis Results for Aboriginal Attitudes*

Variables	Aboriginal Opposition Factor
Special cultural protection for Aborigines	0.670
Recognize aspirations of Aborigines	0.671
Aborigines right to self-government	0.636
Aboriginal land rights	0.788
Government help for Aborigines	0.800
Eigenvalue	2.566
Proportion of variance explained	0.513

The multilevel analysis was estimated by HLM 5.0, employing the La Place estimation procedure for the analysis of binomial dependent variables. Since the explanatory variables are drawn from two different levels of analysis (individual and electorate), a multilevel logit model with varying intercepts was used. To test the contextual effects model, the explanatory variables are grand mean centred at each level of analysis, which results in an easily interpretable intercept term as the likelihood of ON support for the average person in the average electorate. The maximum likelihood parameter estimates presented for the model can be interpreted the same way that one would interpret regular logistic regression parameter estimates (Kennedy 1998).