Citizenship, Gender and Equality: Polish Women Immigrants in Western Australia, 1947-1997

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Abstract

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This thesis explores experiences of citizenship among Polish women now settled in Western Australia. It draws upon an interviewing project involving thirty Polish migrant women, among other sources. It investigates the ways in which women have been incorporated into both Australian and Polish discourses of citizenship, and the impact of these discourses on migrant women taking and practising Australian citizenship.

The context of this study is the revival of both government and academic interest in citizenship, and its potential as a force for equality for migrant women, one of the most marginalised groups in Australia. It emphasises the ambivalent character of citizenship, which both includes and excludes marginalised groups. It also emphasises the patriarchal character of Australian conceptions of citizenship, the difficulty of incorporating characteristically female life patterns and activities within it, and the continuing inequality of women in Australia. It suggests that women may have been assigned sexually specific duties in the Australian polity. In this context, a revival of ideals associated with citizenship may not have much to offer migrant women seeking equality in Australia.

Polish women entering Australia have also experienced highly gendered notions of citizenship, along with a concerted attempt to revolutionise those notions under Poland’s postwar Communist regime. This thesis examines Polish traditions in relation to citizenship and gender, and the experiences of Polish women as members of a nation state under totalitarian control, and as deportees without citizenship rights. It analyses the meaning of citizenship in post-war Poland in the
context of an authoritarian Communist state that guaranteed economic security, and sought to transform traditional Polish gender roles, but severely limited civil and political rights. It also investigates post-Communist discourses of female citizenship in Poland.

The thesis then explores the experiences of three waves of Polish women entering Australia: a first wave of refugees entering Australia as “aliens” during the era of assimilation, the second wave of refugees during the heyday of multiculturalism in the 1980s, and a smaller third wave of voluntary migrants in the 1990s. It compares the experiences of women from these waves of migration, and examines the impact on them of Polish citizenship traditions, their previous experiences of citizenship or the lack of it, and of Australian immigration policy on their expectations and perceptions of their place in Australian society. Finally, it explores beliefs about citizenship among all three groups, and their perceptions of the ways in which they have taken and practised Australian citizenship in Western Australia.
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Introduction

In recent years, there has been an increasing interest in citizenship in Australian public discourse. There is growing concern about the widespread ignorance and apathy regarding political structures and processes in Australia, and advocacy of a revitalisation of citizenship as a national priority.\(^1\) With the fiftieth anniversary of Australian citizenship having just passed in 1999, and the centenary of Australian federation approaching, this was perhaps inevitable. However, citizenship is also receiving growing attention within academic and political discourses internationally. As Ursula Vogel and Michael Moran argued in 1991, “In research, ‘citizenship’ seems to have overtaken ‘class’, ‘market’ and even ‘democracy’ as the strategic concept of political science”.\(^2\) There has also been a marked increase in feminist scholarship on citizenship, democracy and political participation, and this trend has spread to Australian feminist scholars.\(^3\)

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Feminist scholars, however, have argued that women are structurally marginalised within political communities, and that our notions of citizenship are fundamentally male-centred. If this is the case, then a revitalisation of citizenship simply promises more of the same. Unless our notions of citizenship are critically examined and reformulated, women, who are rarely able to exercise their civil, social and political rights on equal terms with men, will continue to fall short of the status of full citizens. This risk falls more heavily on some women than others. Despite the level of interest in women's status within ideas of citizenship, relatively few studies have systematically explored issues of citizenship in relation to female immigrants and the gender structures of particular cultural and ethnic groups. This is despite the fact that migrant women are doubly marginalised by discourses of citizenship and political practice which are both highly gendered and specifically Anglo-Saxon.

I came to this thesis topic inspired by the Women and Citizenship project at the University of Western Australia: an important exception to the relative scarcity of literature on migrant women and citizenship. This project recently conducted interviews among migrant women in Western Australia about their experiences and perceptions of citizenship. Accustomed as I was to reading theoretical material based primarily on documents and statistics, the Women and Citizenship project raised an important avenue for my own research: instead of just talking about migrant women and citizenship, it asked migrant women what they thought about citizenship.

My own interest lay specifically with Polish women. In 1994, I submitted a study of the fall of Communism in Eastern Europe as an honours dissertation. This dissertation piqued my interest in the history of democratic traditions in Poland, one of main leaders of the democratic revolution of 1989 - 1990. Upon further reading of Polish history, I was struck by the diversity of models of citizenship experienced by the Poles. For much of its history, Poland has been partitioned and subject to authoritarian government by foreign powers. Polish citizens experienced genuine democracy for only five short years until their second attempt at liberal democracy from 1991. In the interim, Poland was transformed from a rural, peasant society to a
modern, predominantly urban nation. At the same time, Polish governments made a concerted attempt to revolutionise highly traditional and conservative gender roles, and develop new concepts of female citizenship. I was intrigued by questions of how all of these redefinitions of citizenship had been experienced by Polish women.

My study of Polish history and the existence of the Women and Citizenship project at the University of Western Australia, therefore, inspired this thesis. Through the existing literature on Polish and Australian history, and immigration to Australia, and then through an interviewing project among Polish women, I hoped to address a number of issues related to Polish women and citizenship. I wanted to explore the meaning of female citizenship in both Poland and Australia, and the roles Polish women expected to play in these two communities. I was particularly interested in the gender structures of this group, and especially in exploring connections between their roles as mothers and "carers", their understandings of their roles as female citizens and their participation in politics and in community groups. I hoped that the gulf I expected to discover between their perceptions and experiences of citizenship, and official and dominant discourses of both Polish and Australian citizenship, might give new insights into these dominant discourses. I also wanted to examine the impact of all these factors on Polish women taking and practising citizenship in Western Australia.

This study, therefore, examines experiences and perceptions of citizenship among Polish women now settled in Western Australia. It does so on the understanding that notions of citizenship are historically and culturally specific, highly gendered, and not easily translated from one country to another. Constructions of citizenship are produced by, and participate in, changing national and political identities, and changing constructions of masculinity and femininity. Experiences of a particular citizenship status, therefore, are intimately bound up with shifting and fluid conceptions of citizenship, nationality, community, and gender, and require a complex process of negotiation between these categories. This study explores the ways in which Polish migrant women in Western Australia have experienced and interpreted these categories and negotiations.
As well as the general literature, and documentary sources from both Poland and Australia, this thesis draws upon oral evidence obtained from thirty interviews conducted among Polish migrant women between 1997 and 1999. Polish immigration to Australia has occurred in two main “waves”: a “first wave” arriving almost entirely under the International Refugee Organisation scheme of 1947 to 1951, and a smaller “second wave” following the declaration of martial law in Poland in 1981. The most recent Australian Census, held in 1996, estimated the Polish-born community in Western Australia at 6,999, including 3,582 women. Approximately 3,834 people, or nearly 55 per cent of Western Australia's Polish immigrants, have arrived since 1981. Most of the participants in this project were drawn from the first and second waves of migration. A smaller number arrived between 1960 and 1980, or during a “third wave” after 1989, often in order to be reunited with family members who had migrated earlier.

Although all of these women were of Polish origin, the diversity of their experiences allows for an exploration of many issues related to women and citizenship in both Poland and Australia. Chapter One explains the methodology behind the interviewing project. Chapter Two explores why citizenship has become so important within both political and academic discourses in Australia. Chapter Three examines the specific “problem” of women and citizenship more generally.

The rest of this study relates specifically to Polish women. Chapters Four, Five and Six explore the meaning of female citizenship in Poland. Chapter Four examines pre-Communist conceptions of the role of women in Polish society, the contradiction between Poland's strong democratic traditions and the early collapse of democracy in Poland, and the nature of pre-war authoritarian government. Chapter Five explores the wartime context of the loss of national sovereignty and concomitant loss of almost all citizenship and human rights among the participants in the interviewing project. Most first-wave participants in this project experienced

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5 Unpublished figures supplied by the Australian Bureau of Statistics from the 1996 Census of Population and Housing, Catalogue No. 2031.0.
6 Ibid.
the loss of these rights in both their invaded homeland, and in deportation to Germany and to the Soviet Union. Chapter Six examines the extent to which citizenship constituted a meaningful political identity for Polish women during the Communist era. It analyses the meaning of citizenship in the context of an authoritarian state, a “social contract” which guaranteed economic security but limited civil and political rights, and the reliance of Polish governments on Soviet protection. It highlights the considerable changes in the social structures of Poland, and in Polish ideas of citizenship and the roles of women during the Communist period. Of particular interest is the contradiction between the emphases upon full-time employment and “public sphere” activities as the condition of female equality, and campaigns to raise the birth rate. Chapter Six also explores the reestablishment of liberal democracy in Poland from 1989, and post-Communist phenomena such as the disproportionate levels of female unemployment, a dramatic decline in women’s political participation and bitter struggles over abortion rights. As Poland has constructed and stabilised the new democratic order, women have gained political and civil rights, but have suffered the loss of economic and reproductive rights.7

This study then returns to the Australian context in which Polish women have encountered and practised new discourses of citizenship. Chapter Seven examines the impact of Australian immigration policies on Polish women settling in Australia, comparing the expectations and experiences of first wave women with those of women from subsequent waves of migration. For women participating in the interviewing project, the early years of settlement had a powerful impact on their perceptions of their prospective status and roles within their new community. Chapter Eight explores beliefs about citizenship among all participants in the interviewing project, examining their reasons for taking Australian citizenship and the ways in which these women have thought about and practised citizenship in Western Australia.

Research Design and Methodology

Choosing Qualitative Research Methods

This study draws upon theoretical, historical and sociological studies, as well as documentary sources from both Poland and Australia. However, given that my major interest was in experiences of citizenship among Polish migrant women, my entire approach to this project was shaped by qualitative research methods, and especially by an interviewing project among thirty Polish migrant women in Western Australia. In particular, this study was shaped by an open question: how have Polish women now settled in Western Australia experienced and practised citizenship?

While quantitative research generally works from positivist and empiricist paradigms and seeks to establish facts and causes, or to prove hypotheses, qualitative research emphasises human experience, subjective perception and the making of meaning.1 As Steven Taylor and Robert Bogdan have asserted in their hallmark text on qualitative research, "Qualitative researchers are concerned with the meanings people attach to things in their lives",2 and in-depth, qualitative interviewing aims to learn how "people construct their realities - how they view, define, and experience the world".3 Portrayal of these meanings and constructions requires extensive use of direct quotations that illustrate participants' perspectives.4 Qualitative research is also holistic, in that it tries to understand phenomena as a whole, rather than in components.5

My choice of an interviewing project to complement other sources, and of

3 Ibid., p. 101.
4 Patton, Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods, p. 40.
5 Ibid., p. 49.
qualitative research methods, therefore, helped to clarify the aims of this study. A primarily quantitative approach might, for example, have measured how many Polish women take Australian citizenship, and emphasised other statistical facts about Polish women and the causes of citizenship rates. A qualitative study, however, allowed me to investigate their perceptions of what citizenship meant, the impact of past experiences of citizenship, what motivated them to take on a new citizenship status, and how they practised their citizenship. It also allowed me to explore the context of such decisions and how they fit into the whole life of the person. Quantitative methods, such as polling, multiple-choice questionnaires, and the like, have the great advantage that findings are more generalisable to a larger population. However, such methods often produce very brief, superficial replies which would have told me very little about how participants thought about the topic. A more important disadvantage is that data produced by these quantitative methods would have been directed into response categories predetermined by me. I would have implicitly set the limits of responses before the questions were even asked. Predetermined response categories may also suffer, not only from lack of knowledge about potential respondents, but from being informed by social stereotyping.

From my perspective, therefore, open-ended interviewing of my target group, Polish migrant women, allowed both myself and the participants to produce data more independent of my own pre-existing expectations. The main limitation is that it is more difficult to generalise from the data into statements about Polish women in Western Australia as a whole population. It is possible, however, to view the inherent limitation on my ability to make generalisations across time, space and social and historical contexts as a distinct advantage. It has been acknowledged by many scholars that notions of citizenship are historically and culturally specific to their context. A little humility about generalisability can be a strength in any research project.

Qualitative methods were also appealing to me as a feminist researcher. Qualitative interviewing allowed me to create, cooperatively with other women, evidence about women's lives and perspectives and insert that into the historical record.

7 Patton, Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods, p. 14.
More importantly, to examine citizenship from the usually marginal perspective of women challenged the male domination of Polish and Australian discourses of citizenship, and of histories of our social and political institutions. This male domination is often masked within such discourses. Traditional conceptions of citizenship assume the importance of characteristics and activities that are typically male rather than female, without acknowledging their gender bias. As Dale Spender has stated,

patriarchal knowledge is based on the premise that the experience of only one half the human population needs to be taken into account and the resulting version can be imposed on the other half. This is why patriarchal knowledge and the methods of producing it are a fundamental part of women's oppression, and why patriarchal knowledge must be challenged - and overruled.8

Carole Pateman's analysis of this phenomenon within political theory has become highly influential among feminist scholars. In her view, the individuals at the centre of political theory are often constructed as universal figures in which all members of a community appear to be included. These figures only appear to be universal, however, because they are abstracted from the real bodies of men and women, and appear to be sexually neutral.9 This not only allows a persistent marginalisation of women within the mainstream literature on citizenship, but also supports a construction of citizenship that relies on an implicit division between the public and private spheres, and between men and women.10

Interviewing women, not only about their views on citizenship, but also about their lives, was one way to unmask this artificial division of public and private, and explore the interdependence of these spheres. While interviews were semi-structured into citizenship-related themes, they also elicited life stories, including the reflections

of women on key events in their lives, and their experiences of family life and gender structures. Such material might be judged by some scholars to be purely “personal”. However, as feminists have so often stated: the personal is political. An exploration of the personal pasts of the participants threw light on the histories of key social institutions and discourses in both their country of origin, Poland, and their country of adoption, Australia. As Shulamit Reinharz has argued, “when feminist oral histories cover extensive portions or profound experiences in an individual's life, they assist in...illuminating the connections between biography, history and social structure.”

Moreover, citizenship was examined in this thesis, as it so often is in other “citizenship” literature, both in terms of its formal duties and rights, and as a metaphor for wider issues of status, inclusion, participation, and power. Eliciting life stories allowed for an exploration of these themes in the lives of my participants. For this reason, it is not easy to draw a distinction in this project between “interviewing” and “oral history”. As Reinharz has noted, generally speaking, “interviews focus typically on a particular experience and phenomenon, while oral histories deal more broadly with a person's past”. My intention was to draw these approaches together.

Research Design and Sampling

The choice of qualitative research methods had a strong impact on the ways in which I recruited participants and created my sample. As sociologists Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss noted in their pioneering work *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (1967), rather than seeking a representative random sample, “theoretical sampling” allows researchers to choose participants according to whether they can provide insights into the themes of a study. They can then choose further participants according to whether they can further refine insights already attained, or provide new ones. For this reason, as Taylor and Bogdan have argued, in this form of sampling, the actual number of cases is relatively unimportant. What is important

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12 Ibid., p. 130.
is the potential of each case to aid the researcher in developing theoretical insights into the area of social life being studied...you consciously vary the type of people interviewed until you have uncovered a broad range of perspectives held by the people in whom you are interested.¹⁴

I did not attempt, therefore, to create a random sample of participants. I recruited women mainly through Polish organisations in Perth, and especially through the Polish Women's Association, based in Maylands, and the Cracovia sporting club in Beechboro. Three leaders within the Polish Women's Association, and one leader within the Cracovia Club, functioned as "gate keepers".¹⁵ By this term, I mean women known and trusted within the Polish community who were able to give me far greater access to that community than I would ever have enjoyed without their sponsorship. They not only allowed me to address meetings and recruit their members for this project, but also introduced me to some of the participants. We discussed the need for a variety of participants, and they made up lists of possible interviewees. My "gatekeepers" often made the initial approach for me, vouching for the project and my good intentions, and gaining a tentative consent to participate before I met the proposed interviewees. The value of this second service cannot be overstated, given that the majority of the women I interviewed were refugees from intrusive and authoritarian regimes, and hence nervous of approaches from strangers asking personal, and especially political, questions. It became clear very early on that I required more than one "gatekeeper" to gain access to a variety of women. It was also necessary to maintain a certain distance from my "gatekeepers" because of the undesirability of becoming identified with any "side" in the community's internal politics.

Within these limits, I generally agreed to interview any Polish woman willing to be interviewed who spoke English well enough to make an interview possible. I deliberately asked them very little about their particular backgrounds or experiences before agreeing to interview them as I tried not to speculate in advance on what their

¹⁴ Taylor and Bogdan, Introduction to Qualitative Research, p. 93.
experiences and perspectives were likely to be. This added an element of "purposeful random sampling" to my interviewing project. As Michael Patton has noted, the point of this technique is not to create a representative random sample, but to increase the credibility of findings by reducing suspicions about whether interviewees were chosen because they were likely to back up already-existing theories.\footnote{Patton, \textit{Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods}, p. 180.}

There was, however, a rider on this "purposeful random sampling". It became apparent to me early on that there were four main groups within the Polish community. The first of these groups was comprised of displaced persons arriving after World War II. This group could be divided into those deported to the Soviet Union and settling in camps in East and South Africa before arriving in Australia, and those deported to Germany and immigrating to Western Australia straight from occupied Germany. A second category was a wave of mostly political refugees arriving in Australia in the 1980s, and especially after martial law was imposed in Poland. A third group was made up of more recent migrants who had come to Australia largely for economic opportunities, or to be reunited with relatives from the first and second "waves" of immigration. The fourth group was simply a collection of atypical individuals who shared only their Polish origin and their non-membership of the three dominant groups. Some of these had also been deported to the Soviet Union or to Germany in wartime, or had also fled martial law in the 1980s, but had settled for long periods in other countries before coming to Australia. Others came to Australia after marriage to earlier migrants or to Australian men, or to be reunited with family members. Once I became more aware of these basic categories of Polish migrants, I consciously attempted to have enough participants from each group to allow me to explore already-emerging issues specific to these groups further. However, I also attempted to balance the representation from these groups in order to prevent the sample from being overly dominated by any one group. Moreover, as Glaser and Strauss noted, researchers eventually reach "theoretical saturation point", in which they gain fewer and fewer new insights from particular groups of interviewees, and must find others.\footnote{Glaser and Strauss, \textit{The Discovery of Grounded Theory}, p. 58.} There was also, however, a saturation point with all groups. In the last stages of the project, I was learning less and less from each subsequent participant, and decided to end the project.
at thirty interviews.

In the event, of thirty participants, there were five from the first-wave migration of deportees, with three deportees to the Soviet Union and two deportees to Germany. Another four participants shared their experiences of deportation, but settled for long periods in Africa and England. There were fourteen participants from the second wave, including one woman who had also escaped martial law but settled for some time in Spain and the former Yugoslavia. Four participants were drawn from the smaller third wave of the 1990s. Finally, one woman came directly from Poland in 1964 to marry a first-wave man, another was stranded in Australia in 1962 after a short holiday, and settled permanently, and another is of only arguable "first generation migrant" status, having been born in Australia to a first-wave deportee to Germany who became pregnant on the journey to Australia. Eight of the thirty, therefore, were not drawn from the three dominant groups, despite sharing some common experiences with them, and this was a deliberate choice on my part, to maximise the diversity of the sample overall. I also attempted to allow for some variation, not only across the main groupings, but also within groupings, along the lines of age, English facility and economic status. The youngest participant was seventeen years old and the oldest was seventy-three years old. Religious diversity, however, was not seriously attempted, as Poles are an overwhelmingly Catholic migrant group. Further details regarding the interviewees, along with all forms and question quides referred to in this study, are provided in the Appendix to this thesis.

I did collect some statistical information on interviewees, in an attempt to determine how representative, in an informal sense, they might be. However, I decided that this data, and any recording of the number of women who had a particular experience, or made particular statements, was of questionable value, given that the group was simply not a representative random sample. It was clear, for instance, that the networks employed in the study ensured that interviewees were disproportionately urban, although a number had lived in rural and country areas at different times in their lives. They were mostly middle-aged or older, partly because so many had arrived after World War II, or as women with young families during the early 1980s. They were also mostly connected with Polish organisations. This was because I either met them at
organisational meetings or social events, or contacted them through my "gatekeepers", who usually asked women they knew well because they had worked together on community projects. I made a conscious effort to locate and interview some women who did not have these connections. Participants were also relatively "successful" migrants in economic well-being and in their involvement in ethnic associations which meant they enjoyed access to emotional and cultural support. The women who were interviewed were not the most vulnerable in status in their own community. Put simply, they could be traced to permanent homes, and could speak English well enough to be interviewed. In addition, they had enough time away from the sheer necessities of life to have developed connections with their ethnic associations, or had sought support from their ethnic associations and had benefited from this. A number of interviewees referred to other Polish women who were very poor, unable to speak English and emotionally isolated, and stated that they had become involved in their ethnic association in order to avoid the same unhappy fate. Listening to interviewees, I sensed the existence of large numbers of far more vulnerable women, who remained invisible in terms of this project.

The variety of participants in this project required some flexibility in designing interview questions. My main aim throughout the interviewing was to allow participants to express their experiences and perspectives, and their differences from one another, as fully as possible. As Taylor and Bogdan have argued, qualitative research requires flexibility about questions, and a willingness to respond to the interests of participants, rather than dogged adherence to one's own research interests:

qualitative interviewing is flexible and dynamic...directed toward understanding informants' perspectives on their lives, experiences, or situations as expressed in their own words...The role entails not merely obtaining answers but learning what questions to ask and how to ask them...learn what is important to informants before focusing the research interests.18

I certainly had my own research interests. I began this study with some broad questions

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18 Taylor and Bogdan, *Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods*, p. 88.
in my mind: how had these women experienced the formal rights and duties of citizenship, and how did they think about them? Had they been excluded from these rights and duties because they were women, or because they were migrants? If so, what alternative ideas had they developed? Was citizenship important to them? What did it mean to them, and how did they practise their citizenship? I was also interested in the impact of Polish political traditions, and of Australian immigration policy on their practice of citizenship, their experiences of paid employment and voluntary work, and their beliefs about their roles and status in the Australian community. More specific questions, particularly those relating to experiences of citizenship in Poland, developed during two years of researching the literature before I began interviewing. For instance, women who experienced the Polish Communist regime of the 1970s and 1980s had less experience of the virtually total denial of civil rights to women in the early 1950s, and received more economic support for mothering, and it was important to explore these issues. I developed, over this time, a basic set of questions with specific points of variance to explore the differences between the three main groups. Greater flexibility was required for the fourth group of atypical women. All the questions were revised several times during this study, although the themes they explored remained much the same.

The Interviewing Process

The interviews varied in length, from less than an hour for the shortest, to over four hours for the longest. Most, however, took approximately two hours, with extra time required for "icebreaking", often over coffee. A very important preamble to the interview was explaining the extent of the participant's control over the data. I explained to them that if I asked something they did not want to talk about, they should not feel obliged to answer, that they should raise issues they thought I was missing, and that they could withdraw from the project at any time, including after the interview had finished. I also explained that I would send them a recording or a transcript of their interview, so that they could tell me if there was material they did not want me to use, and assured them I would not use it in that case. Perhaps most importantly, I assured
them that their names, and any other information which might identify them, would not be used. Some participants would have preferred to be identified, but there is no doubt in my own mind that this would have resulted in far more cautious and guarded responses on their part. All the participants signed consent forms that specified these conditions before the interview proper began. Either at that point, or after the interview, we filled in together a questionnaire sheet based on the Australian census form, asking their age, employment status, levels of education, number of children, and the like. This was done so that interview material could also be used for a publication with Dr. Samina Yasmeen for the Women and Citizenship project at the University of Western Australia, of which statistical analysis was a part.

Despite my specific research interests, for the reasons already outlined above, I generally began interviews by asking participants questions that elicited their life stories. I was also interested in these life stories for their own sake. Although much of this information was not directly relevant to citizenship, this process also allowed me far greater understanding of their experiences and world-view as a whole. It proved, in fact, more useful to the analysis of the topic of citizenship than is superficially apparent. It allowed me to see issues related to citizenship in the context of their individual lives. If I had simply asked directly citizenship-related questions, I would not have been able to see the relative importance, or lack of importance, of issues related to citizenship in the lives of the women. Asking questions about their lives also developed an intimacy and rapport, accustomed the women to talking about themselves, and was a guide to what kinds of questions might be relevant. Apparent “digressions” also revealed issues that I had not initially related to citizenship. For example, not one interviewee referred directly to class status in relation to questions directly related to citizenship. In their life stories, however, class appeared as a major issue in both life opportunities and self-concept. Complaints about Aboriginal neighbours allowed me to think about how their experiences of Aboriginal people related to their perceptions of their own status in the community and to their views on assimilation and multiculturalism for migrants.

I also employed the “general interview guide” approach with interviewing. In this model, questions are not standardised, but there is a list of relevant issues which

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19 For the consent form and this questionnaire, see Appendix.
must be covered. A fully standardised interview structure would have made comparisons between interviews easier, and potentially have standardised my own impact on the interview dynamics and content. However, fully standardised questions created before interviews began would not have allowed participants to raise issues I did not expect, and I regarded hearing material I did not expect to hear as a sign of a successful interview. Moreover, the variable English facility of participants made it impractical to ask questions the same way each time, as I would not have been understood in all cases.

Participants did enjoy considerable control over the direction of the interview. Certain questions were asked of all interviewees, but others were formulated in response to what they said. The pre-arranged order of questions was abandoned if the interviewee spontaneously began to address a subject that I had intended to ask about later in the interview, or raised something I had not thought of. In this way, the order of the issues, how much time we spent on them, and whether further questions on the same or different issues were asked were shaped by their initial responses. It was important to ask open-ended questions which would allow interviewees to respond with what was important to them, rather than giving short, factual replies. For example, I would ask, "How did you come to Australia?" or "Tell me about your schooldays". Occasionally, however, I employed questions that J. D. Douglas has described as "phased-assertion tactics", in which researchers imply that they are "in the know" about certain issues to encourage participants to respond further. For instance, I might say, "I have heard that contraceptives were very hard to buy in Poland. How did women buy them?"

Aside from asking questions, I tried to talk as little as possible during interviews, apart from clarifying questions or encouraging interviewees to elaborate further. I especially avoided giving my own views on issues. Some feminist researchers, in particular, have argued that interviewer self-disclosure allows dialogue between interviewer and interviewee that makes the interviewee more of a participant.

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21 Ibid., p. 285.
22 For interview question guides, see Appendix.
even a co-researcher, in a project. I was generally happy to answer questions about myself, but I avoided giving any opinion on questions, as I did not want interviewees to attempt to tell me what they thought I wanted to hear. I was also willing to talk about the content of the other interviews in a general way, to encourage participants to state their views confidently. If a woman had said, for example, that she did not like politicians, but seemed cautious, as if she thought this was not an appropriate attitude or comment, I might assure her that “many other women say the same thing”. As rapport was established, it became both possible, and appropriate, to explore more difficult, potentially taboo questions about gender roles, relationships with children and husbands, opinions about the church, and the like, or probing further on comments which implied lesser “success” in settlement that the general thrust of the interview would suggest.

Reflections on Interview Dynamics

There were some aspects of the interviewing process that it may be helpful to illuminate. I believed it was crucial to enable women to speak freely that the interviews be held in their own “space”: a place in which they felt comfortable and in control of the interview. This usually meant their own homes, although in some cases it was their workplace after working hours. I tried to avoid having anyone else present. Occasionally, children or partners of the participants would become curious and wander in and out of the room, listening and commenting. This was sometimes helpful, as a partner would sometimes remember something an interviewee had forgotten. For example, an interviewee might be providing an account that suggested she had had few difficulties settling in Australia, and a husband might comment that she had wept frequently in the few years of settlement. In a few cases, however, the presence of others was intrusive and unproductive. They would interrupt, talk over the woman, and even try to insist that she change what she had said.

Another important dynamic was the way in which rapport was created. There

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are many strategies and theories on how to develop rapport, which I followed, but I also enjoyed certain advantages. In this context, I believe it was helpful that I am a young woman, and look young for my age. I believe this made me less intimidating, particularly for women whose past experiences included harassment by government authorities. I also sensed that I reminded many interviewees of their own children and grandchildren, particularly as many of these children and grandchildren were university students or graduates. This appeared to make them more willing to help by being interviewed, and more willing to speak their minds, as they felt that I perceived them as an older and wiser person, and therefore a respected source of information. At the same time, the fact that I was studying for a doctorate was important, as university education is highly respected by the Polish community, and gave me greater credibility. I believe that my youth and my connection with the University of Western Australia gave interviewees a sense of handing on their stories to “the future”, and to the “historical record”: a process particularly valuable to them because many of them were ageing. It also mattered that I was a woman. There were many issues, especially those related to gender and family life, that I do not believe they would have raised or commented on with a male interviewer. This was particularly important in a study that addresses gender explicitly, as so many gender structures are relatively hidden from public view, within the private realm of the family.

It was important that I was a comparative stranger, from outside the Polish community, although “vouched for” by their friends and leaders. Some theorists have argued that successful interviewers must share cultural backgrounds and patterns with participants. There are many ways in which it would have been helpful to be Polish, and I do not doubt that a Polish researcher would have more ability to understand the meaning of what was said. Not only did I and the participants often struggle with the language gap, I am certain that a first language shapes the ways in which people think, and I was unable to notice or understand these patterns in anything other than a superficial way, despite undertaking short courses in the Polish language. Moreover, some words and ideas simply do not translate directly from one language to another. Interviewees would often answer questions partly in Polish, and then try to translate

For example, see Catherine Reissman, “When Gender is Not Enough: Women Interviewing Women”, Gender & Society, Vol. 2(1), 1987, p. 176.
their thoughts, commenting along the lines of "that's not quite it, but close". In this sense, our shared gender, useful as it was, was simply not enough, and my lack of personal knowledge of their symbolic and cultural world, despite avid reading, must be acknowledged. There were, however, advantages to being a stranger, not sharing their cultural notions, and not sharing their personal ties within the Polish community. It made it easier to question the obvious, to explore assumptions participants held, because participants were aware that I would genuinely not know or understand them.

Parts of the Polish community are very close-knit, and have a "group story line" about settlement in Australia that emphasises "success" and avoids confrontations with Australians regarding government policy and private behaviour. I believe that it would have been very difficult for a woman from within the Polish community to maintain independence from this "group storyline". The fact that I was a stranger also enabled women to speak more freely, as they felt confident that private matters they discussed with me would not be shared with others.

Reflections on Analysis

A hallmark of qualitative research is inductive analysis of the data. As Glaser and Strauss argued early in the development of qualitative research, such research should not be employed simply to verify already-existing theories or concepts, in a deductive process. Theories and concepts should be created by observing patterns in the data, in an inductive, intuitive process. In this way, the theory should fit the data rather than the other way around. Largely because of the importance of staying close to the data throughout the project, qualitative research demands a flexible research design. Analysis occurs, not after all the interviewing is completed, but throughout the project. Researchers may not know what is important until at least some initial data has been collected. As patterns emerge within the data, and relationships and interdependencies between categories become clearer, further questions can be designed and asked. This flexibility continues throughout the project.

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27 Taylor and Bogdan, *Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods*, p. 8
28 Ibid., pp. 8, 24.
My own process of analysis and interpretation broadly followed this approach. As I transcribed interviews, I frequently thought of new questions to ask the next participant, or made notes on particular themes. I was, in retrospect, very lucky that particular patterns emerged from the earliest interviews and remained surprisingly consistent throughout, despite some variations on the key themes. Perhaps only this fact prevented the adding of new questions from becoming an endless process that might have caused the entire project to lose focus.

It is, however, important to maintain a healthy scepticism regarding the extent to which theory arising from qualitative research can arise simply from the data. Taken simplistically, this assumes the ability of researchers to approach participants and the data they collect with an entirely open mind, stripping themselves of their own beliefs, and taking participants' perspectives, rather than their own, as their starting point. It also assumes that researchers can actually maintain this discipline throughout the process. Feminist theorists, however, regard acknowledgment of "the socially situated nature of the process, producer and product of research" as a precondition for intellectual rigour. It would be naive to imagine that I was an objective observer able to divest myself of my own views and discover how Polish women thought, and was not, in the words of Taylor and Bogdan, developing "social constructions of social constructions".

My entire project was shaped, for example, by my assumption that citizenship, a central discourse in our society, is a highly gendered concept, and that citizenship would look different from a female, rather than male, perspective. I also assumed that class was important, although participants rarely mentioned social class directly in relation to citizenship. The interviewing project was conducted in the context of the rising fame and influence of Pauline Hanson, and in a period of my life in which I was campaigning actively on issues of race, immigration and multiculturalism. I had assumed that most participants would share my opposition to the views expressed by Ms. Hanson, but many did not. This created some very awkward moments. A number of interviewees, for instance, reflected positively on the political platform of Pauline

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30 Taylor and Bogdan, *Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods*, p. 19.
Hanson and asked for my opinions while I was a Senate candidate for a political party campaigning directly against the possibility of One Nation holding the balance of power in the Senate. Moreover, as M. L. De Vault has argued, theorising about what is in the data is important, but so is theorising about what is not there. Some of my interview questions were shaped by my belief that it is desirable for women to share equally with men in political decision-making, which was not an assumption necessarily shared by participants. Overall, I assumed that their experience of citizenship as female migrants would marginalise them from dominant discourses that assume that the archetypal Australian citizen is an Anglo-Australian male, and that citizenship would look somewhat different from their standpoint. My perspective was therefore not only personal, but also inherently political.

Interviewing, moreover, cannot capture in an unmediated way, the perspectives of interviewees. As Taylor and Bogdan have argued, in social situations, “meanings are not simply communicated, but constructed”. Data from interviewing is dialogical, arising from a conversation in which the interviewer is a participant. The conversation, steered by the interviewer, plays a role in shaping what interviewees say. The perspectives shared with me by the participants in this project were partly created by the interviews themselves. Many of these women, perhaps most of them, had not reflected consciously on some of the issues I was exploring and did so “on the spot”. The perspectives they articulated, the meaning that came from the interview, was therefore created between us, through an interview that was sometimes a conversation. Interviewees were also not simply providing unguided memories from the past. As sociolinguist Charles Briggs has argued,

oral history interviews produce a dialogue between the past and the present, including the interview itself. Each query presents them with the task of searching through their memories to see which recollections bear on the question and then fitting this information in a form which will be seen as answering the question. Oral history interviews are thus


32 Taylor and Bogdan, *Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods*, p. 98.

related to the present as systematically as to the past. Interviews were therefore created in a dialogue between me and the interviewee, and between the present and the past. Participants summoned up memories from the past to address questions raised by me in the present for specific purposes. Moreover, not only was I a participant, but my questions and interests were prompted by previous theorists, whose assumptions and findings shaped the questions I was interested in. Inevitably, in the process of creating a narrative for a thesis, I decided which comments were the most significant and chose some over others. As Patricia Sexton has noted about her own study of hospital workers, "my own voice is also in there, and louder than the sheer quantity indicates, since I also edited all the other voices".

The issue of "voices" in an interviewing project is a complex one. I listened carefully to participants' experiences, and the ways in which they described them. I created full transcripts of these interviews, and tried to reproduce their speech, including not correcting errors in English and grammar. I thought of this in terms of allowing the reader to hear their authentic voices. This was particularly important given that these women's voices are so often ignored, interrupted or dismissed, but it was inevitably a clumsy and incomplete process. Moreover, the question of "voices" in this project was far more fundamental than simple issues of how to quote the women involved. The participants' own perceptions were not based on unmediated, "raw" experience, but shaped by their own readings of Polish and Australian history and government policy. In this thesis, some interviewees' voices are more dominant than others. Particular women were often especially articulate, or made comments that seemed to encapsulate the views of the others on a particular subject. It was difficult not to make these women's lives and comments the pattern for the others, using their interviews as the primary narrative, and adding other interview material mainly for confirmation or further exploration. There were also the limitations that the participants themselves placed on what they would say to me, the interviewer, and on a recorded tape. For example, some women had portrayed the suffering inherent in their resettlement process more poignantly in short stories that they had written than in their

34 Ibid., p. 14.
interview. Others asked me to switch off the tape when they became upset or began to cry, and made their sense of loss and isolation from their country of origin and the families they had left behind far more explicit “off the record”.

It is arguable that something very important is lost in the interviewing process itself. Interviewing is a somewhat artificial situation divorced from the daily lives of interviewees. It is, for instance, an open question whether what people say they would do, or think they would do, is necessarily what a researcher might observe if they were able to watch them. As Taylor and Bogdan have noted, “Interviews are subject to the same fabrications, deceptions, exaggerations, and distortions that characterise other conversations between persons”. Perhaps more importantly, the gulf between an interview situation and normal daily life means that the researcher is divorced from the everyday context from which the perspectives of the participants are partly formulated. A related issue is one of language. Interviewees, particularly interviewees for whom the language in which the interview is conducted is not their first language, do not necessarily mean the same thing when they use particular words that the interviewer would mean. In this sense, it might have been useful to employ more participant observation. This was rendered impractical, however, by the fact that so much of what I did observe was conducted in Polish. While I could observe, for instance, who appeared dominant or marginal in meetings of the Polish Women’s Association, or in the homes I visited, I could not understand what they were actually saying, and interpretation was likely to be dangerously inaccurate in that context.

In summary, this thesis, although drawing upon many other sources, has been fundamentally shaped by the interviewing project among thirty Polish women in Western Australia. This is the case even in chapters where little or no interview material appears. Despite the limitations inherent in the interviewing project, both as designed and as carried out, I am well aware that this thesis would not have been possible without the interviewing project, and the generosity of the women who participated in it. They were, in a very real sense, participants as well as subjects in this study. My great regret about the interviewing project is not its limitations, but that the guarantee of their anonymity prevents my thanking interviewees by name.

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36 Taylor and Bogdan, *Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods*, p. 98.
The Revival of Citizenship

The revival of "active citizenship" as a national priority has become a staple of Australian public discourse. Highlighted by the approach of the centenary of Australian federation in 2001, and the fiftieth anniversary of Australian citizenship in 1999, citizenship has become the focus of attention along the whole political spectrum. Theorists sympathetic to marginalised groups have also advocated a revival of ideals associated with citizenship because of its egalitarian potential. Citizenship, after all, is commonly understood to confer an equality of rights and responsibilities within a political community. A closer examination of citizenship, however, reveals that it is intimately bound up with relations of inequality as well as equality, exclusion as much as inclusion, and raises questions about just why citizenship has become so identified with equality and empowerment.

After a long period of neglect, citizenship has become the focus of enormous official attention and encouragement. The landmark report *Education for Active Citizenship in Australian Schools and Youth Organizations*, published in 1989, was widely regarded as one of the most significant products of the Senate Standing Committee system. It was followed by other major government reports, such as *Active Citizenship Revisited* (1991), *Australians All: Enhancing Australian Citizenship* (1994), and the *Discussion Paper on a System of National Citizenship Indicators* (1995). In 1994, the Civics Experts Group appointed by the Keating Labor government conducted a national survey of understandings of civic issues, and produced a strategic plan for

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public education on citizenship. The goal of this public education programme was to ensure that Australians can participate fully in civic decision-making processes...to educate and inform the public about governmental, constitutional, citizenship and civics issues in Australia...help Australians understand their rights and responsibilities as citizens and to promote good citizenship...

This support for a promotion of “good citizenship” appears to be bipartisan. Although the initial programme was established under the Labor government, it has been expanded under the Howard Coalition government. In 1998, moreover, the Coalition government established another body, the Australian Citizenship Council, to advise on citizenship-related matters. In February 2000, the Australian Citizenship Council released its own report, *Australian Citizenship for a New Century.* At a state level, the Western Australian government recently became the first state government to call for widespread community debate on the meaning of citizenship and invite contributions to a discussion paper.

The level of interest begs the question of what has changed within understandings of citizenship to make it such a pressing issue. The most influential account of modern citizenship was provided by T. H. Marshall's classic essay of 1950, *Citizenship and Social Class.* Marshall defined citizenship as a status that signifies full membership of a particular political community, and confers an equality of rights and duties among citizens. He explored the status of citizenship primarily in terms of civil, social and political rights:

The civil element is composed of the rights necessary for individual freedom - liberty of the person, freedom of speech, thought and faith, the

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4 Ibid., p. 5.
right to own property and to conclude valid contracts, and the right to justice...to defend and assert all one's rights on terms of equality with others and by due process of law...By the political element I mean the right to participate in the exercise of political power, as a member of a body invested with political authority or as an elector of the members of such a body...By the social element I mean the whole range from the right to a modicum of economic welfare and security to the right to share to the full in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilized being according to the standards prevailing in the society.8

In Marshall's account, the development of each component of citizenship corresponded to different time periods: civil rights in the eighteenth century, political rights in the nineteenth century and social rights in the twentieth century.9 These rights are generally exercised through separate social institutions. Civil rights are exercised primarily through the rule of law and the court system, while political rights are associated with parliamentary institutions. Social rights are largely maintained through the education system and through social services.10

Formal Citizenship Rights and Duties in Australia

The rights and duties referred to by Marshall, however, are only partially relevant to the formal status of Australian citizenship. Definitions of Australian citizenship, and its precise rights and obligations, are far from clear. The Australian Citizenship Act 1948, which provides the legal basis for Australian citizenship, does not itself actually define either the meaning of citizenship or its rights and obligations. It confines itself to rules for the acquisition or loss of citizenship. The formal rights and obligations of Australian citizens are derived from the Australian Constitution, from the common law and from numerous ordinary legislation and legislation enacted by the Commonwealth through the use of external affairs power.11

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8 Ibid., p. 85.
9 Ibid., p. 70.
10 Ibid., pp. 71-72.
The guaranteed rights of Australian citizens are rather few, and it is arguable whether other "rights" may be truly regarded as such when they are not found in the Constitution or guaranteed by it. The Australian Constitution guarantees a very limited set of civil rights, including freedom of religion (section 116), jury trial for serious crimes (section 80), the right to fair property acquisition by the Commonwealth (section 51xxxix) and free trade between the states (section 92). Some rights that might be considered fundamental are not formally protected. The right to a fair trial is not included in the Constitution, although is regarded as a "common law" right that may be modified by judges. There is no generalised right to privacy. There are no explicit limits on state powers regarding the arrest and detention of individuals. State and Commonwealth parliaments enjoy wide powers to violate individual civil rights. Australians have no formal right to vote. The Constitution guarantees only that individuals who possessed the right to vote in state elections at the time of Federation have the right to vote in federal elections. Current legislation determines eligibility for voting, but does not guarantee the right to do so. State governments may impose their own conditions on who can vote. The right to freedom of speech regarding political issues was confirmed by the High Court as an "implied" right only in 1992. Social "rights", as such, do not exist in Australia. Marshall himself does not appear to have regarded social rights as individual entitlements, so much as the general duty of the state to provide collective services. However, in the Australian context, they might be more correctly described as broad policy goals.

The formal duties of citizenship are likewise unclear. Commonly accepted duties include compulsory voting in elections and referendums, jury service and the duty to defend Australia if called upon. However, while citizens may be fined for a failure to enroll to vote, or for failing to appear at a polling booth, no law actually...

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12 Ibid., p. 58.
13 Ibid., p. 59.
14 Ibid., p. 60.
15 Ibid., p. 61.
18 These are the obligations of citizenship recited to migrants taking citizenship, and are found in Section 3.12 of the Citizenship Instructions compiled by the Department of Immigration and Ethnic affairs. Cited by the Joint Standing Committee on Migration, Australians All, section 5.36, pp. 149-150.
forces them to vote. Jury service may be evaded relatively easily, with a long list of acceptable reasons for exemption from this duty. Only the duty to defend Australia has been enforced, but it has been enforced only for men. In 1901, legislation provided for the compulsion of all able-bodied men to defend Australia in time of war, although it confined compulsory service to defence within Australian territory.\textsuperscript{19} Two referenda to allow Australian governments to send conscripts overseas failed during World War I, but in 1942, the Curtin Labor government amended the legislation to allow for militia to be sent overseas. In 1964, the Menzies Liberal government introduced compulsory military service. National servicemen were sent to fight in the Vietnam War from 1966 to 1972.\textsuperscript{20}

Aside from defence, however, formal citizenship status in Australia appears to be essentially about the possession of political rights and duties. Non-citizens now enjoy most of the civil and social rights of Australian citizenship. Some forms of discrimination are practised. Only citizens enjoy the right to apply for an Australian passport, to return to Australia without a resident return visa and to register children born overseas as Australian citizens. Non-citizens cannot claim protection by Australian diplomats overseas, although intervention may be granted on compassionate grounds. Non-citizens may not serve on juries or in the defence forces, or gain permanent employment in the Australian Public Service. They are subject to ownership restrictions in some Australian industries. Nevertheless, non-citizens are generally protected against most forms of discrimination and enjoy equal access to the legal system. Social "rights", such as they are, rest upon residency status, rather than citizenship. Social security benefits, like taxation liability, are determined on the basis of residency.\textsuperscript{21} Political rights, however, are the exception. Non-citizens may not vote or stand for election to parliament. The only exception to this rule is a number of British subjects who were eligible to vote before 1984, but these individuals do not have the right to stand for public office.\textsuperscript{22} As noted by the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs in 1994,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{20} Ibid., p. 5.
\item \textsuperscript{21} Section 2.63, Joint Standing Committee on Migration, \textit{Australians All}, p. 24.
\item \textsuperscript{22} Sections 2.57 - 2.61, \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 22-23.
\end{itemize}
Through the right to vote that it confers, citizenship allows full participation in every aspect of Australian society. This is arguably the most practical and concrete value of Australian citizenship for members of the community as a whole. In some ways citizenship can be said to fully empower people because it is only those with the right to vote who can fully exert their influence on Australian institutions and values.  

Citizenship and Political Empowerment

Whether the right to vote allows citizens to "fully exert their influence on Australian institutions and values", however, is an open question. In one sense, Australians are politically very active, due to the number of Australian elections. Within any three-year period, Australian voters will vote in elections for the Senate, for the House of Representatives, for state houses and for local government. They may also vote in state and federal referenda. There are, however, many constraints on the political empowerment of the electorate. Australian political scientist Dean Jaensch has been highly critical of some of these constraints. For instance, he has argued that the Australian political system has been distorted by the existence of disciplined political parties that are more cohesive and more powerful than parties in other democracies.  

There has been an extraordinary shift of political power away from the parliament, directly elected by citizens, to the executive or cabinet, appointed by the leader of the majority party. As a result, the legislative process itself is increasingly a formality. At the federal level, the Prime Minister and Cabinet, produced by the parties, make the legislative decisions, and control parliamentary voting through party discipline. In practice, therefore, decision-making power has passed to the party machines, the Cabinet and the Prime Minister.

In the Western Australian context, the "W.A. Inc." scandals of the 1980s

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25 Ibid., p. 221.
focused particular attention on the weakness of Australian parliaments, and their inability to call governments to account. The executive at both federal and state levels possesses considerable power to limit its accountability to parliament by stifling debate. The majority party may silence opposition speakers by voting for a motion “that the Member be no longer heard”, or it may vote for a motion “that the question be now put”, so that the matter under discussion is voted upon without further debate. When faced with strong parliamentary opposition to legislation, the executive may also “guillotine” debate by applying very short time limits to the various stages of the passage of bills. As Patrick O'Brien and Martyn Webb noted in 1991, both the “gag” and the “guillotine” are being used with increasing frequency by both of the major parties, at both federal and state levels. Effective political debate is generally carried out in the secrecy of the party room, and legislation is simply voted through by force of numbers. The executive may also prevent parliamentarians from inquiring into its activities by proroguing parliament and enjoys the power to appoint, and set the terms of, official inquiries into itself.26

More recently, the rise of Pauline Hanson's One Nation party, and the results of the referendum on a transition to a republican system, have highlighted the growing alienation of much of the electorate from the Australian political system. It has become a truism of Australian politics that a large proportion of the electorate feels politically powerless, and has little or no confidence in Australia's political system, or in its politicians. The electorate has shown a new volatility and resentment towards the major political parties. This was particularly evident in the Queensland state election of 1998, in which almost 23 per cent of voters supported One Nation.27 The federal elections of 1996 and 1998, followed by the results of the republic referendum in 1999, also highlighted the widening gap between the privileged suburbs of the major Australian cities and rural and regional voters, and a vehement backlash against Australian politics as currently practised. As Australian political scientist Judith Brett has argued, the level of political alienation in Australia

is the result of fundamental problems with the current party system, and it was only a matter of time before something like One Nation appeared to organise it into a visible political force...As citizens, rather than as farmers or environmentalists or unionists or whatever, many people have been left feeling that the nation's central representative institution, parliament, has abandoned them. Such feelings of abandonment and powerlessness are particularly acute when government policies have an impact at the local level, in the closing of a school, a bank or a factory, thus confronting people with the lack of control they have over the larger forces shaping their lives.\footnote{Judith Brett, "Representing the Unrepresented: One Nation and the Formation of the Labor Party", in Ibid., pp. 27-28.}

The problem for citizenship is not simply a matter of particular election results, or passing electoral phenomena, but the pervasive mood of powerlessness, anger and alienation.

**Citizenship, Inequality and Social Rights**

This sense of alienation among Australian citizens points to a series of debates about whether citizenship really possesses more than a symbolic force. Citizenship, with its rhetoric of equality, exists within a profoundly unequal society. Marshall's exploration of civil and social rights highlighted the fact that citizenship is not simply about voting rights, but is intimately bound up with the freedoms, rights, social resources and opportunities to which members of a community have access. In this respect, the idea of citizenship appears to have a great deal of promise. It holds out the vision of an essential equality between citizens. Perhaps more importantly, citizenship rights are one means of attaining such equality. Disadvantaged groups may struggle for an increased share of power, resources and opportunities through the attainment of citizenship rights.

This is perhaps particularly evident in the case of class inequality. With the decline of the influence of Marxism, analysis of the relationship between citizenship
and class is less fashionable than formerly. However, Marshall theorised in 1950 that citizenship was evolving into a system of rights that were antagonistic to the capitalist class system. In his account, the early development of citizenship, with its emphasis upon civil rights, supported the rise of capitalism and of capitalist class relations. The emergence of civil rights undermined feudal class relations, but promoted rights associated with the attainment and maintenance of private property. Civil rights were "indispensable to a competitive market economy". Marshall theorised, however, that the addition of political and social rights meant the end of this compatibility between citizenship and the competitive market economy. By the end of the nineteenth century, working class movements created trade unionism as a secondary system of "industrial citizenship". Trade unionism succeeded in establishing "the claim that they, as citizens, were entitled to certain social rights." From this moment, citizenship and the capitalist class system were at war. There can be no doubt that the social safety net established in the twentieth century has improved the material conditions of less privileged groups, and that this was partly the result of the attainment of citizenship status by these groups. As Michael Ignatief has argued in his analysis of the development of the welfare state in Britain, the struggle for social rights was led from below by working-class and feminist organisations, assisted from above by middle-class liberals or socialists...The history of the welfare state in the twentieth century can be understood as a struggle to transform the liberty conferred by formal legal rights into the freedom guaranteed by shared social entitlements. Given the tendency of markets to generate inequality, the state was called upon by its own citizens, to redress the balance with entitlements designed to keep the contradiction between real inequality and formal equality from becoming intolerable.

The strength of strategies that employ the rhetoric of citizenship is also apparent in Australian history. It appears to have worked well for groups suffering forms of disadvantage not reducible to class inequality. This is particularly evident in the case of

the history of the campaign for female suffrage. The vote was a strategy for Australian women to achieve equality with, and legal independence from, men. More recently, Aboriginal citizens have been able to stake a consistent claim to basic amenities by comparing their material and social conditions to those of other Australians.

The attainment of citizenship rights, therefore, may constitute an effective strategy for improved material conditions and political empowerment. The British Marxist J. M. Barbalet argued in 1988 that, while civil rights tend to maintain capitalist inequalities, political and social rights are an effective route to improved material conditions:

Some rights, such as welfare rights which entitle persons to a minimum level of material well-being, provide access not simply to opportunities but also to conditions...The capacities exercised in the right to vote...or to strike, provide opportunities which are closer to the shaping of material conditions, and in the absence of such rights material conditions would be less likely to change in a direction favourable to those without social power...certain rights (although not rights in general) may serve as a means to the social acquisition of material conditions which might not otherwise be available.

Citizenship may also constitute an effective rhetoric for disadvantaged groups because it posits material support as rights, rather than as goods desirable in principle that society may not be able to afford to provide. As long as such goods are defended as simply a public version of charity - the duty of a “caring” or “compassionate” society - they are vulnerable to the vagaries of the budget bottom line. Ignatief, for instance, has argued that, in the context of the conservative attack on the “citizenship of equal entitlement” constructed in post-war Britain, the welfare state must be defended as a right:

to continue to describe the welfare state as a ‘caring institution’...is to

think of entitlements as if they were a matter of moral generosity, when in fact, they are a matter of right...the practice of citizenship is about ensuring for everyone the entitlements necessary to the exercise of their liberty. As a political question, welfare is about rights, not caring, and the whole history of citizenship has been the struggle to make freedom real.35

The idea of citizenship, therefore, may have within it a promising impetus towards equality. However, citizenship may not serve all its members equally well. In part, this may be because the different elements of citizenship have independent histories and, perhaps, different social bases. These elements therefore tend to serve the various social groups differently, or perhaps not at all.36 A property right, for instance, as Marshall himself pointed out, “is not a right to possess property, but a right to acquire it, if you can, and to protect it, if you can get it.”37 It is hardly relevant to those who lack the wealth to acquire property.

Moreover, some Marxist theorists, disturbed by the “post-Marxist” interest in citizenship, rather than class struggle, as a political strategy, have argued that citizenship is not only unable to overcome inequality: it may also serve to legitimise it. Liberal democratic theory confines its democratic aspirations to a limited political sphere. Barbalet has pointed out that, despite the promise of equality, notions of citizenship are unable to alter the basis of inequalities, as citizenship has merely introduced “spheres of equal participation which parallel those of exclusive power”.38 As Karl Marx argued in 1843,

The state in its way abolishes distinctions based on birth, rank, education and occupation when it declares birth, rank, education and occupation to be non-political distinctions, when it proclaims that every member of the people is an equal participant in popular sovereignty regardless of these distinctions...Nevertheless the state allows private property, education and occupation to act and assert their particular nature in their own way,

35 Ignatief, “Citizenship and Moral Narcissism”, p. 34.
36 Barbalet, Citizenship, pp. 6-7.
38 Barbalet, Citizenship, p. 44.
i.e., as private property, education and occupation. Far from abolishing these factual distinctions, the state presupposes them in order to exist.\textsuperscript{39}

The spirit of Marx's critique of "bourgeois democracy" continued, and enjoyed a revival in the 1980s. British Marxist Ellen Meiksins Wood asserted that the original meaning of democracy referred to popular rule by the lower classes. The modern liberal democratic revolution achieved its successes and prestige by dissociating "democracy" from these notions, and replacing them with civil liberties and procedural forms.\textsuperscript{40} The rhetoric of a purely political equality disguises the realities of inequality and oppression, and provides them with a spurious legitimacy:

By defining democracy in formal terms not related to the substance of class power, it had the effect precisely of \textit{obscuring} the very oppressions which the old meaning starkly revealed. Liberal democratic discourse has ever since served not only to delegitimate certain kinds of subordination, but on the contrary, also to mystify and legitimate the relations of class domination and exploitation...\textsuperscript{41}

The notion of citizenship may serve to legitimate the status quo in other ways. It may be complicit in the legitimization of a small, privileged elite who appear to be exemplary citizens: the real "full members of a political community" able to fully exercise their rights to political power. Many modern theories of citizenship have emphasised the \textit{inclusiveness} of citizenship. Marshall's history of citizenship, for instance, is the history of an ever-expanding inclusion of all groups within a status of formal equality and an ever-expanding set of rights. Many earlier notions of citizenship, however, as Ursula Vogel has argued, presuppose "\textit{a relation of inclusion and exclusion}."\textsuperscript{42} In the classical Greek city-states, the origin of Western notions of citizenship, citizenship signified the privileged status of a ruling elite. Slaves, foreigners, resident aliens and women were not citizens, and possessed few rights. The Greek philosopher Aristotle argued that a citizen was "one who has a share in the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{39} Karl Marx, "On the Jewish Question" (1843) in Karl Marx, \textit{Early Writings}, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975, cited in \textit{Ibid.}, p. 3.
\item \textsuperscript{41} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 68.
\end{itemize}
privileges of rule": the rule over slaves, foreigners, resident aliens and women, among others. In practice, modern citizenship retains some of these features. Not only are many members of nation states not citizens, but some citizens are still more equal than others. Relatively few citizens possess the prerequisites for full political participation: education, spare time and money, in particular. Those who possess the qualities of a ruling elite, however, are more able to exercise all their citizenship rights, and appear to be exemplary citizens: better citizens, in fact, than the majority. It is the elite from business and professional occupations, overwhelmingly white and male, who stock the political parties, the local councils and the houses of parliament. The Australian political system is less a democracy than an oligarchy.

Moreover, social rights, inevitably more important to those not part of the political elite, do not generally possess the same status as civil and political rights. As Bryan Turner noted in 1986, in the case of social rights, citizenship can be conceived as a series of expanding circles which are pushed forward by the momentum of conflict and struggle...these rights can be undermined by economic recession, by right-wing political violence, by inflation and by the redefinition of social participation through the law.

Part of the revival of interest in citizenship among radical theorists is due to the gradual erosion of some elements of the welfare state in Western democracies in recent years. Internationally, much of the initial interest in citizenship in the early 1990s focused on the decline of “full employment” and other social rights associated with the welfare state. The “citizenship of equal entitlements” referred to by Ignatief, and its Australian variant, “wage-earner's welfare state” citizenship, was highly dependent on the economic circumstances prevailing in the post-war period and the predominance of Keynesian economics. Moreover, the welfare state was a creation of the nation state, which is itself arguably in decline. The extraordinary internationalisation of

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communications, industry and finance over the last two decades has challenged the authority of national governments and the nation state worldwide. The globalisation of the world economy has also resulted in the creation, for instance, of supranational institutions, like the European Community, and supranational trade alliances such as the North American Free Trade Agreement, the Association of South East Asian Nations and the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum. The decline in the ability of national governments to determine national economic policies has become very marked.\textsuperscript{47} A notable casualty of these processes has been the ability of governments to maintain "full employment". High unemployment, and especially the creation of a large pool of the long-term unemployed, was the focus of enormous social anxiety, and a decisive factor in the widespread alienation of Australian citizens from the Australian state in the early 1990s. More recently, the withdrawal of industries and services from regional and rural areas has created similar resentment. Even more noticeable has been the renewal of an ideological assault upon the notion of social rights by a resurgent elite, confident of its own ability to survive and flourish in the new environment, and increasingly unwilling to pay the high rates of taxation necessary to maintain the social "safety net".

**Citizenship as a Solution - For Whom?**

It is partly in this context of an erosion of social rights that official promotion of "active citizenship" has taken place in Australia. Interestingly, a similar phenomenon occurred in Britain in the early 1990s, particularly in the speeches of John Major and Douglas Hurd. Some writers argued at the time that the promotion of "active citizenship" in Britain, like campaigns for "family values", were an attempt to blunt the effects of the conservative economic agenda.\textsuperscript{48} Vogel has noted that these campaigns were also part of an attempt to link citizenship entitlements, especially welfare entitlements, to duties, as seen in work-for-the-dole schemes in Britain.\textsuperscript{49} Ruth Lister,


\textsuperscript{48} Plant, "Social Rights and the Reconstruction of Welfare", p. 50. See also Vogel, "Is Citizenship Gender-Specific?", p. 59.

\textsuperscript{49} Vogel and Moran, "Introduction", p. xv.
however, has argued that the notion of the active citizen constituted an intensive ideological offensive. In Lister's view, the British right promoted the enterprise culture as the symbol of full citizenship, while portraying the welfare state as the symbol of subjecthood. "Active citizens" were self-reliant property-owners, whose freedoms were guaranteed by economic, rather than civil rights.50 As Ignatief also argued,

it is property that makes the active citizen active. Without property, an individual will not have the leisure necessary to be a good citizen. Without property, the citizen is passive, a ward of the state, a dependent on the benefit cheque, the social services and the council housing department...The rhetoric of the active citizen is modern Conservatism's latest attempt to create a genuine and believable language of community. What is interesting is that it cannot make itself believable: each hymn to the active citizen is shadowed by unstated but menacing disapproval of the passive citizen.51

Such criticisms were generally directed at the conservative side of politics. However, the promotion of "active" citizenship solved particular problems for both the right and the left of the political spectrum. As Geoff Mulgan argued in the case of Britain, both the right and the left spoke the language of devolution. The right advocated the empowerment of its citizenry in the market, while the left argued for the devolution of state power through local democratic institutions and constitutionally guaranteed rights. The same was true of bureaucracies, which attempted to privatise all but their most central functions.52 All, however, were

less than honest about the fact that each step towards decentralisation helps to solve the state's legitimisation crisis precisely because it allows government to absolve itself of responsibility....Having privatised and devolved, they can simply shrug their shoulders and say 'None of my business', when something goes wrong...This is also true of reforms to the machinery of government...Like the modern corporation, the most

rational and perceptive modern bureaucracy aims to maximise its power and minimise its responsibilities. To do this it slims itself down to a strategic core and hives off all operational functions. While maintaining strategic control and all the perks of power, it too can shrug its shoulders when anything goes wrong.\textsuperscript{53}

The promotion of a more "active" form of citizenship, therefore, is not necessarily what it appears to be: a conscientious attempt to address widespread alienation from the Australian political system, and to inform and empower Australian citizens. This may sound something of a warning to theorists who hope that citizenship can become a force for equality and empowerment of marginalised groups. Citizenship, as a political category, has historically been enmeshed in struggles for rights, equality, inclusion and empowerment, and perhaps its recent adoption by these theorists is no accident. However, citizenship may not only be unable to overcome inequality, but may serve to legitimise it, rallying marginalised groups around a language of inclusion and community without disturbing existing power relations, around a form rather than a substance. In this way, a revival of citizenship may entrench, rather than challenge, inequality.

\textsuperscript{53} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 41.
Women and Citizenship in Australia

Citizenship has not only been rediscovered by government and by theorists sympathetic to economically marginalised groups. Feminists, both within and outside Australia, have also shown a renewed enthusiasm for citizenship. As Marilyn Lake argued in the special edition on women and citizenship published by *Australian Feminist Studies* in 1994,

> Citizenship has recently been rediscovered - in the east and west, on the left and right, in Australia and overseas, by women and men. Following the fall of the communist regimes, the decline of left-wing politics, and the stagnation of feminism, radicals have seen in this ‘rebirth of citizenship’ the possibility of a new democratic politics and the opportunity to rethink the relationship between the collective and the individual, the social and political, difference and democracy, the nation-state and sovereignty. For feminists, the current excitement recalls an earlier historical moment when the achievement of citizenship promised new power and freedom for women...\(^1\)

Polish migrant women are a group for whom citizenship may hold some promise of greater equality. This promise, however, may be illusory. Polish women are white women, and their position is most easily comparable with that of their white Anglo-Australian counterparts. Even white Anglo-Australian women, however, have attained the status of citizens without attaining social, economic or political equality with men.

Chapter Two explored the contradictory history of citizenship as a force for equality, inclusion and empowerment. The contradictory character of citizenship

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becomes even more complex when women are brought into the centre of the narrative. T. H. Marshall, for instance, portrayed the development of citizenship in terms of a first stage of civil rights that placed all individuals in a direct and equal relationship to the law. This chronology, however, relied upon the assumption that the process was the same for all individuals as it was for men. For many women, however, political rights were not a natural evolution from the possession of civil rights, and some feminists have argued that women still do not possess the same citizenship rights as men.

Some of the discussion below will focus on the evolution of citizenship in Britain, as Australian citizenship has drawn heavily on British traditions. In Britain, as Margaret Stacey and Marion Price emphasised in 1981, a chronology of citizenship for women looks quite different:

the historical order of the emancipation of women is different from that which was followed in the case of men....Women were in the end accorded political citizenship before they were granted full civil citizenship. Right until today there are certain civil rights that are not automatically accorded to married women.

The voting rights of married women in Britain were simply added onto their position as legal dependents. The rights of married women, including those relating to nationality, place of residence, taxation, access to welfare schemes and rights over children, remained conscribed by their status as wives. The earnings of married couples were taxed as one income until 1941. In Australia, until the creation of a specifically Australian citizenship, women possessed a particularly vulnerable claim to nationality. Right up until the mid-1930s, Australian women who married resident aliens lost their Australian nationality status. Only in 1946 did women married to aliens regain their Australian nationality. The nationality of women continued to be affected by marriage.

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4 Vogel, "Is Citizenship Gender-Specific?", p. 66.
5 Lake, "Personality, Individuality, Nationality", p. 31.
Women and Civil Rights

Historically, the institution of marriage has posed a particular problem for female civil rights. As emphasised by Marshall, effective citizenship guarantees, but also requires, full legal independence and agency: liberty of the person, freedom of speech, the ability to own property and conclude valid contracts, and equality under the law. The position of married women in Britain, however, has been fundamentally shaped by Christian doctrines that married women should be subject to their husbands. Until the late nineteenth century, the common law doctrine of coverture ensured that, upon marriage, women lost their legal independence and became effectively the property of their husbands. Under British common law, as outlined by Sir William Blackstone in the 1760s, a husband and wife are one person in law, so that the very being and existence of the woman is suspended during the coverture, or entirely merged or incorporated in that of the husband. Under the law of coverture, the property that women brought to a marriage became the property of their husbands. Until the Married Women's Property Acts of the 1880s and early 1890s, any money women might earn during their marriages belonged to their husbands. Married women were unable to enter a contract, sue another party, or make a will. Although married women could be tried and sentenced in a court of law, they were unable to give evidence, except under special circumstances. The position of unmarried women was more comparable to that of men. Under English common law, for example, single women, including widows, enjoyed much the same civil rights as men. The institution of marriage, however, entrenched the legal dependence of the

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11 Ursula Vogel, “Under Permanent Guardianship: Women's Condition Under Modern Civil Law”,
Notions of citizenship, and especially civil rights, have also been underpinned by the presumption that citizens have undisputed control of their own bodies and capacities and freedom of movement. The liberty and equality of citizens, as the liberal philosopher John Locke emphasised, rest upon the recognition that the individual possesses “a ‘property’ in his own ‘person’. This nobody has any right to but himself.” As Carole Pateman has argued, it is this concept that enables liberal theory to deny that particular relations of subordination contradict the fundamental, if rather abstract, equality of citizens. Historically, however, married women have lacked this undisputed claim to property in their own persons. The rights of the citizen to liberty of the person may be contrasted with British laws that allowed a husband to place his wife under what Vogel terms “permanent house-arrest”: to determine his wife's place of residence; to refuse her permission to leave the marital home; his control over their children, which extended to his right to appoint alternative guardians for them in the event of his death; and his conjugal right to his wife's body. The control of a husband over the person of his wife was almost total under the law of coverture. As Audrey Oldfield has noted, a deserted husband could issue a writ of habeas corpus against anyone who sheltered his wife, and legally force her to cohabit with him. By the late nineteenth century, while whole groups of formerly excluded individuals were granted increasing legal and political equality, married women continued to lack even the most basic legal prerequisites for citizenship.

Some feminists have argued that women in western democracies such as Australia, whether married or unmarried, are still denied access to the same civil rights as men. These claims, however, appear to rest on grounds that are steadily diminishing. Much has been made, for instance, of women's vulnerability to male sexual aggression.

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16 Vogel, “Is Citizenship Gender-Specific?”*, pp. 75-76.
Australian feminist Rian Voet argued in 1994 that women's sexual vulnerability means that they do not possess full civil rights in more than a "strictly legal" way:

Not only is it the case that women do not have exactly the same legal citizenship rights as men have, not only is it the case that the exercise of these rights is asymmetric for men and women, but there is also the problem that women lack full citizenship rights, because these rights are only interpreted in a male way. For instance, the right to 'liberty of the person' perceived from a women's perspective may also imply the right to be free from sexual harassment, and from being raped in marriage.17

Similarly, Pateman argued in 1988 that the liberal myth of the "social contract", a pact by which men created modern civil society and the notion of civil rights, rested on a prior "sexual contract" by which men were guaranteed rights over, and rights to, women:

Men's domination over women, and the right of men to enjoy equal sexual access to women, is at issue in the making of the original pact...Civil freedom is a masculine attribute and depends upon patriarchal right...The original pact is a sexual as well as a social contract: it is sexual in the sense of patriarchal - that is, the contract establishes men's political right over women - and also sexual in the sense of establishing orderly access by men to women's bodies.18

There can be no doubt that male sexual rights have constituted a particularly intimate form of oppression. The work of Marilyn Lake, for instance, has emphasised the importance of "bodily integrity" to early Australian feminist campaigns.19 However, largely due to the efforts of feminist campaigners, male sexual rights over women have been legally abolished. However flawed the implementation of it may be, violation of women's right to freedom from sexual harassment and assault is now punishable by law, both within marriage and outside it.

17 Rian Voet, "Women as Citizens", Australian Feminist Studies, No. 19, Autumn 1994, p. 65
Citizenship remains, however, structurally male-centred. Its rights and duties were designed for life patterns, activities and responsibilities that are characteristically male rather than female. Both liberal and social-democratic notions of citizenship assume that the "ideal type" of the citizen is male: the male property owner or householder in liberal theory, or the male worker in social democratic theory. Marshall's emphasis upon economic welfare and security as a social right is undercut by the liberal notion that all rights are derived from property rights, which includes the capacity to labour. Such notions may have been particularly influential in Australia, as they implicitly justified the taking of land from the control of Aboriginal people. Australian settlers were able to point to their own cultivation of the land, compared to Aboriginal usage of land, as evidence of their rightful ownership of it. As Locke stated,

every man has a 'property' in his own 'person'. This nobody has any right to but himself. The 'labour' of his body and the 'work' of his hands, we may say, are properly his. Whatevsoever then he removes out of the state that Nature hath provided and left it in, he has mixed his labour with it, and joined to it something that is his own, and thereby makes it his property.

Ownership of property, or the ability to work for wages, therefore, are fundamental to modern understandings of citizenship. These have generally been understood as rights. In contemporary Australia, however, as has occurred in other western democracies, paid employment is increasingly being redefined as a duty to the community. Receipt of welfare benefits is becoming increasingly contingent upon proof of an earnest search for paid employment and willingness to participate in "work for the dole" schemes. There is also a practical element to the importance of property or paid work to effective citizenship. Some feminists have argued that the economic

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22 Locke, Two Treatises of Government, p. 130.
dependence of many married women on men constrains their ability to participate politically. As Susan James has argued, a married woman dependent on a husband for economic support may alienate him by expressing her own political views. Her political participation may depend on his cooperation and good will. She is not free to participate if to do so risks losing the means to provide for herself and her children.23

The ability of women in Australia to participate in paid employment has increased substantially since World War II. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, when the first wave of Polish refugees arrived in Australia, women constituted approximately 20 per cent of the paid workforce. This percentage, however, doubled over the following three decades. By 1980, as the second wave of Polish migration began, 42.5 per cent of married women were performing paid work.24 By 1993, in the middle of the smaller “third wave” of Polish migration to Western Australia, approximately 53 per cent of married women with children were engaged in paid employment.25

Polish migrant women, however, have joined a workforce in which their status was sexually specific. They are white women, and their prospective status in the workforce has been most easily comparable to white, Anglo-Australian women. Anglo-Australian female experience of the workforce and remuneration for their labour has been shaped by the construction of women as dependents and men as breadwinners. This was institutionalised early in the twentieth century in the “family wage” system of industrial relations.26 In 1907, the Commonwealth Arbitration Court determined that white male workers were breadwinners, and required a higher wage in order to support their families, while white female workers supported only themselves. Male bachelors and women solely responsible for dependents were held to be exceptional.27 In order to

27 Matthews, Good and Mad Women, pp. 60-61. See also the extended discussion on the concept of the family wage in Edna Ryan & Anne Conlon, Gentle Invaders: Australian Women at Work.
prevent employers from favouring women as cheaper labour, all jobs were classified according to whether they were typically "male" or "female" jobs, with male and female rates of pay.\textsuperscript{28} "Protective" legislation restricting working hours, use of machinery, the lifting of weights and the like also reduced female competitiveness for paid work, and reinforced the segregation of the labour force.\textsuperscript{29} In 1950, when many first-wave Polish women were seeking paid employment, the female basic wage was set at 75 per cent of the male basic wage.\textsuperscript{30}

Much has been made of the contemporary decline in "full employment" policies, but in the post-War period, full employment policies referred primarily to full employment for men. Many apprenticeships were open to women only if a separate female apprenticeship rate existed. Women in many occupations, particularly in the public service, were required to resign from their jobs upon marriage. Others lost their permanency status and chances of promotion when they married. Male applicants were explicitly favoured over female applicants to the public service until 1972, and training was generally directed at men, in the belief that women would resign either upon marriage or pregnancy. Maternity leave, unpaid, was not won until 1979.\textsuperscript{31} In 1972, women in Australia formally won the battle for equal pay. The 1972 Equal Pay decision stated that "award rates for all work should be considered without regard to the sex of the employee".\textsuperscript{32} It did not, however, require a re-evaluation of the value of the kind of work usually performed by women: value originally determined precisely on gender grounds. By 1984, as many second-wave Polish women took up paid employment in Australia, female average hourly earnings amounted to 87.5 per cent of male earnings.\textsuperscript{33}

Despite some gains, when the smaller, third wave of Polish migration came to Australia in the 1990s, Australian women were still constrained by the male-centred

\textsuperscript{28} 1788-1974, Melbourne: Thomas Nelson, 1975, pp. 93-95.
\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., p. 61.
\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., pp. 61-62.
\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., p. 13.
\textsuperscript{33} National Wage and Equal Pay Cases, 147 CAR 172, p. 178, cited by O' Donnell and Hall, Getting Equal, p. 54.
\textsuperscript{34} O'Donnell and Hall, Getting Equal, pp. 54-55.
structure of paid work to low rewards for their labour. Better-paid work continued to be structured around the assumption that employees either had no dependants or had a partner who would care for those dependants. It generally required the ability to work full-time, often for long hours, with few breaks. It demanded, in effect, a characteristically male work pattern. Women, however, continued to perform unpaid domestic and caring responsibilities that made this pattern impracticable for most. As Ann Orloff has argued, married women do not generally choose between unpaid work as mothers and housewives and paid work in the labour force as separate categories. Whether they dedicate themselves to domestic and caring work entirely, or combine it with paid labour, very few married women can choose not to perform domestic and caring labour unless they can afford to pay other people to do it. A government study of women and superannuation undertaken in 1994 found that typical female work patterns were still markedly different from the male norm. While male workers usually worked full-time until retirement, most female workers left the paid workforce for some time after the birth of their first child. Some of these women returned to full-time work, but most shifted to part-time or casual employment until their children were old enough to require less care. Responsibility for caring for elderly relatives was another reason for intermittent breaks in paid employment, or the shift to part-time or casual work. These duties were primarily responsible for women performing approximately 75 per cent of part-time and 60 per cent of casual work, and for their constituting a large proportion of the “hidden” unemployed.

Such work patterns rendered women particularly vulnerable to an old age constrained by dependence on the aged pension. Overall, the 1994 study of women and superannuation found that women spent an average of seventeen years in the work force, compared to thirty-nine years for men. This made them far less able to fund their retirement in their own right. Women received less than half the level of

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36 Ibid., p. 7.
superannuation entitlements enjoyed by men, because superannuation schemes were
designed for workers who followed the male pattern of remaining in full-time work for
three or more decades.39

Australian women, therefore, have engaged in paid labour, which was
increasingly considered a citizenship duty, within a structure designed for men. The
financial penalties have been high. Status and empowerment within the workforce is a
related issue. While Australian women possessed formal rights to equal employment,
the Australian workforce remained one of the most sexually segregated in the world. In
1991, as third-wave Polish women joined the workforce, around two-thirds of women in
Australia were concentrated in only five occupational groups: retail sales assistants,
clerical workers and the "helping professions" of nursing, teaching and community
work.40 A 1995 government study found a similar pattern, with more than half of all
working women employed in low-wage clerical and personal service jobs.41 The low
status of these jobs ensured that Australian women generally worked under less
favourable work conditions and had fewer training or career opportunities than men.42
The new emphasis on enterprise bargaining constituted a significant threat to female
working conditions due to the concentration of women in low-waged, part-time and
casual jobs with minimal bargaining power.43 The question of status in the paid
workforce should not be underestimated in explorations of women and citizenship in
Australia. Paid work, after all, constitutes the main experience of many Australian
women of the public sphere in which many of the duties of citizenship are grounded.
That this experience is of a male centred structure in which women are consigned to
subordinate status and low rewards may have wider implications for their participation
and empowerment in other public sphere activities.

39 Ibid., pp. 9, 25.
40 Kim Windsor, A Fair Deal for Women: A Practical Guide to Workplace Reform, Department of
Industrial Relations, 1991, p. 11.
41 Meg Smith and Peter Ewer, The Position of Women in the National Training Reform Agenda
and Enterprise Bargaining, Department of Employment, Education and Training, Canberra:
42 Windsor, A Fair Deal for Women, p. 11.
43 Smith and Ewer, The Position of Women in the National Training Reform Agenda, p. 11.
Women, Social Rights and the Welfare State

Polish women also encountered an Australian system of social rights, operating through the Australian welfare state, which was strongly patriarchal in its operations. Marshall addressed social rights as equal rights for all. However, until well into the 1970s, the social welfare system operated to protect the system of economic dependence and unpaid labour in the home for married women. Welfare benefits were also, as Ann-Mari Jordens has pointed out, linked to assessments of need, moral worth and the acceptability of the potential beneficiary within the community. Under the Unemployment and Sickness Benefits Act 1944, a married woman was unable to receive unemployment or sickness benefits unless it was not “reasonably possible for her husband to maintain her”. Married women were not eligible to obtain sickness benefits on the same basis as married men until 1977. The widow’s pension, introduced in 1942, was not available to deserted wives or divorcees unless they had taken “reasonable action to obtain maintenance”, and were considered to be “of good character” and “deserving”: a provision not repealed until 1974. A woman living with a man was regarded as his financial dependant. From 1975, widows living with a man became ineligible for a widow’s pension. The supporting mother’s benefit, introduced in 1973, was not available to a woman who was living with a man on a “domestic basis”, or to women who had not taken “reasonable action” to obtain maintenance from the father(s) of her children.

The welfare state, however, did act to protect women with children but with no male breadwinner. Until 1987, women with dependent children could claim the sole parent’s benefit until the children left home. They would then become eligible for the Class B widow’s pension, designed for women who were no longer taking care of children but who were not yet eligible for the age pension. From 1987, however, the sole parent’s pension was only available to women with children under sixteen years of

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44 Jordens, Redefining Australians, p. 89.
46 Ibid., p. 107.
47 Ibid., pp. 55, 80.
48 Ibid., p. 81.
49 Ibid., p. 77.
50 Orloff, “Gendering the Analysis of Welfare States”, pp. 89, 94.
The slow erosion of the traditional model of a lifetime of care-giving, supported by lifelong economic dependency, had begun.\(^5\)

Even very recent Polish migrants have entered an Australian community in which, although social welfare benefits are now formally gender-blind, the access of many women to benefits is still shaped by their positions within their families. Sheila Shaver noted in 1987 that Australian welfare benefits could be generally divided into two types: one in which eligibility was related to workforce status and another designed to provide income support for families. Male claims were generally related to their status as workers, particularly in the form of unemployment benefits, while women usually made claims to family-related programmes.\(^5\) More recently, Orloff has emphasised the impact of means-tested programmes on women. Means-tested programmes include the incomes of both spouses. The “cohabitation rule” ensures that the incomes of men and women who live together and were presumed to be in a sexual relationship are tested jointly. Although unemployed men living with wage-earning women are equally affected, women are overwhelmingly more likely to be living with men earning significantly higher incomes, and this undermines their ability to make claims as individuals. The usual situation is one in which a woman living with a man is presumed to be financially dependent on him.\(^5\) In this context, as Pateman argued in 1992, women, although the major clients of the welfare state, have generally not received their benefits in their own right, but as presumed dependants of male citizens and breadwinners.\(^5\) Women are marginalised by the welfare state, and treated differently from a presumed male “norm”, even though women constitute the majority of its clients.\(^5\)

Partly in response to the difficulties for women in attaining financial independence and equality with men in the workforce, Australian feminists have formed a particularly strong association with the state. This has been in spite of the

\(^{51}\) Ibid., p. 94.
\(^{53}\) Orloff, “Gendering the Analysis of Welfare States”, p. 90.
constant critiques of the masculinist character of the Australian state, and many reservations about the implications of the rise of "femocrats".56 Women of the second and third waves of Polish migration have entered a community in which feminist activism has succeeded in removing almost all legal discrimination against women and instituted equal opportunity policies, including forms of affirmative action. The state, therefore, had institutionalised female equality in legislation. As Jan Pettman noted in 1996, a powerful "femocrat" machinery has developed within Australian bureaucracies and governments that has worked to protect female gains.57 However, the comparative success of feminists in gaining anti-discrimination measures and social welfare benefits for women might also be regarded as something of a double-edged sword. As Rosemary Pringle and Sophie Watson have pointed out, feminists have generally deployed a "needs" discourse in order to attain equal opportunity programmes and other goods such as welfare benefits, childcare, refuges and women's health centres. This discourse has emphasised female difference in terms of pregnancy, domestic and caring responsibilities and disadvantage in the labour market. This discourse of needs, however, may have reinforced the construction of women as dependent upon a provider, or as requiring "special treatment", potentially disabling female attempts to enter public life on other terms.58 This is an issue of particular relevance with the increasingly strong identification of good citizens as property owners and workers, delegitimising the claims of other citizens to equal status.

Women and Political Power in Post-War Australia

Polish women have also entered a political community in which white women have had the right to vote but have not participated in political decision-making on terms equal to men. Throughout Australian history, even white women have made up only a small proportion of parliamentarians. There was, to begin with, a significant time lag between the attainment of suffrage and the right to stand in all elections and compete for office. White women were enfranchised for state elections between 1893

and 1908, but did not win the right to stand for office in state and municipal elections for another fifteen to twenty years. In 1902, they were enfranchised for the Commonwealth parliament. Although they also became eligible to stand as candidates in federal elections in that year, it was forty-one years before the first women were elected. Australian women, in this respect, were more than twenty years behind their Polish counterparts. Even by 1991, as the third wave of Polish migrants began to enter Australia, women made up only 6.7 per cent of parliamentarians in the House of Representatives. In the same year, women constituted almost 15 per cent of the parliamentarians elected to the Polish lower house, and this was a new low that had plummeted from a previous peak of 23 per cent in the mid-1980s.

Western Australia appears to have been more open to female political aspirations than other states. In 1899, Western Australia was the second state in Australia to enfranchise white women. Western Australia has also been relatively progressive in terms of white female representation, providing Australia with its first female Labor member of parliament, its first female Cabinet Minister and its first female Senator. In 1981, the Western Australian branch of the Australian Labor Party became the first to introduce affirmative action. Even in Western Australia, however, by 1994, female representatives made up just 17.54 per cent of the Legislative Assembly and 11.76 per cent of the Legislative Council.

Male political researchers have tended to agree that the most significant factor in the low level of female representation is lack of female interest in politics. They have noted that when women are interested in political issues, they are as likely as men

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64 Sawer and Simms, *A Woman's Place*, p. 6.
to translate that interest into action. It is the interest that is lacking. As Clive Bean argued in 1991, "the bottom line is that gender differences in orthodox political activity tend to reflect different degrees of interest in political affairs between men and women". However, the valorisation of "toughness", political "killer instinct" and relentless mutual abuse by politicians are widely cited among reasons why women are repelled or bored by politics. It is also widely held that women would not stoop to the cynical and immoral aspects of the political patronage and "backroom deals" which make up so much of political life.

Whether women are actually uninterested in politics per se, or simply repelled by politics as it is practised in Australia, is debatable. Even if it is assumed that women are less interested in "orthodox" politics, orthodoxy is patterned after male political interests. As noted by Jocelyn Clarke and Kate White, female political activity in Australia has mostly occurred outside parliaments and in non-party women's groups. Much of their political mobilisation has been around what are often termed moral and social, rather than political, issues. Post-war female struggles for reforms relating to marriage and divorce laws, the welfare of mothers and children and equal opportunity in paid employment tend to be labelled welfare reform or moral and social issues, implicitly defining them out of the political domain. Many of these struggles, however, have involved exactly the same kinds of activities usually identified as political, such as lobbying governments, political parties and public service bureaucracies through organised pressure groups. Women have also been far more likely to be involved in protest activities and movements, or even in minor parties, than in mainstream politics. When the second wave of Polish women were entering Australia in the early 1980s, the majority of all female parliamentary candidates in Australia had stood for minor parties or as independents.


67 Bean, "Gender and Political Participation in Australia", p. 286.


One element of these phenomena has been the belief that women should bring a different set of principles and priorities to politics and that this is not possible through mainstream politics, or the major political parties. Female participation in minor parties, reform groups and protest movements forms a distinctive pattern of political concerns. As Marian Sawer and Marian Simms noted regarding female parliamentarians in other democracies in the 1980s,

When women enter politics in mutually reinforcing numbers they tend to bring with them the nurturing principle which governs the family - the needs-based principle which dictates that the greatest attention should be devoted to those in greatest need, whether the very young, the very old, the sick, the handicapped or those disadvantaged in other ways...The differential approach of men and women to politics has long been known through psychological research and public opinion polls. It arises from the priority of caring relationships in the lives of most women...The nurturing principle suggests not only a differential distribution of social resources, but also a differential response to issues such as militarism, nuclear power and the environment.71

Nevertheless, while women's greater involvement in social movements and organisations, and even in local government, has been highly significant, it has remained true that this is not where political decision-making power is concentrated.

It is possible, however, that female lack of interest in orthodox politics has been overstated. Australian women were always involved in women's organisations within the political parties, and the proportion of women in political parties has increased markedly since the early 1970s. By the early 1980s, as Polish migrant women of the second wave first encountered Australian politics, women made up around 40 per cent of their membership.72 Women had also shifted their participation in political parties from auxiliary organisations into the party branches, to become full members. The most dramatic shift in this respect occurred within the National Party. In the early 1970s,

71 Sawer and Simms, A Woman's Place, p. 19.
72 Clarke and White, Women in Australian Politics, p. 11.
women were overwhelmingly concentrated in the women's section, and only 1 or 2 per cent of women were full branch members. A decade later, they constituted 42 per cent of full branch members. They also accounted for 31 per cent of Labor Party members, around 51 per cent of the Liberal Party and 44.5 per cent of the Australian Democrats.

Some of the research into women in politics, in fact, suggests that it has been the male-centred structure of the political parties, rather than female lack of interest, that has been responsible for the serious gender imbalance in Australian parliaments. This has been particularly noticeable in the case of the Labor party, because internationally, social democratic parties have generally pioneered female representation. This is a role that the Labor Party has conspicuously failed to take up. The position of the Australian Labor Party as the political wing of male-dominated trade unions, historically wedded to the institution of the family wage for male breadwinners, has effectively excluded women. The influence of strongly patriarchal Irish Catholicism and notions of male political "mateship" have also been significant. In all political parties, however, while female membership is lower than male membership, the proportion of women in decision-making positions is significantly lower than their proportions within the parties. As second-wave women entered Australia in the early 1980s, women filled only 16 per cent of executive positions, despite constituting around 40 per cent of party members. Women were also disproportionately overlooked for preselection for winnable seats. When female candidates were pre-selected for winnable seats, they were elected as often as men, suggesting that the low rate of female representation was not due to the sexual biases of the electorate.

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73 Ibid., p. 74.
74 Ibid., p. 73.
75 Sawer and Simms, A Woman's Place, p. 14.
77 Clarke and White, Women in Australian Politics, p. 74.
78 This was apparent even in the earlier stages of the second wave of feminism. See, for example, the comments of Malcolm McKerras in his "Women in Party Politics", The Australian Quarterly, Vol 49(3), September 1977, p. 4 and his subsequent study "Do Women Candidates Lose Votes?", p. 453.
Women and the Defence of the State

Equal participation in political decision-making might have been one marker of equal citizenship for women in Australia. However, Polish migrant women also encountered the relative exclusion of Australian women from the one formal citizenship duty which has actually been enforced in Australia: the defence of the community. Vogel has given little credence to the relationship between military service and modern citizenship, emphasising the contemporary reliance of modern states upon professional armies rather than citizen militias. Moreover, liberal conceptions of citizenship, concerned primarily with arbitrary state power or the representation of interests in political decision-making, emphasise voting rather than warfare. The capacity to bear arms, however, has been central to other citizenship traditions, and especially to republican traditions. This is perhaps most apparent in Machiavelli's vision of the armed state and the citizen soldier, but Jean-Jacques Rousseau and other major political theorists also emphasised this duty. In countries where the tradition of the citizen soldier is particularly powerful, citizenship rights for women have been harder to establish. Switzerland, for instance, did not admit women to voting rights until 1971.

Moreover, the notion of military service as a citizenship duty remains highly significant in Australia. The obligation to defend Australia is one of the few duties actually listed among the duties of citizens as part of citizenship ceremonies, although it may be argued that this does not necessarily refer to participation in direct combat. Perhaps more crucially, the figure of the citizen soldier retains an enduring symbolic significance. Effective citizenship is both supported and constrained by discourses of nationalism and national myth-making. National myths help to create and sustain the boundaries of the community, its “in” and “out” groups, and legitimate the wielding of political power. Australian nationalism is highly militaristic and, arguably, its most

79 Vogel, “Is Citizenship Gender-Specific?”, p. 69.
revered celebration of nationhood is Anzac Day. The figure of the citizen-soldier remains a central cultural icon in constructions of “legitimate” Australian nationalism, and the exclusion of women from this duty is therefore an important one.

As with wage earning and political decision-making, Australian women have been increasingly allowed to perform military duties. Women were recruited for military support roles in the armed services during World War II. Combat-related roles, however, have only been open to women since 1990. In theory, the Australian Defence Force now admits women to 99 per cent of all positions in the Air Force, and allows them to serve on all warships except submarines, although sexual harassment has emerged as a major issue in the navy. Only direct combat in the infantry remains closed to women.84 As April Carter has noted, however, the gradual opening up of combat roles for women has been phrased in terms of rights to equal opportunity and employment.85 The idea that it might become a duty for women has received relatively little attention. There is a possibility that women who struggle for the right to bear arms may establish a corresponding female obligation to fight, rendering all women liable to be conscripted and sent into combat on the same terms as men.86

The Female Citizen

Polish women have encountered a context in which, while women in Australia have come to share certain citizenship-related activities with men, they do not necessarily perform these activities to the same degree or in the same ways. Rarely do they share the same resources, opportunities and status in asserting their rights or in performing their duties. The common sense view in Australia is that women will draw equal with men in Australia as they increasingly take up activities formerly designated as male. Women, therefore, will become full citizens as they more closely approximate the male norm around which citizenship is structured. There is, however, quite another view of female inclusion within citizenship. Notions of citizenship have been established as much upon what they have excluded as upon what they have included.

85 Ibid., p. 103.
86 Ibid., p. 105.
Feminist theorists, in fact, are increasingly arguing that citizenship has never constituted a category in which women could be fully included. The individual citizen found in political theory appears to be a universal figure in which both sexes might be potentially included. This figure only appears to be universal, however, because it is abstracted from the real bodies of men and women.87

In fact, the rights and duties of citizenship are constructed from within a division between the public and private spheres. Feminist theorists have analysed the ways in which patriarchal political thought is established upon a series of hierarchical dualisms, in which terms connected with the public sphere are privileged over those connected with the private sphere. An analysis of such dualisms in Marshall's account of citizenship, for example, might note that they include liberty and subjection, independence and dependence, the rule of law and arbitrary authority, equality and inequality and universality and particularism. Feminist theorists have also emphasised the ways in which the division between public and private is, perhaps fundamentally, a division between men and women. As Pateman has argued,

The masculine, public world, the universal world of individualism, rights, contract, reason, freedom, equality, impartial law, and citizenship, is taken to be the proper concern of social and political theory. 'Theory' has been constructed within the sexual division between the private and public spheres, and theorists look to the latter sphere. But they cannot acknowledge that the public sphere gains its meaning and significance only in contrast with, and in opposition to, the private world of particularity, natural subjection, inequality, emotion, love, partiality - and women and femininity...88

In this way, the grounding of citizenship in the public sphere has been founded upon the exclusion of all that is traditionally female.


Nevertheless, many theorists have argued that, despite the fact that citizenship is constructed upon the exclusion of all things female, women are somehow included within understandings of the political realm. Vogel has argued that the institution of marriage, while entrenching inequality between men and women, has also been the mechanism by which women have been included within the polity, and that women have been included as "indirect citizens". She has pointed out that classical formulations of democracy did not grant citizenship status upon individuals as such, but upon men as representatives of a family or household. Vogel has also noted that the dominant traditions of European political thought incorporated women as if they were "resident aliens", while the equality of citizens was predicated upon each citizen's personal rule over his wife. This observation resonates with Pateman's examination of marriage as an institution that ensures that women are not left out of the contractual world of the social contract theorists.

The connection between women and the private sphere, men and the public sphere, and the public sphere and citizenship, is explicit in the traditions of political thought on which modern citizenship has drawn. The exclusion of women is also quite explicit. Many Western political philosophers have insisted that the values of women and the family must be contained within the private sphere because of the threat they pose to the public sphere. This idea, in varying forms, runs through much of the tradition. It is worth reflecting on the possibility that Western notions of citizenship and subjection to the state were, in fact, developed in opposition to family relationships, which threatened to constitute an alternative site of loyalty and power. As Diana Coole argued in 1988, from the origins of Western political philosophy in Athens in the fourth century B.C.E., the rights and obligations of members of the polis were articulated in contrast to those characteristic of the kinship structures that had formerly constituted the basis of authority. Plato's advocacy of the abolition of the private family in his ideal republic may have constituted a suppressed dialogue with the continuing vitality of these kinship structures. In his Republic, he insisted that the impartiality and

89 Vogel, "Is Citizenship Gender-Specific?", pp. 58-59.
90 Ibid., p. 64.
objectivity of the law of the polis must be protected from the citizens' personal loyalties to their blood relatives and their ambitions for their children.93 Similarly, the French political philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau systematically defined the general will, the only basis of legitimate political power, in opposition to particularism. In his account, it was necessary for citizens to be able to sacrifice their own selfish interests for the sake of universal civil liberty and universal justice. The creation of civil society required a transformation of "man" which puts justice as a rule of conduct in the place of instinct, and gives his actions the moral quality they previously lacked...the voice of duty has taken the place of physical impulse, and right that of desire...man, who has hitherto thought only of himself, finds himself compelled to act on other principles, and to consult his reason rather than study his inclinations...man acquires with civil society, moral freedom, which alone makes man the master of himself; for to be governed by appetite alone is slavery, while obedience to a law one prescribes to oneself is freedom.94

For Rousseau and other political theorists, universal law, which applied impartially to all citizens, promised protection from the arbitrary authority and factionalism of family bonds. Reason should govern the public sphere, and protect it from the passions and particularism suitable only for the private sphere.

For such theorists, women were incapable of civil morality and ideal citizenship, and this incapacity was firmly linked with their special role in reproduction and the family. In Rousseau's The Social Contract, women were unable to see beyond the interests of their families, and side with universal justice.95 In Locke's philosophy, women lacked the liberty and property required for true rationality, but their domestic and childrearing duties also precluded the development of their reason and independent judgment.96 Other theorists echoed the reasoning of the social contract theorists. For

93 Ibid., p. 36.
95 Coole, Women in Political Theory, p. 112.
96 Ibid., pp. 97-99.
George Hegel, civil life required individuals to transcend private interests and behave as if bound together only by universal and impartial rules. He argued that the values of the family were inimical to public life because family bonds are particularistic. Women, confined by nature to the domestic realm, cared nothing for universal justice, and tended to corrupt the sense of justice in male members of the family. Woman "perverts the universal property of the state into a possession and ornament for the family". In Western political philosophy, therefore, the fundamental difference between the male citizen and the female non-citizen was that the male appeared capable of transcending the private sphere of reproduction and family. He was able to divest himself of the limitation to purely personal perspectives, personal interests and loyalties they represented and ascend to the heights of reason and impartiality.

There is a certain irony in accounts of male ability to transcend personal interests in political philosophy that so clearly serves the interests of men as men. The long tradition of explaining male domination of political processes with reference to the reproductive role of women has been a transparent attempt to portray the male monopoly on political power as being as "natural" as motherhood. In fact, the construction of citizenship and legitimate political power in opposition to the private sphere was not limited to simple exclusion of that sphere. Political theorists have also appropriated women's reproductive capacity in constructions of citizenship. Indeed, Mary O'Brien has argued that political theory and institutions are themselves the result of men's desire to appropriate children. This may obscure, however, the crucial importance of procreative power to notions of legitimate political authority prior to the triumph of the liberal social contract theorists. As Pateman has noted, patriarchalists such as Sir Robert Filmer held that the rights of kings rested upon procreative power. Patriarchalist theorists argued that individuals were not born free and equal, but were subject from birth to the power of their fathers, and that all power to rule was ultimately derived from fatherhood.

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100 Pateman, *The Sexual Contract*, pp. 82-83.
power to rule was passed on to all subsequent fathers. Sons were subject to the power of their fathers, but also, through their fathers, subject to the paternal power of the king. This theory was underpinned by the belief that men were the principal agents in reproduction and that women were simply vessels for male procreative power. Nevertheless, the important point was that their reproductive capacities granted men, not only the ability to create new life, but also the opportunity to exercise political power.

Pateman has noted that the arguments of the social contract theorists rested on a separation of paternal right from political right. Fatherhood, however, remained a significant subtext in democratic theory. The citizens in the works of Thomas Hobbes, Rousseau and Locke appropriated female reproductive powers, giving birth to civil society. Through reason, rather than through the female body, they created Hobbes' "Artificial Man, we call a Commonwealth", Rousseau's "artificial and collective body", and Locke's "Body Politick". Such notions might arguably constitute an implicit, if suppressed, recognition of an ancient tradition that binds procreative power and political power together. Concepts of the political community may owe a great deal to the male inability to give birth to real children. O'Brien has argued that men may enjoy a relative freedom from reproductive processes, but this also separates men from natural, readily apparent, genetic continuity. Men have created, instead, artificial forms of continuity and immortality by establishing political communities. This view may be borne out by early political theory about the nature of political communities. In Plato's Timaeus, for instance, Diotima of Mantinea emphasised the superior immortality represented by the political community:

those who are pregnant in body turn to women...and thus, by begetting children, secure for themselves, so they think, immortality and memory and happiness...but those who are pregnant in the soul, for there are some who conceive in the soul more than in the body, what is proper for

101 Ibid., pp. 83, 86.
104 Ibid., p. 85.
105 Pateman, The Disorder of Women, pp. 45-46.
souls to conceive and bear...that which is concerned with the ordering of
cities and homes.107

In such accounts, male political procreativity was portrayed as superior to female procreativity, because it stood against subjection to nature, and the cycle of birth and death. A political community may be continually renewed, and promises civic immortality.108 For Niccolo Machiavelli, for instance, the founding of a city should be a masculine creation founded against the principles of natural growth and decay.109 In Hegel's philosophy, the goal was the transcendence of the endless cycle of life and death associated with the female.110 Noting these oppositions within Western political theory can help explain the somewhat paranoid relationship of male political theory with women and the private sphere. Theorists of political power may have defined themselves in opposition to women and the private sphere partly because the seemingly natural link between procreative and political power ensures that the private sphere is its most potent challenger for loyalty and authority.

Even in contemporary Australia, this identification of citizenship with the public sphere remains so fundamental to citizenship that contemporary attempts to redefine it in ways that take equal account of both spheres are fiercely resisted. The Senate Standing Committee report *Active Citizenship Revisited* (1991), for example, was one of the few government reports to acknowledge criticisms of the confinement of citizenship to public activities. Nevertheless, it stated that,

The Committee retains the view that the very concept of citizenship is grounded in the public sphere (without denying the nexus between public and private dispositions). To be a citizen is to participate in the public practices which sustain, and to a large extent define, a community.111

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109 Pitkin, *Fortune is a Woman*, pp. 237, 241
In this account the private sphere was meant to play merely a supporting role in the public practices which "sustain" and "define" the community. In this context, it is interesting to note that in the history of political theory, the theories which have most emphasised "active citizenship" in the form of participation in the polity, civic virtue and the equality of citizens, have been those which have placed the most emphasis upon the subordination of women.  

Some theorists have argued that women are not simply incorporated into the nation state through contractual relations with men. They also have sexually specific duties. As Pateman has noted, while men are expected to bear arms and defend the community, it has often been argued that the corresponding female duty is to give birth and raise children. Nation states have often exhibited an intense interest in the size and "quality" of their populations, and the male duty to bear arms and the female duty to bear children have often been compared. Other feminists have noted that through Australian debates on federation the main contribution of women to the new nation was "not forecast as active citizenship, but prolific childbearing." Moreover, the figure of the female citizen-mother, like the figure of the male citizen-soldier, retains enduring symbolic value. While motherhood has often represented all the reasons why women cannot attain full citizenship, Pateman has argued that motherhood also exists as a central mechanism through which women have been incorporated into the modern political order. Women's service and duty to the state have largely been seen in terms of motherhood... Women's political standing rests on a major paradox; they have been excluded and included on the basis of the same capacities and attributes...Women were incorporated differently from men, the 'individuals' and 'citizens' of political theory; women were included as subordinates into their own private sphere...But that does not mean that women had no political contribution to make and no political duty to perform. Their political duty...derives from their difference from men, notably their capacity for

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112 Vogel, "Is Citizenship Gender-Specific?", p. 68.
Many twentieth century Australian feminists have thought that motherhood should not weaken but strengthen women's claim to citizenship, and demanded women's inclusion within citizenship precisely on the grounds of their motherhood. They also insisted that the state should support women who carried out this particular political duty.\textsuperscript{116} Marilyn Lake has asserted that, prior to World War II, Australian feminists articulated a model of maternal citizenship for women, constructed upon female difference and rewarding motherhood. They argued that the citizen-mother performed a service to the state and deserved financial rewards, in a manner similar to the citizen-worker or the citizen-soldier. Lake has emphasised that the idea of the maternal citizen carried the penalty of state interference in marriage, sexuality and maternity, and the idea of motherhood as a duty to the state.\textsuperscript{117} Pettman has pointed out that the notion of maternal citizenship was also complicit in racist policies and practices because only white women were considered to be desirable mothers.\textsuperscript{118} However, such a model articulated a variant of a claim to political power on the basis of reproductive capacities: reproductive power creating political right rather than precluding it.

Polish migrant women have entered into an Australian context in which even white women have not been admitted to the status of citizens on the same terms as men. Citizenship appears to promise an equality of rights, responsibilities and decision-making power. However, any analysis of rights, duties and activities generally identified with citizenship shows that they were designed for men, rather than for women. In a public sphere shaped by and for men, women in Australia can only achieve "equality" as citizens in liberal terms by behaving as honorary men, with their domestic and caring contributions largely viewed as a handicap. They have, however, also been incorporated into the Australian political community specifically as women, with sexually specific duties arising from their reproductive capacities. The structurally male-centred character of citizenship has proved to be a powerful force in the subordination of women in Australia. An uncritical revival of citizenship, therefore,
may simply reinforce the subordinate status of Polish migrant women in Australia, along with that of other women in the Australian political community.
"Poland was always a very democratic country": Citizenship in Poland Before World War II

This thesis has so far explored the ways in which citizenship in Western democracies such as Australia has been intimately bound up with inequality, particularly for women. The next three chapters examine the ways in which Polish women, like Australian women, were incorporated into citizenship traditions and practices that ensured their subordination. They also investigate the nature of the traditions and experiences that Polish women have brought with them when they arrived in Australia. Oral evidence from the interviewing project among Polish women now settled in Western Australia is employed as a primary source. This chapter examines Polish citizenship traditions up until the beginning of World War II. While even the oldest participants in the interviewing project were only children before World War II, Polish citizenship traditions established before they were born have informed and shaped their views on citizenship, nationality and gender. Moreover, a number of participants were avid readers of Polish history, and their reading had influenced their understandings of their own roles, activities and identities in both Poland and Australia. As one of these women reflected on the influence of their history and tradition:

We have a thousand year history. We have lots of tradition what Australia hasn't got. We have a national dress, we have national author. We have a thousand year history, and we come with this history. And we bring like baggage history, baggage tradition.¹

The position of women as female citizens in Poland prior to World War II can

¹ Interview with Gizela, who arrived in Australia in 1964 to marry a first-wave displaced person who had been deported to Germany. All names are fictional in order to protect the confidentiality of the participants. Brief biographical information is provided only in the first footnote referring to an interview. Further information regarding participants is supplied in the Appendix to this thesis.
only be understood in relation to the paradoxical Polish experience of nationality as a whole. The paradox arises from the fact that Poland had a powerful democratic nationalist tradition, but had little experience of either democracy or national independence. For much of their history, Poles were not citizens of their own nation state, but subjects of imperial rule by authoritarian foreign powers. Polish citizenship traditions, therefore, largely emphasised national identity and ethnicity rather than a set of individual rights and duties that could exist only in theory. Polish women, moreover, were subordinated within a strictly patriarchal social structure. Understandings of female citizenship were informed by the imperatives of intense nationalism and idealisation of female sacrifice for the nation. The establishment of an independent Polish state from 1918 enabled women to exercise civil, social and political rights, and to achieve some progress towards equality with Polish men. This was, however, a heartbreakingly brief experience before a return, once again, to authoritarian rule and then foreign occupation.

The Democratic Nationalist Ideal

The belief that Poles were highly democratic, with a passion for individual freedoms, was common among participants in the interviewing project. This was despite the fact that very few of them had any experience of democracy in Poland. As Sylwia, who was a child when she was deported to the Soviet Union during World War II, reflected:

Poland was always a very democratic country...But because of our neighbours, the taste of freedom was so short...Poles were always very free people. You tell them to go to church, they won’t go to church. You tell them not to go to church, and they’ll risk everything just to do the opposite. And in the ‘liberium veto’ in the parliament, one voice could sway the whole wonderful democratic process.2

2 Interview with Sylwia, a displaced person deported to the Soviet Union with her mother and arriving in Australia in 1950.
The intensity of both elite and popular Polish passion for the notion of the freedom of the individual has also been remarked upon by historians and by foreign observers.3

Underlying this notion of Polish democratic zeal is the tradition regarding the era known as the “golden freedom”, a time of political stability and a profound commitment to political and civil rights and freedoms.4 By the sixteenth century, the Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth possessed one of the most democratically advanced constitutional systems in Europe. The nobility enjoyed freedom of speech, freedom from arbitrary arrest and seizure of property, domiciliary rights and the right of limited taxation. They also enjoyed the right to vote in elections for the crown: power that they employed to reduce the monarchy to a figurehead.5 The crown had not been able to enact new laws without the consent of parliament since 1505.6 Like Sylwia, many Polish intellectuals have viewed the notorious liberium veto, by which a single voice could prevent the passing of new resolutions in the Polish parliament, as exemplifying Polish respect for individual rights.7 Freedom from persecution on the grounds of religious belief became law in 1572, more than two hundred years before it was introduced in France. Relative freedom from persecution was a central factor in the influx of Jewish immigrants to Poland.8 Poland also enjoyed a comparatively developed democratic intellectual tradition. One of Poland's greatest political and legal works, Andrzej Frycz-Modrzewski's Comenarii De Republica Emendanda (1551), for instance, advocated the equality of all citizens before the law, the protection of peasants against the abuse of power, and political and social reforms.9

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4 Dziewanowski, Poland in the Twentieth Century, pp. 14, 19.
6 Ibid., p. 6.
7 Dziewanowski, Poland in the Twentieth Century, pp. 16-17.
8 An extract from Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski, De Republica Emendanda, or On Improving the Commonwealth (1551), in Kridl, Wittlin and Malinowsky (eds), The Democratic Heritage of Poland, pp. 26-27.
This era of the "golden freedom" has tended to be idealised within the Polish nationalist tradition as if all Poles enjoyed these kinds of freedoms. The nobility, however, used its increasing power to limit the freedoms enjoyed by the peasant majority. The nobility in this era restricted village self-government, abolished the role of the village elders and absorbed their assets and privileges, expropriated peasant land, forced peasants to work on the great estates and limited their freedom of movement. By the seventeenth century, they had effectively turned the peasantry into serfs. The gentry also gradually absorbed the economic power of the small middle class, which undermined the political influence of that class.\(^\text{10}\)

Perhaps more importantly, however, reformers of the Polish democratic tradition argued mainly from a religious and nationalist point of view. The idea of equality and freedom for all citizens, regardless of race or religion, was still a long way off. Moreover, the position of women was not considered in this vision of equality for Poles. As the Polish preacher Piotr Skarga Poweski argued in the face of increasing serfdom among the peasantry in 1597, that evil law must be mentioned which makes yeomen, freeborn men, Poles and Christians, subject, and poor men slaves...whereby others do with them as they please, giving them no protection of their possessions or life and providing them with no court of justice to plead against their intolerable wrongs...and exercising over them a supreme domination at which we ourselves shudder...if they are Poles of the same blood, not Turks or Tartars, why do they groan in slavery?...He sits on thy soil, and if he misbehaves, drive him away from thy soil, but do not take his natural and Christian freedom away from him...we, faithful and holy Christians, forcefully coerce Poles of the same nation who have never been slaves...\(^\text{11}\)

The Polish democratic tradition, therefore, has been heavily idealised as if rights reserved for the men of the Polish nobility, and which were advocated primarily

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\(^{10}\) Dziewanowski, *Poland in the Twentieth Century*, pp. 20-21.
\(^{11}\) An extract from Piotr Skarga Poweski’s *Sermons Before the Diet* (1597), in Kridl, Wittlin and Malinowsky (eds), *The Democratic Heritage of Poland*, p. 30.
for Polish Catholic men, were enjoyed by all.

Partition, Romantic Nationalism and the Myth of Eternal Revolt

The most important element in the formation of Polish conceptions of nationhood and democracy, however, was not the "golden freedom" of the sixteenth century, but the partitioning of Poland in the eighteenth century. Poland was partitioned and under foreign occupation for more than a hundred years. This included the whole of the nineteenth century: the period in which both nationalism and the ideals of democracy and citizenship spread throughout Europe. The Poles, in effect, experienced the spread of both ideals, but not in the context of an actually existing nation state. Polish nationalism, deprived of a nation state, emphasised Polish ethnicity, culture, language and religion. In 1772, Russia, Austria and Prussia partitioned approximately a third of Polish territory. This prompted the Polish political elite to attempt to unify and strengthen the country through democratic reform. Polish reformers greatly expanded civil rights in the late eighteenth century and established a new national Constitution. The May Constitution of 1791 turned Poland into a hereditary monarchy, but also limited serfdom and gave peasants protection under the law. Male "townsmen" gained representation in the Polish parliament, the Diet, and freedom from arrest without a warrant. This Constitution was notable for its concern for the protection of individual liberties and the rule of law. However, a Russian army, supported by a small group of Polish noblemen opposed to reform, abolished the new constitution and reestablished serfdom. Poland was then partitioned for a second time by Russia and Prussia in 1792. The rulers of Russia and Prussia defended this interference as the containment of "Jacobinism" through Europe. A Polish uprising which again attempted to abolish serfdom led to a further military intervention by Russia and Prussia and the Third Partition of 1795. This was intended to ensure the

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14 Dziewanowski, *Poland in the Twentieth Century*, p. 27
destruction of Poland as a nation.\textsuperscript{16} Polish territory was divided by Russia, Prussia and Austria, and Poland ceased to be an independent nation until 1918.\textsuperscript{17} Poles were subjected to the absolute monarchies of Austria, Prussia (and later the German Empire), and Russia.\textsuperscript{18}

These events established a powerful national mythology of a perpetual struggle between Poland's democratic aspirations and its authoritarian, predatory neighbours. The May Constitution of 1791 is still celebrated in the form of a popular national day, both in Poland and among Polish migrants. Franciszka, who was a teenager when she was deported to Germany during World War II, explained the significance of the national holiday dedicated to this Constitution:

Even now we have the third of May. Every year we have this day... because Poland made the peasants free. That was very important, very important... The Constitution of the third of May was never really implemented because Poland was then divided by Russia, Prussia and Austria. But what happened is that we had it bloodless, not like the French who cut off heads of the intelligentsia. It was a bloodless Constitution where the peasants were freed.\textsuperscript{19}

A related but even more powerful national tradition, however, developed in the nineteenth century. Following the failed national uprising of 1830-1831, exiled revolutionaries, artists and especially poets created an intensely influential romantic tradition that became central to the popular ideal of the Polish nation. The mystical patriotism of this tradition was not only centred around folklore and legend, but was intimately bound up with Catholicism and religious passion. The idea that the Polish nation would be resurrected, an apparently hopeless cause, became a staple of Polish religious faith. The romantic poets were the authors of the notion that Poland was not merely the final frontier of Christian, western Europe in relation to the east, but had a

\textsuperscript{16} Dziewanowski, \textit{Poland in the Twentieth Century}, pp. 27, 28.
\textsuperscript{17} Benet, \textit{Song, Dance and Customs of Peasant Poland}, p. 27.
\textsuperscript{19} Interview with Franciszka, a displaced person deported to Germany and arriving in Australia with her husband in 1950.
messianic role. Adam Mickiewicz's *Books of the Polish Nation* (1832), in particular, portrayed Poland as the Christ of Nations. Poland, in this view, had a unique responsibility and burden to suffer in expiation of the sins of humankind, but also looked forward to a certain hope of resurrection. The romantics also helped to create the myth of eternal revolt, according to which it was the duty of each generation of Poles to take up armed struggle to free Poland from its invaders. The belief that determination to fight for national independence was a peculiarly Polish characteristic was common among participants in the interviewing project. As Paulina, a second-wave migrant, reflected on this tradition:

Polish people is very proud sometimes, you know, and they don't like pushing...For example, other countries were occupied by another country, it's okay, but Polish people, no - they always boiling over, they don't accept. Polish people afraid a bit but more determined, very strong. Polish people fighting, they like fighting. When you know history from Poland, many times Poland was occupied and people fighting.

**Women and the Polish “Nation”**

The partition period had enormous implications for ideals of Polish womanhood, and conceptions of their place within the Polish national tradition. Conditions for all Poles under the partitions varied considerably, with different political systems and levels of economic development. This creates the great difficulty of generalising about the roles of women in Polish society. However, the romantic nationalist tradition of the nineteenth century virtually deified motherhood. As Barbara Einhorn has argued, popular Polish traditions emphasising the image of the strong,

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22 Interview with Paulina, a political refugee who arrived in Australia with her husband and child in 1987, after a short stay in Austria.
suffering mother, trace back to the partition period. In this tradition, the Polish mother provided for her family as breadwinner, nurturer and head of the household, while her husband was fighting in nationalist uprisings or exiled to Siberia. The more the mother suffered and carried her cross in the cause of family and nation, the nobler she appeared.23

The romantic nationalist poets, in particular, created a striking imagery of suffering womanhood that quickly became merged with the powerful Marian tradition within Polish Catholicism. The subject nation of Poland was represented as the suffering, redemptive woman, Polonia. Polonia was identified especially with the Virgin Mary, the Holy Mother, crowned Queen of Poland.24 The figure of Polonia, repeatedly raped by occupation and partition by foreign powers, was central to the romantic notion of Poland's redemptive suffering: a female version of Poland as the “Christ of Nations”.25 Participants in the interviewing project frequently identified suffering for the homeland as a key element of being a “good Pole”. As Wanda, who had spent almost all her adult life in Poland, reflected,

To be a good Pole, I think there was the sacrifice I will find most appropriate. Our history is just horrible, if you think about it. Everywhere there is someone dying for their country, whole families suffer for their country, everyone suffer. And people try to suffer. They have this image that suffering is good, that to suffer is a privilege to do. And it’s not average, it’s an honour to suffer. It’s like everyone want to be the heroes.26

On a more pragmatic level, the partition period was crucial to Polish ideals of gender because it raised the status of middle and upper class Polish women considerably. This occurred within definite constraints. The rigidly patriarchal structure of the Polish family ordained the subordination of women. As Polish historian


24 Ibid., p. 222.

25 Ibid., pp. 228-229.

26 Interview with Wanda, a voluntary migrant who came to Australia in 1997 with her Australian husband. She answered in this way in response to the question “What ideas were there about what a good Polish person was like? What was special about being Polish?”
Anna Zarnowska has argued, the role of wife and mother determined the economic and social status of women at every level of the social hierarchy. Moreover, most impulses for reform of the condition of women were subordinated to the cause of national independence. The subordination of women was reinforced, as in other European countries, with reference to the sin of Eve, and the divine origin of male rule over women. Biblical stories were elaborated by folk tradition. One traditional story, for instance, suggested that when God took Adam's rib to make a woman, he left the rib drying in the sun. A wandering dog ran off with the rib in order to eat it. God was unable to catch the dog, but slammed a gate on its tail during the chase. The dog left the tail behind, and God made the woman from the dog's tail. Woman, therefore, was made to follow man, because she was made out of a tail. A level of misogyny also prevailed. The Polish word for a woman, "kobieta", was a term of abuse until the eighteenth century. Even today, notions which identify women as the possessions of men, and associate men with greater rationality and agency, remain deeply embedded in the Polish language. Upon marriage, a man "takes a wife" ("zenic sie"), while a woman is given to a husband ("wydawac za maz"). "Zona", the Polish word for "wife", comes from a Latin word which means to give birth, while both "mezczyzna" and "maz", man and husband, come from words related to thought. In the plural form of verbs, there is one form used for men, and another used when referring to women, animals and objects. There are still many, many more traditional Polish words for women that are derogatory than any equivalent for men.

However, the traditional identification of women with the home became a source of power when traditional forms of male power partially disintegrated following the partitions. As Bozena Uminska has argued,

with the disappearance of Poland as a state, there vanished a vast sphere of life where men played a dominant role (institutions of government, administration, education, etc.) and family and home became a place where all national values could - and had to - be hidden and preserved

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29 Newman, The Story of Poland, p. 113.
30 Reading, Polish Women, Solidarity and Feminism, p. 25.
future revival. Thus the role of woman was considerably enhanced...woman ruled the nineteenth-century Polish family...the only institution of national life on the territory once belonging to Poland.\textsuperscript{31}

Andrzej Wyrobisz has argued that during the partition period, the family replaced political and charitable institutions.\textsuperscript{32} The division between the private and public spheres, therefore, may have been relatively ambiguous. Moreover, armed revolt by the men, and repression of that revolt, meant many absent husbands and fathers, creating a significant number of woman-headed households. Whether men were present or absent, however, the private realm of the home, the acknowledged female sphere of influence, became the centre of Polish nationalism and ideals of national independence.\textsuperscript{33} With the destruction of the Polish state, great emphasis was placed on the preservation of the Polish language and of the stories that comprised the nationalist tradition. Children learned Polish language and history at home mainly from their mothers. These roles created a strong identification of women with the survival of the nation, and this raised the status of women.\textsuperscript{34}

This new veneration of women occurred predominantly within the middle and upper class intelligentsia. The peasants did not necessarily share these views.\textsuperscript{35} Moreover, the German historian Natali Stegmann has criticised the emphasis on women as national heroines in the historiography of women in Polish society. She has argued that this portrayal has paid little attention to social class, and has also neglected women from national minorities, as well as prostitutes, “immoral women” and “bad” mothers. In particular, this historiography has tended to neglect the fact that Polish society in this period was predominantly rural and agrarian, and that most women were peasants.\textsuperscript{36}

If the partition period raised the status of peasant women at all, it would have


\textsuperscript{33} Reading, Polish Women, Solidarity and Feminism, pp. 20, 24.

\textsuperscript{34} Newman, The Story of Poland, p. 127.

\textsuperscript{35} Benet, Song, Dance, and Customs of Peasant Poland, p. 35.

risen from a very low level. Daughters were regarded as temporary members of families who would one day marry and require a dowry. \(^37\) While male children could have some voice in family affairs, this was not the case for girls. \(^38\) Women of all classes, but especially peasant women, were expected to marry or be considered a failure. Once a woman married, however, she lost much of the relative freedom she enjoyed as a young girl. As Polish ethnologist Benet noted regarding the low status of women within peasant traditions,

Technically she is in fact the property of her husband and he generally exercises his authority physically as well as morally. Wife beating is the rule rather than the exception — ‘If you don’t beat your wife, her liver starts to rot’...The woman has also a limited sphere of independence, which she may manage to extend. In strictly household matters, her rule is underwritten by the force of the proverbs: ‘The woman keeps three corners of the hut and the man only one’...This authority does not extend to family affairs. The husband can exercise sole sway in serious discipline of the children and decisions about inheritance or marriage settlement...each woman must win her own measure of autonomy against the pattern set up by the accepted forms, and not all succeed in the struggle...According to a popular proverb, ‘A hen is not a bird and a woman is not a human being’. \(^39\)

The subordination of women was partially mitigated for women of higher social status, or more property, than their husbands. \(^40\) There were also, however, new opportunities for peasant and working class women in the nineteenth century. While the poets were idealising women who suffered at home and waited for husbands to return, Polish women were establishing a new emphasis on participation in paid work. The law had traditionally allowed women to inherit and hold property. \(^41\) Jewish women were often involved in businesses, partly in order to free their men for religious

\(^{37}\) Benet, *Song, Dance and Customs of Peasant Poland*, p. 192.

\(^{38}\) Ibid., pp. 108-109.

\(^{39}\) Ibid., pp. 176-176.


learning. The industrialising cities increasingly provided new avenues for paid work. In the Kingdom of Poland, women made up more than 49 per cent of textile workers, more than 45 per cent of paper manufacturing workers, and approximately 40 per cent of the timber industry workforce. Zarnowska has noted that most female workers were supplementing income brought in by a male breadwinner. Moreover, working conditions for women were significantly worse than for men. There were large numbers of single women, with their marital status often enforced by the structure of their work as domestic servants and unskilled labourers on irregular wages. Their situation contributed to the depression of wages and working conditions for women more generally. However, by the end of the nineteenth century, women headed 5 per cent of all working class families in the Kingdom of Poland. In large cities such as Warsaw, one tenth of proletarian households were headed by women working in factories, shops, commerce and restaurants.

In the late nineteenth century, Polish women also began to participate far more actively in the public sphere. Writers such as Eliza Orzeszkowa (1841-1910), Maria Konopnicka (1842-1910) and Gabriela Zapolska (1857-1921) advocated the emancipation of women in novels and plays. Opportunities for this were greater in the Prussian areas than in the Russian-controlled regions, and women were often involved in campaigns for national independence. Women were explicitly excluded from membership of political parties in Austrian Galicia, and from standing for political office. Only a very small number of women who paid national direct taxes were able to vote. Such women could not vote if they were married, and husbands and plenipotentiaries voted on their behalf. However, in the 1890s, a recognisably

46 Ibid., p. 198.
49 Irena Homola-Skapska, "Galicia: Initiatives for Emancipation of Polish Women", in Jaworski and Bianka Pietrow-Ennker (eds), Women in Polish Society, pp. 85-86.
feminist movement emerged in Austrian Galicia, campaigning for equal pay and for access to university education. These women eventually won the right to grammar school and university-level education for women.

Polish feminists campaigned into the twentieth century, and their aspirations turned to the attainment of the vote. In 1905, they submitted a petition for female suffrage that included twelve thousand signatures. Feminists in Austrian Galicia set up schools, cooperatives and day-care centres. In the Russian-controlled provinces, women were the main impetus behind the revolt against Russification and the ban on Polish language in schools. In the Kingdom of Poland, women were involved in the establishment of clandestine secondary and higher education that enabled other women to become teachers. Working class women in Warsaw organised strikes and demonstrations, and were active in the Polish Socialist Party in the early 1900s.

Women, the most famous of whom was Rosa Luxemburg, were also involved in the Social Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania, further to the left of the political spectrum. Feminist activism was not limited to urban areas. The United Circle of Women Landowners, founded in 1895, campaigned for education and better conditions for Polish peasant women, and had over two thousand members in one hundred and three chapters by 1911. The same years saw the establishment of the Polish Association for Women's Emancipation and the Union for Women's Emancipation. The organisers of these associations described them as dedicated to improving the sad...conditions, facilitating women's education, which would put them on an equal footing with men in terms of vocational training. Another of their goals is to spread in society the ideals of justice and justifiability of the new women's demands; society

should educate her to be a citizen fully responsible for her actions, develop her political and social commitment...\textsuperscript{58}

By 1913, at least thirty women's organisations were operating in the Russian provinces. Nine professional and trade associations for women included over three thousand four hundred members in Warsaw alone.\textsuperscript{59} The Association for the Equal Rights of Polish Women was formed in 1907, and campaigned for civil and political rights equal to those of men for Polish women in all partitions.\textsuperscript{60}

The increasing activism of Polish women within the public sphere also extended to the creation of the unusual Polish tradition of women participating in direct combat. As Chapter Three of this thesis indicated, women in Australia have never performed direct combat roles in the military. In Poland, however, women began to serve with formal military units early in the twentieth century. Robert Ponichtera has noted that women joined the Polish Socialist Party's Combat Organisation in the early 1900s, as well as women's units in the paramilitary arms of nationalist organisations.\textsuperscript{61} During World War I, women served as military auxiliaries. Polish women served in women's units of the Polish Army and the Polish Riflemen's Association, and with other women's groups such as the Women's League and the Polish Women's Circle. Their main role in these contexts was to support the male combatants by fundraising, and by feeding and sheltering troops.\textsuperscript{62} Women also worked throughout the war as couriers, journalists, nurses, clerks, commissaries and spies, as they did in other countries.\textsuperscript{63}

There was only limited support in Polish society for the idea of women in combat as the norm. Their presence was, if anything, a sign of utterly desperate times. Desperate times, however, quickly followed the end of World War I. The Polish declaration of national independence in 1918 was followed by a series of battles to establish its borders. The first battleground of the newly independent state was the defence of Lwow against the Ukrainians. In this context, the regular army was fighting


\textsuperscript{59} Ponichtera, "Feminists, Nationalists and Soldiers", p. 21.

\textsuperscript{60} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 22.

\textsuperscript{61} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 20, 22.

\textsuperscript{62} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 22-23.

\textsuperscript{63} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 24.
elsewhere. There were very few able-bodied young men. A volunteer army was made up of old men and boys, but there were no male reserves to replace them. Female volunteers acted as reinforcements. As Bernard Newman was told during his tour of Poland shortly before World War II:

...it is an ancient tradition in Poland that the woman's place in war is not only the hospital ward or even at the plough. Reinforcements marched into the trenches of Lwow, companies of women and girls. Thousands of them fought as gallantly as their men, hundreds of them died on the field of battle.64

Lwow was not an isolated incident. During the height of the 1918-1921 war to establish the borders of the newly independent Poland, the Women's Volunteer League served at parts of the front as gunners in the infantry and in field artillery units. Anywhere between two thousand five hundred and ten thousand women served in the Volunteer League.65 As Newman stated in 1940,

Every man in Poland can tell stories of the amazing courage of the women of Poland in the long struggle for Polish liberty. Pilsudski allotted them posts of danger in the early days of his organisation, and they never failed him. When Poland was reborn and its army re-created, the world was astonished to hear that every woman of active age was liable to mobilisation beside the men. In theory they were to take over the work of the communications behind the lines, but in practice it was recognised that Polish women might again be called upon to shed their blood for their country. And they did.66

The battle for Lwow, however, has a special significance. Women fought in direct combat in the very battle that signified the birth of the independent state. The female soldier has become a significant figure within Polish nationalism. The status of the battle for Lwow as the first in the fight for independence made the cemetery for these defenders so significant to Poles that the body of the Unknown Soldier was chosen from

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there. The body of Poland's Unknown Soldier, therefore, may well be female.  

**Women, Polish Citizenship and the New Polish State**

Polish citizenship traditions emphasised Polish ethnicity and culture, and sacrifice for national independence, rather than a particular set of citizenship rights. The establishment of an independent and democratic state from 1918-1921, however, introduced the kinds of political, civil and social rights now recognised as basic to modern citizenship. The right to vote was granted to all citizens of Poland, of both sexes, at twenty-one years.  

Elections were held within weeks of independence. As well as an elected central government, there was limited self-government on a local level. Aside from the capital city of Warsaw, Poland was divided into provinces, which were sub-divided into districts. Districts enjoyed limited self-government. Individual villages also appointed their village "leader" in five-year periods. The governor of each province, however, was appointed by the central government. Social rights were entrenched with the declaration of the eight-hour working day, and the institution of a system of social security. Compulsory education at elementary level was introduced in 1919. Participants in the interviewing project remembered only the introduction of compulsory education, as this affected them personally. Krystyna, who was a child in the 1920s, recalled the changes:

> For a long time, in my father's time, it wasn't compulsory for children to go to school. It all depended on the parents. If the parents were well off enough to send their children, they went to school and learned. Some of the wealthier people could send their children to higher schools, some of them just finished primary school so they could read and write, like my mother was. But when I was a child, this schooling became compulsory and every child have to go to school and finish the seven years of school.

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70 Dziewanowski, *Poland in the Twentieth Century*, p. 77.  
at least. They had to. I don't know if they be punishing people or not if they didn't go, but I remember it was very strict.72

The Constitution created by the new parliament in 1921 guaranteed an extensive set of political, civil and social rights. The Constitution even created, not merely the traditional Polish ideal of democracy for ethnic Poles, but a kind of multicultural modern state, with cultural rights for minorities. In Australia at this time, the population was overwhelmingly of British ethnicity, and notions of citizenship and national identity were culturally and racially based. Poland, however, had gained territory from Russia, Austria-Hungary and Germany, and more than 30 per cent of the population was not of Polish ethnicity.73 The 1931 population census found that ethnic Germans made up 2.3 per cent of the population, Jews 8.7 per cent, and Ukrainians and Belorussians concentrated in the new eastern territories around 17 per cent.74 The 1921 Constitution was highly explicit on the subject of all these new rights:

The Republic of Poland assures within its boundaries absolute protection of life, liberty and possession to all, regardless of descent, nationality, language, race or religion...All citizens are equal in the face of the law. Public offices are accessible to all equally...No one may be deprived of the right to trial...Poland recognises all property whether private or collective as of the most important principles of the social structure and lawful order...Every citizen has the right to State protection over his work, and in case of unemployment, sickness, accident or incapacity, the right to social security...Every citizen has the right to free expression of thought and conviction...Freedom of the press is guaranteed. Citizens have the right of cooperation and assembly, and the right to form societies and unions...Every citizen has the right to retain his own nationality and his own language and national character.75

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72 Interview with Krystyna, a displaced person deported to the Soviet Union with both parents and arriving in Australia in 1986, after long term settlement in England.
75 The Constitution of March 17, 1921, in Kridl, Wittlin and Malinowsky (eds), The Democratic Heritage of Poland, pp. 145-145.
The new Polish state also supported some of the aspirations of women to equal citizenship. After World War I, women outnumbered men in Poland at the ratio 107 to 100 in 1921, and 105 to 100 by 1939.\textsuperscript{76} This ratio may have helped women in their campaigns for greater equality. Women over the age of twenty-one had gained the right to vote, and the new regime formally committed itself to female equality under the law.\textsuperscript{77} The number of professional and university educated women increased dramatically. Women began to stand for the Polish upper and lower houses of parliament. Although they succeeded in comprising only between 2 and 5 per cent of representatives,\textsuperscript{78} they were more than twenty years ahead of Australian women in this respect. Polish women also gained maternity allowances and other legal milestones.\textsuperscript{79} 

Outside industrial and urban centres such as Warsaw, Lodz and Silesia, however, Poland remained overwhelmingly rural and agrarian, and the Catholic and peasant traditions regarding female subordination were central to social life.\textsuperscript{80} As Krystyna remembered, although female children were being sent to school, adult peasant women were not usually educated, and the old ways continued in the countryside for a long time:

My mother wasn't educated. She didn't go to school like me. She was taught to write and read. In those days they said the girls didn't have to have education because girls usually been housewives. They got married and they had to do the housework. But men had to have the education. My grandfather, all the sons were educated, they all got good jobs, but none of the girls did. Only two last ones did basic school. The men were very much the boss, very much decision making. Most of the men used to make decisions, do everything, and the woman was there to bring up the children, to run the house, feed the chickens and do the veggie garden, do things like that. She was busy in the house. But


\textsuperscript{77} Einhorn, \textit{Cinderella Goes to Market}, pp. 12-13


\textsuperscript{79} Reading, \textit{Polish Women, Solidarity and Feminism}, pp. 163, 164.

\textsuperscript{80} Einhorn, \textit{Cinderella Goes to Market}, pp. 12-13
decision-making was a man.

For working women, moreover, the female wage was still between 50 and 70 per cent of the equivalent male wage by the late 1920s. Both nationalist sentiments and military considerations continued to favour a high birth rate. As in Australia, middle class women in all areas were generally expected to cease working after marriage and be supported by a male breadwinner. Almost all the mothers of women participating in the interviewing project were housewives who had engaged in paid employment only before marriage:

Before the war in Poland it was unheard for the housewife to work. It was the man breadwinner and that was that, and the women would be home with children...My mother, she wasn't working. When she was single, she was a professional seamstress...But on marriage they would stop. Most of them, when they got married, very soon they had a family.

For women from minority populations such as Ukrainians, Belorussians and Jews, the trend towards greater equality was complicated by their ethnic status. Gizela, who was born in the late 1920s, remembered the Poland of her childhood as united by the euphoria of independence:

They think it was very nice, very good because Poland was occupied by Prussia, Russia or Germany, and after that since 1918, it was Poland free again, after such a long time. And everybody was very happy, and especially my mum who was very patriotic and it was young again country. Many things was very hard, but everybody was happy, these people was again free and whole country was together again.

However, despite this wave of national feeling, and despite the enlightened words of the

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82 Interview with Olesia, a displaced person deported to Germany and used for forced labour after the Warsaw Uprising of 1944. She arrived in Australia with her husband in 1949.
Polish Constitution, there was a competing definition of Polish citizenship as the right of the ethnic Poles, rather than of all those who lived within the borders of Poland. There was a popular nationalist sentiment, harking back to the chauvinism of the romantic nationalist tradition, which emphasised citizenship as membership of a nation of ethnic Poles, rather than of a multinational state.

The Catholic Church, in particular, was central to this popular nationalist ideology. The Church was a great power in the inter-war period. The teaching of Catholicism was compulsory in all schools, priests were state employees, and the Church was the biggest single owner of land and buildings. As Katy, a second-wave migrant with strong views on the historical role of the Church in Poland, reflected,

Church in Poland had a very, very dark history. Before the second war, there was no institution turning without Church. They overpower everything...They have enormous treasures in Poland. They have land, they have beautiful ancient buildings. They have everything.

Catholics had constituted a religious minority in the Russian and German controlled territories during the partitions, and the Catholic Church had always been the main focus of resistance to foreign religious and political influence. The Church also had close ties with the intensely nationalistic and semi-fascist National Democratic Party, which aimed for a national-Catholic state of ethnic Poles that excluded the national minorities from any real power.

The picture for the implementation of the formally equal rights of national minorities, therefore, was mixed. From 1923, the Lanckorona Pact ensured the dominance of the Polish majority:

in...local and state government the Polish national element must be preserved. The Polish majority must be the basis of any parliamentary

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83 Benet, *Song, Dance and Customs of Peasant Poland*, p. 221.
84 Interview with Katy, a political refugee who came to Australia with her husband in 1981, after a short stay in Libya.
majority and the government should be formed only by Poles...Polish youth must have the opportunity to be educated at the universities, in professional and high schools, according to a fair nationality percentage...the Polish population must be given an adequate share of government contracts, jobs and concession...government administration in border territories should try to bring change in the direction of strengthening national and governmental spirit.\(^{86}\)

However, in 1925, despite rising anti-Semitism, the Ugoda Pact acknowledged Jewish allegiance to Poland and allowed Polish Jews to run their own schools and conduct their affairs in their own language.\(^{87}\)

The vision of Poland as a modern democratic state was hopelessly compromised by the Polish situation throughout the 1920s. World War I devastated Polish territory and the Polish economy. The new regime, whatever its ideals, was administratively weak. It was also inexperienced in the ways of government. A particular problem was the inability of the three regions of Poland formerly incorporated into Prussia, Russia and Austria to form a single economic unit. They struggled to overcome the widely differing systems of money and credit, civil and commercial legislation that were the legacy of the partitions.\(^{88}\) As Sylwia reflected,

Because of our neighbours, the taste of freedom was so short...It's no wonder that when we got our freedom after the First World War, we didn't know how to manage it. It's like a baby learning to walk. We had to rebuild everything.

The feudal tradition in Poland had ensured that almost half of all arable land was owned by landed nobility who constituted less than 1 per cent of the population, while about 60 per cent of farms were too small to support a single family. Distance between rigid social classes was strictly observed, despite a strong tradition of equality between


\(^{88}\) Dziewanowski, \textit{Poland in the Twentieth Century}, pp. 86-87, 89.
individuals of the same class. As Franciszka, who came from a wealthy family, remembered this class system,

In Poland, the strata was very much like in England - the very high, the intelligentsia, the middle class, the factory workers and the peasants. Poor people had to work. They were servants in the houses. Everybody had a servant, so they came usually from the country...The peasant had their holding, and when they had three sons they were allowed to divide it to give to each son so they became smaller and smaller and the children could never make a living. So they went to the city and worked in factories or became servants in houses. Every house had a servant.

In this context, land reform became highly contentious, and increasingly virulent struggles between the ideological forces of the left and right created intense political instability. These fundamental problems, combined with the system of quasi-proportional representation in the Polish parliament, resulted in frequent changes of government as unstable alliances rose and fell. There were eighteen governments in less than eight years. The fragility of the new state was increased by its geopolitical position. Poland had gained its independence when Germany and Austria-Hungary were defeated in 1918, and Russia was weakened by revolution and then civil war. However, once Germany and the Soviet Union began to recover their strength, Poland's hard won independence was once again under threat. The threat to Polish independence and the turmoil within Poland's new civil and political institutions drove Poland towards increasing political paralysis. The national state dreamed of for so long was at risk, and democracy was sacrificed to its survival.

Poland was ready for domination by a charismatic leader. Polish political rights were steadily eroded from 1926, when the military Marshal and hero of the struggle for independence, Joseph Pilsudski, carried out a successful military coup. Many Poles welcomed this, as Pilsudski was generally venerated as the father of the nation. As

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89 Benet, *Song, Dance, and Customs of Peasant Poland*, pp. 32-33.
90 Dziewanowski, *Poland in the Twentieth Century*, pp. 86-87, 89.
Krystyna remembered,

Pilsudski was to us like a hero. When the first war was on, and Russians used to fight against Poland, we been on the brink to lose our country. And when he was a young man he organised the legion, and that's where my father was, and it was because of him that we regained freedom of our country from twenty years. So to us he was a symbol. He was a very great patriot for a start. He believed in freedom and he brought that freedom. He loved his country, he loved his soldiers, and he loved children. I remember we used to see the photographs and people telling us what he was like. He was like a father to us.

The result of Pilsudski’s coup was the “Sanacja” (“moral cleansing”) regime, an authoritarian government with a functioning parliament, including active opposition parties, in a system Pilsudski described as “directed democracy”. The Constitution of 1921 was amended to allow President Pilsudski to issue decrees when the Sejm was not in session and submit them for approval later, and also to dissolve the Sejm, even without its consent. There were still, however, important limits on his power. The early years of the Pilsudski regime were relatively moderate and concerned mainly with economic issues, foreign policy and the army. Pilsudski was originally a member of the Polish Socialist Party, but he became strongly anti-Communist and repressed groups who wanted a more extensive model of social rights, in the form of more radical social policy and land reform. He also instituted greater censorship of the press. However, he also opposed National Democratic attempts to deny the rights of the national minorities, and tried to limit the effects of rising anti-Semitism and discrimination against national minorities.

In the 1930s, however, the Sanacja regime became increasingly repressive and
political, civil and social rights for Polish citizens were circumscribed. Even “directed
democracy” became once again paralysed by the struggle between the Sejm and the
Pilsudski government. In 1930, opposition leaders were imprisoned and Pilsudski
increased the use of military men in both the government and its civil administration.
Military officers took over most provincial governorships, and also became prominent
in the state sector of the economy.\textsuperscript{98} As well as her own reading of Polish history,
Sylwia had been told about this period by her relatives:

My husband’s father was a lawyer, and he used to say that we had a very
conservative government in the last few years before the War. The army
was running the government. The first story was that this Marshal
Pilsudski was an army person, very clever, but he got very senile at the
end, and the army was running the government. Anyone who was
against them was ignored in the first place, and then on the national
holidays they would be marched off to prison for a few days, so that they
wouldn’t be able to protest too much.

As the depression in the world economy reached Poland, the government was granted
powers of legislation by decree. Both civil and political rights were limited at the same
time as the ability of the regime to maintain its systems of economic security
crumbled.\textsuperscript{99} A bloody “pacification” programme was carried out among ethnic
Ukrainians in 1930.\textsuperscript{100} After a hopeful beginning, female political participation
decreased, and by 1935 there were only two female deputies in the Sejm.\textsuperscript{101}

The social and economic conditions under which women were exercising their
remaining citizenship rights and raising families were desperate. By the 1930s,
industrial wage earners had risen to 29 per cent of the population.\textsuperscript{102} However, national
income per head of population was one of the lowest in Europe.\textsuperscript{103} Real wages

\textsuperscript{98} Dziewanowski, \textit{Poland in the Twentieth Century}, p. 92 and Leslie, Polonsky, Ciechanowski and
Pelczynski, \textit{The History of Poland Since 1863}, p. 177.

\textsuperscript{99} Leslie, Polonsky, Ciechanowski and Pelczynski, \textit{The History of Poland Since 1863}, p. 177.

\textsuperscript{100} Budurowycz, “Poland and the Ukrainian Problem”, p. 487.

\textsuperscript{101} Regulska, “Women and Power in Poland”, p. 177.

\textsuperscript{102} Benet, \textit{Song, Dance, and Customs of Peasant Poland}, p. 32.

\textsuperscript{103} Marcus, \textit{Social and Political History of the Jews in Poland}, p. 22.
improved in the 1930s as food prices fell faster than wages, but the official unemployment rate of non-farm workers was 25 per cent, and continued to rise throughout the 1930s.\textsuperscript{104} As conditions in the countryside, too, deteriorated, peasants became increasingly involved in unrest and, finally, peasant strikes.\textsuperscript{105} Polish homes were heavily overcrowded, with more than 80 per cent of villagers and more than 55 per cent of townspeople living in rooms which housed at least two people, and usually three or four. About one tenth of urban homes were in attics or cellars.\textsuperscript{106} By 1931, more than 80 per cent of homes had no running water or sewer connection, more than 60 per cent had no electricity and more than 90 per cent had no gas. Village houses usually had none of these facilities.\textsuperscript{107} Franciszka, who was brought up in Lodz in the 1930s remembered the condition of factory workers as desperate:

There were a lot of poor people, underpaid, especially in cotton mills in my town. It's famous for cotton mills. There must have been about forty thousand employed by these factories alone. They lived in tenements, they lived almost underground, not quite underground, halfway. They lived like this - very poorly. The men drank because it was such an unhappy situation for them, they couldn't afford anything. So they drank the money away and the women had nothing to live on or feed the children with. It was quite terrible, quite terrible.

After Pilsudski's death, political rights became so limited that they were scarcely worth exercising for all but the elite. In 1935, Pilsudski's successors instituted a new dictatorial constitution based on the "solidarity of the elite". The Constitution declared that the President was responsible only to "God and history", and that the government, both houses of parliament, the armed forces and other key bodies were subject to him. He was able to veto laws approved by the Sejm, and any changes to the Constitution.\textsuperscript{108}

The President was to be elected by an electoral college selected mainly by parliament. However, an outgoing President could also choose his own candidate and call for a

\textsuperscript{104} Ibid., pp. 23-24.
\textsuperscript{105} Gross, Polish Society Under German Occupation, p. 17.
\textsuperscript{106} Marcus, Social and Political History of the Jews in Poland, p. 183.
\textsuperscript{107} Ibid., pp. 183-184.
universal vote to choose between the two candidates. The term the "solidarity of the elite" becomes clear in the methods of election for the two houses of parliament. Candidates for the lower house were to be nominated only by electoral assemblies, composed mostly of representatives from territorial, economic and professional governing bodies. The voting age was raised to twenty-four years, while the minimum age for lower house deputies was raised to thirty years. In the upper house, one third of Senators would be nominated by the President, and the other two thirds by electoral colleges. Even more significantly, voters for these electoral colleges were limited to "elite" individuals who had university degrees, were officers in the armed forces, held particular offices, and the like. Individual liberties were formally subordinated to the "general good", and the power of the President was further increased. The elections of 1936 were boycotted by most political parties, and for the first time since 1918, the majority of Polish citizens did not vote. Even in 1928, the first election following the 1926 coup, approximately 78 per cent of the eligible population had voted, but in 1936, only 46.5 per cent did so. In some regions, participation was much lower: only 23 per cent of the population of Warsaw voted. Repression of active dissent increased through the 1930s, and a number of women involved in the Communist Party, in particular, were imprisoned in the late 1930s.

Polish citizens, however, were not simply oppressed: they were also oppressors, as the citizenship rights of the Jews, in particular, were increasingly denied. Anti-Semitism had long been a popular prejudice endured by Poland's three and a half million Jews. Teresa Kulak and Krysztof Kawalec have argued that anti-Semitism was in fact a sign of the weakness of a Polish national identity defined in terms of religion, language, tradition and culture. Despite the prevalence of anti-Semitism, a number of participants in the interviewing project remembered friendly relations

110 Ibid., pp. 260-261.
112 Leslie, Polonsky, Ciechanowski and Pelczynski, The History of Poland Since 1863, p. 188.
114 Benet, Song, Dance and Customs of Peasant Poland, p. 27.
between Poles and Jews, particularly between children. Ewa, who attended school in the 1930s, remembered friendships, but also described the Jews in words which echoed the prevailing stereotypes:

In the school, before war, I have friends, yes. There were six Jewish girls in my class, and two boys. The Jews were everywhere - they have shops, they have streets even. You could recognise them straight away, they did look different – their nose is different and their hair long. Today everyone, the boys, have hair long, but before the war only the Jewish men have long hair. And the girls in the school, they say straight away ‘We are Jewish’. They never hiding that. We were very good friends, always, right through school.\(^{116}\)

The new military government, however, was effectively semi-fascist, and a split within the Sanacja regime allowed for the increasing influence of the openly anti-Semitic Nationalist Party, formerly the National Democrats. Pilsudski’s successors attempted to broaden their political support and silence their nationalist critics by instituting increasingly anti-Semitic policies.\(^{117}\) The Constitution of 1935 formally guaranteed equality of civil rights for Jews and other national minorities, but the actual citizenship rights of the national minorities, and especially of the Jews, deteriorated steadily. By the 1930s, four-fifths of Jewish families were below the poverty line. Unemployed Jews were deprived of the right to financial support from the government, and were excluded from the public projects designed to help the unemployed.\(^{118}\) In June 1936, economic boycott of Jewish shops became official government policy, and created an environment in which the pogroms of 1936 and 1937 could occur.\(^{119}\) The government moved increasingly towards national-totalitarianism and anti-Semitism became official policy in all areas of national life.\(^{120}\) Political rhetoric stressed the need

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\(^{116}\) Interview with Ewa, a “voluntary” migrant who, with her husband, became stranded in Australia during a short holiday in 1962.


\(^{120}\) Marcus, *Social and Political History of the Jews in Poland*, p. 355.
for unity among Catholic Polish patriots to counter the threat to the nation of Jews and Communists.\textsuperscript{121} In 1937 and 1938, professional associations began excluding Jewish members. The exclusion of Jews from employment in the government sector was almost total.\textsuperscript{122} Significantly, government speeches no longer referred to Polish "citizens", a term which included the Jews and other national minorities, but to "compatriots", a term which referred to ethnic Poles only.\textsuperscript{123}

The political, civil and social rights of citizenship were all strictly limited in the last years of the 1930s. Even the last remaining meaning of citizenship, membership of an independent nation state, however, was coming to an end. The political atmosphere within Poland was one of gathering crisis as the threat of war intensified. As the Polish Labour Movement stated in its 1937 "Memorandum" to the President,

...all illusions of security and peace are shattered. The threat of an immediate outbreak of war faces us, and war-mongers who lie in wait for other people's territory and freedom will certainly not be deterred by its horrors...The already proverbial poverty of the villages has assumed in some parts of the country the proportions of a disaster affecting thousands of people, thousands of families...the nation has been forced into a political system long condemned and rejected by the majority of the people - the system of voting privileges for the ruling groups and police repression of anyone outside these groups...Manifestations of violence...have become rampant...\textsuperscript{124}

Within two years, as the German and Soviet armies occupied Poland in 1939, the new nation returned to its previous condition of foreign occupation and partition.

A number of the women I interviewed were well informed and articulate about Poland's history and citizenship traditions, which were historically and culturally specific and somewhat different to those of Australia. Polish citizenship traditions

\textsuperscript{121} Ibid., p. 362-363.
\textsuperscript{122} Ibid., p. 366.
\textsuperscript{123} Ibid., p. 418.
\textsuperscript{124} Memorandum of the Polish Labour Movement to the President of the Republic of Poland (1937), in Kridl, Wittlin and Malinowsky (eds), The Democratic Heritage of Poland, p. 175.
emphasised democratic aspirations, but also intense nationalism and willingness to suffer for national independence. Deprived during the partition period of an existing nation state, they also emphasised Polish ethnicity and culture rather than an inclusive system of rights. The status of women in Polish culture was generally low, and impulses for reform in this respect were subordinated to the cause of national freedom. Although the nationalist tradition sometimes portrayed women as nationalist heroines, this was largely limited to veneration of motherhood and female suffering. The establishment of an independent state supported a new discourse of citizenship that guaranteed political, civil and social rights, allowed cultural rights for minorities and enabled some progress towards female equality and participation in the public sphere. Within twenty years, however, Poland shifted from a democratic state with guaranteed citizenship rights for all within its borders to a Polish-national state with very few guaranteed rights for anyone. Racism, discrimination against minorities and political elitism were inscribed within Polish law. Formal membership of the Polish state as citizens signified very little when what mattered was membership of a community of ethnic Poles dominated by an authoritarian regime. In 1939, even national independence was lost. The fragile mechanisms for female equality, and the last remaining protections for ethnic Poles and minorities alike, disappeared with the nation state they had required for their existence.
"We had no rights": Polish Women During World War II

For women in Poland during World War II, citizenship existed mainly in the highly specific sense of subjective identification with the Polish nation. World War II began with the destruction of the Polish nation state in 1939. An agreement between Hitler and Stalin to partition Poland was followed by the almost simultaneous invasions of the German and Soviet armies. Women from all parts of Poland were effectively denied all citizenship rights. They experienced forced changes in nationality, totalitarian control, economic exploitation, and deportation. Some of these women made their way to Australia, either as displaced persons after the War, or subsequently, as voluntary migrants. Thirteen participants in the interviewing project were in Poland when World War II began. Seven were deported to the Soviet Union, and two were deported to Germany. The others remained in Poland throughout the War. For all of these women, the denial of all rights was a formative experience in both their personal pasts and in their conceptions of citizenship.

In 1939, Poland was divided virtually in half, along very similar lines to the Third Partition of 1795. The Germans controlled twenty-two million of a whole population of approximately thirty-five million. Upper Silesia, Polish Pomerania and parts of central Poland such as Lodz, were incorporated into the German Reich.¹ This area was not devastated by the fighting, as other parts of Poland were, although Franciszka, a teenager in 1939, remembered fears and alarms:

I was fourteen. I was made in charge in case gas was dropped. My grandmother in the back of her bedroom had a tiny little room, it had no

windows, and that was where everything was kept - the gauzes, the gas masks. I had to put water in special solutions and I was in charge of that. And I remember my father came one day, the first of September or the second of September. He came running from the street into the house and said 'gas, gas is coming, gas is coming', and I went into this little room and I started soaking the materials in this special solution to put into the gas masks. But nothing like that happened - it was just a rumour. We were very afraid. My city wasn't at all bombed - maybe two or three bombs fell. Not like Warsaw.²

Łódź was destroyed, however, by other means. Polish citizens were divided according to National Socialist biological theories, with those of German ethnicity included within the German master race. Ethnic Germans were granted German citizenship. The mass of the population were designated simply "people under German protection", and had virtually no rights at all.³

The second-class status of ethnic Poles within these areas is illustrated by the closure of educational institutions other than primary schools and some vocational schools. This was to ensure that Poles would have no opportunity to gain higher education or high status employment. A memorandum by Heinrich Himmler, head of the S.S., instructed that Polish children should complete only four grades, that their being taught to read was not necessary, and that all that was required of them was to be able to sign their names and learn obedience towards Germans.⁴ Polish children, in effect, were to learn to be second-class citizens in a German empire. Anna, who was also a teenager at this time, remembered ethnic Germans being forced to choose their nationality and the lower status of ethnic Poles:

² Interview with Franciszka, a displaced person deported to Germany and arriving in Australia with her husband in 1950.
The Germans came to Lodz. There was very big tank, very big German soldier. And people, German people who live in Poland – it was very sad, but they eat always Polish bread and now they feel German. I had uncle who had German name and they ask him to register as a German; but he decided he was a Pole. The Germans closed all the school in Poland. For Poland it was no school. He say the Polish people are lower people. They must not learn. They can work as peasant, as worker in factory. I stopped school, and I must work. I work very hard as metalworker in a factory. I worked twelve hours a day and next time twelve hours at night, with machines. It was very hard work.⁵

There was great suffering in these territories. Mass executions, arrests and deportations to concentration camps or to the remaining Polish territories were carried out throughout the war years. The German invaders targeted prominent citizens and the intelligentsia in order to deprive the Poles of any potential political elite. All Polish enterprises and farms were taken under German control, and the Polish standard of living plummeted. Poles had effectively lost all citizenship rights, but one duty as members of the German Reich remained: the men were made liable for military service.⁶ The War had an impact even on those who did not experience it personally. For women such as Paulina, who was born after the War, their family histories were rich with stories of suffering, heroism and lucky escapes:

When my grandfather live in Silesia, was occupied by the Germans, and everybody have to speak Germany. School was also Germany. My grandfather was educated. Because he was educated he was in the camp, my grandfather and also my uncles - Ravensbruk in Bavaria, Buchenwald-Ravensbruk in Germany...When he finished school, my father had to go to military school, but German military. And my father changed, he had another name, he put moustache different, and he never

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⁵ Interview with Anna, a voluntary migrant who came to Australia to join her daughter, a political refugee, in 1996.
come back, of course.7

Citizenship in the Government-General

The German-occupied areas not incorporated into the Reich were formed into a “Government-General” and placed under German administration. This territory was increased when Hitler’s invasion of the Soviet Union enabled him to add eastern Galicia to the Government-General, increasing its population from around twelve million to sixteen million people.8 In the Government-General, Polish government administration and almost all voluntary associations were dissolved.9 Polish administration was allowed to continue at the town and village level, and the Polish police were also allowed to continue their work, but only under strict German supervision.10 As in the other occupied areas, the intelligentsia was marked for extermination in order to deprive the Poles of potential national and political leadership. By the end of the war, 45 per cent of doctors, 40 per cent of university professors, 50 per cent of engineers and 18 per cent of the clergy were dead.11 As in the territories incorporated into the Reich, some of those targeted had lucky escapes. Edyta, who was a young child during the war, narrowly escaped death in Auschwitz:

All intelligent people, all intelligent families the Germans wanted to eliminate. My father was a lawyer. My mother didn’t work because she didn’t need to work before the war. My grandfather printed books and wrote books, and he was an editor. They were very rich people. I remember the Germans came and threw us from our house, and we were going to Auschwitz. But my father could speak German very well, and he spoke to one German man, and this man said ‘Thirty kilometres before Auschwitz the train will stop. You have only one minute to escape’. It was open lorry and we escaped. We jumped. My father

7 Interview with Paulina, a political refugee who arrived in Australia with her husband and child in 1987, after a short stay in Austria.
8 Leslie, Polonsky, Ciechanowski and Pelczynski, *The History of Poland Since 1863*, p. 216.
10 Ibid., pp. 92-93, 96-97
throw us out, and my mother and my cousins, and we escaped.\textsuperscript{12}

The German occupiers never attempted to legitimise their rule over the Polish population. Poles in all areas were regarded as sub-human, and fit only for extermination, forced labour and economic exploitation.\textsuperscript{13} As Hans Frank, the Governor-General stated, Poland was to be destroyed and its former citizens reduced to inferior status:

the political role of the Polish nation is ended. It is our aim that the very concept Polak be erased for centuries to come. Neither the Republic, nor any other form of Polish state will ever be reborn. Poland will be treated as a colony and Poles will become slaves in the German empire.\textsuperscript{14}

In this context, guarantees for Polish property rights were effectively removed. The vast majority of Polish industry and raw materials was removed to the areas incorporated into Germany, all the property belonging to the Polish state was taken under German control, heavy taxes and appropriation of goods were imposed and inflation soared.\textsuperscript{15} Sylwia was told by an uncle who lived in Government-General of how the invaders took everything:

When the Germans came, they didn't leave the slightest thing. They took everything, like knobs off the door, everything! We had to start afresh. They took land, and wagons and wagons of black soil to Germany, denuding our land. It was very difficult.\textsuperscript{16}

Social rights in the form of social security benefits were abolished.\textsuperscript{17} Conditions in the countryside in the first years of the war actually improved as food prices skyrocketed.\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{12} Interview with Edyta, a voluntary migrant who came to Western Australia in 1994, following her marriage to a “first wave” displaced person.


\textsuperscript{14} Dziewanowski, \textit{Poland in the Twentieth Century}, p. 114.

\textsuperscript{15} Gross, \textit{Polish Society Under German Occupation}, pp. 92-93, 96-97

\textsuperscript{16} Interview with Sylwia, a displaced person deported to the Soviet Union with her mother and arriving in Australia in 1950.


\textsuperscript{18} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 104.
However, the situation of the peasants gradually deteriorated with the imposition of forced deliveries of produce for the German war machine.\textsuperscript{19} Levies on Jews were used on a much larger scale, driving the Jews to penury.\textsuperscript{20} Raising children was a terrible struggle in a time of unprecedented social and economic dislocation, mass hunger, and random terror and violence. Parents or children often left their families or disappeared, never to be seen again.\textsuperscript{21}

Poles in the Government-General, as in the areas incorporated into the Reich, were deprived of education above primary school level. They also lost the freedom of the labour market, and could be directed to perform any work, including forced labour. In 1940, systematic deportation for forced labour was introduced.\textsuperscript{22} Gizela, who was ten years old when the war began, remembered the eradication of Polish history and culture in schools, and her fear of being taken for forced labour in Germany:

\begin{quote}
    it was illegal if somebody learn history Polish, or geography. They want only people like slave. They said like enough for occupation, people just only very little reading and writing and that’s all. They try make us a slave. And we always frightened, because every day in street they pick up people and took straight away in Germany, like slave work for nothing, only they have once a day some food, sometimes twice, and work like slave. And they hate us and we hate them.\textsuperscript{23}
\end{quote}

Only one interviewee was used for forced labour after being arrested for a particular crime. Ewa, by then a young adult, was imprisoned in a forced labour camp for speaking Polish on the street:

\begin{quote}
    There was not allowed talking Polish on the street, we were not to write Polish letters, anything in the Polish, nothing, nothing...I spoke Polish on
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{19} Leslie, Polonsky, Ciechanowski and Pelczynski, \textit{The History of Poland Since 1863}, p. 218.


\textsuperscript{21} Gross, \textit{Polish Society Under German Occupation}, p. 167.


\textsuperscript{23} Interview with Gizela, who arrived in Australia in 1964 to marry a first-wave displaced person who had been deported to Germany.
the street with my cousin. We both speaking Polish. And she went longer because she has signed the list that mean that she agree that she is German, and we didn't done that, with my mother and my brother. But because I was pure Polish, they send me to the very hard labour jail.24

As she remembered, conditions in the jail were very harsh:

It was very, very bad. I had to clean all the corridors and the gardens, it was all day, and there was nothing to eat...It was not Germany, it was the place where the Germans took over from the Polish. We were digging the big stones, the heavy stones, to shift it over, because they want to build the big streets, the big ways for the tanks...They didn't give much to eat - the women and the men were always hungry. Sometimes I was giving the food, you know, with the spoon, and as soon I put the little bit more, I get hit...There was round barracks. We are forty-eight girls sleeping like in a circle where they keep the horses before. And it was winter, it was snowing, and there was no heating, nothing, nothing. There was one blanket, that's all. How we made it through, I wonder.

Two other participants in the interviewing project were deported to Germany and used for forced labour in German factories. Franciszka was taken during a routine labour deportation. Olesia was deported after the Warsaw Uprising of 1944, despite the fact that she had not been actively involved:

We were taken as ‘Warsaw Bandits’, they called us, because there was the uprising in 1944. We were insurrection against the Germans because we were under occupation, and we staged that in 1944....We were taken to different camps until we ended up in Germany. At first I was in Dresden, and it was a factory, and we worked there. But there was a big air raid and they took all the women from Dresden to a smaller town, and I was there until the Americans came...It was harsh. You had a bed to sleep and that was all, and a place to go and wash or have a shower.

24 Interview with Ewa, a “voluntary” migrant who, with her husband, became stranded in Australia during a short holiday in 1962.
You had long, long barracks, and stove at one end, and stove at the other end. But holes were everywhere - and cold like anything! And we were fed rubbish - mostly soup, and for breakfast we get measured a slice of bread and imitation jam made of sweet beetroot.25

All three women remained in labour camps under these conditions until the end of the War.

Citizenship and Polish Jews

If life for ethnic Poles was extremely difficult, the situation of Polish citizens of Jewish origin deteriorated steadily until 1941, when they began to be exterminated en masse. The deprivation of all possible citizenship rights was a precursor to the Final Solution. As well as the obligatory armbands with yellow Stars of David, compulsory labour was forced upon all Jews between fourteen and sixty years in 1939, followed by restriction of property rights and then mass confiscation of property in 1940.26 Jews were restricted to ghettos, isolated from both ethnic Poles and other ghettos, and administered by Jewish councils who organised Jewish forced labour under German supervision. In 1941, Jews were made outlaws, which deprived them of any legal protection. Germans who attacked Jews were not liable for prosecution, and Poles who assisted Jews were vulnerable to immediate execution.27 Interviewees who witnessed the treatment of the Jews were unable to forget the horror of their fate. Gizela viewed it as a tragedy, and was particularly traumatised by the death of a Jewish friend:

The Jewish people heavy digging or something, and they must singing.
They look tragedy. They must singing like ‘Before we live in Poland, doing nothing, and now Hitler teach us good working’, and I remember it was tragedy. I remember one very old Jewish man pass out and German soldier come and he said ‘Rouse! Rouse! Quick up.’ And he

25 Interview with Olesia, a displaced person deported to Germany and used for forced labour after the Warsaw Uprising of 1944. She arrived in Australia with her husband in 1949.
couldn't and he open and kill him. And I also had a friend, Jewish friend, she was a doctor's daughter. We been in the same class before Second War and one day I be in town and you know was truck after truck full of Jewish people and they took you behind sheeting in one place and they kill him. Somebody call my name, I look at her, and she was my friend, and they took her and she was killed.

Jews were subject to systematic starvation. Most Poles were underfed - with daily food rations of less than six hundred and seventy calories, and the rest obtained on the black market - but the Jews were allowed only one hundred and eighty four calories per day and rapidly starved to death. None of the participants in the interviewing project were Jewish, but Olesia's father was a policeman, and the Warsaw ghetto was in his precinct. She wept as she remembered scenes from the ghetto, and especially the terrible effects of starvation:

My father's precinct was in the ghetto, and sometimes when I had school holidays, my father would take me to his precinct. And, oh, it was heartbreaking! The children, the older people just lying there, skeletons. The child already had nothing on him except skin. It was skin started like a grey colour with the hair on from malnutrition. That was a child, but it had the body of an old man. It was heartbreaking. My father used to come home and he just sat there and wouldn't eat because he couldn't stand that...They were dirty, hungry because there wasn't enough to eat, and the way they were crowded into the spot, and there was nothing.

The denial of all human rights was followed by a policy of mass extermination in 1941. Two million, seven hundred thousand Polish Jews had died by the end of the war, along with one million Jews from elsewhere in Europe.28

Polish Jews, notoriously, received very little assistance from their fellow Poles. Polish historiography is generally divided on this point. Jewish scholars have emphasised anti-Semitism in the wider Polish population, and the abandonment of the Jews to their fate, while other historians have highlighted the support that was given by

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Poles, and defended Polish inaction. Olesia remembered that Poles she knew did help the Jews, often for financial gain, but sometimes from altruism. Poles in her own block of flats cooperated to shelter a young Jewish boy:

A lot of people helped, if sometimes it was from the goodness of their heart, or sometimes for the money. After there was a ghetto, this little boy came to our flats where we were living, and he asked, so people gave him. And they even kept him on the top floor. The people used to dry their washing there, so they make a room for him and they kept him there for a while, feed him. But after he got a little better and had food, he went back to the ghetto because he wanted to take some food to his family. And a few times he used to come and go, until he stopped coming. So, you know, we didn't know if he was caught, or if they just took them to the concentration camp. So that was terrible.

Olesia also remembered that assisting Jews to avoid extermination was extremely dangerous. Ethnic Poles themselves had few rights, and were already subject to arbitrary execution. She was adamant that fear of punishment, rather than anti-Semitism, explained the rarity of this kind of action:

It could cost your life, because you could be shot helping a Jew, you could be shot on the spot. You and the Jew. Not only you, but your whole family, if you were hiding a Jew. You had to hide him from everyone, because you never knew who could give you away. And once that happened, your whole family was wiped out. So it was hard to jeopardise your family, to hide the Jews.

The comparative rarity of this kind of assistance, however, cannot be glossed over. A central Jewish primary source for the attitude of Poles towards the German plans for the Jews has been the Wartime notes of the Polish Jewish historian and member of the Polish underground Emmanuel Ringelblum. Ringelblum was executed by the Germans in 1944, along with his family. In his account, even as the German army entered Poland, it was common for Jews to be excluded from air-raid shelters in
Polish blocks of flats during bombing. The intense anti-Semitism of the pre-War years ensured that the vast majority of Poles were disinclined to help the Jews, especially at the risk of their own lives. As before the War, ethnic Poles were not simply the oppressed, but also the oppressors in relation to Polish Jews. Many Poles were willing to exploit and betray Jews attempting to escape the German onslaught, and gangs of blackmailers developed. Ringelblum’s notes on the activities of blackmailers, agents and uniformed Polish police against Jews state that their activities went almost completely unhindered, because there was no substantial Polish assistance against it. The Government Delegacy issued warnings that such activities were criminal and would be punished after the War, but the underground did not follow through on this edict as it did with other Delegacy edicts. The Acting Chairman of the Representation of Polish Jewry noted in 1944 that the Home Army generally did not admit Jews to its ranks and that Government Delegacy officials were themselves anti-Semitic and highly resistant to the return of Jewish property after the war. Some historians have noted that Jewish soldiers in the Polish Army overseas were generally persecuted, and that thousands deserted for this reason. It seems likely, however, that the Polish population was ambivalent towards the predicament of the Jews, rather than solidly anti-Semitic. Shmuel Krakowski, for instance, has stated that the Polish underground’s response was highly ambivalent. His study of the underground notes that the underground press often encouraged Poles to shelter individuals in need, but also published anti-Semitic articles which advocated the deportation of Jews after the war to solve the “Jewish problem”.

30 Ibid., p. 126.
31 Ibid., p. 128.
Given the virtually complete lack of civil, political or social rights, the former Polish citizens could not be described as citizens of the German Third Reich. There was, however, a kind of shadow state in Poland during this period. The exiled Polish government and the leaders of the Polish underground constituted the bodies generally held to be legitimate authorities among the Polish population. A former Prime Minister, General Sikorski, a leading opponent of Marshal Pilsudski before the war, was appointed Prime Minister of a coalition government. A Committee of Ministers was formed, communicating with the underground by radio and couriers. This government operated from France until the German occupation of France in June 1940, when it moved to London. It was formed mainly from members of four pre-War political parties, was strongly supported by the Polish underground and Polish servicemen, and was opposed only by the far right. Its “Government Delegacy” in Poland created twenty departments, which were mainly recreations of pre-war government administrations and ran their own presses. The Delegacy also set up the Directorate of Civil Resistance for sabotage and boycott of the Soviet and German occupiers. The Directorate’s official 1942 statement protesting the mass slaughter of Polish Jews was published by almost all underground papers and increased what little Polish assistance to the Jews existed. This system became known, after the war, as the “Polish Underground State”. Poles, in this sense, and especially those in the German-occupied areas, could identify as citizens of an underground state or shadow state, and the exiled government provided a symbolic continuity of independent statehood, as well as a body that could negotiate with the other Western allies.

The underground had arisen almost spontaneously from the defence of Warsaw in September 1939. As described in the Underground Polish Study Trust files in London,

The society moved to underground life without any formal leadership as

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recognized by the government in exile or even by political opinion in the country...For Polish political life the defense of Warsaw had a crucial, almost historical, importance. It made possible, within a period of only three weeks, the transition from old to new leadership. The defense of Warsaw, based on citizen-volunteers, drew from all political parties...It was a shortened process of emergence and evolution of political leadership.40

One aspect of this evolution of political leadership was the creation of the Citizens Committee of military officials and citizen's representatives, a model that spread to other Polish cities.41 Another was the formation of an underground movement supported by the leading political parties with internal passports, military personnel and bank accounts.42 As historian Jozef Garlinski has noted, the underground was substantially weakened in the Soviet-occupied territories by the use of selective terror and deportations, but also by the use of equalitarian slogans and recruitment of local Communists, splitting the underground movement. The German occupiers, however, created so great a general terror that all social classes were united in opposition to them.43 The underground, moreover, was able to recruit most of the Polish intelligentsia and potential leadership. Since this group was marked for liquidation by the Germans, and forced to keep moving and assuming false identities anyway, the risks involved in joining the underground were much the same as not joining it. It was, in fact, probably safer, as underground members had access to better false identification papers, training in case of interrogation, and a network of potential rescuers.44 Underpinning the recruitment of the intelligentsia to the underground was the long Polish tradition of conspiracy and revolt against occupying powers.45

Women were involved in the underground at most levels. Barbara Einhorn has noted that they were rarely members of the central leadership, but were particularly crucial in the carrying of messages, the printing and distribution of resistance material

41 Gross, Polish Society Under German Occupation, p. 217.
42 Ibid., p. 220.
43 Garlinski, Poland in the Second World War, pp. 44-45.
44 Gross, Polish Society Under German Occupation, pp. 233-234.
45 Leslie, Polonsky, Ciechanowski and Pełczynski, The History of Poland Since 1863, p. 220.
and in providing shelter. Women were also, however, members of the Women's Military Services established in 1941. Such women were officially auxiliaries but in practice, as Garlinski argues, "they were everywhere, even among the partisans. Without their contribution underground Poland could not have existed." Two participants in the interviewing project, Ewa and Olesia, had worked for the underground. Ironically, Ewa, finally arrested merely for speaking Polish in the street, had been involved in the underground for some time, but had never been caught. She noted that women appeared to be numerically dominant in the resistance, partly because so many men were either fighting in the official army, or had been captured:

My friend from school before the war, she came very often to my place, and she told me that she is in the underground... They didn't ask me. I just come from my heart - I want to help. I never was German, so I want to help them. For instance, a friend of mine, she came from Warsaw to our town, and I contact people in my town so she can easily finish her job, give the messages or something... It was mostly women or very young boys - if they were older, they were in war, or in the camp. I help them very much, and I lost all my friends, too. They were shot. But I was so clever, and I been lucky. I help them, but they never caught me. I was working in espionage. There were French people and Dutch and Belgian and all the scripts what they writing to each other, I was taking from one to the other. Of course, that was very dangerous if they caught me.

Young Poles could assist through the Polish scouts, which were linked with the Home Army through the central command and divided into male and female sections. As Sylwia remembered,

My cousin was in the underground. My cousins, being Polish, they were

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48 Ibid., p. 204.
rebellious. Poles are rebellious, yes they are. They won't take orders easily. They won't be told...If you didn't want to take part, you were not in immediate danger, but with your pride you would say 'Why should I, you're in my country, and you're telling me what to do, whether I can got to school or not?'...My cousin went to a university which was called the underground university...She took messages, or transported blotting paper for the printing press, which is not allowed under the German occupation.... She was also an officer in the underground. She probably had a few scouts under her, selling papers, taking messages.

The main function of the underground, however, was not to sabotage the German military, but to lead Polish society, to fulfill the basic needs of citizens and maintain Polish identity and solidarity. As the historian Jan Gross has observed, the only possible response of most Poles to the occupation and random terror of the occupation was to try to work around the occupying forces, ignoring them as much as possible and developing a highly absorbing life separate from them:

The social environment in which the Poles were forced to live did not allow for satisfaction of even minimal needs...a multitude of initiatives from a variety of social milieus combined to establish a framework of behaviour that allowed the Poles to pursue their self-interest and try to fulfill their basic needs...Collective life in all its complexity emerged outside of the German-imposed and/or German allowed institutions. German rule in Poland was not merely opposed, it was, so to speak, circumvented...a society formed itself outside of the institutional context created by the occupier.49

In this context, the "Underground State" not only constituted a source of national resistance, but also took on many of the functions of government. The attempts of the invaders to destroy all Polish cultural life increased the extent to which the underground operated as a "shadow state", maintaining schools and universities, underground courts and presses. Much assisted by the establishment of the Department of Education and Culture of the Government Delegacy in 1941, nearly two thousand

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secret secondary schools were established in the Government General, which approximately sixty-five thousand children attended. Such schools were also established in the areas incorporated into the Reich. The main centres for these clandestine schools were in Warsaw and Poznan, and there was even a branch for medical education in the Warsaw Ghetto. Several participants in the interviewing project attended these schools, or had relatives who taught in them. As Anna described her interrupted education:

In Lodz, I stopped school, but there was many Polish teachers who came forward and five or six girls learn with the teacher. Such teachers when German catch him go to jail and the students also. I was lucky.

Secret universities were also established, with around nine thousand university students benefiting from this system in Warsaw alone. Military groups proliferated, with the various underground political parties forming their own groups, despite the proclamation of an official Home Army by General Sikorski in 1942. The Directorate of Diversion, with the code name Kedyw, created an effective military-style resistance also known as the partisans, which sabotaged German communications and executed German agents and officials. The extent to which the Kedyw constituted an accepted authority among Poles is illustrated by their civil activities, such as ridding villages of bandits, arbitrating in local disputes, addressing local problems and performing weddings. The Government Delegacy granted the underground special courts the right to judge criminal activities such as blackmail and banditry, as well as collaboration. Perhaps even more significantly, the “Underground State” possessed sizeable budgets, with estimates that it received anywhere from $33 to $60 million, with around 30 per cent of the budget spent on social welfare, 18 per cent on education and a large proportion on wages for civilian administration.

Membership of the underground might be considered citizenship par excellence,
with its intense nationalism, voluntarism, leadership and service to other Polish citizens. The very large number of Poles involved, despite the considerable risks, indicates the extent to which the ideals of Polish nationalism, at least, survived the occupation. A Pole did not have to be an active member of the underground, moreover, to be influenced by its culture or to sympathise with its values and activities. The underground press, in combination with an existing Polish government, albeit in exile, preserved avenues for a sense of Polish nationhood and of citizenship and solidarity with a still-existing state, however covert that citizenship might be. It enabled participants in the interviewing project to continue to identify with the Polish state, and follow the progress of Polish and allied forces through the War. As Olesia, who helped her father distribute newspapers, reflected,

you had friends that brought you the underground papers, you went with them to give away to people....My father was risking his life, or his freedom, when he came and he ask somebody to do it. But he wouldn't say 'I am in the underground army and I want you to do it'. No, he says, 'I have from a friend a few papers if you can distribute them'. The less you knew about it, the better, for your own safety if you were caught - you didn't have anything to say. You didn't know. But if you knew, they had ways to get out of you.... I gave them to people I knew. They had from the Western world the news, what was on the radio, London, because they used to listen underground to the London special news. And they would make of that into the paper so people knew what was happening, where the war went. We were isolated because we're not supposed to have radios, only what was on the loudspeakers on the streets, what the Germans wanted us to know. So it was only Germans, Germans, Germans, how they were winning, and how bad was the West and how great was Hitler, and that was all.

The press also enabled communication between Poles in various regions and the maintenance of social norms. Underground newspapers were published virtually from the beginning of German occupation, and the underground and the Home Army
produced many new books and reprints. Such publications were widely available. There were around four hundred secret printing presses, with only half of these based in Warsaw. Garlinski has estimated that the Home Army, the Delegacy and the various groups associated-with them published over one thousand journals, the Jews forty-three, the National Armed forces forty-three and the Communists eighty-two. Magazines and newspapers were not only political or military, but also resembled the press of a peacetime society, with various journals targeting specific readerships and including material ranging from literary and philosophical theory to scientific and humorous articles.

As Gross has argued, the variety of the underground press is an indication of the place of the underground primarily as a Polish state and only secondly as an anti-German conspiracy...The conspiracy could not (and it was aware of this fact) decisively sabotage, attack, or expel the Germans from the country, but it could frustrate their efforts...by preventing the atomization of Polish society. In that sense the underground was directed primarily towards the Polish population and only secondarily against the Germans. It was essentially a norm-creating institution for those who joined it and also for those who remained outside its network.

The underground press also possessed a political function, promoting patriotism and belief in democracy and human rights. Its defence of human values and solidarity among Poles against the temptations of collaborating, profiteering and blackmailing of the vulnerable helped to preserve the notion of social norms and the rule of law.

60 Ibid., p. 133.
The Soviet-Occupied Areas

In 1939, the Soviet Union effectively regained the territories it had lost between 1917 and 1921 and almost all of the Belorussian and Ukrainian populations. This made the border between the Soviet Union and Poland roughly similar to the Curzon line of 1919-1920. In the Soviet-occupied territories, only about five million out of a population of thirteen million were ethnic Poles. The Soviets employed this pretext to form national assemblies that voted for incorporation into the Soviet Union. The "rights" of these populations were restricted to voting for incorporation, for the confiscation of estates and the nationalisation of industries. Ballot papers for the Supreme Soviet and for local government offered only a sole candidate, chosen by the Soviets, and occupying troops also had the right to vote.

Former Polish citizens in the Soviet-occupied areas were formally designated as Soviet citizens with extremely restricted civil rights. The use of the Polish language, of Polish textbooks, and the teaching of Polish geography, history and religion, were forbidden. Poles were widely dismissed from official positions, Soviet models of administration were imposed and collectivisation of agriculture began. The families of seven of the participants in the interviewing project were settled in the eastern territories at this time. The Soviet invaders exploited ethnic and class tensions in these regions. David Marples has argued that the Soviet authorities deliberately kept some ethnic Ukrainians and Belorussians short of land to make them allies against the "kulaks", but such tensions were also used against ethnic Poles. Krystyna, whose father was a soldier-settler in eastern Poland, vividly remembered the arrival of Soviet troops, the burning of her family's farm, and attacks by Belorussians:

The house was saved, so we stayed in the house, but soon afterwards

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64 Dziewanowski, *Poland in the Twentieth Century*, p. 115.
when the Russians came in, people from the village, who were Belorussians, they started to invade us. They started to say that we possessing their land, and what is in here is theirs, and sending people to move into our house with us. We have to accept that. So we been sort of shut out in one room and the rest of the house was taken over until the Russians came and took us to Siberia. What was funny about it, was that when Russians came, the Belorussians thought they going to possess our land, but they didn't. The Russians didn't let them. The Russians took over, pulled all the buildings down, and made a big collective farm. They have to work like slaves there, the Belorussians.69

All seven participants from these regions eventually came to Australia after their initial deportation to the Soviet Union. The Soviet invaders intended to destroy all potential for political leadership among the Poles. From 1939, they interned more than two hundred thousand army personnel, as well as thousands of political and civic leaders.70 They also registered all males born between 1890 and 1921 for military service in the Red Army.71 In 1940, mass deportations began, with up to two million people eventually deported to the Soviet Union.72 The main targets for such deportations were those connected with service to the Polish state: the intelligentsia, the clergy, civil servants, legal practitioners, officers and ex-army settlers, policemen and their families.73 Many of the others were the wives and children of the interned officers and political and civic leaders, or else the families of landowners, foresters, wealthier peasants and smallholders, and particular categories of workers.74 They were taken to the northern and central regions of the Soviet Union, and especially to regions such as Archangel, Kazakhstan and Siberia, where thousands died.75 Gutka, who was taken to

69 Interview with Krystyna, a displaced person deported to the Soviet Union with both parents and arriving in Australia in 1986, after long term settlement in England.
70 Sword, Deportation and Exile, pp. 2, 6-7.
71 Ibid., p. 10.
72 Kolankiewicz and Lewis, Poland, p. 11.
73 Garlinski, Poland in the Second World War, p. 36 and Leslie, Polonsky, Ciechanowski and Pelczynski, The History of Poland Since 1863, p. 219.
74 Sword, Deportation and Exile, pp. 15-18.
Siberia with her mother, remembered the Soviet deportations, and the work required of women as well as men:

Only seventeen days after the Germans had walked into Poland from the west, Stalin's army walked in from the east side of Poland. Actually, they must have been quite well prepared because they had lists of people, a lot of collaborators, especially with the Ukrainians. They arrested a number of prominent people. They systematically deported especially families from the cities, people of intelligentsia.... We were put into cattle trucks at the railway stations, and then for two or three weeks, depending how far you were going, we were transported to various places of resettlement. My mother and I were taken to Siberia. Other people were also in small settlements around that area. It all depended what the Russians needed, where the Russians needed the labour force. Because their men went to war, and they needed people to cut down forests, to till the fields, to work in the sawmills, the mines and so they put the Polish women to do it.76

Conditions for most deportees constituted an almost complete denial of rights. Those assigned to labour camps, or designated as “special settlers”, were used for forced labour. Another category, “free deportees”, mostly families of army and police personnel, were not obliged to work, although they were expected to support themselves, and enjoyed relative freedom of movement. They were even granted Soviet passports and expected to vote in elections.77 Conditions were, however, extremely harsh. There was very little food, and most deportees supplemented their diet with food brought with them, or by bartering with local people. Some local people were friendly, but most deportees had no redress if they were not. Sylwia, who was deported with her mother to Khazakstan, remembered the terrifying experience of the loss of rights:

We had a terrible time ourselves...we had no rights, no passport, we couldn't complain to anybody. We had nothing. We had no rights. You

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76 Interview with Gutka, who was deported with her mother to the Soviet Union. She arrived in Australia with her mother in 1950.
77 Sword, Deportation and Exile, pp. 24-25.
had to work, the Russians would supervise the work, and my mother would have to work for hours and hours before she got a refreshment break, and you couldn't complain to anybody.... The Kazakhs were also under the Russians and used to have their own independence. Russia annexed everything, and they were poor themselves. But the deportees would steal a chook or something, and the Kazakhs would beat them to death because they needed the chooks for eggs and because they were so angry.

There was, however, often some attempt to prepare children for Soviet citizenship, in the form of political indoctrination. Children were sent to school, partly for this purpose. Petra, who was only five years old when she was deported with her family, remembered her education in Russia as indoctrination in Communism:

I was sent to school and my brother was taken to kindergarten...from that time on, all children were indoctrinated to become Communists. They were sort of manipulating you until you start to believe that this was the best place for you. Of course, parents were devastated.\textsuperscript{78}

Older children sometimes preferred to labour rather than attend school, largely because of the political component to their education, as Krystyna remembered angrily:

Children had to go to school, but I said 'I'm not going to school, I've finished my school', so they couldn't make me. They said that I'm not up to their standard, so I said 'Don't give me that stupid propaganda of yours'. I was surprised at myself. My mother was shaking in fright, but I was so angry.... I just couldn't stand it. They were teaching children all these stupid stories about Stalin; they made a god about Stalin. The promises! We had no shoes on our feet, there was snow up to our waist and no food, and they were feeding us with all these false stories and I couldn't stand it. About Stalin and about other countries, how wealthy they were and how wealthy we were going to be. But we were dying from starvation.

\textsuperscript{78} Interview with Petra, a displaced person deported to the Soviet Union with her whole family. She arrived in Australia with her family in 1950.
Many of these deportees were rescued after the German attack on the Soviet Union in 1941. Under the Maisky-Sikorski agreement, the Soviet Union declared all treaties regarding Poland invalid, and reestablished diplomatic relations with Poland. Stalin agreed to the formation of a Polish army allied with the Soviet Union and commanded by the exiled Polish government, although operationally subordinated to the Soviet supreme command. He also granted an amnesty to Polish citizens deported to the Soviet Union. Edwin Bacon has argued that around forty-three thousand Poles were released. Amnestied deportees were issued with release documents, which were later replaced with passports.

Passports and identification papers were crucial documents during these years. Some participants in the interviewing project found that lost papers and passports left them especially vulnerable to abandonment and starvation. As Elwira, whose family was attempting to leave Siberia, reflected,

My mother had a very sad experience because she lost her papers, she lost passports. She thinks they were stolen. If you don't have passport you can't get papers, you don't get food so people were just sharing with us. When we were in Russia, we had to get a train, everybody at the station, and you had to produce papers, but because my mother didn't have papers, we just got on the train because they didn't have time to check everybody. Our family split up on the train, so that each of us could say the other family members had our papers.

Even for those with papers intact, however, there was a harrowing journey out of the Soviet Union to endure, and thousands died along the way. Many families followed the railway lines south, working for food at collective farms, until the Polish army contacted them:

We were moving south.... We would just follow the railway line. They

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81 Sword, *Deportation and Exile*, p. 41.
82 Interview with Elwira, who was deported to the Soviet Union with her family. She came to Australia with her husband in 1962, after long-term settlement in Tanganyika and Rhodesia.
been taking us to kolhozes, collective farms...my brother got the measles, then he got pneumonia and he died...We were scrounging for food, asking, begging. We came to the last place before we got out, another collective farm...We stayed over winter and become more ill, more people ill and dying, and they had to bury us, so they just threw it on the cart, and they been burying those people without clothes.... two Polish soldiers came to visit us. Everybody had lost all their hope for life altogether, the conditions we were in. It must have been the beginning of March 1942, and they said to us that there is Polish army forming and they been looking for Polish families. They were planning to get these people out...It was March, the ground was thawing, we had to walk in the mud, it was very bad, a lot of people ill. When we got out of that collective farm there was forty-eight of us came in but only twelve got out.  

On the journey south, men, women and children also suffered different fates. Most of the men were called up for the Polish divisions, and some women also joined the Polish forces. Some families that had previously managed to stay together were separated at this time. As Maria, who had been deported with her whole family, remembered,

"See, our family was divided in Russia. My three brothers and sister joined either Polish cadets or the army. My sister joined the Air Force, and my father joined the Army. Later we met up again in England. My brothers and sisters joined the Polish Corps and they were all sent to England. My eldest brother, he took part in the fighting at Montecassino, in Italy."

Both these Polish forces, and other Polish deportees, were eventually evacuated to Iran. The divisions were en route to the Middle East. The civilians were sheltered for some time in refugee centres in Iran. Agnieszka Lelinska has noted that the vast majority of

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83 Interview with Krystyna.
84 Bacon, *The Gulag at War*, p. 105.
85 Interview with Maria, who was deported to the Soviet Union with her family. She arrived in Australia as a voluntary migrant with her husband in 1983, after long-term settlement in England.
these civilians were women and children, and that about half were children and young people. Many more refugees died in Iran:

When we got to Pahlevi on the Caspian sea, we were loaded onto ships.... Any able bodied person like my mother, who wasn't visibly sick – she was only very emaciated, very hungry – she was called up to nursing in Tehran. At the hospital where she worked, a lot of the people were dying. The problem was that all these people were starving, really starving, on their last legs, and the Americans gave them a lot of unsuitable food.... There were thousands of people dying of dysentery and typhoid. After having survived Russia, it was shocking.

Such experiences in Iran underlined for the interviewees how vulnerable they were as refugees, despite their escape from the Soviet Union.

Settlement in Africa

The majority experience for the Poles during World War II, therefore, was not only the negation of their citizenship rights and their Polish nationality, but a denial of even the most basic human rights. Poles who survived deportation to the Soviet Union were directed by Soviet and then British authorities to refugee camps in East and South Africa, India and Central Asia. The seven women from these groups who participated in the interviewing project, however, were all settled in British East Africa from late 1942, some of them for up to eight years. Maryon Allbrook and Helen Cattalini have noted that there were twenty-two of these camps in East and South Africa, accommodating approximately nineteen thousand people, mostly women and children. For those who had been very young when deported, the African camps provided their first experiences of rights and a "normal" life. As Petra reflected,

I was in Uganda. Quite a few people were in Tanganyika. Right

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87 Interview with Sylwia.
88 Garlinski, Poland in the Second World War, pp. 110, 115, 179.
through Africa, East and South Africa, not west, there were camps with Polish refugees. Actually in Africa, for the first time, we started to live normally.  

The African camps also provided a formative experience of communal living and reinforced their Polish national identity. The bigger camps allowed a quite comprehensive experience of community. Initially, camps offered only very basic facilities. However, they soon developed more institutions and social opportunities. These varied depending on the size of the camp, but there were clear attempts to build a cohesive community, rather than shelter alone. Alina, for whom the camps were only the beginning of long-term settlement in Africa, described her experience:

They built schools, long big barracks of schools, and a Y.M.C.A., and there was also Catholic education and a social club, and later on a cinema, an outdoor cinema, which we kids used to sneak into after school. It cost us fifty cents to get in. We used to get pocket money from the government. Provisions were provided also by the government, but there were communal kitchens...we'd go into the dining rooms and eat together...we had our own farm and we used to grow our vegetables to feed the camp, and we had cows to milk them. There was the social side of it, some entertainment, some plays, some dances, school dances, which was Y.M.C.A. also, which had its own hall and you could play chess or other games there.... There was also the Red Cross, because lots of people wanted to know what happened to their families. It was not quite isolated because there was the radio. The news was on every day. It was a really nicely run camp.

There were also some opportunities for women to work, often for women who had never undertaken paid work before:

The young girls were training to be nurses and others teachers, within the perimeters.... and there were also workshops for the women whose

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90 Interview with Petra.
91 Interview with Alina, who was deported with her mother and brother to the Soviet Union. She came to Australia in 1970 with her mother and her husband, after long-term settlement in Tanganyika and Kenya.
children went to school. My mother, although she had never done anything like that in her life before, my mother went into a workshop which used to make leather goods...they use to make suitcases, little handbags, purses and other leather goods like that. For other women, there was a sewing workshop where they used to make clothes for distribution in the camp. We used to get a lot of second-hand clothing from American Polish community, so women used to do a lot of sewing, because they would remake clothes from the old second-hand clothing that came through. Some new materials were also provided, and they made pyjamas and dresses and things like that. Also there was a farm close to the camp.\textsuperscript{92}

In the refugee camps, there were intensive efforts to educate the children, teach them discipline and prepare them for adulthood. The curriculum was gendered, as was education in Australia during the same period:

Everybody had the chance to finish academic school, and there were of course technical schools as well. There was the car repairs and things like that, and for the girls there was sewing, cooking. The academic was really up to the standard, much better than here, much higher standard. All our books were sent from England, some were from Italy, but all in Polish, of course. We learned everything. We had lessons in history, geography, even Latin, Polish of course, grammar, arithmetic, geometry, algebra. We learned the history of Poland and then of the world.\textsuperscript{93}

Many refugee children had left Poland at a very young age, and had only very indistinct memories of their homeland. In the camps, however, with only occasional contact with non-Poles, they developed a strong Polish national identity. Until 1945, most refugees expected to return to Poland, and the pattern of education was distinctively Polish:

We had accommodation, we had Polish food...at that stage, none of us ever dreamed of going anywhere but back to Poland...we believed Poland will be free, and we will go back, so the education was geared to

\textsuperscript{92} Interview with Gutka.
\textsuperscript{93} Interview with Alina.
Another force for the inculcation of Polish identity, religion and "good citizenship" among the children was the formation of the Polish Scouts and Girl Guides within the camps:

Some of the women were Girl Guide and Scout leaders from Poland, so they just implemented the same sort of style. We'd get arm badges, and we used to go a lot on excursions, which was quite fun - out in the African bush, look at elephants and lions and so on... It was very, very value packed. It was very patriotic as well. God, honour and the country was very much in that. There was a lot of stories told about the history of Poland, and we learnt a lot of Guide songs, very patriotic songs. Yes, the Guides were very patriotic... also the Christian values of honesty, of obedience to your parents, respect, care for animals. You had to pass certain tests to be a cook, and then there was a badge that you got for bravery, where you had to stand guard in the middle of the night in a camp in the bush or something. Then there was a badge for good deeds, service to the community. We would try to outbid each other to do good deeds, favours, and be kind to people.

It is possible, therefore, to view experiences of these camps as experiences of a form of "citizenship". There were social and educational institutions to participate in, strong civic values, and a tight-knit community. Nevertheless, the camps had their limitations. They restricted personal freedoms, gave only limited opportunities for decision-making regarding their community and encouraged passive obedience to authority. As Sylwia commented,

There were managers, camp managers. There were not many men, and the men were mostly old, because the young men in Persia who survived Russia went to war.... the men, mostly old, were given managerial jobs.... Everybody was waiting to get a normal job away from camp restrictions, because it was a restriction, because everything was decided

94 Interview with Petra.
95 Interview with Gutka.
for you. Even the school, you had your holiday, but you couldn't go to
town, you couldn't hitch a ride without a permit. They were looking
after us, so they had the right to restrict us, not to move around too much
or to mix with natives...In Australia it was very different: we had to
think for ourselves.

In this respect, as Sylwia suggested, the camps did not prepare these refugees for
everyday life or for citizenship in Australia.

The New Communist Government

Neither the hopes of deportees waiting to return to Poland, nor the underground
state's dedication to the restoration of a fully independent, democratic Poland, were able
to survive the plans the Soviet government had for Poland. The Soviet regime aimed to
incorporate Poland into its sphere of influence. Stalin had dissolved the Polish
Communist Party in the late 1930s, but in 1942, the Soviets reestablished the Polish
Workers' Party, effectively an embryonic Communist party. The Polish Workers' Party
established an official platform of an independent, democratic Poland. It gathered
support among Poles frustrated by the underground's continuing policy, in the face of
escalating German terror, of waiting for the German withdrawal from Poland to begin
before calling for a general insurrection to assist Soviet troops.96 Relations between the
government in exile in London and the Soviet government were also bedeviled by
Stalin's insistence on retaining the eastern territories he had gained, his claim that
former Polish citizens who lived there should remain Soviet citizens, and the notorious
executions of Polish officers at Katyn. In 1943, these conflicts enabled the Soviet
Union to break off diplomatic relations with Poland.97 Agencies that had been set up by
the Polish embassy to assist Poles still stranded in the Soviet Union were closed down.98
It became increasingly apparent at the conferences at Moscow and Tehran that Stalin
intended any post-war Poland to have a guaranteed pro-Soviet foreign policy, and that
the Western Allies, intent on preserving their alliance with the Soviet Union, would

97 Garlinski, *Poland in the Second World War*, pp. 161, 185, 188.
sacrifice Polish territory and, implicitly, its independence.99

In December 1943, the Polish Workers’ Party set up a National Council for the Homeland in Warsaw. This council had a specifically pro-Soviet stance on any future foreign policy, and competed directly with the increasingly divided Polish government in exile for Soviet recognition.100 The Polish resistance forces, never formally united, split into three groups: the Communist and pro-Soviet People’s Army, the far right National Armed Forces and the larger, pro-government Home Army in the ideological centre. The Home Army hoped to forestall a Communist take-over and Soviet domination by staging an insurrection against the Germans before Soviet troops arrived.101 In July 1944, as the Red Army crossed into the undisputed Polish territories and the German army retreated, Communist officials established the Communist-dominated Polish Committee of National Liberation in Lublin. The Lublin Committee’s manifesto stated that the Committee constituted the “sole legal authority” in Poland because it was based on the Polish Constitution of 1921. It contrasted itself to the London government, which it portrayed as an illegal body based on the illegal and Fascist constitution of 1935. It called for close collaboration with the Red Army.102 It also signed an agreement with the Soviet government granting wide powers to the Red Army as long as military operations continued and promising full cooperation between the new administration and the Soviet government.103

The pro-Communist forces suffered from relatively weak support in Poland, compared to the government in exile and the Home Army, but were effectively backed by the Soviet occupying troops. In 1944, as the Red Army approached Warsaw, the Home Army staged an insurrection intended not only to speed the German collapse, but also to demonstrate the strength of the pro-government forces in Poland. The insurrection collapsed after sixty-three days of fighting. The Soviet troops halted outside Warsaw, allowing German troops to destroy Warsaw. This also allowed the German troops to slaughter the flower of the Polish underground, which was the most

100 Leslie, Polonsky, Ciechanowski and Pelczynski, The History of Poland Since 1863, p. 252.
101 Ibid., pp. 233-234.
103 Dziewanowski, Poland in the Twentieth Century, pp. 128-129.
politically committed and active element in the country.\textsuperscript{104} The failure of the Warsaw Uprising marked the effective end of the model of nationhood and citizenship championed by the underground. The extinction of so much of Poland's potential political leadership and the diminished prestige of the government in London created further opportunities for Communist forces. In December 1944, the Lublin Committee declared itself to be the provisional government of Poland. It was recognised as such by the Soviet government in January 1945. After the Yalta Conference of February 1945, this provisional government was also recognised by the Western powers. This was followed by an agreement between the new government and the Soviets on military and political cooperation.\textsuperscript{105}

After the Yalta Conference, many of the Polish refugees still encamped in East and South Africa were unwilling to return to Poland. Their experiences in the Soviet Union made them reluctant to return to a Communist government under Soviet control. In response, the new Polish government deprived the deportees of their Polish citizenship. As Gutka reflected, although this was an emotional blow, it was also something of a blessing:

We didn't have any nationality when we came here because the Communist government in Poland had deprived us of our Polish citizenship because we did not want to come back to Poland. We had people coming in from the Polish embassy into the camps and proposing that we should return to Poland and when people refused to do that, we were made stateless. That was a way that the Communist government had punished us. 'You don't want to come back to your own country, you don't belong to us anymore. You're deserting your own country'. It made the older women sad from the fact that they were no longer Polish citizens, but they didn't want to be Polish citizens under Russian domination. As far as they were concerned, it was probably better to be stateless because you didn't have any fear that the Communist government would have any kind of claim on you.

\textsuperscript{104} Dziewanowski, \textit{Poland in the Twentieth Century}, pp. 130, 133 -134.

\textsuperscript{105} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 134, 139.
By 1950, most of the camps were closing down, as their inhabitants either returned to
Poland or departed for Britain, Canada, France and Australia.\textsuperscript{106}

The establishment of a Communist provisional government in Poland created
another pool of refugees unwilling to return to Poland. The new Polish government
staged show trials of sixteen leaders of the Polish government, charged with sabotage,
which further ensured the absence of serious competition for political leadership of
Poland.\textsuperscript{107} It also exiled, imprisoned or executed Home Army officers.\textsuperscript{108} This
increased the reluctance of many deportees to Germany to return. As Franciszka
remembered, returning to Poland had become very dangerous:

Our citizenship in Poland was taken away if we didn't come back in
1945...We couldn't have, because my husband could not go back to
Poland...My husband could not go back because he would have been
incarcerated in Poland...one day he listened to a Polish broadcast and his
name was mentioned that he couldn't go back. His friends, also
professional soldiers, went back right after the war and we met them
when we went to Poland in 1973...and they were telling us what
happened to them. They were incarcerated, they were beaten, they were
tortured, everything.

All of the thirteen interviewees who were living in Poland in 1939 had
experienced almost total denial of their human and citizenship rights. For nine of them,
as for thousands of other Polish women, their sufferings under authoritarian foreign
invaders were over in 1945. Although the War had ended and Poland was once again
formally independent, they could not go home. Their losses of country, culture and
family were incalculable, and the impact of these experiences was lifelong. They were,
however, finally free to immigrate and make new lives elsewhere. For the others, their
homeland was effectively consigned to the Soviet sphere of influence. A new
provisional government, dominated by pro-Soviet Communists, was recognised by

\textsuperscript{106} Janusz Wrobel, "Polacy w Afryce Wschodniej i Poludniowej 1941-1950" [translated as "Poles in
Eastern and South Africa 1941-1950"], \textit{Zeszyty Historyczne}, Vol. 115, 1996, p. 120.

\textsuperscript{107} Walter Laqueur, \textit{Europe Since Hitler: The Rebirth of Europe}, Revised Edition, Harmondsworth,

\textsuperscript{108} Łuka Świątkowski, "The Home Army At Bay: The Political Situation in Poland on the Eve of the
Poland’s former allies. By the time elections were held in 1947, the Red Army, a Communist regime and security agencies imported from the Soviet Union had dominated Poland for two years. A very different social system, with new citizenship norms and a transformation of the status and roles of women in Polish society at the centre of its programme, was under construction.
“You were not a free person at all”: Polish Women and Citizenship in Communist and Post-Communist Poland

The new Communist regime, despite its origins, offered many possibilities for equal citizenship for women. In particular, it made an early commitment to female equality and participation in the public sphere. Twenty participants in the interviewing project lived through at least part of the Communist era. Despite some gains for women under Communism, these participants regarded the regime as established and maintained by force, and therefore lacking in political legitimacy. Moreover, they resented the many restrictions on their citizenship rights. The imposition of martial law in 1981 prompted a second wave of migration to Australia. Fourteen participants in the interviewing project joined this “second wave” as political refugees. The fall of Communism appeared to promise new rights and freedoms for Polish women, and perhaps political empowerment through the establishment of a liberal democracy. However, at the end of the Communist era, women were in a weak position to strike a new citizenship bargain. By the mid-1990s, Polish women enjoyed some new citizenship rights, but were being once again subordinated within the new political order. In this context, another four participants in the interviewing project joined a “third wave” of migration to Australia, seeking a new form of citizenship.

The situation in Poland had changed greatly with the post-War settlement, and this had many implications for Polish citizenship. Poland had regained its existence as a formally independent nation state. The Teheran, Yalta and Potsdam Conferences had shifted the borders of Poland so that, although Poland had lost its former eastern territories, it had gained new territories from Germany. In particular, it had gained much of the former East Prussia, Upper Silesia, which was rich in coal and other minerals, and the fertile agricultural areas along the Oder River. Economically, these were far more valuable lands than those taken by the Soviet Union, and Poland
therefore possessed more and better agricultural land, greater natural resources and greater industrial capacity. The new government engineered massive population transfers to accompany the border changes. Around three million ethnic Poles were moved to the newly attained western lands, and approximately two and a half million Germans, Ukrainians, Russians and Belorussians were deported from Poland. By 1951, Poland was a far more ethnically homogenous state than it had ever been. Out of a population of twenty-five million, 98 per cent were ethnic Poles, and 94 per cent were Catholics. As explored earlier, deprived of an existing state, Polish nationalism had emphasised Polish ethnicity, culture, language and religion, rather than the geographical borders or the particular citizenship rights prevailing at any particular time. By the early 1950s, for the first time, the acknowledged borders of Poland largely coincided with its ethnic and religious composition. Within Poland, national and ethnic identity largely coincided with the formal status of Polish citizens. In practical terms, Poland was no longer vulnerable to the political instability created by the presence of large national minorities. Moreover, the War itself, and the material deprivation endured by the whole population, had partly eroded the powerful class distinctions of the pre-War years and deepened national unity. Poland was a far more integrated, unified country than it had ever been.

Nevertheless, the immediate situation in post-War Poland was in many respects extremely unpromising for active or meaningful citizenship. Poland was devastated by the War. By the end of the war, six million Poles, more than one in six of the pre-War population, were dead. Almost half of Poland's arable land was uncultivated, and agricultural production was only 38 per cent of pre-war levels. Communication systems had almost entirely disintegrated. Moreover, both the Soviet and German invaders had deliberately exterminated many of the most educated and politically active groups in the country and thereby deprived Poland of a political elite. They also deprived Poland of many of the trained personnel needed for reconstruction. More importantly,
however, the new Polish government was supported by Soviet troops on Polish soil and Poland was incorporated into the Soviet sphere of influence. Soviet troops treated Poland as an occupied country in ways that were perhaps more painfully apparent to Polish women than to Polish men. Not only was there widespread looting and terror, but many women were raped by Russian soldiers. Ewa, who had recently turned twenty-one years old, remembered being hidden in the chimney by her family to avoid this fate:

I was three weeks, you know, the chimneys. Myself and my little friend, she was younger than me, she was three years younger. They put us to the chimney and they pitch it up with bricks, so we were there for three weeks. Because when the Russians coming, they attacking women - they want the women in the bed, you know. Raping women - girls, we were girls! And my mother and her mother, they bricked us in the chimney. When we come out, we were black like that. We were frightened, yes.... And they were not friends, they were not friends, no. They raped, they steal everything what we have, everything - nighties, pillows, everything, everything!6

Both political and civil rights were extremely limited in this period. Some writers have noted that the Poles enjoyed relative freedom of worship, movement and employment, and were even able to listen to foreign radio broadcasts.7 However, Poles were subject to the wishes of a totalitarian regime and vulnerable to the new security and political agencies imported from the Soviet Union. The elections of 1947 were far from free, and were preceded by mass arrests of opponents and a new election law that created widespread disenfranchisement.8 Participants in the interviewing project were adamant that the Communists were invaders, much as the Germans had been, and viewed the 1947 election as a fraud. Such attitudes might be expected from those who came to Australia as refugees. However, those who came to Australia as voluntary migrants conveyed similar beliefs. As Gizela, who was eighteen in 1947, remembered,

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6 Interview with Ewa, a “voluntary” migrant who, with her husband, became stranded in Australia during a short holiday in 1962.
8 Ibid., p. 153.
Communists decide like Hitler, like Germany, that put people in jail because many people don't want Communists, or say what we thinking about Russia. They want to teach us only Lenin's idea, and Marx and Engels. And Communists have many slogans in every wall in city, and we have an election, and they did untrue election.\textsuperscript{9}

There was an ideological offensive, in the form of attacks on the Church and on Polish nationalist values, and replacement with Soviet norms. Edyta, who was attending primary school after the War, described the attempted indoctrination she experienced as part of her education:

They tell us that Stalin is the first, in love with Stalin, and we should be everything for Russia because Russia is our mother. And don't believe in God, and you can't go to church because it's for nothing. They didn't think about Polish patriots. Mainly it was that your aim was Russia. You have to work like them because they are like mother. You have to learn what Russia does, you have to do the same, the same way. We hated that.\textsuperscript{10}

The absence of civil rights was particularly painful for those who had experienced the German invasion. Ewa, who had been imprisoned by the Germans, remembered this period as the saddest she had known because she had waited so hopefully for the end of the War to bring personal and national freedom. She was eventually imprisoned by the new regime also:

On the street, the people were so sad, no smile. Because you always think someone is looking, someone is looking at you, what you doing, what you talking about, what you saying. You was not allowed anything, anything.... And in 1955 they arrested me because they say I am against Communism.... If you know something, your neighbor is talking one word against Communism, you have to tell to an official, and they come and arrest them and me too...People say they is unfair, this is very cruel,

\textsuperscript{9} Interview with Gizela, who arrived in Australia in 1964 to marry a first-wave displaced person who had been deported to Germany.

\textsuperscript{10} Interview with Edyta, a voluntary migrant who came to Western Australia in 1994, following her marriage to a "first wave" displaced person.
very cruel. Like the Germans, they shot all the people and send to the jail. It was very cruel. Stalin was very bad.

The new Communist regime made extraordinary changes to Poland. Property rights were transformed. The property of many wealthy families was confiscated. The loss of homes, as well as of wealth, had an emotional impact that continued beyond that generation of Poles. Lila, who was only a baby during this period, told of her family’s sufferings:

All our family experienced that, and that’s why I wasn't happy for a long time. In my family situation, it was like my mum was quite rich, and when the Germans came they took everything from them, but they had a few things left, and then the Communists came and they took everything away from them. And they had big house, and they just put so many families in the house.\(^{11}\)

More fundamentally, the government broke up the great estates by confiscating all land over one hundred hectares, along with other categories of land.\(^{12}\) It also nationalised the economy, including both industrial and commercial enterprises, and instituted central economic planning.\(^{13}\) The Three Year Plan of 1947-49 was only the beginning of an effective industrial revolution in Poland that changed the demographics and social structure of Poland irrevocably. The Six Year Plan of 1950-1956 set the goal of an annual growth in industrial production of around 20 per cent.\(^{14}\) Before the war, Poland was predominantly rural and agrarian. However, the urban population increased from 31.4 per cent of the total population in 1946, to 57.5 per cent by 1978. By the same year, the percentage of those who drew income from agricultural work shrank from 47.1 per cent in 1950 to 23.4 per cent.\(^{15}\) Poland had become a predominantly industrial and urban society.

\(^{11}\) Interview with Lila, who came to Australia with her husband as a political refugee in 1980.
\(^{13}\) Ibid., p. 264.
\(^{14}\) Dziewanowski, *Poland in the Twentieth Century*, p. 169.
The Soviet-Led Drive for Female Equality

Other drastic social changes were undertaken in the post-War period. At first, the status of women continued much as it had been before the War, although there was a renewed valorisation of women as national heroines. As in other countries, the contribution of women during the War had won them higher public status. This was intensified by the extent of the suffering endured during the War, and the strenuous effort required for reconstruction. In the first few years after the War, moreover, many households were headed by a woman and had no men in them. Large numbers of women were breadwinners and heads of households.\textsuperscript{16} The renewed status of women as national heroines drew upon familiar Polish traditions of the suffering woman preserving the Polish nation. Once again, the legend of the heroism of Polish women became part of the narrative of the reestablishment of the nation.

The role of women in the reconstruction of Warsaw was of particular symbolic importance because of the status of Warsaw as the historical capital of an independent Poland. By 1945, Warsaw had been utterly destroyed, and there were plans to move the capital to the city of Lodz. Women, however, led the campaign to rebuild Warsaw as the capital city. The theme of Polish women as national heroines was even adopted by scholars outside Poland. As William Rose, a long-time resident of Poland before the war and then Professor of Polish literature and history at the University of London, wrote in 1948,

Not for the first time in the nation's history have they stood between its survival and its destruction, and never have they shown finer courage and strength than now. Thousands were shot, thousands more were insulted and humiliated in concentration camps... Other thousands were taken to forced labour camps in Germany; while others still were deported with their children to the depths of Soviet Russia. Yet the spirit of womanhood has not been broken.... Now we know that it was the women who returned to the ruins of Warsaw and began the almost

desperate task of rebuilding the life of the capital, carrying things so far that a mooted plan of the administration to abandon the city and make Lodz the capital of the new Poland was given up. That is only a sample of the kind of thing Polish women have undertaken in time of stress, guided by a sure instinct that often puts the men to shame.\(^{17}\)

The valorisation of women as national heroines was nothing new. What was new, however, was that the new Communist regime was formally committed to female equality. In the Soviet Union, the Communist government had been the first government in history to inscribe female equality into the Constitution. It had also been the first to legislate for equal pay and the right to full-time employment and to encourage active female participation in politics.\(^{18}\) The Polish regime followed suit. The new Polish constitution of 1952 did not simply provide for formal, political equality. It provided for equal rights for all citizens, regardless of sex, in public, political, economic and social life. In particular, it guaranteed equal pay for equal work.\(^{19}\) The new regime also secularised the Polish family. Given the role of the Catholic Church in entrenching the subordination of women within marriage, this secularisation had potential for greater equality for women within the family. The 1918 Soviet Family code had established the notion of men and women as equal partners in marriage, with the abolition of property-based control over women symbolised by the introduction of liberal divorce laws and the granting of equal rights to children born outside of marriage.\(^{20}\) Similarly, the Polish regime abolished the religious form of marriage and imposed civil ceremonies in 1945.\(^{21}\) It also incorporated into Polish family law the principles of equality of rights and obligations of husbands and wives, abolished discrimination against children born outside of marriage, and entrusted the courts with children deprived of parental care.\(^{22}\) At a practical level, the regime provided women with access to greater education and to public childcare and maternity leave. Women also possessed some reproductive rights, in the form of virtually

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20 Einhorn, *Cinderella Goes to Market*, p. 21.
unrestricted access to abortion.  

The commitment to female equality was visibly successful in several important areas. The education system was expanded, including evening schools and preparatory schools to aid workers and farmers. Around 40 per cent of women ended their education after primary school, particularly in rural areas. However, women quickly came to constitute the majority of high school graduates, and to dominate university courses in the humanities, medicine and economics. The Communist regime also encouraged women to participate in politics. Even in the first years of the regime, the proportion of women in the lower house of parliament reached 17 per cent of deputies, and by the mid-1980s, the proportion had risen to 23 per cent.

The most marked change, however, was the increase in women engaging in paid work. Both Marxist doctrine and the imperatives of the national economy committed the regime to raising the participation of women in paid employment. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels regarded productive labour as the essential mark of the human being. Production and labour, both conceptualised primarily as public sphere activities, were absolutely central to both human dignity and the engine of historical change. Marxist theory posited that women could be liberated from inequality and dependence upon men by participation in the paid labour force. Once women were able to earn a wage, they would be economically independent and therefore emancipated from male domination. This would require, however, some state support. As Engels had stated in 1884, "The emancipation of women becomes possible only when women are enabled to take part in production on a large social scale and when domestic duties require their attention only to a minor degree." To this end, domestic labour and childrearing would be socialised. On a more pragmatic level, the industrialisation of Poland also required a large supply of workers.

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25 Ibid., p. 183.
27 Einhorn, Cinderella Goes to Market, p. 27.
The working woman became the new ideal of Polish womanhood. Literature, music and art portrayed young, healthy men and women working together to build the new economy, and a new, socialist future. Women were provided with special educational programmes, and state subsidised childcare. Crèches were provided for children from five months old. There were even residential homes in which children could be left on Monday mornings and collected on Fridays. In 1949, the Six Year Plan aimed for an increase of 11.7 per cent to raise female numbers to 33.5 per cent of the workforce, and this was reached by 1953. Female participation in the socialised sector rose to 39.3 per cent by 1955.

Poland Under Communism: A New Citizenship “Bargain”?  

After the death of Stalin in 1953, Polish citizens experienced greater personal freedom. The Communist regime consolidated its position by pursuing a more “Polish” form of national Communism, including greater freedom for the Catholic church, the end of collectivisation of agriculture and the resignation of the Soviet general who had been brought into the government. This was partly in response to the 1956 riots by workers demanding more “bread and freedom” and greater independence from the Soviet Union. The totalitarian control of the Communist Party was partly liberalised. For instance, Poland became the only Communist country with a large degree of private ownership of farms. In other East European countries, all farms were publicly owned, but in Poland, after the rebellion of 1956, farmers were allowed to leave collectivised farms and return to private farming. By the 1980s, three-quarters of all farming was private, and a quarter of the workforce was involved in private farming. This meant a large sector of the economy, and the main activity of a quarter of the working population, was partly outside of Communist control. Toleration of the Church also created an important element of social life outside of party control.

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30 Holzer and Wasilawska-Trenkner, “Poland”, p. 130.  
32 Ibid., p. 37.
became, in 1956, the first Communist country to institute a choice of candidates in elections.\textsuperscript{33}

Participants in the interviewing project noted that Polish citizens enjoyed more civil rights and freedoms from 1956, although their personal freedoms were still curtailed. Katy, who was fourteen years old in 1956, commented on some of the continuing restrictions:

I remember from my early childhood that you couldn't write to family in the West. We had a big family in England and we couldn't write to them. You couldn't listen to radio that wasn't Communist radio. People were going to jail for jokes. This was 1950s. Later on was better. The life was still not very easy, but it was better when the Stalinism era went by. After Stalin died, in 1956, was a big change. This was the year when new reforms were introduced. They were halted later on. But it was like, you know, clean up. So things changed, but not for long. But it never came back like in Stalinist era, when people were shot, people were killed, no trace of them...\textsuperscript{34}

In particular, Poles generally enjoyed more freedom than citizens of other Communist states. As Jadwiga noted, by the 1970s, women who had grown up under the Communist system did not always recognise the extent of the limitations on their civil rights until after they had left Poland:

We could say more things. I think probably because our ‘Big Brother’, Russia, they know the Poles like to speak and say what they want. There probably was more freedom for what you say in Poland than in Czechoslovakia. But it probably depends what you want to say... But when you are living in some system, and if you don’t know how it’s like, like a bird who is in the cage who was born in the cage, you don’t know what means the freedom.

\textsuperscript{33} Stephen White, “Eastern Europe After Communism”, in White, Batt and Lewis (eds), \textit{Developments in East European Politics}, p. 6.

\textsuperscript{34} Interview with Katy, a political refugee who came to Australia with her husband in 1981, after a short stay in Libya.
After living in Australia, she concluded, “I can say I didn’t feel free in Poland.”

The extra freedoms were, however, always subject to the overriding control exercised by the regime. For instance, while Poles enjoyed freedom of movement throughout the country, they were compelled to inform the government of any significant changes in their personal circumstances. Kamilla, who came to Australia as a political refugee in 1981, believed that Poles were still under surveillance when she left:

In the system where we live, the government had control for everything - your education, where you live, because you have to register yourself every few months where you're going, when you change your living. You have to be registered by the government and you have to review your I.D., where is your address, your occupation, with your photo, everything. Even when you move, you have to report the government you change your address from this to that, and they automatically change your I.D. with your address...In Poland they know where you are, who you are and when you move and what from you move, where you working, everything they know... They know everything, absolutely everything about everyone.

Similarly, Poles were allowed to travel to other countries, but only with special permission. Jasia, hoping to travel overseas in the early 1980s, was refused this permission. She experienced this not only as an inconvenience and a limitation, but as symptomatic of her powerlessness under the regime:

In those days, if you wanted to travel overseas, each time you had to apply for permission...your freedom was actually curtailed because you couldn't make choices wherever you wanted to go for holidays. You had to go through a very elaborate process and quite often the authorities would say no without any reason, and just actually to keep you under the thumb...quoting an article or an Act that was meaningless, because there was no real reason...people never knew where they stood in terms of

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36 Interview with Kamilla, who arrived in Australia as a political refugee in 1981.
their life decisions because the decision wasn't yours, the decision was someone else's, and there was a lot of control and power exerted on people in Poland.37

It is arguable that the Communist regime reached an implicit "citizenship bargain" with Poles. Poles accepted limited political and civil rights in exchange for formal national independence and economic security. As historian Padraic Kennedy has recently argued, Communist regimes "insist on a distinction between the political and the social in a kind of contract: society is to refrain from contesting the political realm, and, in return, the state promises to provide fully for society's needs".38 There was no separation of powers as in liberal democracies, and no independent civil society. Strict control was exercised, not only over specifically political processes, but also over all state and public organisations. This included most of the economy, the military and police, the judicial system, the trade unions, youth and sporting organisations, the media and academic and cultural institutions.39 An important "trade" for this was economic security, particularly in the form of zero unemployment, social security and low prices, especially very low food prices, which required huge government subsidies.40 There was also much greater economic equality between citizens than previously, with a particularly noticeable shrinking of the divide between rural and urban households.41

Katy explained how the citizenship bargain worked in practice in Communist Poland:

The system was that the system gave us the basics - gave us place to live, food to eat, money to spend on small things. You have free education, and education was good, I can tell you. You had access to good holiday, not expensive, in Poland. You had free health service.... everyone had almost the same salaries. For example, doctors and workers in the

37 Interview with Jasia, who arrived in Australia officially classified as a political refugee, although she considered herself to be a voluntary migrant. She came to Australia in 1981, after spending a short time in England.
40 Mason, "Poland", p. 39.
factory were almost the same, so there was no rich and drastically poor. But you didn't have your passport in your hand. If you were not a party member, it was very difficult for you to make your career...History taught at school was cut and changed according to needs of Communists. And you were not a free person at all.

In the rhetoric of the Polish Communist regime, good citizenship meant neither political or civil rights, nor a strong national identity. It simply required political passivity and loyalty to the system. Wanda, a very recent, “third-wave” migrant remembered this rhetoric:

The official emphasis was that Communism focus was not strongly on nationality because it was on the brotherhood of the workers, so citizenship would be more important. The ‘good citizen’ would be the word they use much more that the ‘good Pole’. A good citizen was loyal to the government, to the Party. There was a lot of slogans, always Party-related. There was no ‘my Poland’, but ‘my Party’. There wasn't a big emphasis on nationality. We were part of the big world, the Communist world, the Soviet Union worker was big partner, big friend of ours, ‘comrade’, and all workers come together...A good citizen would work hard and be honest, but everything was related to loyalty, because they mean accept that some people get the power and close your eyes on a lot of things that happen around us. It was the loyalty they really wanted.42

In this context, for many women, political “participation” was not an opportunity, but an unwelcome intrusion into their lives. The women in the interviewing project fiercely resented both the political indoctrination they received as children, and the compulsory political rituals they had experienced, such as participation in Labour Day marches. Jana remembered these rituals as a child in the 1970s:

They were trying to brainwash you and tell you the Communists were

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42 Interview with Wanda, a voluntary migrant who came to Australia in 1997 with her Australian husband.
the best thing that ever happened to you, all the time. I was in Scouts for a few years. It was based in the school, with Communist ideas. You know, Lenin and Stalin are the best people there were ever born. We were brainwashed from an early age about Communism. And every year on the first of May, we had to go on parade with our uniform. We looked like soldiers. We had the uniforms and red scarves, and we had to carry the flag, and we were saying the Communists were the best thing that ever happened.43

Accordingly, many participants found the ritual of voting in Communist Poland farcical:

What we used to do was put paper with no writing on it, because we knew that our votes don't counted. We had to vote because you got to do that in Poland, but we didn't actually vote because no matter what you vote for, there was everything fixed behind our backs anyway...Even if we have, say, a leader who would like to change things, he would be called to Russia and they would decide what to do. And when there was a strike they were sending the solders to fix the problem.44

The interviewees explained that there was no point in standing for election. To do so required joining the Communist Party, which many abhorred. Besides, there was a widespread belief among these immigrants that elections were rigged. They did not believe that election was a meaningful process, or that women who stood for election wanted more than the material benefits of a political position:

Nobody cares, because no real choice at all. The same people went to parliament whether you voted for them or not. It was established before the election the percentage of the people and who will be elected. They can put whoever they want on the election list. They come to you and say 'We want you to be on the list', and you say yes, because you get

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43 Interview with Jana, who came to Australia as a political refugee in 1982 after a short stay in West Germany.
44 Interview with Lila.
house in Warsaw and have a very good life, very good money, do nothing, holidays in special places just for politicians.45

In Poland, the implicit “citizenship bargain” of social rights and security in return for political passivity and resignation is particularly apparent in the waves of political activity every time those social rights were threatened. The 1970 demonstrations in Gdansk and Szczecin, which brought down the Gomulka government, were prompted by a rise in food prices and revised industrial wage scales.46 In the 1970s, the regime attempted to buy off dissent by developing new forms of consumer socialism. Wages rose by 116 per cent between 1970 and 1979.47 Although the regime also offered greater intellectual and religious freedom than before, the main strategy was to provide a rising material standard of living with the help of Western loans. Citizens would enjoy more consumer goods, as well as the traditional advantages of full employment, social security and stable prices.48 When the new government attempted to reintroduce price rises in 1976, further demonstrations and strikes, and far more widespread active opposition to the regime, were the result.49 This is not to deny that Polish opposition to the regime was consistent, but to note that the consistency of this pattern of active rebellion in the face of the erosion of social rights suggests an implicit “citizenship bargain” of formal national independence and economic security in return for political passivity and extremely limited civil and political rights. Some scholars have noted that this model was a highly gendered one in which the state replaced traditional forms of paternalistic authority, acting as the male head of the family by providing material support and protection in return for obedience.50

Just as in liberal democracies, where a “sexual contract” guarantees female subordination, there was also a form of “sexual contract” in Communist Poland.51 The 1960s and 1970s had seen significant changes in notions of female citizenship in Poland. After the industrialisation drive of the 1950s, definitions of the Polish female

45 Interview with Wanda.
47 Kalankiewicz and Lewis (eds), *Poland*, pp. 104-105.
49 Mason, “Poland”, p. 38.
51 See Chapter Three.
citizen shifted, emphasising reproductive, rather than productive, duties. As feminist writer Anna Reading has noted, the regime became increasingly anxious about the declining birthrate, as this risked future labour shortages.\textsuperscript{52} Certainly the birth rate had begun to fall: from a total fertility rate of 3.24 in 1950 to 1.72 by 1968. The need for female labour, however, had also dropped. By the late 1950s, economic growth was slowing, which decreased the demand for labour. From 1966, there were more women seeking work than there were jobs available.\textsuperscript{53} Even in the 1950s, the regime introduced new legislation to provide pregnant women with free healthcare, job and wage protection, and sixteen weeks of maternity leave with salary.\textsuperscript{54} As Jolanta Plakwicz has noted,

During the years 1945-54, when there were direct labour shortages, the streets of Poland were full of posters showing joyful, smiling women driving tractors, tramcars and working in other ‘non-traditional’ occupations. It was in 1958 that this trend began to be reversed and the general ‘homecoming’ of women began to be promoted. From this time until the late 1960s the confusion of women workers-mothers remained an issue.\textsuperscript{55}

This ideological shift continued. By 1970, married women with children constituted 75 per cent of all working women, a figure that had risen from just over 30 per cent in 1956. However, a content analysis of radio and television programmes in the 1970s shows that the emphasis on paid work had been broadened to include both work and domestic duties, with the second actually presented as more important that the first.\textsuperscript{56}

A renewed emphasis on motherhood by the Communist state was not necessarily unwelcome to Polish women. The Catholic Church had, if anything, gained greater informal social influence with greater ethnic homogeneity, and as a counter to the Communist regime. It continued to inculcate Polish women in traditional gender roles.

\textsuperscript{52} Reading, \textit{Polish Women, Solidarity and Feminism}, p. 39.  
\textsuperscript{53} Holzer and Wasilawska-Trenkner, “Poland”, p. 133.  
Some women had remained hostile to the Communist ideal of women as workers. Gizela, for instance, resented the encouragement for women to take up non-traditional jobs, which meant women being compelled to be like men, and an attack on Polish culture:

For example, women in fire engine, in train was driver. Sometimes woman was pregnant, and they keeping in tractors, work in the field. Women start in the factory like drilling... Woman always must be a woman, different from men. And they want to push, 'oh you be like man'. Because they want to stop our country, our culture.

Moreover, the experience of paid work was not necessarily a liberating one. Women were generally overburdened by the combination of paid employment and domestic and family responsibilities. Under the Communist system, the family was, like all other social elements, to be harnessed to the needs of the state and the progress of Communism. Official discourses spoke of a socialist family, geared to the production of future socialist citizens as well as to the participation of women in the paid labour force. A much more subtle understanding of the place of female emancipation under socialism had been lost in favour of little more than participation in paid work and the building of an industrialised socialist state. Women's emancipation tended to be viewed as an almost automatic result of the defeat of capitalism and the triumph of socialism. Despite the best efforts of female Marxist and socialist theorists and leaders, female liberation remained at best secondary, and at worst, was regarded as trivial. The organisation of any independent feminist movement was extremely difficult because it was virtually impossible for Polish citizens to organise independent organisations of any kind.

Mere participation in paid work was no guarantee of equality or freedom from exploitation. While tracing levels of participation in paid work and other public sphere activities produces a picture of increasing female equality, examining the nature of

57 Einhorn, Cinderella Goes to Market, pp. 31-32.
participation makes the picture more complex. Women had, in fact, been incorporated into the public sphere on sexually specific terms that ensured their subordination. In education, for example, women had great difficulty being accepted into more prestigious areas of study such as surgery and art courses. Although women attained one in every three doctorate degrees, only a small number were promoted to professorships, especially in the sciences. Military training was another marker of sexual difference. Polish women generally received some basic army training as part of their general education, which can be viewed as a move towards equality. However, men generally performed two years of compulsory military service:

In Poland, men go to the army when they turn eighteen or more. If they don't study, if they finish their high school and don't study, they go into the army, and it's not on a voluntary basis, they have to go. They finish two years and they go to work. They don't have any more obligation, except some training during their life. In high school we have a subject which was called military training. We had to learn how the gun machine operates, how to use gas mask. Then at the University we had this training, but wider. We learn how to shoot, we learn how to march, and we were taught about some kind of weapon used, very basic. If not at University you don't have this.

Women were also discriminated against in the workforce. Even in the mid-1970s, women's salaries were around 30 per cent lower than men's, partly because men tended to be concentrated in industry, where salaries were higher. By the end of the 1980s, female labour was concentrated in the light industrial or service sectors where wages were lower, and women were drastically underrepresented in managerial positions and trade union leadership. Professional women became concentrated in professions that were typed “female”, such as medicine, pharmacy and dentistry. While these have been high status, highly paid professions in the West, they were defined as “services” in the socialist economy, while professions associated with production, such

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61 Interview with Katy.
as engineering, were much better paid. Even women in higher paid sectors, however, generally took up positions at a lower level, were rarely promoted and were paid less than men. Women also occupied lower positions in political institutions. They held just over 10 per cent of the positions on the Central Committee of the Polish United Worker's Party in 1980 despite making up almost a third of Party members. As Edyta reflected, theoretical equality did not necessarily match reality:

In politics, it was mostly men, but there were some women, but less women than men. This was mostly because of tradition, I think... a woman for the same work also receives less money than men. The regulations theoretically are for us, but the practice is different. I think it needs two generations, maybe more. There are a lot of men who think woman is only for children and house, nothing more. Woman doesn't need to be clever. She has to know how to cook.

In the 1970s, pronatalist policies were introduced, further reinforcing the renewed identification of female citizens with motherhood. As Kassia, whose children were born just before this period, remembered,

My generation didn't get pension. After you use your leave, you had to take like maternity leave without pay. There wasn't any pension or anything like that. The 1970s, yes. There was the talk they were going to introduce paid leave for women having kids, or get part of their salary.

Before the early 1970s, women with children had very little choice about their working hours. Most mothers worked full-time, relying on public childcare:

When you had your child you could stay six months at home and you get full pay for it. After six months we had nursery for little children from six months up to three years old, and there were around professional nurses, and always a doctor on the premises. For the last group, three years old, they had a trained person just for two or three hours to play

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65 Ibid., p. 184.
66 Interview with Kassia, who arrived in Australia as a political refugee in 1982.
with them. So they could go there for a full day, and it wasn't very expensive. Then there was kindy, and kindy was for three years old to six years old. Some of them they left with grandma and stayed at home, but mainly we all grow up in the kindergarten. Hardly anyone stay at home, because they could not afford to stay at home with a child.67

In the 1970s, however, family allowances were increased, and leave without pay for one year was introduced for mothers of children under four years old. In 1972, this leave without pay period was extended to three years, with this time also counted towards the period of employment needed to gain a pension. Leave on full pay for the care of sick children under fourteen years old was increased from thirty to sixty days each year. Paid maternity leave was increased from twelve to sixteen months for the first child, and to eighteen weeks for subsequent children, while childbirth benefits were raised to 100 per cent of salary for manual workers. In 1974, benefits for parents of disabled children were introduced, and family allowances were increased. In 1975, individuals unable to gain access to alimony were granted state-funded alimony money. Maternity leave for multiple births was increased from eighteen to twenty-six weeks, young couples were granted financial help up to 40 per cent of the value of bank credit drawn and family allowances were once again increased. From 1978, every woman who bore a child was awarded a maternity grant, regardless of other income.68

This model of pronatalist citizenship was not sustainable. The regime suffered from recurring economic crises, and was unable to maintain either the new consumer socialism or the beneficently funded policies for women. Another problem was the demographic explosion created by the post-War “baby boom”. This meant that the 1970s, in particular, saw an unusually rapid increase in demands for childcare, schools and apartments, which was difficult to meet.69 In Poland, shortages became evident after the O.P.E.C. price increases in 1974, and by 1980, everyday living and provision for families was a constant struggle.70 Women recalled how this affected their daily lives:

67 Interview with Lila.
68 Holzer and Wasilawska-Trenkner, “Poland”, pp. 132-133.
You go into the shop, you've got the money, but you can't buy anything in the supermarket. All you could buy was a bottle of vinegar. You could go to butcher's shop, but you couldn't buy anything from there. There was nothing in there. Things were getting bad.... Housing was very bad in Poland. If you wanted an apartment, not even a house because it was not possible to get a house, you had to wait like 15 years to get a place from like state housing commission place. That was Communism. It's very hard to describe how hard it was, but every day was very hard, like a struggle.\textsuperscript{71}

The endless struggle as the economy collapsed was not only exhausting, but was also experienced by participants in the interviewing project as degrading. Beata viewed it as a denial of her right to live a civilised life:

The simple life, like getting things for basic living like food and clothes for children, this was just so degrading. You were feeling like you had to fight for everything. It's a waste of your life, because you're meant to do other things in your life, more interesting, instead of trying to get basic things for living - like standing in queues for three hours to get butter, or to buy for children. It's just so humiliating. I was feeling like I'm not a human being there.\textsuperscript{72}

Shortages were particularly resented because of the material privileges enjoyed by the Communist elite, and the rise of corruption and organised crime. These were highly visible, and caused ever-greater alienation from the regime:

Most of the time, things were not available for ordinary people. Things were available for people only who were up high. The government was a bunch of crooks - black money going through their hands, and deals, just to make money for them. People had to speculate to be able to get anything, to get food, to get medication. And that's how the criminal element was getting money, and it was getting dangerous for people in Poland. It was like a mafia.... The ordinary person in Poland at that time

\textsuperscript{71} Interview with Jana.
\textsuperscript{72} Interview with Beata, who arrived in Australia as a political refugee in 1985.
was just nobody. If you were like principal, or someone like mayor, or some higher level, you were quite well off, you could afford quite a lot because your salary was quite high. But if you were an ordinary person, you just struggle. If you were clever, if you had enough brains, and you know people - that was the main thing, if you know somebody who knows somebody.73

Jolanta was cynical about the motivations of Poles who joined the Communist party:

How they say it, ‘everything for everybody’, that’s how they are saying, but it wasn't like that. The ones in government, or ones in with Party, the one which was the bosses in some big factories, they have everything... A lot of people, they just join because they have some extra money, and in work getting better position. Some of them, they really believe it, you know, what they are saying, but I think most of them they are just joining because of the things what they get.74

The dual definition of female citizens as both workers and mothers was also unsustainable. Pronatalist policies, along with the strong influence of the Catholic Church and the scarcity of contraceptives, might have been expected to raise the birth rate. However, the average number of children per family actually dropped from 1.65 in 1970 to 1.45 in 1978.75 The 1978 population census showed that the largest group of women had no children living in the same household, the next largest had only one child and only 7 per cent of all women had three or more children.76 There had also been a marked increase of over 23 per cent in couples with no children at all since 1970.77 Part of the problem was that, as Barbara Einhorn has argued, under the Communist system, female citizens were conceptualised as both workers and mothers, but there was no corresponding understanding of men as both workers and fathers.78 While the socialist state attempted to provide greater support and services for women in order to reconcile these roles, it could not overcome the problem of the double burden

73 Interview with Jana.  
74 Interview with Jolanta, who arrived in Australia as a voluntary migrant in 1987.  
75 Holzer and Wasilawska-Trenkner, “Poland”, p. 138.  
76 Ibid., p. 146.  
77 Ibid., p. 138.  
78 Einhorn, Cinderella Goes to Market, p. 5.
for women both working and rearing children.

The double burden, common also in non-Communist states such as Australia, was particularly heavy for Polish women, partly because the dual definition of women as both mother-citizens and worker-citizens rested upon the delivery of services, which were always very far from the rhetoric.\(^7\) One of the reasons for this was that domestic needs tended to be classed as consumer needs, all of which were crowded out in Communist economies, where investment and defence were the highest priorities, and consumer goods and services were a low priority. Services such as childcare and obstetrical care, and goods such as birth control items were well down on the list of priorities, as were all other goods and services.\(^8\) Housework was rendered more demanding by the scarcity of appliances such as vacuum cleaners and washing machines, so that housework included heavy tasks such as beating carpets by hand and hand washing of clothes.\(^9\) Beata, who was raising two small children in the early 1980s, remembered that basic tasks of childrearing were particularly time consuming:

I didn't finish my law degree. I did two years, and then I got married, and got pregnant, and forget about it, bye bye! It's much more difficult in Poland to study and have children. Getting things for the house took so much time every day. I remember in Poland I spent two hours in the queue to get nappies, because they started to deliver the disposable nappies, and this was such a good thing, because it was the first time I experienced something like that. Imagine actually having to wash them! I bought packets of those nappies and I was so happy! It was much easier. Or the milk, the powdered milk. You have so much different kind of food for babies here, but you didn't have those things, you had to cook everything, everything had to be done by hand, which was obviously time consuming. When you add up little things like that, it would use up the whole day, and you don't really have much time to study. Another day, another day, and you just sit down and try to study, but you're tired, you're simply falling asleep.

\(^7\) Ibid, p. 13
\(^8\) Meyer, "Feminism, Socialism and Nationalism in Eastern Europe", p. 23.
\(^9\) Long, We All Fought For Freedom, p. 22.
The proportion of women suffering from the double burden was high. A 1988 study found that most Polish women were wives and mothers as well as workers. In 1988, 77 per cent of adult women were married, and only 5 per cent of women remained unmarried throughout their entire lives. Only 13 per cent had no children. In 1987, another study found that women performed three times as much domestic labour as men. The workload was also increasing in some forms of work, such as farming, in which the division between private domestic labour and public paid labour was less clear. In the 1930s, rural women were estimated to be working thirteen hours each day, and by 1988, this had risen to a norm of sixteen hours. As the economy deteriorated, the double burden became greater. More and more economic activities were shifted to households, and ordinary household tasks took more time. The exhaustion of women under the Communist system became a by-word. As the independent press reported in 1989,

Hazardous conditions, primitive machinery, and low working morale are some of the factors that contribute to women's ill health and chronic tiredness. This is compounded by the fact that the average woman spends up to nine hours after her working day on travel, standing in lines, shopping (and here there are shortages of all staple foods), housework, and looking after children. Most households also tend to be increasingly self-sufficient: the majority of women also make and mend clothes for their families, preserve fruit and vegetables, tend vegetable plots, and oversee maintenance and repairs in the home. It is therefore hardly surprising that few have any time, energy, or money left to engage in political activity.

As a result, from the mid-1970s, a rising proportion of women attempted to reduce their participation in paid work. This trend should not be overstated. The rate of female participation in the workforce continued to climb, although at a slower rate, until the 1980s. Women constituted 39.6 per cent of the workforce by 1970 and 44.2

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83 Kolankiewicz and Lewis, Poland, p. 39.
per cent by 1980. After 1970, there was a significant improvement in the kinds of jobs available to women, coinciding with better education. Sectors such as finance, insurance, education and healthcare became heavily feminised. By the end of the 1980s, 86 per cent of women worked full-time. Women had been brought up, after all, in the expectation that they would earn their own living for most of their lives, rather than relying on male support:

In Poland, we all work. We could not afford to sit here like that. We all were education, we all were equal, and always from the time I was small they were telling me if something happens you have to be able to cope in life. You can't depend on anyone. You have to be independent, you have to be independent.... That's the way we grew up, because it doesn't matter if you are a boy or a girl, you must achieve something in your life.... any Polish girl, she got occupation, she got her job, she make her own money, so it's not like we depend on our husband, she look after herself.

Nevertheless, from the mid-1970s, the participation of women in paid work decreased significantly for women under thirty and over fifty years of age. The main reason for this was that many young women were on leave caring for young children, and others were retiring from the workforce earlier. This tendency was reinforced as family income increased but the number of creche and nursery school places decreased. In the 1980s, women were allowed one year of paid maternity leave, and then three years' childrearing leave at half pay, while by 1988, for every one thousand children requiring daycare, only forty-five places were available. The rise in the proportion of women looking after children at home was hardly surprising. Even women who maintained full-time work were often heavily reliant on their own mothers for childcare. As Kalina, who was able to leave her daughter at home with her own

85 Table 82, in Holzer and Wasilawska-Trenkner, “Poland”, p.131.
86 Holzer and Wasilawska-Trenkner, “Poland”, p. 131.
89 Interview with Lila.
90 Holzer and Wasilawska-Trenkner, “Poland”, pp. 142-143.
Many of the grandmothers in Poland keeping care of grandchildren. My grandmother take care of me, and later on my mother keep care of my daughter, because I left her with my mum. It's institutional, our grandmother, because many, many extended families live together. Who can afford housing then in Poland? Not many people.92

The unsustainability of both the Communist citizenship bargain and the particular place for women within it became increasingly apparent through the 1970s and early 1980s. As the economy lapsed into recurrent crises, political opposition to the regime strengthened. When the Gierek government attempted to reintroduce price rises in 1976, demonstrations and strikes sparked the formation of a far more dissident political movement. This included the formation of the Worker's Defence Committee, the Movement for the Defence of Human and Civil Rights, the Confederation of Independent Poland and the beginnings of Solidarity, in the form of a Committee of Free Trade Unions. The strikes and demonstrations which created the legend of Solidarity and of Lech Walesa were prompted by yet another attempt to raise food prices in July 1980, creating a political movement so enormous that the regime was forced to agree to the formation of the first independent trade union in the Communist bloc: Solidarity. Approximately twelve million people, of a total workforce of sixteen million, joined the new union, which was rapidly creating a new centre of political power, until the declaration of martial law in 1981.93 In contrast to the Communist model of political passivity, Solidarity leaders articulated a new model of citizenship:

It is a matter of a system in which the social structure can be established from below...This country can no longer be governed any other way...this entire democratisation movement comes from below, from the populace, which are increasingly well organised. Thus it forces the government to give in. The government must, whether it likes it or not, meet the people's demand for more pluralism, more democracy - it must

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92 Interview with Kalina, who arrived in Australia as a voluntary migrant in 1993 after marrying a second-wave political refugee.

93 Mason, “Poland”, p. 39.
Women were often heavily involved in the political opposition. In 1971, for example, strikes by female workers in textile factories in Lodz had been particularly effective. As the political opposition became more established, women were particularly central to secret activities such as sheltering dissidents, producing and distributing dissident publications, and acting as couriers, just as they had been during World War II. Several participants in the interviewing project had worked actively for Solidarity and other dissident organisations. Wanda, who was at university in the early 1980s, estimated that there were more women than men in these organisations:

My mother was involved in Catholic intelligentsia club, and after in Solidarity. I think women were more involved than men in general. I think Polish society is much more woman and family associated. The Polish woman, they have more correct courage to go out and do what they want and in the way they want...I also joined organisations. I was involved with K.P.N., the Confederation for Independent Poland. I was doing everything - I can write articles, I can talk to people, I can walk with my articles and give them to somebody. And I was doing like courier job between my university and the central. If you are twenty-one years old, and things like this happen, I don't think it's a choice. It was just such a fascinating thing, and such happiness that it can happen in your life. It was a hope, too, because everyone who is twenty, they hope for a better life. And that is the moment where maybe, maybe we have the chance to do something with our lives.

For a time, the imposition of martial law in 1981 quashed the new political culture. Not only were there mass arrests of activists, but Poles in government positions were required to formally register their loyalty to the regime. Some refused, and either resigned or lost their jobs. Only political connections saved Paulina from a similar fate:

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95 Jančar, "Women in the Opposition in Poland and Czechoslovakia in the 1970s", p. 175.
96 Einhorn, Cinderella Goes to Market, p. 170.
Union Solidarity doesn't exist officially, and I have problem with martial law because I work in government - like public service, but special government job. And they told me if I want to stay working I have to write some paper like 'I am loyal for people who put Poland to martial law'. But I thought 'No, I don't like this. It's not fair. Union is still union. They maybe can't work in here, but they still exist'...And before Christmas I told them no. And after, I don't working for three months because I have special black mark, because I working in Solidarity and I don't sign this...And after three months or four months, because I have many friends, and friends in very good position, they ask me 'Can you come back to work?' And I start again work.\(^{97}\)

Moreover, martial law initiated a substantial flow of Polish refugees out of Poland. It resulted in a second wave of Polish refugees to Australia in the 1980s, including fourteen participants in the interviewing project. Some of these interviewees, or their husbands, were in danger of arrest for their political activities. Most, however, had simply tired of the restrictions on their rights, and of the constant struggle of everyday life in Poland:

Simply, we ran away from the Communist system. There was trouble, there was problems there, and we knew the martial law was coming very soon again. So that's why we decided to run away for good. It was quite difficult because we left everything behind.... That's how we came to Australia, mainly because of the Communist system. We wanted to leave for the freedom, freedom of speech, and general no future because of the system.... And the worst part was, it was getting more and more, you know, it was getting worse and worse. So we just had enough, you know. It was quite a big decision in our life and quite a lot, you know, many, many of our friends left at this time because they just didn't want to go through, you know, martial law again.\(^{98}\)

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\(^{97}\) Interview with Paulina, a political refugee who arrived in Australia with her husband and child in 1987, after a short stay in Austria.

\(^{98}\) Interview with Lila.
Other women, however, continued to work actively for the end of the regime:

That night when martial law started, they come to private houses and take agent people. They know who to take. And these people were in prison for a long time, for two years or more. And I was in the organisation that prepared help for these people - collected some clothes, food for the prisoners and for their families. We took also small papers, messages about what's happening. It was useful for them. That was one part of our work. And the second part was to help people who prepared some newspapers and to give them to other people. The newspapers were against martial law, against government, against Communists. The truth about what they do, because they always said they do everything for people, and it wasn't true. It was like tell people that it will be different, it will change. They have to be together, and change will come.99

Despite recent experience of martial law, by the mid-1980s, there were over two thousand regular dissident newspapers and other publications in Poland. This reflected the revival of a dissident civil society.100 The 1988 protests which were eventually to lead to the further liberalisation of the regime, the legalisation of Solidarity and the free elections which spelled the end of the Communist regime, were, like other periods of intense protest, brought on by a new round of price rises and a plummeting standard of living.101

Only a few women ever attained leadership positions in Solidarity or any other dissident organisation. Their characteristic activities were clandestine, which marginalised female activists from leadership positions with a high public profile.102 One underground leader noted that the opposition movement relied heavily on women's willingness to perform anonymous tasks, while men insisted on recognition and contact with the leadership.103 When the Committee for the Defence of the Workers was

99 Interview with Edyta.
100 Mason, "Poland", p. 38.
101 Ibid., p. 41.
102 Einhorn, Cinderella Goes to Market, p. 170.
103 Comments by Underground leader Władysław Frasyniuk, quoted by Long, We All Fought For Freedom, p. 62.
disbanded in 1980, only four of its thirty-four members were women.\textsuperscript{104} The culture of Solidarity was strongly Catholic and conservative on gender roles. Stefania Miller has analysed the ways in which Solidarity supported images of women as only secondary wage earners whose primary responsibilities lay with children and domesticity in the 1980s.\textsuperscript{105} Women constituted around 50 per cent of members of Solidarity before martial law, but less than 8 per cent of the delegates to the Solidarity Congress, and only one woman was elected to the National Executive Council in 1981.\textsuperscript{106} During martial law, not one woman served on the underground governing committee.\textsuperscript{107} By 1989, as Solidarity and the Communist regime negotiated a new political settlement, the sixty key participants included only one woman, and none of the negotiating sub-groups were led by a woman.\textsuperscript{108}

This does not mean that women were not crucially important political agents. An overemphasis on leadership of organisations can create a very narrow definition of "political" activity and resistance. Most accounts of the rise of opposition in Poland emphasise the dramatic and violent confrontations in male-dominated industries in 1956, 1968, 1970, 1976 and 1980.\textsuperscript{109} However, as Einhorn has argued, under Communism, a peculiar reversal of the private/public sphere dichotomy prevailed. Communist ideology promoted the ideal of female participation in the public sphere of the paid labour force, and devalued the importance of domestic labor and the private sphere until the low birth rate posed a threat to the state. In a social context, however, the private sphere became idealised as a site which belonged to family and friends - not only as escape from, but also resistance to, the Communist system and its relentless politicisation of everyday life.\textsuperscript{110} In fact, Hana Havelkova has suggested that, as the economy broke down and more and more Poles relied on the black market and other forms of barter, female dominance of the private realm of household management

\textsuperscript{104} Jancar, "Women in the Opposition in Poland and Czechoslovakia in the 1970s", p. 170.
\textsuperscript{106} Jancar, "Women in the Opposition in Poland and Czechoslovakia in the 1970s", p. 169.
\textsuperscript{107} Kenney, "The Gender of Resistance in Communist Poland", p. 399.
\textsuperscript{109} Einhorn, \textit{Cinderella Goes to Market}, p. 7.
meant their dominance in the sphere of substitute economic activity and information exchange, but also in the main form of resistance practiced by Poles. Moreover, Padraic Kennedy has argued that the male leaders of Solidarity shared many of the assumptions of the Communist leadership relating to the proper place of women in society and political culture, and that this limited the success of the “official” opposition. Women, however, often employed very different assumptions, and forced the regime to attempt to meet their demands as managers of households. The government’s inability to pay back Western loans to meet these demands left the system bankrupt. Women, therefore, can be seen as key agents in the final collapse of the regime.

The Democratic Revolution

Between 1989 and 1991, the fall of the Communist regime and establishment of a liberal democracy appeared to promise a restoration of civil and political rights, new freedoms, the establishment of civil society and empowerment of citizens. The new government, headed by the former opposition, was greeted with euphoria. The early years saw, along with the restructuring of the economy, the construction of basic democratic institutions, the establishment of the rule of law, and guarantees for civil rights such as freedom of speech. The first leader of the new government, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, emphasised that the rights of citizens would be protected by law:

The introduction of the rule of law, the acknowledgment of the rights of every citizen in agreement with international pacts, treaties and conventions, is a necessity. Citizens must have the feeling of freedom, security, and participation. Such a feeling can be had only in a law-abiding state, in which every activity of the government is supported by law...We mark off the past with a thick line.

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114 Speech by Tadeusz Mazowiecki widely known as the “thick line” speech, printed as Tadeusz
It was not, however, quite so easy to mark off the past. The political passivity of most Polish citizens under Communist rule had left its own imprint. The first truly free elections were held in October 1991, amid the economic insecurity created by the rapid transition to a market economy. Polish “shock therapy” of rapid deregulation and privatisation lifted government price controls and withdrew most government subsidies to state enterprises. In 1990, when price controls were lifted, living costs overall were eleven times higher than in 1989, with food costs fourteen times higher. By 1991, inflation was still at 70 per cent, unemployment had reached 12 per cent, and real wages had declined by approximately 20 per cent. A noticeable class divide was developing in Poland. Kalina, who left Poland in 1993, noticed a polarisation of rich and poor once government subsidies and welfare programmes were cut:

When the changes came, that was cut straight away so what’s going on what’s happened? Even right now there are so many very rich people and many very poor people... now we have capitalism, people are not happy there. Many people, that’s mentality, because many people liked the Communist system when they compare. They fight against it and later on they feel that was better than capitalism because there was no money, no work... everything change so quickly and people can, you know, struggle with that.

Paulina, who visited Poland in 1995, was also struck by this trend, as well as by the level of corruption:

Now it’s going to big difference - before was three levels of wealthy, middle class, poor, etc., but people more the same. But now it’s going more rich and more poor. And more rich people not working officially, many mafia people from Russia, speculation, you know. Maybe because change very quick, you know. Another country going very slow, but in Poland from this Communist system the change was very fast.

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Long, We All Fought For Freedom, p. 26.

Mason, “Poland”, pp. 46-47.
In spite of widespread economic suffering, or perhaps because of it, Poland's first completely free elections attracted a voter turnout of only 43 per cent.\textsuperscript{117} Considering that Poland has had a strong, if largely underground, democratic tradition, and was lauded by commentators worldwide for the movement which had forced a return to democracy, this participation rate must be regarded as very low. The political passivity inculcated over more than four decades was very difficult to unlearn, as Katy observed:

For so many years, the voices, they were just a farce. There was no real voting in Poland. So the people still have that feeling. Why so many people don't go, if they so unhappy? They don't believe it will change anything, which of course is not true... Probably other people will tell you that they don't believe their vote will change anything, because it is still a heritage from Communist era.

Feminist commentators, moreover, soon noted that, despite enjoying new political and civil rights, women appeared to have lost out overall under the new system. A new social and sexual contract was under construction, and women were in a very weak position to influence the outcome. The result was new forms of subordination for women under a new system. Politically, the new environment was hostile to female equality. To begin with, female candidates had fared relatively poorly in the first elections, winning only 6 per cent of seats in the Senate and just under 15 per cent in the Sejm. As local government was reconstructed in 1990, women gained only just over 10 per cent of seats on local councils, significantly less than they had achieved in the former provincial councils.\textsuperscript{118} Einhorn has argued that women's anti-Communist activism in the private sphere actually strengthened the private/public divide in Poland, setting up women for their post-Communist role as central to an idealised domestic sphere within rising nationalist ideologies. As the newly legitimised centre of political power moved back to the state, women were left behind in the private sphere while political debate and decision-making returned to male-dominated politics.\textsuperscript{119}

\textsuperscript{117} Ibid., p. 44.
\textsuperscript{118} Regulska, "Women and Power in Poland", p. 187.
\textsuperscript{119} Einhorn, \textit{Cinderella Goes to Market}, p. 7.
The alliance between Solidarity and the Catholic Church that had evolved under the former regime also meant a consolidation of the political power of the Church under the new system. The Church exercised considerable influence through Church-owned mass media, Catholic politicians, Catholic political parties and pressure on parishioners. Feminism was portrayed as an ideology imposed by a foreign power from which Poland was now free. The importation of liberal narratives of citizenship linked active citizenship to private property and the free market. The Church, however, aggressively proclaimed that women belonged at home with their families rather than in paid work or in politics. The attitude of the Church shocked Wanda, who had formerly viewed the Church as an ally against the Communist state:

The Church was for us a partner for changing our country...We find in 1989 for the first time the church started having power. I remember my church when I am partner of my priest and of everyone - that we discuss things. Then in 1989, we get a church who want to come and preach - from this partner position to this preaching position. I think a lot of people was totally shocked, and unacceptable because they was preaching on issues which we not used to being preached about, and I'm talking about moral issues like abortion. They make a law in Poland where they banish abortion, stop divorce...When they change the system, there was unemployment 30 per cent. Church started preaching about strongness in the family, which means that woman should stay home and be a woman.

Once the Church hierarchy had set the general tone, she found that zealous parishioners enforced these ideas with social pressure:

There was a group of people who go from pharmacy to pharmacy and ask about contraceptives, and if this pharmacy has them, they would say in church that this person is unCatholic or defiant, and the pharmacy would be picketed by people. Imagine this in a little town where

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120 Long, *We All Fought For Freedom*, p. 176.
everyone knows everyone!

The Church wielded not only social power, but also direct political influence to enforce its views. As unemployment rose, a combination of rising church pressure, the extra costs of employing women who might require maternity and childcare leave, and "protective" legislation left over from the Communist regime ensured that women were generally the last hired and the first fired. Jasia, who visited Poland in 1994, was shocked by the decline in the position of women:

All the gains that were made were lost, for society to make way for a new system that is developing itself. Another situation is actually deteriorating childcare system, pushes women to stay at home. I don't think it is incidental. I think it is deliberate unwritten policy to have women at home and actually reduce people of unemployment.

The Church also moved to confine women to an idealised domestic sphere. Within two years, sex education was removed from the school curriculum, and university staff reported withdrawal of funding and pressure to cease research on projects dealing with domestic violence and sexual assault. Divorce laws were revised so that divorce became more difficult and more expensive. Church pressure prevented the passing of a bill that would have indexed child support payments to inflation, claiming that this would support divorce. The Church attempted to push the new Solidarity government to introduce a "family" wage bill, in which men would gain supplements to their salaries for each child, provided that their wives did not work. This bill did not succeed, but childcare was reassigned from national to local authorities, and over half of all childcare centres closed. From 1989, government and public debated a Church-sponsored bill "On Family Planning, the Defence of the Human Fetus and Conditions of Abortion Permissibility". Early versions of the bill would have outlawed contraceptives, abolished abortion rights and provided for a three-year jail term for doctors and women terminating pregnancies. When the Women's

123 Ibid., p. 104.
124 Ibid., p. 105.
Section of Solidarity campaigned against the bill in 1990, the Solidarity leadership first refused them access to all equipment, including telephones, and to foreign contacts, and then closed down the Section in 1991. The version of the bill which finally passed in 1993 dropped the ban on contraception and permitted abortion when the mother's life or health were threatened, and in cases of severe fetal defects, rape or incest. However, any person aside from the pregnant woman who violated these laws was liable to imprisonment for two years. Roza Tsagarousianou has argued that the wave of anti-abortion legislation in post-Communist Europe was part of a new form of "reproductive politics" in which women's bodies were nationalised as a public resource.

By 1991, the number of women in paid employment had fallen from almost 80 per cent of the comparable figure for men to just over 71 per cent, women constituted more than half of the unemployed population, and some observers judged that job openings for women were only one-seventh the number for men. By 1994, women constituted just under 10 per cent of the Sejm and 6 per cent of Senators. In 1992, the Sejm elected Poland's first-ever female Prime Minister, Hanna Suchocka, but she was a prominent critic of abortion rights. By the early 1990s, Polish women had gained an array of civil and political rights, such as freedom of speech, assembly, association and movement, along with free elections, but lost guaranteed employment, free education and medical care, subsidised housing, and rights especially important to female equality such as reproductive freedom (such as it was), paid parental leave, and cheap daycare.

Economic insecurity, and the loss of reproductive rights, in particular, led to criticisms. The new democratic system lost popularity, and was vulnerable to a creeping authoritarianism. By 1992, public opinion polls showed that an ever increasing majority of the population approved of granting the government stronger

126 Long, *We All Fought For Freedom*, p. 171.
130 Titkow, "Polish Women in Politics", p. 31.
131 Mason, "Poland", p. 48.
132 Godorf, "Women and Catholic Church Politics in Eastern Europe", p. 112.
powers to "rule with a strong hand", and that approximately 40 per cent of those polled believed that Jews had too great an influence in Poland's public life.\(^\text{133}\) Hanna Suchocka's government was followed in September 1993 by the electoral victory of the Left Alliance and the Polish Peasant's Party - an effective return to power by many figures from the former Communist regime.\(^\text{134}\) Participants in the interviewing project attributed the return to power of former Communists to economic insecurity, particularly among the older generations:

> A lot of older people over the years, they were used to the government took care. Whatever care it was wasn't good, for instance, but at least it was free care...even the services wasn't up to the proper standard, but it was something which was expected to be given to you.... Now they had to think for themselves, it wasn't given to them, they had to pay. You don't have this security, you don't have this backup...And at the same time the value for work, for wages, is not high, and people don't feel comfortable that they can earn enough money to provide all these things for themselves for the future. That's why they don't have the security zone, the comfort zones, that they had before, where 'at least we had this or that'.\(^\text{135}\)

It was noticeable, however, that women voted in particularly high numbers for the Left Alliance and the Polish Peasant's Party, which had also opposed the restrictions on abortion, and some political commentators argued that women were reacting against the interference of the Church in their lives.\(^\text{136}\) The return to power of many former Communists suggested, in fact, that many Polish citizens, and women in particular, preferred the old model of economic and reproductive rights to the alternatives offered by the new democratic system.

The Polish Communist regime had committed itself to equal citizenship for women. In the process, it partially reconfigured traditional gender roles in Poland. However, women enjoyed few rights under the Communist system. The regime may, in

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\(^\text{133}\) Mason, "Poland", p. 49.

\(^\text{134}\) Holc, "Liberalism and the Contraction of the Democratic Subject in Postcommunism", p. 426.

\(^\text{135}\) Interview with Beata.

\(^\text{136}\) Gudorf, "Women and Catholic Church Politics in Eastern Europe", p. 115.
fact, have developed a specific form of citizenship in which Polish citizens accepted formal independence, and limited civil and political rights, in exchange for economic security. This form was itself highly gendered, in that it defined female citizens as both workers and mothers, with no corresponding definition of male citizens as both workers and fathers. This prevented Polish women from attaining the equality to which the regime was committed. Under Communism, therefore, as under previous systems of government, women were subordinated and assigned sexually specific duties and a sexually specific status. The collapse of Communism brought new models of citizenship for Polish women, with new civil and political rights. However, women lost both economic security and reproductive rights. Once again, women were subordinated within a new political and social order. The ways in which Polish women sought and experienced a different citizenship bargain in Australia are the subject of the following two chapters.
"We were sort of second class citizens": Polish Women and Settlement in Australia

The next two chapters explore experiences of settlement and citizenship among Polish women now settled in Western Australia. These experiences are discussed primarily in terms of the three main waves of Polish migration to Australia. Strictly speaking, there were five interviewees, all former deportees, who were part of the first-wave migration of 1947-1951. However, five other participants shared common experiences of Australian assimilation policy with these first-wave women, although four of the five arrived in Australia between 1962 and 1970. Where these two groups are discussed together, they are referred to as post-War migrants. Fourteen interviewees came to Australia from Poland in the 1980s as part of the second wave of migration. They are discussed here along with two former deportees who also arrived in Australia as part of the second wave of the 1980s, but had originally settled in England. Four more women joined the third wave of migration to Australia in the 1990s.

Australia's immigration policy has been intimately bound up with the goal of producing a supply of new Australian citizens. One important factor in the ways in which participants in the interviewing project perceived and practised their citizenship was their experiences in the first years of settlement. For women from all three waves of migration, as for the atypical individuals, the early years of settlement shaped their sense of welcome and inclusion, and impressed upon them their prospective status in their new community. When the first wave of Polish women entered Australia after World War II, they came to a country highly suspicious of other "races" and cultures. Australian citizenship norms emphasised the British character of Australian citizens, in contrast to "aliens". Between 1948 and 1987, the *Australian Nationality and Citizenship Act 1948-1950* designated as an alien "a person who does not have the
status of a British subject and is not an Irish citizen or a protected person".\(^1\) In their first years of settlement, therefore, first-wave and other Polish women did not enjoy the rights of citizens, but were designated as aliens. They were treated as individuals of markedly lower economic and social status than the Australian-born. They were also expected to assimilate to Australian cultural norms. The post-War migrants, however, exerted a strong impact on notions of Australian identity, community and citizenship. As a result, subsequent groups of Polish women entered the Australian community on far more equal terms. Despite many difficulties in settlement and cultural adjustment, second and third-wave Polish women enjoyed higher social status, more access to services and a greater sense of inclusion in the Australian community. The positive effects of this change, however, may be under threat by a political backlash against migrant equality.

When the first wave of Polish migrants began to enter Australia from 1947, white Australian identity had been strongly shaped by the idea of white Australians as an isolated and vulnerable outpost of the British race, surrounded by inferior but aggressive multitudes. A highly restricted, racially based immigration policy was one of the few areas of bipartisan politics in Australia.\(^2\) Ironically, the extraordinary immigration intake of the 1940s and 1950s, the beginning of the end for this worldview, was motivated by the same insight. It was prompted by a renewed sense of the vulnerability of Australia, despite the fame of its citizen soldiers, and partly due to the perceived failure of its citizen mothers to maintain the birth rate. During World War II, the Japanese had penetrated into Southeast Asia and New Guinea, and made Australian policymakers intensely aware of Australia’s position as a small nation of only seven million, surrounded by non-European countries and isolated from Britain. This experience created a revival of “populate or perish” discourses.\(^3\)

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The preference of even the most fervent exponents of the immigration programme was always for a higher birthrate among Australia's white women. In 1945, the Minister for the newly-established Department of Immigration, Arthur Calwell, stated that "our first task is to ennoble motherhood". The birth rate, however, had been low during the Depression years, falling from 25.5 births per thousand in 1920 to 16.4 in 1930, and it became clear that only immigration could supply the much-needed population growth. There was, moreover, another motive for large-scale immigration. The demands of reconstruction, increasing industrialisation and economic development also appeared to require a much higher population, and especially an influx of industrial labour. By 1949, Calwell was embarked on a campaign to persuade the Australian public of the need for an immigration drive:

We must fill this country or we shall lose it. But even if there were no urgent security reason for our immigration drive there would be sound and cogent economic ones. A great industrial expansion has taken place during and since World War II, and we, as a consequence, have unused industrial capacity which offers a prosperous life to huge numbers of additional workers. There is no hope of meeting the demands for this labour power from among the Australian population.

These two priorities, an increase in the sheer number of Australians as a defence measure, and the need for more workers, shaped Australian immigration policy and its expectations of new migrants.

Initially, as in the 1930s, the predominance of the white Anglo-Celtic citizen was maintained by a concerted preference for British migrants. By 1947, however, it became clear that the planned influx of British stock would not materialise. Calwell signed an agreement with the International Refugee Organisation (I.R.O.) to accept "alien" refugees, with transport to be provided by the I.R.O. In Australian immigration policy's unofficial hierarchy of desirable races, Eastern Europeans were placed below

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the British, the Dutch, the Belgians, the French, the Scandinavians and even the recent enemy, the Germans. However, in 1948, Polish refugees were granted displaced person status. By 1954, one hundred and seventy thousand displaced persons, almost all wartime refugees, had been brought to Australia as alien assisted migrants. Between 1947 and 1951, in particular, Australia admitted over sixty-eight thousand Polish refugees. Five participants in the interviewing project joined this first wave of Polish migration.

As Ann-Mari Jordens has argued, Australian policymakers assumed that assisted aliens had entered a form of "citizenship bargain". The bargain was that Australia would take them in, and they would enjoy some of the rights of Australian citizens. In return, alien migrants would learn to assimilate and would then take Australian citizenship. There was, however, more to this bargain. Participants in the interviewing project were well aware that they were also imported as an easily directed source of labour. Generally speaking, displaced persons were required to be healthy, within specific age limits, and willing to work for two years in bonded employment nominated by the Australian government. This rule meant that some women who eventually settled in Australia missed out on the first wave. As Elwira reflected, the age limits prevented her family from joining friends migrating to Australia until 1962:

Then was transport to Australia. We couldn't come to Australia then because my father was too old for contract work. Some other men would have to sign for him and do four years contract work, and do his share, and my mother wouldn't allow that. So that's why we stayed behind.

Most Polish women, however, entered Australia through employment contracts. Petra remembered the conditions of these contracts:

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13 Interview with Elwira, who was deported to the Soviet Union with her family. She came to Australia with her husband in 1962, after long-term settlement in Tanganyika and Rhodesia.
When Australian government send their representatives for their selection, they made it from sixteen to forty-five. They were taking all the younger, as well, as long as there was a working member for each non-working member, so if in the family were two eligible, you could take another two which were not, so that applied to us then. I was fifteen, my brother was not quite thirteen, but my sister was just eighteen and my mother was thirty-nine, so we were put on the list to come to Australia - with the conditions, of course, that they sign the contract. My mother and my sister had to sign two years contract.14

There was also a gendered element to this citizenship bargain. As explored earlier, a form of sexual contract operates within western liberal democracies that subordinates women and assigns them sexually specific duties. Women were subordinated in a similar manner in Poland, under a number of different types of political regimes. Australian immigration policy also assigned a sexually specific role to prospective female Australian citizens. As women, they would share in female inequality. They would also join their Australian-born counterparts in raising the population.

There is, unfortunately, very little literature on gender and immigration to so-called “first world countries” like Australia. The experiences of female immigrants tend to be portrayed simply as deviations from a male norm.15 Within the Australian immigration programme as a whole, however, women were largely admitted in sexually specific categories such as wives, mothers of future Australian citizens and economic dependents.16 The immigration programme was built around the ideal of a healthy male manual worker and women were generally admitted as dependants. As criteria for female migrants were added, they related mostly to their marital status: “married women”, “single women”, “divorcees with children” and the like.17

14 Interview with Petra, a displaced person deported to the Soviet Union with her parents and siblings. She arrived in Australia with her family in 1950.
17 Fincher, Foster and Wilmot, Gender Equity and Australian Immigration Policy, p. 24.
marriageability of female migrants was a crucial factor in admission to the immigration programme: a factor which was re-emphasised in the early 1970s.\textsuperscript{18} Age was the main criterion for female migrants, with the usual upper age limit for single women of thirty-five years compared to the male age limit of forty-five years until 1976. Age, after all, affected women's ability to bear children.\textsuperscript{19} Quotas for female workers were much lower than for male workers, and general "presentability and appearance" was included among selection criteria for females, but not for males.\textsuperscript{20} In the mid-1950s, the programme specifically sought single women, partly in order to correct the imbalance between the male and female immigrant population, and supply marriageable women for the men.\textsuperscript{21} All criteria restricting the entry of single women between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five years were lifted in 1959.\textsuperscript{22} While these rules were not applied to the women in this study, the general expectations regarding women were apparent to some members of the group. As Sylwia remembered,

My mother was able to come here, but she had to work for two years, and she had to go where Immigration would send her. She signed a contract that she would work for two years. They needed people to work there. She said she was told that in Australia, there was a shortage of women. The idea was that they would marry the men and have children, and help the population.\textsuperscript{23}

\begin{itemize}
  \item See, for example, the table of policy provisions with regard to immigrant selection, table 2.1, in \textit{Ibid.}, p. 13.
  \item \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 13, 23.
  \item Michael Dugan and Josef Szwarc, "There Goes the Neighbourhood!": \textit{Australia's Migrant Experience}, South Melbourne: Macmillan in association with the Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs, 1984, pp. 150-151.
  \item Fincher, Foster and Wilmot, \textit{Gender Equity and Australian Immigration Policy}, pp. 46-47, 48-49.
  \item Interview with Sylwia, a displaced person deported to the Soviet Union with her mother and arriving in Australia in 1950.
\end{itemize}
The Rights and Status of Female “Aliens”

The citizenship bargain offered to these first-wave Polish women, moreover, did not offer any kind of equality with Australians. Despite the massive influx of alien migrants from 1947, the ideal of the Anglo-Australian citizen was enshrined by discrimination against aliens. As Jock Collins has argued, Australia established a “two-class” immigration programme, in which British migrants were treated as the equals of Australians, while those from non-English speaking countries were relegated to inferior positions in both the labour market and in Australian society in general. This study is indebted to the painstaking work of Ann-Mari Jordens in tracing the specific legal forms this discrimination took.

Aliens enjoyed very few of the rights or duties of Australian citizens. The civil rights of aliens were limited by discriminatory legislation, with the degree of discrimination varying according to their national origins and the scheme under which they entered Australia. This legislation underlined the qualified welcome and vulnerability to exclusion of alien migrants. The Aliens Deportation Act of 1949 required all aliens to register and to notify the government of changes to their names and addresses. This Act was intended to enable their internment in case of war with their country of origin. Aliens could be deported after any period of residence, whereas British immigrants could not be deported after five years of residence. The same kind of discrimination applied to political rights. British migrants were granted full political rights upon arrival, and became eligible for Australian citizenship and its associated benefits after one year of residence. Aliens, however, were ineligible to apply for full citizenship rights until they had been resident in Australia for between five to fifteen years, depending on their “racial” origins.

Discrimination against aliens with regard to social rights was systematic. State and federal laws prevented aliens from being employed in many occupations. In

26 Ibid., p. 7.
27 Ibid., pp. 3-4, 6.
particular, they were debarred from permanent employment as Commonwealth public servants, and were excluded from the state public service in all states except Victoria and Queensland.28 Alien migrants were also excluded from particular professions. For instance, aliens were prevented from practicing as lawyers in all states and territories. They were ineligible for permanent employment as teachers in government schools, except in Queensland and South Australia.29 While British migrants were eligible for all social security benefits except the age pension on the same basis as Australians, aliens were eligible only for child endowment and for unemployment, health, medical and pharmaceutical benefits. They remained generally ineligible for maternity allowances, widow's pensions, age and invalid pensions and rehabilitation benefits.30

Despite the importance of defence in the encouragement of such large-scale migration, aliens also occupied an ambiguous position with regard to the defence forces. Male aliens were required to register for National Service from 1954, but no aliens were actually called up and aliens who failed to register were not pursued.31 Although another National Service scheme was established in 1964, aliens were not required to register until 1967. Conscription for service in Vietnam was introduced in 1965, but aliens were not liable to conscription until 1968.32 From 1968, however, alien men could be conscripted for a war conducted by a government they had no part in electing as long as they were twenty-one years old and had lived in Australia for two years.33 Military service was, however, recognized implicitly as an alternative path to citizenship throughout this period. In 1953, the five-year qualifying period for citizenship was reduced for aliens who served in the army or in the Citizens Military Forces, and this period was reduced again to three months in 1967.34

Jordens' work has primarily emphasised discrimination against aliens in general. My study highlights the extent to which discrimination against their gender added to the difficulties experienced by first-wave migrant women. They were, after all, excluded

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29 Ibid., p. 116.
30 Ibid., p. 92.
31 Ibid., pp. 141-142.
32 Jordens, Alien to Citizen, p. 185.
33 Jordens, Redefining Australians, p. 146.
34 Ibid., pp. 140, 146.
from duties such as defence by their gender as much as by their alien status. Male immigrants, for instance, were also required to work where they were directed, and their labour was also generally unskilled manual work of low social status. However, for women, their occupation categories were generally limited to work as domestics, or similar employment that they could find for themselves. As Gutka remembered, many first-wave women took jobs in hospitals as cleaners, caterers and kitchen staff:

Some of them were actually allocated jobs. You had to go and work whether or not you wanted to. But if you found a job yourself, like this friend of mum's found her a job in Perth, she was given permission to take up that job. So she came to Perth and went to work at the Royal Perth... She worked in a nurses’ dining room. She wasn't cook in the kitchen, but she was in the dining room, dishing out food, and washing dishes and that sort of thing. And that's what she did for the next nineteen years.35

Their main problem in taking this work was that working women in Australia earned around three-quarters of the basic male wage.36 As Petra reflected, the requirement to work in the first two years prevented her from finishing high school and effectively consigned her to low status, unskilled work for the foreseeable future. However, it was the rates of female pay that created the most hardship:

When I came to Australia, I was sixteen, and instead of going to school I had to go to work. That upset me, because I’d done high school in Africa, and all my dream was to do further study. To me, those first months in Australia were extremely difficult, because I had dreams… we were classified as domestic which was for unAustralian, not naturalised. When you came here, regardless of what your dreams were or what you were capable of, you were given the job what the vacancy existed, in the brackets of domestic or labourer, no other places available…. Women were earning much less than men, and you had to be twenty-one before

35 Interview with Gutka, who was deported with her mother to the Soviet Union. She arrived in Australia with her mother in 1950.  
36 See Chapter Three.
you got full wages. So can you see the situation in my family? We have the youngest brother who has to go to school, who has to be in a sense supported. There are two girls who are both under twenty-one and earning pittance, and there's no future at all. So the first few years were extremely difficult.

For those who were able to finish school, their gender was also a factor in their education. As Sylwia remembered, they were effectively educated to be wives and mothers, and for low status, low paid female jobs:

We didn't have a very intellectual education. I don't remember a science class. That was a boy's area, you know.... We were taught English and maths, those were the top subjects, but we were also taught to cook, sew. It was mainly for girls. I don't think we were meant to go to University. We were lucky to go and do our leaving....I went to do my leaving, and then came back for a year to do commercial studies, which was very handy, with the bookkeeping and the balancing.

Gender discrimination in the workforce was also a source of frustration. As Gutka reflected, after several years of hard work in country schools to establish a teaching career, she wanted to marry. However, she found that discrimination against married women affected her job security and her career prospects:

I had to resign from the Education Department as was mandatory in those days and become a temporary teacher. I lost all my rights to any promotion and was not certain of employment from one year to the next. After my children were born... I did some temporary relief work while my mother and mother in law looked after the two girls. It was difficult to juggle a job, housework and the children.

For other immigrant wives, their relationship with the paid workforce was often through their husbands. Migrant women in general were more likely to be employed than their Australian-born counterparts in this period. In fact, between 1947 and 1961,
over half of the new jobs for women were taken by migrants.\textsuperscript{37} The 1954 Australian Census indicated that female displaced persons were more likely to be in paid employment than were both other female immigrants and Australian born women.\textsuperscript{38} However, as Olesia reflected, for women with children, this was more difficult. Moreover, Polish traditions regarding gender roles also had an impact on whether or not they took up paid employment:

I would have liked to work, but my husband wouldn’t hear of it, because, you know, before the war in Poland it was unheard for the housewife to work. It was the man breadwinner and that was that. Most of the women didn’t work when they had children. Some of them, if they had business, or like a hairdresser’s, they had a salon or working in a salon, or dressmakers, they had dressmaking place. But they combined, you know, housekeeping and the business. I didn't like very much to leave the children on their own, so I didn't press that when he said 'No, I make the money and it should be enough for the whole family'.\textsuperscript{39}

Housing was the other great practical problem for the first-wave migrants. The combined effects of the Depression and World War II had created a housing crisis. The need to ensure the political acceptability of the immigration programme meant that the Australian government was under considerable pressure to prevent migrants from competing with Australians in the rental and housing markets. Calwell had, in fact, promised that there would be no large-scale immigration until the housing crisis was over.\textsuperscript{40} Refugees were initially housed in former army and air force camps which had been rejected for use by British migrants, in the belief that British subjects would find such conditions intolerable.\textsuperscript{41} The women interviewed for this project were placed in Western Australian camps in Northam, Cunderdin and Graylands. As Sylwia


\textsuperscript{39} Interview with Olesia, a displaced person deported to Germany and used for forced labour after the Warsaw Uprising of 1944. She arrived in Australia in 1949.

\textsuperscript{40} Jordens, \textit{Redefining Australians}, p. 44.

\textsuperscript{41} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 48, 51.
remembered,

We were in Northam camp. It was terrible. We arrived in the month of February, and it was excruciatingly hot. It was in army barracks, and they got very hot, incredibly hot. People nearly expired. Because I was a shy little girl, I was very shy of my body, it was very difficult. We were supplied with blankets and that sort of thing. But to see women in their bras and panties, because it was so hot, and I didn't have a bra! I was just going through puberty, and I didn't know what to do. You couldn't wear clothes because it was too hot, but lying there with just pants was so embarrassing. It was the most unhappy time of my life.

Interviewees and their families were keen to leave these camps and find their own homes as soon as possible. However, as Jordens has pointed out, the entire housing market discriminated against aliens. Until 1958, they were excluded from public housing in Western Australia until two years after their arrival. In the meantime, the private housing market was the only option. In the immediate post-war period, landlords renting to immigrants were required to demonstrate that the quality and the rent for the accommodation made it unattractive to the Australian-born. Exploitation of aliens by landlords was widespread, and no protection was provided by the state. The Western Australian amendments to the Rent Act, in fact, enabled landlords to give only one week's notice, and there were few services for those who were evicted under this legislation. All the first-wave participants in this study lived in one room with their families for several years after their arrival:

It was very, very difficult to find anything, because of an avalanche of all these new people coming. There were hardly any flats. I think the only flats might have been down by the Esplanade. The rest was just houses, and Australians just rented out rooms. My mum used to just go up and down the streets looking for a sign saying 'room for rent', or something like that. And she found it very, very difficult.... When I

42 Ibid., p. 65.
44 Jordens, Redefining Australians, p. 63.
finished school, I came to live with her in that one room. It had three different families living in the house. Each one had one bedroom, and we had a small communal lounge, and we shared one communal kitchen. That was all. 45

Single women found it particularly difficult to find housing. As Franciszka reflected, this was mainly due to their low wages, and the presence of children made their problem much worse:

Jobs were plentiful in 1950, but accommodation was scarce.... People paid as much as a woman's wage for a single room. Women with small children were worst off, nobody wanted them, and consequently they often had to make do with a corner of the verandah, open to the elements and without much privacy. 46

Franciszka and her husband eventually bought a house, but found that there was discrimination against migrants in private sales:

We put everything aside. We lived frugally, we didn't spend, we didn't go to restaurants, nothing! We bought the house and the tenants wouldn't leave. We had to go to court, and the judge gave us ten months for the people to look around. Tenant protection existed at the time. Because the priority was for Australians and not New Australians. He didn't like New Australians like all other Australians didn't at the time. Ten months! And it was our very first house in the world, in our lives!

The exclusion of aliens from the rights enjoyed by the Australian-born and by British migrants was increased by their inability to access even those rights allowed to them because of the scarcity of translators and written material in translation. Assisted aliens were obliged to learn English, but English classes were generally inadequate and

45 Interview with Gutka.
46 Interview with Franciszka, a displaced person deported to Germany and arriving in Australia with her husband in 1950.
held at night, preventing many women from attending. As Petra reflected, this made learning English very difficult for her, and even more difficult for her mother:

The other thing that always upsets me when I think about those times is that you were supposed to learn English. You came to Australia, and you had been told there were English courses available. But no one ever considered for a moment how the hell you could attend English courses if you were a domestic. Courses started at six o'clock, and you finished work in the hotels, hospitals, private homes, after seven. So the only choice, I decided I would take it by correspondence, which I did. But even then, if you had no accommodation, no room to put the book, the exercise book, how am I going to learn this English by correspondence? It was extremely difficult, which was never looked into. From government point of view, we are given everything, but to whom – one in hundreds? Others cannot use it. It doesn’t matter if they want it or not, they are unable to use the facilities that were there. They were not geared to the time and people who actually came. My mother had no chance to learn English, she had to support us. She struggled, and eventually she learned English, but at great expense.

The incompatibility of the English classes with domestic and shift work was a very significant flaw, given that most alien women were expected to perform this kind of work.

The “New Australian” and the Assimilated Citizen

Aside from the practical problems of employment, income and housing, the most vivid memories regarding settlement among these five women were of the emotional stress created by Australian assimilation policy. These stresses were shared by another five interviewees who did not belong to the first wave but arrived subsequently. The shift to a large influx of non-British migrants constituted an

enormous symbolic and practical change within Australian immigration policy. The Australian public was overwhelmingly uneasy about such large-scale alien migration. The implementation of the policy was only possible if the Australian public was constantly reassured that it did not threaten the essentially British character of Australian culture. The answer to this dilemma was the policy of assimilation. As Jean Martin observed, "the assimilability thesis had a predominantly ideological aspect...It was framed and perpetuated...to legitimate a policy that the state had to sell to the community". Assimilationist doctrine assured the Australian public that the non-British immigrants recruited to enhance Australia's population and economic growth were not a threat to Anglo-Australian culture. Immigrants were expected to learn English, to adopt the existing cultural norms and to blend seamlessly into the population as rapidly as possible. The aim of the policy was for migrants to be absorbed into a model of Australian citizenship based on Anglo-Australian culture and ethnicity.

The maintenance of political support for the immigration programme was considered to require the virtual invisibility of the differences between migrants and the Australian-born. As one early expert explained, "We do not want anybody who looks, speaks or thinks very differently from ourselves. In fact...we want people who are almost if not quite indistinguishable from ourselves or will rapidly become so". One story told by Arthur Calwell reflects the "selling" of the immigration programme in ways which consciously portrayed potential migrants as healthy workers, attractive and fertile potential parents to stock the continent and yet indistinguishable from Anglo-Australians in physical appearance:

...we decided to select a 'choice sample' of displaced persons as migrants. We would bring one shipload with nobody under fifteen and nobody over thirty-five, all of whom had to be single...There had been some doubt about the quality of these displaced persons who had the blood of a number of races in their veins. Many were redheaded and

blue-eyed. There were also a number of natural platinum blondes of both sexes. The men were handsome and the women beautiful. It was not hard to sell immigration to the Australian people once the press published photographs of that group.  

Researchers throughout the assimilationist period shared the cultural basis of notions of Australian citizenship. For academic researchers, as for official discourses, the theme of *indistinguishability* was central. Ruth Johnston defined assimilation in her 1965 study of Polish migrants in Western Australia as the eradication of difference:

> Assimilation has been conceived...as an attenuation of differences between immigrants and members of the host community. As soon as the immigrant becomes indistinguishable from those members, he is classified as assimilated.

Even in 1965, Johnston's study centred on the cultural aspects of migrant adaption. Progress was measured in terms of becoming like Anglo-Australians in their choice of food and clothing (choosing characteristically Australian or Polish food or clothing), language (a preference for speaking Polish or English), cultural activities (whether Poles preferred to read English or Polish literature or listen to English or Polish-language radio), leisure (leisure activities characteristic of Australians or within Polish-dominated settings), and social participation, including social contacts with Australians in formal and informal groups and friendships with Australians. Naturalisation was only one aspect of the process of assimilation, which was defined primarily as cultural adaption. Similarly, in 1962, Ronald Taft, based at the University of Western Australia, produced a scale of "Australianism" among migrants in 1962. "Australianised" migrants would answer questions in the following ways: "The Anglo-Saxon races owe their leading position in the world to their outstanding qualities" (agree); "A country is far more enjoyable to live in when the people come from a wide range of racial and national backgrounds" (disagree); "One could hardly have more than

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one or two true friends in a lifetime” (disagree); “Wine is a good drink to offer a friend who just drops by for a visit” (disagree); “The use by foreigners of their language in public places is objectionable” (agree).54

Some of the literature available by the 1950s and 1960s suggested that Polish refugees might experience particular emotional conflicts regarding assimilation due to their history.55 For many Poles, Britain had just sacrificed Poland and then the whole of Eastern Europe to absorption into the Communist Bloc, and some migrants were understandably hostile to the idea that they should adopt a perceptibly British culture.56 For displaced persons, who had experienced pressure to forget their Polish identity under German and Soviet occupation, terms such as “assimilation” possessed threatening and indeed sinister overtones of which Australian policymakers were probably unaware. Another issue was the prevalence of Polish romantic nationalist philosophy within this post-War group.57 Some Poles interpreted this tradition to mean that they should continue to identify with Poland despite removal from Polish territory and regardless of the country where they were forced to live.58

However, for women participating in this study, the main problem was the attitudes of Australians towards them. There was, no doubt, a mutual culture shock for both Poles and the Australians who came into contact with them. Poles were not entirely impressed by Australian culture. The unfavourable impressions of the first wave were shared by other post-War migrants who arrived somewhat later. Some were critical of what they saw as the lax behaviour of Australian women. As Gizela, who finally arrived in Australia in 1964, articulated her negative impressions of Australian women:

You know, many Australian mother go with husband in the pub, drink

57 See Chapter Four.
58 Johnston, Immigrant Assimilation, p. 36.
beer, while children have run loose. The children go where they want to
go, just only fish and chips and something, that's all, you know? And
European parents, no, they have every day proper dinner for children.\textsuperscript{59}

More commonly, these first-wave and other migrant women were very surprised by
what appeared to be less nurturing and less discipline of children in Australia. Alina,
who left Africa and arrived in Australia in 1970, was puzzled by the apparent
indifference to their adolescent children among Australians:

They weren't that warm towards their children I don't think. They loved
them, they looked after them, but the young people would leave home to
look for a job. I found that very strange, because I never thought that I
would leave my mother and just go away. If you get married, that's
different, but it was very strange for us for a sixteen-year-old to look for
a job and look for a rented place. I think Poles were much more strict
than Australians. There were certain laws within the family that you
could do or you couldn't do.\textsuperscript{60}

These comments by interviewees were consistent with earlier studies by Johnston, who
found similar criticisms among Polish immigrants in Western Australia in 1965.
Johnston quoted comments such as “The children here refuse to do what their mother
and father tell them. This means nothing to an Australian child”,\textsuperscript{61} “Australian mothers
don't take sufficient care of their children and allow them too much freedom. The
mothers sit in the bar all day and bet on horses”\textsuperscript{62} and “I have the impression that all the
children want is to get out of school. The little girls are brought up to catch a
husband”.\textsuperscript{63}

There was, however, an important difference between the culture shock

\textsuperscript{59} Interview with Gizela, who arrived in Australia in 1964 to marry a first-wave displaced person
who had been deported to Germany.

\textsuperscript{60} Interview with Alina, who was deported with her mother and brother to the Soviet Union. She
came to Australia in 1970 with her mother and her husband, after long-term settlement in
Tanganyika and Kenya.

\textsuperscript{61} Johnston, \textit{Immigrant Assimilation}, p. 129.

\textsuperscript{62} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 176.

\textsuperscript{63} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 177.
experienced by Australians and Poles. Their relationship was not equal, and Poles were expected to adapt to Australian mores. Moreover, Poles did not necessarily feel welcome in their new country. In 1965, Johnston found that over 60 per cent of her Polish subjects believed that the average Australian held unfavourable attitudes towards immigrants. For the women in my study, however, it was the pressure not to be different from the Australian-born that was most stressful. They sometimes found Australians to be friendly, and often found them very helpful in practical ways. However, they felt that Australians showed very little understanding of the difficulties that Australian insistence on cultural conformity created:

It wasn't bad will in any way. It's just simply that people felt 'You are here now, forget about what you did before. You are now an Australian. You do what the Australians do'. Without realising, because they haven't ever been away from the country, they have never experienced being in a country where people act differently and speak differently. You didn't realise it just doesn't work like that. You can't suddenly become somebody else overnight. You've got to adjust. I think the more you pressure people into denying who they are, the more they want to be different, and I think you antagonise them. You don't actually make them want to belong, because they don't feel happy. They don't feel that there is any understanding of their position.

The emphasis on not speaking Polish in public created some of their worst experiences, and underlined the qualified welcome in their new community:

The people weren't terribly nice at first. I don't blame Australians, but they were a little antagonistic towards people who speak a different language in the buses, in the trains, in the street, because they were not used to such an influx of strange people. And having already had Italians and Greeks here, which they hated, I know, because there were some unfortunate incidents in Kalgoorlie. And when we went along the

64 Ibid., p. 175.
65 Interview with Gutka.
street or we were on buses and we spoke Polish, they said 'Speak English!' because Australians have the notion that when you speak a different language in their presence, you can only speak about them.  

Different attitudes towards employment presented another problem to migrants. Relations with Australian-born workers could be fraught with suspicion. Some migrants unwittingly increased this suspicion by transgressing the unwritten social codes of Australian workers of egalitarianism, "taking it easy" and lack of respect for authority. Jean Martin's study of the adjustment of displaced persons in the large provincial town of "Burtin" between 1953 and the mid-1960s found that displaced persons antagonised Australian co-workers by appearing to work too hard and seek favour with bosses. Martin also noted that migrants complained that Australians resented any show of superior skills or education. Similarly, Petra, for instance, found that Australians expected migrants to remain financially and socially unequal. They resented any variation from their own work norms, and any signs of prosperity:

Newcomer is putting the nose to the ground and works because he or she has to. Somehow Australians cannot comprehend it. 'Why do they work so many hours? Why do they work so hard?' And this becomes animosity within the people. 'Why do you change our ways?' Because of this, they were not very friendly towards newcomers. It was difficult to make friends... at work there was jealousy. If you happened to have a new frock, 'How did you get that?' Or for example, if Polish or Czech or German started to buy properties, houses, it was extremely unacceptable because no one seemed to understand, even now, that because we lost everything, it was so important to us to possess something. It's human nature, if you have something and you lost everything, then you need that bit of possessions to call your own, but that was not accepted very well. There were sort of sneers, like 'Where did you get the money from?'

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66 Interview with Franciszka.
67 Martin, Refugee Settlers, pp. 31-32.
68 Ibid., p. 16.
Children also suffered hardships under the assimilation policy. The main problems were lack of access to resources in schools, and the emotional impact of attempts to separate them from one another. Gutka found that little effort was made to accommodate newcomers in her school in the early 1950s:

The schools weren’t ready for us. We were a novelty. There were no materials to teach us English. When I say the system was not ready for us, it didn’t have any books for children, any system of teaching non-English speaking children English. … There were five of us at Santa Maria, and we would always gravitate towards each other, even though we were in different classes, after school. And the nuns were trying very hard, with the best intentions in the world of course, very hard to tear us apart, in the sense that if we went and sat together they would send some girls to take us away... We had some sad moments, and some fairly traumatic moments, where you had to cope with whatever was going on.

Others found that Australian children were also very sensitive to cultural differences and excluded them socially. Danuta was born in 1950 to a first-wave displaced person who became pregnant on the journey to Australia. She might therefore have been considered to be an Australian. However, she remembered that at her primary school, in the late 1950s and early 1960s, she was regarded as a foreigner. The other children teased her about her accent and the food she ate:

Lunches were one thing. In those days if you had garlic, if you went to school smelling of garlic, ‘Woh, that’s Wog food’ type thing. A lot of people were quite good to me. I had a lot of people who took me under their wing as well. Like parents, who would take me under their wing, which was quite good. They were really quite helpful. But there was the stigma of the Wog. I always thought Wogs were Italians, but it was Poles too. They would say it to you. They would. It was hard to make friends too. I remember in primary school I didn’t have many friends. I did have one Polish friend. I remember being very hurt by it. I remember saying ‘I don’t want to go to school, I don’t like it there’
think Mum must have gone to see the teachers, because I started
elocution lessons. It did work, and I used to find people would turn
around and say ‘Yeah you talk like a snob’. Everyone picked on me for
having a posh accent then. I thought ‘I can’t win.’ But by high school, I
was dinky-die. I spoke real good English.69

All of this made close friendships between Australians and post-War Polish
migrants very rare. Jean Martin found that friendships between Australians and Polish
displaced persons were almost non-existent.70 Approximately one-third of her
interview subjects had experienced an unpleasant social incident, but many more had
countered simple and generalised unfriendliness.71 By 1965, almost half of Martin's
subjects believed that “New Australians will always be second-class citizens here,
whether they are naturalized or not”. She noted that the term “second-class citizen”
was in common use among the subjects, referring to both legal and institutionalized
inequalities and the extent to which they were treated as inferior in personal
interactions.72 Likewise, in this interviewing project, most women arriving right up
until 1970 made only relatively superficial friendships with Australians. The Poles,
many of whom were highly traumatised by their experiences in the Soviet Union or in
Germany, were not necessarily easy to make friends with. Danuta reflected on her
mother’s lack of close relationships in general:

My mum is very bitter, very closed book. She's just like a big, hard rock.
There's a little core, a tiny, tiny little spark in the middle of it, and there
are times when I have got to that spark in the middle of it, and I think the
emotions that come out, I think I better leave that alone, because if she
were to bring it all to the surface, I don't think I am qualified to handle
that.

However, others found that Australians made no sustained efforts to maintain
friendships with them:

69 Interview with Danuta, who was born in Australia in 1950. Her mother, a displaced person
deported to Germany, became pregnant on the journey to Australia.
70 Martin, Refugee Settlers, p. 32.
71 Ibid., p. 15.
72 Ibid., p. 56.
I can tell you that in forty-eight years I have hardly any Australian friends... I have three very good neighbours, we invited each other. But after my husband died they didn't invited me once. They never said, 'oh, you are alone, come over'. Never once. That is Australian. I don't know why they do this. We had neighbours next door, we invited them because I started a party for the street, a street party, I started it. And in the end they sold the house and went away, and they didn't even say goodbye. That's typically Australian. They don't need you any more so they don't say even goodbye. I ask this woman, 'Why don't you have any Australian friends?' She said, 'Australian friends? You can invite them a hundred times, they never invite you'. That's typically Australian.

The limited opportunities for friendships with Australians, and their exclusion from much of Australian social life, ensured that the post-War Polish migrants relied heavily on one another for friendship and were strongly motivated to establish small outposts of Polish culture. Franciszka wrote about how Poles spent most of their leisure time together and developed a highly absorbing Polish cultural life:

We used to meet every Sunday at a hired hall on the first floor of some building in Central Hay Street not far from His Majesty's Theatre... There, we listened to music, young people danced, we held quiz afternoons, talked and went home happy for another week. We observed, and still observe, all national holidays. Soon a theatre group was formed... The first Polish House in Brisbane Street... was used by a number of Polish organisations like the Polish Association, the Association of Polish Women (formed a little later), S.P.K. (Returned Soldiers) and the Polish Saturday School, where the Polish language was taught as well as Polish history and geography, also singing, folk dancing and religion... A business was formed which first housed a Polish paper 'Echo' published weekly, then a monthly magazine, and

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73 Interview with Franciszka.
was then transformed into a parcel service to Poland.\textsuperscript{74}

In this study, this kind of social life, with its distinctive focus on the Polish community, was in sharp contrast to the ways in which later waves of migration integrated much more quickly into Anglo-Australian society.

All of these experiences, discrimination in work and education, financial hardship and lack of acceptance of cultural differences, made the post-War migrant women participating in this study feel unwelcome and consigned to permanently unequal status in the Australian community. Sometimes this was related to their lack of education, or the class status they occupied in Australia. As Danuta reflected on her mother’s experiences in the 1950s:

I know that the impression Mum used to get was that we were sort of second-class citizens. We weren't the same as everyone else. We were second-class to other people, like authority figures. Mum would go into the doctors, and ‘Yes Sir, no Sir’. He was educated, he was up there, and I am a much lower person than what he is. And we are sort of brought up with that attitude. Anyone who was brought up with an education was far better than what we were.

However, it was also related to their status as migrants. Feelings of inferiority specifically as migrants often continued decades after both the government policies and the community attitudes that produced them had changed. As Gutka reflected almost fifty years after her arrival, she was a leader in the Polish community. Among the Australian-born, however, she still felt inferior and reluctant to take on leadership roles:

I was probably reasonably well adjusted, but all my life in Australia I've always felt a little bit inferior. In the sense that I always stood back if I was in the company of Australians. I would never become the life of the party, whereas I am a leader in my own community. But in the Australian community for many years I would always be in the

\textsuperscript{74} Franciszk\a added a short memoir of her settlement in Australia to the edited transcript of her interview.
background. Even when I worked for Catholic education, I always felt that I was a little bit inferior to them in a sense that I only worked with migrants. I felt that, as I say whether I imagined it or it was real, I sort of felt that I wasn't as fully professional person as the others were because I was only a migrant and I only worked with migrants. I had an accent and I wasn't as eloquent in speech as the others were. I felt I wasn't as good as the others.

Australian assimilation policies, in effect, were a failure for first-wave women, and for the whole post-War migrant group. They led almost inexorably, in fact, to the opposite of their intended result. As Jordens has argued, Australian policymakers assumed that assisted aliens had entered a form of “citizenship bargain”, in which they would learn to assimilate and would then take citizenship. However, the ways in which assimilation policy and the lack of rights entrenched inequality between alien migrants and the Australian-born defeated this aim. Jordens has noted that exclusion from social rights on equal terms to the Australian-born, for instance, was instrumental in the fact that, by 1965, only 12.7 per cent of those residually qualified had applied for naturalisation. However, my study has highlighted the ways in which unequal treatment also made interviewees feel unwelcome and excluded. Australian policymakers had assumed that migrants could be prepared for a status that signified equality and inclusion by socialisation in inequality and exclusion. Interviewees, however, felt that they would always be viewed as inferior, and some of them internalised this inferiority.

Migrant Political Rights and Multiculturalism

The post-War migrants were not simply passively excluded by dominant models of Australian citizenship. They also changed them fundamentally. Multiculturalism, introduced in the mid-1970s, marked a real departure from the assimilation model. It constituted, in effect, a new citizenship bargain for migrants that emphasised equality of rights and duties rather than cultural conformity. It also established a model of cultural

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75 Jordens, *Redefining Australians*, p. 100.
rights that prevails, however uneasily, to this day. The rise of multiculturalism, however, was no accident. Jordens has emphasised the role of the Department of Immigration and of Australian students protesting racial discrimination in the shift to multiculturalism and greater equality for migrants. She has paid less attention, however, to the actions of migrants themselves. As argued in Chapter Two, the exercise of citizenship rights by marginalised groups can constitute an alternative route to equality, improved material conditions, and political power. In Australia, the increasing exercise of migrant political rights secured new economic and cultural rights. In this way, the exercise of migrant citizenship rights fundamentally changed the citizenship bargain for subsequent arrivals.

The shift to multicultural policies began with the election of the new Labor government in 1972. In 1965, the Federal Labor Conference had ended its historical support for the White Australia policy. The Conference had also agreed that immigration policy should avoid discrimination on the grounds of race, colour or nationality. The new Labor government removed all remaining discrimination against non-British immigration, extended the assisted passage scheme to all races, abolished privileges for British settlers and shortened the qualifying period for Australian citizenship to three years of residence. It ended the system by which aliens were required to register their address and occupation and amended the Crimes Act to protect naturalised Australians from deportation. In 1975, the Australian parliament passed the Racial Discrimination Act (1975) which outlawed discrimination based on “race”, descent and ethnic origin that threatened equal access to political, economic, social and cultural life. Equal treatment for migrants of any ethnic origin had become official government policy.

Perhaps more crucially, a notion of cultural rights was introduced into

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76 See, for example, Chapter Ten, “The role of the Department of Immigration in eroding the ‘white Australia policy’”, in Jordens, Alien to Citizen.
80 Jordens, Redefining Australians, p. 167.
Australian immigration policy. The previous Coalition government had followed the Chifley, Menzies and Holt governments in insisting on effective cultural assimilation. As Billy Snedden, the Minister for Immigration, stated in 1969:

We must have a single culture - if immigration implied multicultural activities within Australian society, then it was not the type Australia wanted. I am quite determined that we should have a monoculture, with everyone living the same way, understanding each other, and sharing the same aspirations. We don't want pluralism.81

In contrast, Al Grassby, the new Labor Minister for Immigration, introduced the term “multiculturalism” to Australian discourse. He effectively announced the end of official demands for cultural assimilation in his “family of the nation” speech. Grassby perhaps failed to recognise that differences in gender might make for differences in status and power within a nation as they may within a family, but his speech did advocate the acceptance of diversity:

To the average Australian, whether ‘old’ or ‘new’, terms like ‘assimilation’, ‘integration’, ‘homogeneous’ or ‘pluralistic society’ are probably meaningless. The concept I prefer, the ‘family of the nation’, is one that ought to convey an immediate and concrete image to all. In a family, the overall attachment to the common good need not impose a sameness on the outlook or activity of each member, nor need those members deny their individuality and distinctiveness in order to seek a superficial and unnatural conformity. The important thing is that all are committed to the good of all.82

A major impetus for policy change for the Australian Labor Party (A.L.P.), however, was an increasing awareness of the potential of the “migrant vote”. Migrant groups had the capacity to employ the promise of migrant votes in pursuit of their goals.

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Such forms of ethnic political solidarity were relatively unusual up until the 1970s. The one exception to this rule was strong migrant support for the anti-Communist Democratic Labor Party (D.L.P.), which enjoyed powerful links with the Catholic Church. Polish migrants, in particular, combined loyalty to the Catholic Church with strongly felt anti-communism, and some Polish leaders estimated D.L.P. support among Polish migrants at between 75 and 95 per cent. Lyn Richards' study of politics among displaced persons found that migrant support for the D.L.P. had been exaggerated, and that even this limited degree of support was vanishing by 1978, when the party collapsed. Certainly none of my interviewees had actively supported the D.L.P., although some noted that older Poles had done so. With the erosion of migrant support for the D.L.P., however, and the status of many migrants as a significant sub-section of the working class, such migrants had constituted a major opportunity for the Australian Labor Party. This was an opportunity that the Labor Party had seized.

This strategy was highly successful, and was partly responsible for the election of a Labor government after more than two decades of Coalition government. By the time of the 1975 election the Liberal party had followed Labor's lead. The wooing of the migrant vote by both major parties also coincided with increasing activism by migrant groups, including the establishment of organisations by, rather than merely for, migrants, such as the Australian-Greek Welfare Society, Italian welfare groups and the Ecumenical Migration Centre. Government further increased the political power of migrant lobby groups. In particular, the Whitlam Labor government's Australian Assistance Plan brought new Regional Councils for Social Development. These Councils included committees to deal with social issues of special interest to migrants, and a number of migrant task forces. The work of these committees resulted in the introduction of greater social rights for migrants, including the right to invalid and widows' pensions, migrant housing and low-interest loans, family health insurance and childcare programmes. They also became the first official spaces in which migrant

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85 Ibid., p. 3.
88 Castles, "Australian Multiculturalism", p. 186 and Theophanous, *Understanding Multiculturalism*
issues were discussed, and through which migrants could be mobilised politically and contribute to political decision-making. It was not long before Ethnic Community Councils were created to lobby against social pressures for the continuation of assimilationism and for equal opportunity policies. These Councils spread to all states from the mid-1970s. There was a substantial political reward for the Labor Party. As Gough Whitlam noted in his account of those years: “Largely as a result of my Government's reforms in immigration and ethnic affairs, the bulk of migrants have since preferred the A.L.P. to the Liberals”.

Not all groups of migrants preferred the Labor Party, however. Despite the identification of multiculturalism and the “migrant vote” with the Australian Labor Party, it was the Coalition government elected in 1975 that truly institutionalised multiculturalism. Within ethnic politics, while some sections of groups such as Greeks and Italians had a pronounced bias towards the A.L.P., other migrant groups represented a marked political opportunity for the Liberal Party. Only one of my interviewees from the post-War migration stated that she voted Labor, and all the others who stated a preference were Liberal voters. Labor was perceived to be too close to the former Communist oppressors:

I usually voted Liberal. I was scared of Labor because we had a different outlook on Labor. Labor in Poland was like Communists ruling you. There were quite a lot of Communists in Labor.

The Fraser Coalition government followed the Labor Party’s lead with a vengeance, wooing the “migrant vote” and establishing multiculturalism as one of the few bipartisan policies of its time. The adoption of the 1978 Galbally report into migrant programmes and services was a major landmark. Recognising that by this time more than 20 per cent of the Australian population was born overseas, and that more

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92 Interview with Alina.
than half of these were non-English speaking migrants, it stated:

We are convinced that migrants have the right to maintain their cultural and racial identity and that it is clearly in the best interests of our nation that they should be encouraged and assisted to do so if they wish. The knowledge that people are identified with their cultural background and ethnic group enables them to take their place in their new society with confidence if their ethnicity has been accepted by the community.93

The result of the Galbally report was an extraordinary expansion of migrant services and of the ideology of multiculturalism: a major expansion of the Adult Migrant Education Programme and the introduction of a Multicultural Education Programme to schools, the introduction of the Telephone Interpreter Service, the redirection of public funding away from the Good Neighbour Councils to ethnic associations, and the creation of Migrant Resource Centres and the Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs to promote multiculturalism and advise government on ethnic issues. It also resulted in the establishment of multicultural television and radio in the form of the Special Broadcasting Service (S.B.S.).94

Prime Minister Fraser's determined support for multiculturalism can be read as a shift in the citizenship bargain for migrants. It also underlined the shift to a new model of citizenship that emphasised an equality of rights and duties between citizens rather than conformity to an Anglo-Australian culture. This model included a level of cultural rights. Such rights were in some respects a trade-off for the erosion of some of the social rights introduced by the previous Labor government. The Coalition Fraser government shifted the emphasis from welfare policies to cultural pluralism and the rights of migrants to enjoy and practice their own cultures. This had some advantages for the government, in that greater recognition and support for ethnic organisations enabled these organisations to provide significantly cheaper, more effectively targeted welfare services.95

Just how powerful the migrant lobby had become was made apparent in the mid-1980s. A political and social backlash against immigration, marked by the historian Geoffrey Blainey's warnings against the "Asianisation of Australia" in 1984, constituted a major challenge to the bipartisan policy of multiculturalism. In 1986, the Labor government's federal budget abolished the Institute of Multicultural Affairs, cut funding to education programmes, including both the Multicultural Education Programme and the English as a Second Language programme, and attempted to merge the Special Broadcasting Service with the Australian Broadcasting Commission.96 Within a year, migrant protest, particularly in marginal seats in Sydney and Melbourne, had forced a major recommitment to multiculturalism. This protest included a show of political power by highly politicised migrant leaders well aware of their influence with a government shortly to face reelection. As Labor M.P. Andrew Theophanous has recounted, when the Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia met with government members, they

expressed anger and frustration at what they described as 'the sabotage' of multicultural institutions and policies by the Federal Government...

Mr. Bonnici stressed that opposition feeling in ethnic communities was running very high, and was very anti-Government. This was demonstrated by the fact that ethnic newspapers were pushing for independent candidates to run in elections.97

Peter Walsh, the finance minister at the time, has confirmed the political threat posed by outraged migrant groups. He has described the leaders as "professional ethnics" able to blackmail the Government through the threat of block ethnic votes.98 Such pressure was remarkably effective. Plans for the merger of the S.B.S. and the A.B.C. were abandoned, a new Department of Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs was created and became a senior Cabinet ministry, the Office of Multicultural Affairs was established in order to monitor government policy and an Advisory Council on Multicultural Affairs, was established, with a brief to create a national agenda for

96 Ibid., pp. 188-189 and Theophanous, Understanding Multiculturalism and Australian Identity, p. 61.
97 Theophanous, Understanding Multiculturalism and Australian Identity, p. 66.
multiculturalism.99

The content of the National Agenda for Multicultural Australia (1989) suggests that multiculturalism offered, in effect, a new citizenship bargain for migrants. It also suggests that, by 1989, a fundamental shift from a cultural idea of citizenship based on an Anglo-Australian cultural identity, to a model based essentially on rights, freedoms and responsibilities within a culturally diverse nation had taken place. The National Agenda, with its explicit recognition of cultural difference and emphasis on anti-discrimination and equality, placed a renewed emphasis on civil, social, cultural and political rights, and the duty of the state to protect them.100 The three agreed principles for future multicultural policy were related to cultural identity and equality of status, as well as economic imperatives:

Cultural Identity: the right of all Australians, within carefully defined limits, to express and share their individual cultural heritage, including their language and religion; Social Justice: the right to equality of treatment and opportunity, and the removal of barriers of race, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, gender or place of birth; Economic Efficiency: the need to maintain, develop and utilise effectively the skills and talents of all Australians, regardless of background.101

The National Agenda recommended, in support of these aims, structural and institutional reforms to support equality. Access and Equity policies and English language programmes were to be extended. A National Office for Overseas Skills Recognition was to be established in order to improve recognition of overseas qualifications. Inquiries into the impact of political and judicial decision-making on those from other cultural backgrounds were to be instituted to ensure equality of treatment under the law.102 It insisted, however, that all citizens should be committed to the basic structures and principles of Australian society, which it defined as

102 Theophanous, Understanding Multiculturalism and Australian Identity, pp. 138-140.
the Constitution and the rule of law, tolerance and equality, Parliamentary democracy, freedom of speech and religion, English as the national language and equality of the sexes.  

The Multicultural Citizen

With its model of equal rights and responsibilities for all, and its emphasis on civil, social, political and cultural rights, multiculturalism offered a new citizenship bargain for migrants. Accordingly, the second and third waves of Polish migrants entered Australia under far more equal terms than the post-War migrants had experienced. Fourteen participants in the interviewing project came to Australia as part of the second wave of Polish migration from 1980. In general, they had left Poland because of opposition to the Communist regime. They were tired of restrictions on their rights and of struggling to maintain their families in a collapsing economy. They were joined by two other interviewees, who came to Australia from England in 1983 and 1986. Another four interviewees joined the third wave of migration from Poland from the early 1990s, mostly for economic opportunities or to reunite with family members. Participants from both of these waves of migration were far less conscious of differences in status between themselves and the Australian-born than the post-War migrants had been. They also enjoyed much greater access to services. Most were surprised by the level of support they received from both government and charitable organisations:

We were very happy, and we were very surprised. We came as refugees. The Australian government paid for us to come to Australia. And when we came first here, we arrived in the compound at Graylands hostel, a hostel for migrants, and we stayed there a few months and we had English courses there. And then we moved, tried to get on our feet ourselves. We were really surprised to get financial help straight away, to get our accommodation. That was good. In the hostel, there was Polish lady, she work for migrant office, and she was there to help us.

She helped us to find job and accommodation, especially accommodation because after two or three months in Australia we couldn't speak proper English.  

Unlike the first-wave children who were sent straight to schools unprepared for them, the new waves of younger migrants were eased more gently into the Australian education system. As seventeen-year old Teresa commented,

I went to an intensive language class, so I went there for six months, and that was pretty good, then went to a normal school. It wasn't that bad, actually, but if I was dumped straight into a normal school straight away that would have been very hard, I think.

The second wave of migrants enjoyed almost immediate access to the social security system. This not only provided them with much-needed financial assistance, but created a strong impression that they were welcomed with open arms:

I didn't expect so much. We get the unemployment benefit from the beginning, just after two weeks. We had Medicare, we had opportunity to the health service, and you know, I used to tell about Australia, 'This is mother, not stepmother, second mother, but not stepmother'. Because they didn't know how much I give to this country, maybe nothing, but they said ‘Maybe there's some potential’, and they gave us everything they had.

Access to such services meant that the main problem was learning English, rather than the kinds of difficulties that the first wave had experienced:

I think the language; the language was the hardest thing, because if you have to go to the office and ask about something of course was the interpreter service. But not every time you can call him, because sometimes you are just going to ask something like, you know, the bank,
or for five or ten minutes, so you are not going ask the interpreter service. Language was the hardest. Other things was very easy, and we was treated the same as English, as Australians or other people.107

The first impression that they were welcome was reinforced when they found Australians very friendly. By the 1980s, Australians had become used to the presence of migrant communities, and were more empathetic towards the struggles of new arrivals to adapt to a new culture. The sense of welcome helped to ease the trauma of adaption to a new language and a new culture, and, Kamilla reflected, it also provided emotional sustenance:

We've got very good support, like emotional and mental. Australians are very friendly, very warm one. They always, when they even don't understand what you are saying, they try so hard, more hard than another one, to understand what you want. And that was keeping me going. You cannot find other nations support you with your work, with your keeping going. We travel a lot, we met so many different nations, but Australia is absolutely different one. Maybe climate make them happy and helpful, maybe because they are insulated from another country. They are so friendly, so helpful. And when you are just feeling so uncomfortable, they say 'Don't worry, tomorrow is another day, take it easy, don't be too hard on yourself'. For someone who feel uncomfortable and need something, this is very important.108

In contrast to first-wave and other post-War women, whose leisure time was primarily occupied by Polish cultural activities with a Polish club, the social life of most second and third-wave women was more evenly distributed. Not only did a number of these interviewees state that they had close Australian friends, but some of these women preferred the company of Australians to that of Poles. More often, however, they had both Polish and Australian friends. Post-War women sometimes criticised subsequent migrants for being less involved in Polish cultural organisations. In particular they feared that the Polish cultural clubs they had established would fail, as

107 Interview with Jolanta, who arrived in Australia as a voluntary migrant in 1987.
108 Interview with Kamilla, who arrived in Australia as a political refugee in 1981.
they got older and the newer migrants did not replace them in leadership positions and volunteer work. However, the newer migrants did support the Polish clubs by attending some Polish social and cultural events. The difference was that they had more Australian friends, with whom they shared other activities. Katy, who arrived in 1981, found that her warm welcome in Australia encouraged her to make Australian friends:

We liked the country. We were very grateful for what we get here, you know. It was completely different kind of life, and we were welcomed here. We felt that. Definitely we felt that we were welcomed. The people were friendly towards us, and we liked it here. Poles are very spontaneous, too spontaneous for me. I was like that, but I just, you know, now appreciate some kind of distance Anglo-Saxon have, which is sometimes much more convenient, easier and so on...If you don't speak English and you not open, they won't open to you, but I have an excellent relationship with my Australian friends - fifteen years when we came to Australia, and we still friendly.109

Perhaps because they received a much warmer welcome, and felt more included and involved, the second wave and later female migrants were generally more positive about Australian culture. Like the post-War migrants, they found Australian children relatively undisciplined. As Paulina explained,

Polish people expect more of their children. I was very surprised when I went to the shop here and children take everything from the shelf, and cry. Sometimes you have to discipline your children. My son would sometimes have tantrum, and I would give him smack, then he would think about pain, and he would forget about the problem. I know it is not good, but sometimes you have to. Children very quick learn. When you give in on this, they want more, and more, and more. Here, children are more relaxed, 'don't push him, no stress'.110

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109 Interview with Katy, a political refugee who came to Australia with her husband as a political refugee in 1981, after a short stay in Libya.
110 Interview with Paulina, a political refugee who arrived in Australia with her husband and child in 1987, after a short stay in Austria.
Second and third-wave women were generally highly educated, and some found the cultural life in Australia very limited:

I'm not very happy, because the life is different. The first thing, I have not enough money to go to the theatre, the opera - there is no opera here, anyway - but concert, I like very much these things. In Poland, the town I was living in, Krakow, it will be next year the cultural capital of Europe. There is so many things. I was there this summer. Every day, every night, there was something, it was beautiful - cabarets, operas. Also in T.V., you could see some programs, different than I watch here - singers, dancers. But you can't see here much, only on the A.B.C. sometimes.\(^ {111} \)

However, many appreciated Australia's more relaxed culture. As explored previously, everyday life in Poland in the 1970s and 1980s had been a struggle.\(^ {112} \)

Moreover, suffering, heroic effort and self-sacrifice were considered a key element of being a "good Pole". As Beata explained, it was a relief to enjoy life in a more relaxed environment in which constant self-sacrifice was not mandatory:

Poles are usually sort of anxious, more stressed out, because the lifestyle was such. Here, everything is more laid back, relaxed, 'If it isn't done today it can be done tomorrow, so no rush, no pressure'. Sometimes it's annoying because you expect things to be done, but then you become the same way. You don't worry any more. That's what we say about Australians, 'Don't worry, she will be alright'. Australians are a little bit selfish; they're very much self-centred, which is good. We were taught different way. We were always taught that other people are more important than us, because with the Communists this was their idea, that you had to do for others and not consider yourself too much, that this was wrong. But in here, it's just the opposite. You are the most important, and another is the second. Which is right, because if you are

\(^ {111} \) Interview with Stefania, who arrived with her husband and daughter as a political refugee in 1989.

\(^ {112} \) See Chapter Six.
happy inside then everybody around you will be happy as well.¹¹³

The Australian lifestyle was viewed as a great contrast to the life of self-sacrifice demanded particularly of women in Communist Poland. Jadwiga noted that older women, in particular, enjoyed much a much higher quality of life in Australia than in Poland:

We are old, and I am sure system in Australia is much better than in Poland or in Eastern Europe. Definitely in Australia is more happy life for elderly people - so many senior citizens clubs, the elderly people they travel a lot, is many activities for elderly people. Nobody tell you you can't do this or this because you are old. In Poland, the elderly people was just for helping the family, the children, who work so hard and standing in the queue, buy the food, or caring for grandchildren. If some old widow want to marry, everybody look on her, 'Gosh, she is crazy - she is old and she wants to be happy!'¹¹⁴

Multiculturalism had made a powerful difference to the experiences of Polish migrants to Western Australia. Its transformation of the terms of the Australian citizenship bargain for migrants boded well for the status of second and third-wave women as future Australian citizens. The policy itself, however, had a number of critics in Australia. Multiculturalism may have transformed citizenship, but it was also enmeshed in the power relations, exclusions and inclusions of citizenship. Like citizenship, multiculturalism has been viewed by some critics as a technique of dominance and exclusion: a way for the dominant elite to manage, domesticate and control ethnic minorities, and also distract attention away from class and other determinants of social inequality. Marie de Lepervanche, in particular, argued that the concept of ethnicity is employed by ruling elites to entrench their own dominance.¹¹⁵

The very act of defining ethnicity and managing ethnic diversity, after all, is overwhelmingly carried out by the dominant ethnic group. As Manfred Jurgensen has argued:

¹¹³ Interview with Beata, who arrived in Australia as a political refugee in 1985.
¹¹⁴ Interview with Jadwiga, who arrived in Australia as a political refugee in 1983, after short-term settlement in Spain
¹¹⁵ Marie de Lepervanche, "From Race to Ethnicity", _Australia and New Zealand Journal of Sociology_, Vol 1(16), 1980, p. 2.
The history of terms such as ‘migrant’, ‘ethnic’ and ‘multicultural’ reveals the politics of cultural identification, the casting of social roles. All white Australians are ‘migrants’, ‘ethnics’ and ‘multicultural’. The question is not merely who owns the power of cultural definition, but who is in control of the process of arriving at social identities. Who owns the discussion? Whose political interests dispense ‘multiculturalism’?\(^\text{116}\)

Multiculturalism, therefore, is a highly ambivalent ideology. As Ellie Vasta has argued, it is simultaneously a discourse of pacification and emancipation; of control and participation; of legitimation of the existing order and of innovation. Multiculturalism is part of a strategy of domination over minorities by the majority, but also points beyond this, to the possibility of new forms of social and cultural relations. As such, multiculturalism is a power relationship... \(^\text{117}\)

The power relationship implicit in multiculturalism is not simply that of Anglo-Australians over the rest. Multiculturalism potentially marginalises migrant women compared to migrant men, and multiculturalism’s emphasis on ethnicity has obscured the position of immigrant women in Australian society. As Martin argued, within multiculturalism, the important power relations all appear to relate solely to ethnicity, masking the role of gender:

For females, this means that the claims of women are always secondary to, or a sub-clause of, the ethnic claims; there is no mention of an equivalent female community...the ethnic group represents women, and the family, and is their bridge to public life.\(^\text{118}\)

Multiculturalism as it existed through the 1970s and 1980s has been criticised as unable to articulate the difference experienced by migrant women, implicitly understanding


them as either members of an ethnic group, or as participating in a culturally “Australian” identity. A language which might acknowledge the complexity of their positions as simultaneously members of an ethnic group, members of a wider Australian society and women in both cultures and spaces, has been absent from multiculturalism.

For the second and third-wave women participating in this interviewing project, multiculturalism had little to offer in terms of the gender structures in Australian society that constrained them. They found their position as women to be less equal to men in Australia than it had been in Poland. Some of this was due to the costs of the immigration process itself. For instance, among these interviewees, the move to Australia often meant the end of active careers, with their qualifications not recognised or their occupations not in demand. Most found that the jobs immediately available to them were menial. Since Australia was less class conscious than Poland, this was less humbling than they had feared:

At first we have unemployment benefit, then my husband he had after one and a half years a job. I was doing the cleaning job, and my husband, when he finished his part time job he was helping me in cleaning job. But what was nice here was that in Poland, if you are cleaning lady, you are cleaning lady from the time when you born to time when you go. The community is divided. When you are cleaning lady, you be never friend with doctor. In Australia, I was surprised. The ladies, they are not really cleaning ladies, but one was really teacher, one was manager. Here you change your profession so easily. It doesn't mean, if you are doing this cleaning job, that you are not intelligent, you are not educated, or your culture is very low. And I like this very much.119

The husbands of these second and third-wave women generally began in equally menial jobs. However, it was noticeable that, several years after arrival, their husbands were usually working, and most had higher status jobs than their wives.

Second and third-wave women found that gender roles in Australia appeared to

119 Interview with Jadwiga.
be more rigid than in Poland. Several interviewees noted that women in Australia simply were not supported in their careers as they were in Poland. They appeared to be more confined to the private sphere, both by culture and by lack of material support in the form of maternity leave and childcare. Jasia reflected on the difference practical support and explicit encouragement had made in Poland, compared to what she found in Australia:

In many ways Polish women, after the War, they participated in public life more than here, I think – there weren’t many women politicians, but in the workforce. Few household in Poland only one person work. You can argue it was because of economic necessity, but actually they thought quite independent, goals weren’t only to look after children. To a certain degree women expected to do traditional tasks at home, cooking and cleaning, and they had quite a difficult job. That’s quite common here, too. But what I’m saying is that women employment is much higher in Poland than it is here...also women want to study more. They were not raised in the belief that their only life is to marry and have children.... And, for example, women in Poland were entitled to maternity leave, paid leave up to twelve months, which is obviously a huge difference. We have day care, full time day care. In many ways, women were more supported in Poland than here.120

Women who had experienced the drive for female equality in Poland were shocked by the quality of the Australian childcare system, and equally unimpressed by Australian assumptions that husbands should make the major financial decisions:

The childcare system was hopeless, absolutely big shambles. I work now in private childcare centre, and everyone is stressed. We've got too many children in the groups and too big gap in the ages with the same room. Their food is cut to a minimum. When I see what they eat, actually, I am surprised they can walk. I would never, ever take my son

120 Interview with Jasia, who arrived in Australia officially classified as a political refugee, although she considered herself to be a voluntary migrant. She came to Australia in 1981, after spending a short time in England.
to private day care, never ever...and I was shocked when I came here, when I find out that when I went into the bank, they were asking for my husband. They ask 'Who is your husband?' and 'What is your husband doing?' You see, in Poland, we all work, we could not afford sit here like that...We have business here, and the guys, they wouldn't talk to me, they were asking for the boss, and I say, 'You have to deal with me', and this was like shock. How woman she can run the business? Everything was based on husband.  

However, while a number of participants with solid careers in Poland had become housewives, in general, they considered the transition to be worth the costs:

I am housekeeper now, but for me it doesn't matter. Somebody told me 'You working in Poland twenty years, you have to work at something because you have practice in Poland, you have experience'. I was like Principal here in T.A.F.E. in Warsaw. But no, I am okay. I don't care about I have old home, and I bought many things second-hand. These things was for me nothing. I have many things in Poland, I left everything, and now I know it's nothing important. Because I know its good country, they give you everything. It's open for you, everything.  

There were other costs for the women, however. Women who were not working during the days found the isolation of the Australian suburbs very hard to bear:

I would say the first two or three years were very difficult for me. Not for my husband, but for me, because the everyday life was different to Europe. In Europe you live in the city. You have few small groceries around you, everybody knows you, and you can go everywhere by bus or train. In Australia you live in the suburb. I don't know these neighbours here. They never introduce themselves to me. If you want to go for shopping, you go for the big shopping centres. When you are nobody, nobody remembers you. I doing the shopping and nobody knows me.

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121 Interview with Lila, who came to Australia as a political refugee in 1980.
122 Interview with Paulina.
123 Interview with Katy.
Others noticed the gender segregation typical of much of Australian social life, and felt that this limited their social lives:

What I realised is, it’s always two groups, men and women. I’m not used to that. I never experienced that before. I find this very strange. In Poland I can have a friend, man or girlfriends, and its nothing to do with having friends. There’s not a problem of sex. A woman is a friend, or a man can be, older, younger, whatever. Here people tend to stay in one group. The girls go one side, the men go to the other. Even in the office space that happen, and even when you go into the bar, it’s the same.124

Second and third-wave migrants, therefore, were far less conscious of differences of status between themselves and the Australian-born than the first wave had been. However, they found Australian gender structures to be more limiting than those of Poland, and that this affected their own status in their new community.

The Threat to Multiculturalism: An Anti-Assimilation Policy?

During interviews with the most recent Polish migrants to Australia, criticisms of multiculturalism, however, appeared almost as a luxury. Generations of Australians had been brought up in the expectation that migrants would assimilate to Australian culture. In comparison, the ideology of multiculturalism was very new, and its hold on some sections of the Australian population very tenuous. Australian politician John Howard's ambiguous commitment to multiculturalism had been apparent since 1988. In that year, as Leader of the Opposition, John Howard had attacked multiculturalism, advocating its abolition in favour of a “One Australia” policy and changes to the Australian immigration programme to favour groups more easily absorbed into Anglo-Australian culture.125 His election as Prime Minister in 1996 appears to have ushered in a new phase. It is, perhaps, important not to make too much of one Prime Ministership. That year, however, also saw the election of Pauline Hanson, who articulated a backlash

124 Interview with Wanda, a voluntary migrant who came to Australia in 1997 with her Australian husband.
against multiculturalism and its alleged threat to Anglo-Australian culture. This backlash was translated into changes in government policy. By 1997, the new government had extended the waiting period for new arrivals for social security benefits from six months to two years, closed the Office of Multicultural Affairs and the Bureau of Immigration, Multicultural and Population Research, and cut funds to S.B.S. and other agencies, among other measures. Moreover, the overall immigration intake was significantly reduced, with a substantial reduction in the family reunion category.\textsuperscript{126}

The two participants in the interviewing project who arrived in 1996 and 1997 were very aware of the tenuous hold of multiculturalism on the Australian population. They did not receive the same impression of a bountiful social security system and a warm welcome that had so impressed the second and the other third-wave migrants. Anna, who arrived in 1996, was critical of her situation in 1998:

\begin{quote}
I must wait two years for help. I think there are so many migrants and all need money, but the government is not so rich. I get special benefits from Centrelink, $350 a fortnight, but I must pay $80 each week for rent, then power, gas, everything. The Australians, they are quick to be friends to migrants. They say always 'Good morning, hello, how are you', and then talk about the weather. They are helpful, they are good people, I think. But they do not like migrants. They like Pauline Hanson. Multiculturalism is very exalted idea. When I was in migrant education there was a monk from Tibet, there were people from India and Syria, from China. It is very interesting. But Australians, old Australians, they like Hanson because they say migrants come, need money, need work, and we haven't got it. Australians are not cosmopolitan - Pauline Hanson, One Nation. She get 25 per cent in Queensland, and that is very many.\textsuperscript{127}
\end{quote}

In the place of the ready assistance provided to second wave migrants, the most recent migrant in this project, Wanda, was very frustrated by her experiences of


\textsuperscript{127} Interview with Anna, a voluntary migrant who came to Western Australia to join her daughter, a political refugee, in 1996.
government policy. She encountered not only lack of support, but what seemed like an active creation of barriers between herself and her attempts to join her new community:

I go to this immigration office and everything I heard was what I was not allowed to do. I wasn't allowed to work even if my husband is Australian. I wasn't allowed to get any social help, unemployment money, nothing...I want to establish my life here, get in contact with real life here, where there are people, but I am not allowed to do anything. I say 'Okay, if I can't work officially, can I work voluntarily - just do a voluntary job, you see? I speak French, I can go to the school and speak French with children, or whatever I can do. Or work in a hospital just to keep contact with some people, meet people and get some ideas about this life here?' But they said no, I am not allowed to. I am practically not allowed to do anything, except sitting down and waiting for the decision.

Ironically, given the assimilationist rhetoric of Pauline Hanson and other influential political figures, Wanda concluded, “It’s really anti-assimilation programme, absolutely no helpful programme”.

Australian immigration policy has been at least partly shaped by the intention to produce a supply of new citizens. The type of citizens it aimed for, however, has shifted in the last fifty years. When the first wave of Polish women arrived in Australia from 1947, Australian citizenship was conceptualised primarily in terms of Anglo-Australian culture and ethnicity. Australian policymakers sought migrants who would conform to Australian cultural norms. Assimilation policy itself, however, created a strong impression on first-wave and other post-War participants in this study that they would never be treated as equal citizens, either by the state or in personal interactions, and taking formal citizenship status would make little difference to this. Nevertheless, the post-War migrants did not passively accept the Australian citizenship bargain as it was offered to them. They employed their political rights towards a redefinition of Australian citizenship in terms of rights and duties rather than cultural categories. A form of cultural rights was established at the centre of Australian citizenship. Women
from subsequent waves of migration, therefore, enjoyed a much greater sense of equality and inclusion in the Australian community. Whether this achievement can be maintained, however, is an open question. Australian immigration policy shows signs of returning to economic exclusion of migrants, and the political climate is increasingly hostile to multiculturalism and its model of cultural rights. Moreover, this study has highlighted the ways in which Polish women from all waves of migration have been subordinated as women within the Australian community. In this context, the Australian citizenship bargain presented to migrant women, while it appears to promise more equality than before, has offered only highly gendered terms.
"You have to make some sort of a commitment": Polish Women as Australian Citizens

The taking of Australian citizenship by participants in the interviewing project was a highly significant legal, symbolic and personal step. It signified a transfer of membership to a new country, and a willingness to acquire the rights and responsibilities that entailed. Theoretically, the taking of a new citizenship ought also to have meant full participation in a new political community. However, notions of citizenship and nationality are historically and culturally specific, highly gendered and not easily translated from one country to another. The taking of a new citizenship, therefore, was intimately bound up with shifting conceptions of citizenship, nationality and gender, and required a complex process of negotiation between these categories. These Polish women also joined the Australian community in a context in which they were doubly marginalised by political and cultural traditions that were both specifically British in origin, and highly gendered. Mainstream notions of citizenship were constructed on the basis of characteristically male-centred life patterns, and activities such as full-time, uninterrupted paid employment, military service and involvement in politics. With the exception of civil rights, which were highly valued, the formal rights and duties of Australian citizenship were mostly marginal to the lives of these Polish migrants to Western Australia. Perhaps as a result, they reinterpreted some of these duties according to their experiences as immigrants under Australian policies, or according to traditions, discourses and practices they experienced in Poland. They also employed the taking of Australian citizenship to resolve complex questions of personal, cultural and national identity.

Polish migrants have a particularly high rate of Australian citizenship, and Western Australian and national figures are identical. The most recent Australian census, conducted in 1996, found that 92 per cent of Polish-born migrants in Western
Australia, and the same percentage nation-wide, had taken Australian citizenship. These figures rose to 96 per cent for those who had lived in Australia for more than fifteen years, and were well above the overseas-born average of 75 per cent in Western Australia, and 76 per cent nationwide.¹ Twenty-eight of the thirty women participating in this study had already taken Australian citizenship, and only one interviewee, Wanda, stated that she did not intend to do so.

The majority of participants in this study, when first asked why they had taken citizenship, responded that it was because they were planning to stay. Citizenship was simply a logical step, given that they planned to remain in Australia. Some women said that they had taken citizenship, even though it was not required of them in order to remain, because they thought this might change in the future:

We thought, ‘Well, we’re here now, in Australia, and you never know what the future holds for you. Maybe a law will come that if you live in Australia you have to be an Australian citizen’. We just thought that ‘We are in this country, we’ll become Australians and it might be good ... in the future maybe everybody will have to be Australian, so why wait until somebody tells us, when we can do it of our own free will?’²

Most also had some pragmatic reason for taking citizenship when they did. Post-War migrants frequently took citizenship because it was required for employment or for access to social rights such as pensions, while for the second and third-wave women it was generally linked to the need for a passport.

There was, however, an important difference between these two groups. For post-War migrants, the status of an “alien” meant systematic discrimination in employment, including inability to attain permanency in the public service, and exclusion from particular professions. It also meant inferior access to housing and

¹ Unpublished figures supplied by the Australian Bureau of Statistics from the 1996 Census of Population and Housing, Catalogue No. 2031.0.
² Interview with Maria, who was deported to the Soviet Union with her family. She arrived in Australia as a voluntary migrant with her husband in 1983, after long-term settlement in England.
ineligibility for particular welfare benefits. Accordingly, taking Australian citizenship was often an economic necessity, and usually signified greater economic rights and a higher material standard of living. Gutka, for instance, needed to take Australian citizenship to begin her teaching career:

I had to take it because at that time, I don't know whether the rule is still there, you couldn't go into teacher's college unless you were a naturalised Australian. Which is understandable - I suppose if you are going to teach Australian kids, you've got to be an Australian yourself.

The women who arrived in the 1960s took citizenship in Australia for similar reasons. Ewa, who became an Australian citizen in 1967, remembered:

They been telling us in these days that we don't get the job when we don't have citizen, so we went and we took the citizen. And when my mother-in-law came, after five years she got it, because she would get the pension, and otherwise she wouldn't get that. And when my husband was working as a taxi driver, they been asking him if he is an Australian citizen, if he got Australian citizen, because they don't want to give work to the foreign without citizen.

By the time the second and third waves of Polish migrants arrived from 1980, most of the material benefits of citizenship were determined on the basis of residency rather than citizenship. It was noticeably more common for migrants from these groups to take citizenship, not in order to gain economic rights, but in recognition and appreciation of those they already enjoyed. It was a common belief among these women that they owed it to Australia to take citizenship because Australia had given them new economic opportunities:

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3 See Chapter Seven.
4 Interview with Gutka, who was deported with her mother to the Soviet Union. She arrived in Australia with her mother in 1950.
5 Interview with Ewa, a "voluntary" migrant who, with her husband, became stranded in Australia during a short holiday in 1962.
6 See Chapter Two.
Australia gives me job, Australia give me the land, the opportunity. I just don't agree with be here, using everything without. Because practically, the way we always thought that Australia gives us much more opportunity than we had in Poland, therefore we are just sort of like obligated to Australia.7

Australia was also prepared to support them with pensions and health care when these were required, and this, too, was considered to warrant a reciprocal gesture:

I think the privilege is having the Medicare, if I lose the job having unemployment benefit or sickness benefit. If Australia is taking care of me, supporting me, this is my obligation, to go and pay the tax and be a proper citizen.8

Similar ideas could be found among a small number of first-wave women who had taken citizenship under very different circumstances. As Gutka commented,

I believe in being an Australian citizen, really...to become a citizen that makes use of the privileges that are allocated, you have to make some sort of a commitment... I think it's a great country, Australia. For the day to day living, unless you have a lot of money, there's not a better place than Australia...

For women from all waves of migration, therefore, citizenship was associated with material benefits, even when formal citizenship status did not confer these benefits.

7 Interview with Lila, who came to Australia as a political refugee in 1980.
8 Interview with Jadwiga, who arrived in Australia as a political refugee in 1983, after short-term settlement in Spain.
The Rights and Duties of Citizenship

The experiences of all these women led them to articulate the meaning of Australian citizenship primarily in economic terms. For them, Australian citizenship was not identified primarily with its formal rights and duties. For instance, although all participants agreed that citizens should obey the law, this was not connected specifically with citizenship:

That's a natural thing, but even if I wasn't an Australian citizen I wouldn't want to break the law. So really, to become an Australian citizen it isn't so I don't break the law or whatever. That's a natural thing whether you are or you are not.⁹

Being available for jury service, in particular, was not considered to be important. Sometimes it was not even possible. Only two women out of thirty participants in the interviewing project had served on a jury. More had been summoned to do so, but had successfully evaded this role. Sometimes they had avoided jury service because it conflicted with work commitments. However, as in Elwira's case, they also did so because the idea frightened them:

I was called twice, but because of business I managed to get out of it. I was busy at work, I couldn't spare the time so I didn't. I got the fright of my life when I had to do that: me? I don't know why, but somehow it was being in court. I managed to get out of it. I couldn't leave work, and they never called me again.¹⁰

Many women in this study were not able to serve as jurors because of their limited English abilities. They could not fulfil this duty even when they wanted to:

I was thinking I can say no. Because in my opinion, how I could be in jury and be a part of the verdict if my English is not good? I think that

⁹ Interview with Maria.
¹⁰ Interview with Elwira, who was deported to the Soviet Union with her family. She came to Australia with her husband in 1962, after long-term settlement in Tanganyika and Rhodesia.
this is not right, if just everybody can be a part of the jury. Not everybody, only the people whose English is very good, because I think to judge somebody, you must understand everything very well.\textsuperscript{11}

Participants in the interviewing project, in fact, primarily identified citizenship with economic rights and responsibilities. They emphasised that the main duties of citizenship were economic. Engaging in paid work and paying taxes without cheating was the one citizenship duty emphasised by all of the post-War migrants: “Good citizen work, pay taxation, be honest with your country”\textsuperscript{12}. Sometimes this was expanded to other kinds of personal integrity, particularly of the financial kind, as Franciszka commented:

My duties were to pay taxes, most of all…. A good citizen is one that doesn't steal, doesn't lie, doesn't rip off the government, pays his taxes, pays his bills on time… That’s a good citizen, I think.\textsuperscript{13}

Post-War women were consistently indignant about people they knew who cheated on their taxes, because they felt these people were robbing the community:

‘To cheat the government is not cheating’, I’ve heard that so often, ‘But it’s only government!’ You might be lying, but ‘That’s not lying, it’s just the government’. That attitude is foreign to me, because there is no pride. If there is no pride, if we can cheat it, why not? They consider themselves smart, instead of saying ‘No, hang on, after all it’s us – what is the government? It’s us, it’s our country’.\textsuperscript{14}

Another way in which these women expressed their belief in the importance of work as a social duty was to inculcate the virtues of education and hard work in their children:

\textsuperscript{11} Interview with Jadwiga.
\textsuperscript{12} Interview with Gizela, who arrived in Australia in 1964 to marry a first-wave displaced person who had been deported to Germany.
\textsuperscript{13} Interview with Franciszka, a displaced person deported to Germany and arriving in Australia with her husband in 1950.
\textsuperscript{14} Interview with Petra, a displaced person deported to the Soviet Union with her parents, and siblings. She arrived in Australia with her family in 1950.
Here kids from school and off they go somewhere, so Aussies thought we were hard on the poor kids. But many of them became good citizens and well educated... they weren't hippies, they were workers.\textsuperscript{15}

Although Australian citizenship did not bring direct economic benefits in the 1980s and 1990s, women from the second and third waves of Polish migration also tended to identify Australian citizenship with economic duties. They had been brought up in a Communist country, in which the state limited civil and political rights but provided a level of economic security. Economic rights were central to the Communist citizenship bargain.\textsuperscript{16} There was, however, another element to this continuing identification of the state in economic terms. Most had left Poland partly in order to escape the Polish economic crisis. Some felt that the economic promises inherent in the Communist model of citizenship had been betrayed. In this context, Australia offered not only economic opportunities, but also renewed hope for a reciprocal economic relationship with the state. Walentyna reflected bitterly on her despair in Poland:

We believed that if we learn, if we work so hard, we believed that we were going to make something good. We been told ‘You are working for this country’. And one day we notice there is nothing changed for the good, it’s just getting worse. They told you day after day ‘You are working for this country, you are working for your future, you are working to make your life better’, but you didn’t see that life is better. It just was worse, and you didn’t have this opportunity... Coming to Australia was the last chance to change something in our lives.\textsuperscript{17}

Although hard work in Poland had not really paid off, women from the second and third waves also emphasised the duty to work hard for the Australian community. Anna was unemployed at the time she was interviewed. However, she spent hours every day practising her English in the hope that she would find employment:

\textsuperscript{15} Interview with Olesia, a displaced person deported to Germany and used for forced labour after the Warsaw Uprising of 1944. She arrived in Australia in 1949.
\textsuperscript{16} See Chapter Six.
\textsuperscript{17} Interview with Walentyna, who arrived in Australia as a political refugee with her husband and children in 1989.
Citizenship means I have right to stay here, to do something job...I am not lazy. Because men who don't work mean nothing. As long as we live, we must work, we are something doing. No lay and dream. This my father's idea. My father work all his life, was ill two months and died. He worked until he died - it is right.¹⁸

Second and third-wave participants also believed strongly in paying their taxes while trying to minimise their dependence on the social security system. They were highly critical of those they perceived to be taking economic support from the government without contributing their fair share. Katy said that she worked hard to support herself and paid her taxes. As a taxpayer, she did not mind contributing to the welfare of those in genuine need. However, she believed that many of the unemployed did not want to work and she resented paying for their maintenance:

I think that to be a good citizen, it means that I don't cheat, don't overuse the social benefits, let's say. That I work here, that I am useful for this society... the bad citizen is the whole army of voluntary bludgers... and they suck the government for everything which is possible.¹⁹

At the same time, these interviewees expected that as long as they worked and paid taxes, the state should provide economic benefits:

I have the right to benefit from national wealth - what I mean is to use government schools, government hospitals, which I don't because I am fully insured. But I send my daughter to the public school because I think it's the right thing I doing. And to have, you know, some kind of services, to have clean water, to have good communication possibilities

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¹⁸ Interview with Anna, a voluntary migrant who came to Western Australia to join her daughter, a political refugee, in 1996.

¹⁹ Interview with Katy, a political refugee who came to Australia with her husband in 1981, after a short stay in Libya.
and so on. This is what I expect from the state.\textsuperscript{20}

Participants from all waves of migration also had a lively appreciation of civil rights and freedoms in Australia. For women who had experienced forced deportation to labour camps in the Soviet Union or in Germany in particular, such rights could be fundamental to their decision to take Australian citizenship:

Generally speaking, you are a free person, you have recourse to justice, you can go and complain – even if you don’t get anywhere, at least you’ve got the right to go and make a complaint... You’ve got recourse to justice, even if as I say, not always the court case goes your way... the thing is, you can express yourself and if you’re a law abiding citizen, you’ve nothing to fear... This is what I love about this country, you can do that. Maybe you are personally unpopular because you have pushed some sort of a cause... but you can't be penalised by it, you can't be put into jail for it.\textsuperscript{21}

For women from the second wave, the absence of civil rights had generally been one of the major imperatives in leaving Poland:

We knew we won't be able to go anywhere, we won't be able to see anything, we won't be able to say anything what we think. We have to agree everything what they say, what they do, and everyone hated them.... And I had my family in West German then, and I can see the way they live. I'm not talking about materialistic things, but they can do what they want, and they can say what they want, and it's up to them what they are going to achieve. It's not up to the Party, what they think, with all just lies and lies and lies. And the government could do, practically they could do, whatever they wanted. If you were on the list, you had no one to complain, no one to protect you.\textsuperscript{22}

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{21} Interview with Gutka.
\textsuperscript{22} Interview with Lila.
For women who had lived under the Polish Communist regime, the extent of the freedoms available in Australia were at first difficult to believe in and hard to get used to. As Beata reflected, learning to speak freely without fear and learning to trust government organisations and services required several years of settlement in Australia:

Even when you come here, after so many years of living in a Communist country, you still watch what you say sometimes. It took us a while to trust the government organisation and things like that. Because you always looking for the catch there, what they're trying to achieve by doing this or that. Everything was sort of double - not real, not honest. You didn't feel like a free human being, like a free spirit. It was impossible to be yourself like we are here, where you can say whatever you want, within reason.23

For these women, their ability to practise their civil rights was crucial to their decisions to take Australian citizenship. It was also very important to their ongoing satisfaction with that decision. None of them expressed regret at coming to Australia and taking a new citizenship, despite the high personal costs of the immigration process:

When we arrived in Australia was very tough because we didn't speak English, we have to go to the uni. We left everything, established house, established our life behind, and we have to start from zero. That was very tough time...I'm very happy because for first time in Australia I find out how happy I am. Of course I miss my parents, they still alive, I miss my friends, only one brother left, the other has passed away, and I still miss them. I miss my friends and places what was so very close to me, even this pollution, I miss that too. But Australia is so exciting. You can feel free. Really, when you came from the different system you can feel this freedom, you can feel that. You can work, you can go where you want. Nobody be watching you...Australia is really the best

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23 Interview with Beata, who arrived in Australia as a political refugee in 1985.
one, best one around. Here is quiet, is really freedom, absolute freedom.24

Women from the second and third waves were often ambivalent, however, about the effects of the same freedoms on their children. Complaints about the laxity of Australian discipline of children were typical of all waves of migration.25 Most participants in the interviewing project believed in the desirability of a typically Polish concept of family, in which even the extended family lived together. Children were not expected to leave home except to marry and start a new family. They were also expected to be obedient to their parents, rather than asserting their individual rights. Strict discipline and physical punishment were the norm:

I was brought up in strict discipline. There was no way I could tell my parents what I think about sixteen year old going out with a boy, or drugs or smoking or stuff like that. There was no even thinking about it, not mentioning doing something about it. I was very strictly brought up, and I realize a lot of my friends from school the same. Smacking or punishment, heavy punishment, was a normal part of life. I'm not talking about bashing up children or something like that to get a better discipline, but different punishment. And I think it worked, it does work, I think.26

Concerns about discipline of children were directly linked with criticisms of the government and the Australian state. In Australia, children are increasingly viewed as individuals who have their own rights, and the state supports children who are unable to remain with their parents. Many women in my project feared for the morals of their children in the permissive Australian context and worried that this kind of freedom was not in their long-term interests. In their view, a government that supported children in defying their parents or leaving their families was going beyond its proper role and interfering with their natural authority as parents. They considered this to constitute an

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24 Interview with Kamilla, who arrived in Australia as a political refugee in 1981.
25 See Chapter Seven.
26 Interview with Jana, who came to Australia as a political refugee in 1982 after a short stay in West Germany.
They teach the kids they are free people, they don't have to listen anybody, they have their own choice, they don't have to respect anybody. They are taught like you are big enough, you can do whatever you want. You can even leave the house, you can get money from social security. If you are not happy with your mother and father, you can leave. They can live together, they take drugs, they have sex when they are very young. I am quite disappointed with this kind of freedom...My daughter, she started to argue with me, and I lost my patience, I lost my control, and I slap her on the bottom. And she start to scream, sort of hysterical, 'It's my body, it's only my body, you are not allowed to touch me'. I said 'No, no, darling, it's my body as well. I used to look after this body from the beginning. Even when you did not have your brain ready to work yet, I was watching for your body, I was looking for you, I was worrying for you, I was sitting during the night when you been sick.' But it would never happen, believe me, this discussion would never happen in Poland, never. This kind of conversation 'It's my body, it's my body' - nobody can even think in this way!

The impact of past traditions and experiences was apparent in the emphasis on economic rights and duties and a powerful appreciation of civil freedoms among all the women participating in the interviewing project. This impact was perhaps most apparent, however, in their attitudes towards military service. This was the one formal duty of Australian citizenship readily identified by women from all waves of migration, and it was highly valued. Thirteen participants in the interviewing project were old enough to remember the virtually simultaneous invasion of Poland by the Soviet Union and by Germany in 1939. In this context, the duty to defend Australia could be an incentive to take Australian citizenship:
I only knew that if it ever came to defend the country, I would. Protect me or my son or my daughter in case of war. We are more aware of the dangers of 'the good neighbours.' I want to say Australia's better and I want to protect.27

The defence of Australia was generally understood to include, at least potentially, combat roles for women. This expectation reflected a tradition of female military involvement very different to that of Australia. While the defence of Australia has always been considered a duty of Australian citizenship, Australian women have so far served only in support roles. Combat-related positions have been available to women only since 1990.28 Women in Poland have likewise been traditionally confined to support roles, and have generally served in combat only in times of national emergency. Such emergencies, however, have occurred many times throughout Polish history, creating an awareness among Polish women that combat roles, while not the norm, might one day be expected of them.29 As Sylwia reflected, she simply took it for granted that women should fight in the event of a national emergency because Polish women had always done so:

Polish women always have - over centuries. I know that Polish women take up arms many times. Not like men, but they were the support. In the last war, women were equal to men. They laid down their lives, they fought with everything they had. In the First World War, they were mainly nurses, but in the other uprisings we had, in the last century, there was a famous uprising, and there was one Polish woman general...There was a spirit of patriotism. They were so brave, you know, and the children would be brought up in this patriotism. Like now, they were mostly at home, but they kept the fires burning. And of course, some of them got involved in the fighting.30

A number of participants knew of female relatives who had fought in particularly

27 Interview with Olesia.
28 See Chapter Three.
29 See Chapter Four.
30 Interview with Sylwia, a displaced person deported to the Soviet Union with her mother and arriving in Australia in 1950.
desperate circumstances during World War II, or who had received some form of military training as Scouts, partisans or members of the Home Army. Women brought up under the Communist regime had themselves received military training as part of normal lessons at school, or as part of their professional training at university. Such roles, therefore, were not only theoretical possibilities, but part of their lived experience. As Anna reflected,

My husband’s brother’s wife was in A.K. She was the boss of a squadron. She had one star...I was in army because all people from medicine in Poland have exercises from soldiers, and I become two stars when I was very young, twenty or twenty-six years old...In Warsaw the women fight in uprising in 1944. Sometimes the women...give advice from boss, or they are nurses, and sometimes they fight. Fighting was not normal, it was in very difficult situation. Australian women should nurse, bring advice, cook. Fight in very difficult situation.

These women were generally willing to take up arms and defend Australia, and some expressed surprise that the idea of women in combat was not more popular in Australia.

Of course I would fight for this country. I be first one go. Of course, absolutely. I love Australia. Only in Australia is not popular, even is not at all. We’ve got one in uni, every woman has the special subject, army, and when be war, you are prepared for that... How to use the firearms, how to use the masks, how to use the medication, what kind of medication. You have to go, yes. For the special subject army, you’ve got the special course and you’ve got to go for the camp, army camp, and you spend mostly three months doing the things, and you have to know how to use the firearms. But in Australia is not popular.

Many participants believed that combat roles were unsuitable for women, and none

31 See Chapter Five.
32 See Chapter Six.
33 Interview with Kamilla.
thought that female military service should be compulsory. Such beliefs were subject, however, to there being no national emergency. Almost all agreed that women had the right to perform combat duties if they wanted to, and should not be prevented from doing so:

You can’t deny their right, you can’t. If they want to, they should, but I don’t think it’s the right place for women...but absolutely is different situation when you fight for your country, your freedom, when you fight because the whole nation is fighting with the enemy...and I don’t think, you know, anything can be done if a woman wants to go. It’s her right. It should be her right.  

Moreover, some of these women connected performing combat duties with equality with men. They thought that the roles of women in Australian society had changed, and Australian women were more capable of defence duties than they had been:

If a woman feels she can contribute, and she wants to, why not? I think women are more tough today than before, and I think women’s role was more at home before, but now they're more independent, and they want to be equal.

Citizenship and Political Empowerment

The most obvious absence in these women’s accounts of citizenship was of political empowerment. Only a small minority of post-War migrants spontaneously mentioned the right to vote as either the duty of citizens, or an incentive to take citizenship. Several, in fact, stated that they did not approve of compulsory voting and might not vote at all if it was not compulsory. Krystyna, for instance, was weary of political arguments and viewed the system of compulsory voting as depriving her of her free will:

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34 Interview with Katy.  
35 Interview with Maria.
The only thing is I don’t agree with the compulsory voting. I would like to have my own mind and my own will. If I want to vote for somebody, I would like to be allowed to vote the way I want, but if I don’t want to vote, I would rather not, but you can’t do that. Not so long ago I thought ‘I’ve had enough of this – arguments about one party or another – if I had the choice I wouldn’t go to the voting station at all’.36

Second and third-wave migrants, for whom economic and civil rights were virtually automatic, found that political rights were the exception, given that non-citizens could not vote. Accordingly, they were more conscious of citizenship status as conferring the right to political participation. Large numbers of both second-wave and more recent migrants made a direct and spontaneous association between voting and citizenship status. They also appreciated the difference between voting in Australia and voting in Communist Poland. Like Jasia, they connected voting with other signs of full membership of the Australian community:

In terms of the outcomes you think that you have more influence. In Poland the outcome was obvious so no one took much notice of it. No matter what you did you didn’t have much choice anyway...the experience is different, because you go into the polling booth thinking that your vote is counting and you have the say who is going to end up Prime Minister. So it’s more empowering, I guess.... I thought that I came here, and I made the decision to actually continue to live here, I felt that I wanted to be sort of full-fledged citizen. If I was going to stay here, I wanted to have the same rights and obligations as any other citizen - my say in who is actually going to be in government, my right but at the same time my obligation to vote, and basically to be part of this country and of what expectations the government has of its citizens...37

36 Interview with Krystyna, a displaced person deported to the Soviet Union with both parents and arriving in Australia in 1986, after long term settlement in England.
37 Interview with Jasia, who arrived in Australia officially classified as a political refugee, although she considered herself to be a voluntary migrant. She came to Australia in 1981, after spending a short time in England.
At the same time, however, the vast majority of participants claimed not to be interested in politics at all. Only one woman in the entire study had ever participated in Australian party politics in any way other than voting, and in her case she had handed out How to Vote cards on election day. However, participants from all waves of migration often appeared to be intensely concerned about particular political issues. Key political issues for them were privatisation, unemployment, health care and the crime rate, along with Aboriginal welfare and immigration. The vast majority also stated that Australian politicians were self-interested individuals who lied to the electorate, broke their promises, and voted themselves large pay rises and other benefits. It was a virtually universal belief that it was impossible to be involved in politics and be truthful:

They get me very annoyed because I don't believe what they're saying. They say one thing and do another. I was interested, but many times I couldn't understand. I had to ask my husband, because he is really into it. I used to ask him ‘Could you explain to me why they are doing this and that?’ I would say ‘I want them to do it this way’, and he would say ‘But it has to be that way’. In politics there is a special way of saying and a special way of doing things. He told me one thing, which I understand now, and the more I look at it, it's true. That a better politician is a better liar. The more you lie, the better you are. You're more successful, and better still, if you're not caught lying. So I know that.

A high proportion of interviewees felt deeply alienated from the Australian political system. Post-War women, in particular, viewed Australia as a nation in decline. There was great anxiety about the crime rate and about privatisation. Privatisation has sometimes been portrayed as an empowerment of the citizenry through the marketplace, but my interviewees felt politically disempowered by privatisation programmes. In particular, they believed that privatisation led to high unemployment. The idea of thousands of unemployed people was very shocking to them. Moreover,

38 Interview with Olesia.
39 Interview with Maria.
40 See Chapter Two.
they feared that widespread youth unemployment meant that young people would turn to crime and violence. They viewed a political system that allowed this to happen as abdicating its responsibilities:

The country has changed because we have so many crimes...I don't think the government is very clever, I am sorry to say. I think the privatisation is the worst thing that could happen. Politicians who say that when they come to power they will reduce the unemployment number, they must be either silly or think we are. They privatise so much, and by privatising a lot of institutions, they create unemployment because the private enterprises make people redundant - thousands and thousands of people. And they create unemployment and the government allows it. Nothing is being done. People aren't safe in their houses, you have to barricade yourself, you have to close the doors. What do they do with the young people? The young people are on the dole, they steal money because they are on drugs. The parties, you have seen the parties where the gatecrashers come in, hundreds of them, and they even attack the police. Is that a state that should be tolerated? It shouldn't be like that, its terrible.\footnote{Interview with Franciszka.}

Women from subsequent waves of migration shared some of their concerns. They were less worried by unemployment and crime, but were unhappy to observe the transformation of government according to the values and practices of the private sector. In part, this was because, although they had sought refuge in a country with a strong economy and were enthusiastic consumers, they often felt disempowered within the marketplace. In particular, they were frustrated by the gulf between the rhetoric of ever-improving services and their own experiences:

Now it's worse in Australia. Definitely it's going down, because I don't know why, but I think the big bureaucracy in some areas there is. For example now, I am dealing with my bank... you can't talk to anybody. Absolutely no people, no names. When you want to do information you
have to ring, then to press another number, then to chose another
number, then to wait ten minutes, and they ask ‘How can I help you?’
And then realise they can't help me, so they switch me to another person.
Can you imagine in my shop I have people coming and I have to do
something? I have a business. It’s just awful. It’s just a joke. Same with
my bank that I go to. And not only banks, it’s everywhere like this. It’s
getting worse and worse… It’s something I hate. But I think it is a trend
everywhere. The same as the big shop centres. You go there, and nobody
knows you.⁴²

With these experiences of the private sector, they were unhappy to find formerly
publicly-owned enterprises taking on the same practices:

They send me, for example, Telstra, it’s sending me a letter that I have
to pay that day because I didn't pay in time, otherwise they will cut me
off. So I phone them and ask them, ‘Can't you take into account that I
might be sick, or it’s a holiday, or lost form. And I am your customer
fifteen years, I am not someone who disappears. You know me.’ And the
answer is usually because of computer is doing that. I wish all
institutions that I am not just a number. I am flesh and blood, and I
would like to be treated like I treat customers in my shop, with attention.
But it's difficult, because today you talk to Jan, the next day with Katie.
You never know where they are sitting in Sydney or in Canberra. You
never talk to the same person twice.⁴³

Women from all waves of migration perceived politicians to be very remote
from the electorate, operating in a closed system that ordinary people could not
penetrate. Moreover, even those able to join the political elite risked co-option by the
political system. Any ordinary person who tried to change the political system would
eventually take on the same beliefs, practices and political culture, and themselves
become impervious to voices from outside the system:

⁴² Interview with Katy.
⁴³ Ibid.
Politics are closed to average Australian. You can't pierce the barrier. It's us and them. It's very difficult for average person to project any opinion over this fence, because by the time you reach the internal circle your opinion is so strong that you're not likely to change it due to other influences.\(^4\)

In this context, feeling powerless to change Australian politics, they found it better not to think about it, rather than to distress themselves:

I think I can't change nothing, and some people talking and talking, and you can't change this. We are too small to change something. We like to think about family, what is around you, very close. I know many people interested and good, somebody have to, but not me. I don't want to be upset, because I don't change, I can't change. Not many people can change something.\(^5\)

The responses of women in this study overall, therefore, suggest that they were not so much uninterested in political issues as actively repelled by Australian politics as it is practised.

The women themselves sometimes suggested reasons for their lack of more active participation as citizens within the political system. Post-War women sometimes described their lack of education and confidence as a barrier to effective political participation:

No, I'm not good enough. I'm not a performer. I don't have enough schooling for that, I think the person should be educated, have more knowledge.\(^6\)

One significant factor for women of the second and third waves of migration was that

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\(^4\) Interview with Petra.

\(^5\) Interview with Paulina, a political refugee who arrived in Australia with her husband and child in 1987, after a short stay in Austria.

\(^6\) Interview with Elwira.
the politicisation of all aspects of life under the Communist system was experienced as oppressive and intrusive. Some felt that they had come to Australia partly to escape politics:

I didn't want to be involved with the government, I had enough in Poland. For me was not important voting, for me was not important what kind of government will be Labor or Liberal. I didn't want to listen that, I didn't discuss it, even when someone mentioned it I didn't listen, I just switched off my mind, that's it....Because you know when you came from another system when you been controlled by the government, how do you want to be involved with that again? What for I came here? That reason why I didn't want anything about politics, whatever, government. And, to be honest, all politicians the liars that have to make promises and don't keep them.47

It is possible that social class may also be a factor. The working classes have been severely under-represented in Australian political life, and many migrants took up working class occupations upon entry into Australia. The extent to which social class is a barrier, however, is difficult to determine because their class status was highly ambiguous. First-wave displaced persons, for instance, had generally been targeted by the German and Soviet occupying forces precisely because their families were from the educated middle classes, or had links with government. Their families were considered an actual or potential Polish political elite. Second and third-wave participants were also disproportionately drawn from the middle classes, and from professional groups, at least in their country of origin. While many interviewees, therefore, might be described as working class in terms of their occupations and incomes in Australia, they viewed themselves as predominantly middle and even upper class in family background.

Polish politics has, however, been overwhelmingly male dominated, and most participants viewed political activity other than voting as essentially a male activity. Political life as they described it appeared to be overwhelmingly dominated by men and male concerns and ambitions that seemed far removed from their lives. A number of

47 Interview with Kamilla.
women commented that their husbands, unlike themselves, were very interested in politics and seemed to understand it. Post-War women were generally brought up in families in which women were not expected to be interested in politics. In fact, active involvement in politics was regarded as a potential threat to the stability of their families:

My mother would say 'women don't talk politics and women don't talk religion.' It was always considered that it was a man’s place to be in politics. And I knew a woman who was involved in politics, but she was separated. She couldn’t bring the two things together. There was this malfunction in the family because it’s either your ambition or your home.

Women from subsequent waves of migration sometimes noted that very few Australian-born women appeared to be actively involved in politics, either, and for much the same reasons:

Politics, it’s for men...it was, you know, a very traditional thing. Like in Poland, and I believe in here, women are, like, staying home and looking after kids unless they working. They too busy. Even if you work, you’ve got two or three jobs to do during the day – the kids and the home, and husband and job. It’s too much to be involved in something else...Men are more politically oriented, I think, more abilities towards politics than women. We more peaceful...We don’t care what’s happening, which party you’re from, under the condition that everything goes, you know, sort of okay. They know better, they can see more than some woman. Because I know that they talk more, they more interested.

In this sense, participants in the interviewing project appeared to view themselves as political, as well as military auxiliaries: a few rare women might take on these roles,

48 Interview with Sylwia.
49 Interview with Kassia, who arrived in Australia as a political refugee in 1982.
and they supported their right to do so, but most would do so only in unusual situations or crises. Moreover, performance of what they regarded as their primary citizenship duty, the duty to engage in paid work and pay taxes, meant that women caring for children had even less time to participate politically than they might otherwise have done. In this way, patriarchal Polish political traditions were supported by traditional gender relations in both countries and both Polish and Australian valorisation of paid work and economic contributions. The marginalisation of Polish women from political activity then found confirmation in the male domination of Australian politics.

Gender, Difference and Equality

Gender, in fact, had a fundamental impact on the inequality of these women as citizens. In some respects, their gender was at least as important as their status as migrants in shaping that inequality. As explored above, they assigned little value to more active political participation. However, their ability to exercise rights and responsibilities of citizenship that they did care about were also undermined by gender structures in both the Polish community and the wider Australian context. For instance, many women in this study had a difficult and contradictory relationship to paid employment and taxation. Women from all waves of migration viewed engaging in the paid workforce and paying taxes as key symbols of their membership of the Australian community. Nevertheless, in practical terms, paid work also constituted an experience of discrimination and inequality, both as women and as migrants. For first-wave women in particular, the workplace could signify low wages, low social status and resentment from Australians regarding their work practices. Moreover, Polish women, like their Australian-born counterparts, generally organized paid work around primary responsibilities to care for children and other family members, and spent long periods working intermittently or not at all. Their engagement in this duty, therefore, was often less direct than their husbands': they raised children at home, enabling their husbands to work and pay taxes on behalf of the family. The status of their husbands as breadwinners often meant that man’s need for citizenship came first, and the woman’s decision was essentially secondary and derivative. As Franciszka commented,

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50 See Chapter Seven.
Citizenship was very important to us, especially to my husband since he was a public servant. He had to be. If he hadn’t taken the citizenship he would have been dismissed after a while. They gave him that time because they knew it takes five years, so he was already working as a public servant without being naturalised.

She took citizenship herself because “families go together, of course. You wouldn’t do it separately”.

Many of the women arriving in Australia in subsequent waves of migration were highly educated and had qualifications in fields in high demand in Australia, such as engineering. These were able, therefore, to avoid the kind of economic inequality endemic among the first wave, in the long term. Others could not find work in their own professional fields, and simply had to accept that only relatively unskilled, menial work was available. For them, as for their predecessors, therefore, experience of the workplace was an experience of inequality:

Of course I had a problem finding job, I had a problem with communication difficulties, still my position is worse. I feel it is sort of degradation for me to live here, because I could do better, more ambition, job in Poland. I am working in the factory. It is not mental job. I have to work with people which are not on my level.\textsuperscript{51}

Moreover, despite the development of formal equality in the Australian workplace, paid work has continued to be structured around the assumption that workers either have no dependents or have a partner who will care for any dependents.\textsuperscript{52} In this context, many women were unable to engage in the kind of work they would have chosen because husbands did not contribute equally to the care of children and because paid childcare was so expensive. Some of these women, moreover, had been persuaded to come to Australia by husbands anxious to expand their own professional options but were able to avoid menial labour only by relying on their husbands as breadwinners. The

\textsuperscript{51} Interview with Walentyna.
\textsuperscript{52} See Chapter Three.
immigration process, therefore, often deepened the economic inequality between the women and their husbands, as Wanda explained:

I understand that he really want to come because of his work, which was the major reason...there were more exciting possibilities for him...We can’t pursue our careers together. It is impossible. So one of us will go for work, and the other will just try and do what we can...I don’t want to go clean the houses or do the work that probably I would be able to do if I really want to work, and because we can afford it I stay home and study English.\textsuperscript{53}

When women were not able to work, the welfare system perpetuated their economic dependence due to the treatment of couples as a single economic unit. This deprived a number of married women with working partners of unemployment and other benefits, which they found very disempowering:

I think that it is actually quite disadvantageous to the other person, who has to be dependent on the person who is earning the money. I don’t agree with it, it creates a lot of dependency, it’s very discouraging for women. Sometimes they make life choices because of their financial dependency on their husbands that might not be in their best interests.\textsuperscript{54}

Some of the civil rights so appreciated by these women were also partly compromised by their gender. A number of older women, widowed and living alone, listened for much of the day to talkback radio, which sensationalised reports of attacks on the elderly, and particularly on elderly women. In this context, they felt very unsafe. They emphasised that they were afraid of attack even in their homes, but were particularly afraid when they were away from home. None of them were willing, for instance, to walk alone at night. In this respect, therefore, civil rights such as freedom of movement were undermined by what they perceived to be their lack of physical safety. Post-War interviewees felt that women and the elderly were far more vulnerable

\textsuperscript{53} Interview with Wanda, a voluntary migrant who came to Australia in 1997 with her Australian husband.

\textsuperscript{54} Interview with Natia, who arrived in Australia as a political refugee in 1981.
than they had been in previous decades:

I long to be back in the 1950s, I long to be back there, because people didn’t have to close the doors even to their houses...it wasn’t as it is now, that you are unsafe. A woman can’t go into the street without thinking that her bag will be snatched. It’s terrible... we are not free from fear any more. We live in a country where there is fear. The 1950s was lovely. You could walk in King’s Park at night alone and not be attacked, you could go down the street...you can’t do this now, it’s a state of fear and the government doesn’t do anything about it.55

Newer migrants, however, also felt vulnerable in ways that restricted their freedom of movement. Although they were not physically frail due to their age, they felt vulnerable specifically as women to physical attack and sexual assault. Wanda, who had lived in France and Switzerland before settling in Australia, noted that she enjoyed far less physical freedom in Australia than in other countries. In her case, her sense of physical vulnerability prevented her attending events at the local Polish club:

The bus, the unsafetyness of the night time is quite strong here. I never had this before. I never feel that way in Poland or Switzerland...no fear at all.

Both traditional Polish and Australian constructions of the meaning of their gender also exerted a powerful influence on the ways in which women in the interviewing project perceived and practised citizenship rights and duties. Although many believed in equal pay and financial independence for women, and could visualise the need for female soldiers, the views of women from all waves of immigration on gender roles were characteristically essentialist. They felt strongly that women and men were very different creatures, with very different purposes. While many of them enjoyed their jobs, and strongly emphasised the virtues of working hard and paying their taxes, they viewed employment itself as additional to their primary role in both Polish and Australian society, rather than fundamental to it. This primary role was the raising

55 Interview with Franciszka.
Participants from all waves of migration were highly ambivalent about female equality in the public sphere, believing that it could not cater for female difference. The differences between the bodies of men and women were held to signify very different male and female roles. Although western notions of the duties of citizenship appear to be universally applicable, they are based on constructions of the individual which are abstracted from the real bodies of men and women. For women participating in this study, male and female bodies translated into different duties for men and women in human society. Women’s bodies were for the birth and raising of children, and this was what women should do. Other roles, including the duties they identified with citizenship, were very much secondary. Where paid work, for instance, interfered with childrearing, they abandoned it when they could. As discussed above, political involvement other than voting was considered too difficult to combine with childrearing. For this reason, the notion of equality within the public sphere foundered upon their bodily difference from men. For example, they found it difficult to imagine that a system in which men and women performed the same amount of paid work while the women continued their traditional tasks in the home could be equal. However, they did not really envisage sharing traditional female roles:

Maybe I’m old fashioned, but I always think if God would create us in the same bodies, not one body woman and one body man, then I would say equality. But we are not equal. A married woman has a specific role in this life. There are only a few occupations where both sexes could do equally well. If a woman works forty hours in a shop, and a man works forty hours in a shop, but when they both go home the woman cooks the meals and puts the children to bed, then where is the equality? Thirty years ago I had two children, and I knew my husband had to support me and the kids. And because I was a responsible female, I contribute, not equal jobs you know, but I done equally as much.... But equality is unattainable in the sense that you cannot

measure equality between two sexes. You could measure equality between two men, one is Australian and one is not, then I can see that. Why would I want to compete with a man? What could be more beautiful than male and female, entirely different, but worth the same?57

Second and third-wave women, despite several decades of inculcation in female equality, and having received military training themselves, remained ambivalent about whether women should be in combat, because they believed women were fundamentally different to men. They linked these questions to other public sphere activities, because the dilemmas were largely the same. In a long statement, Jadwiga reflected on the nature and meaning of sexual difference:

Probably women should fight because in Poland was the military service, and we have in high school military service…. But I am not sure if this is the place really for the woman because we are not equal really. Now I think is the time when they try make us really equal, you know, the woman and man. But I think we are created not really equal. The men can’t be the mother, and we are never equal…. I think it’s very difficult to be good wife and good housekeeper, good mother, and have job outside home. I think it’s the men who’ve got the more aggression. In our century, how many war start from woman, and how many start from the men? And this man ambition, you know, they must be the best. We don’t care for these ambitions, I think. And I think probably we are having the child inside us, and that make us different, too. And I think if God create us not the same but different, we must stick with different job what we must do. We must keep this different job what we must do. The woman give the birth, the family. Because I think if you look on T.V., all these women who are in very high positions, how many have got the family life, really good family life? Because it’s so difficult be involved in your career and take care of the children.58

57 Interview with Petra
58 Interview with Jadwiga.
Interestingly, these women, like the Polish and Australian communities in which they had lived, were unable to conceive of ways in which women could be different from men and yet equal to them.

In terms of equality in the public sphere, there were not only the practical difficulties of combining the primary task, bearing and raising children, with careers or combat roles. Women participating in this study often viewed strong career or political ambitions as a threat to that primary role. Many felt that mothers pursuing these activities simply could not look after children as well as women who devoted themselves to the care of their children and took up other activities when possible and when it did not interfere with this role. Others believed that to do so was so difficult that the effect on the woman's character could be detrimental; to go beyond the essential female role was not only very difficult but even dangerous. For this reason, participants were often highly ambivalent about women politicians. On the one hand, they believed that if more women took political power, the political world would reflect female values, and be a kinder, more compassionate place and there would be fewer wars. On the other, they feared that women who were more powerful would not only be less feminine, but more ruthless than a man:

"Our characters are better because we are more sensitive, or gentle. On the other side, if you find the women on the top of the government, they are very bad persons. If they are strong enough to go on the top, the women are worse than the men. They must be very, very strong – ruthless! They must be like that because they never get this position if they are not like that. You know, even in the company, how many women have they in the position as the supervisor? Not very many. Whatever we say about rights, we are still treated in a worse way. We have to work harder if we like to do some career."  

Overall, the citizenship duties interviewees identified were characteristically male rather than female duties. Their own key duties lay with children and the family, regardless of which country or nation state they lived in. These duties, after all, were

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59 Interview with Walentyna.
not so much duties to the state as duties to something much higher. Most of the participants in the interviewing project were practicing Catholics, and this had a powerful relationship with their understandings of gender roles. Women describing their roles in the family tended to adopt religious and spiritual language and imply divine creation of the gender system. This language was very different to that employed when they talked about involvement in duties to the state such as employment, politics or combat:

I reckon it is not women’s nature to fight, to kill anybody else. Some of them can do that, but most of them can’t. It’s not in our nature. Our nature is to give the life to people, to have the kids and to give them the life, you know. And to make the house nice for your husband, for your partner – and the atmosphere. It’s our duty. It’s not only duty, it’s something more, it’s like a mission. Don’t kill anybody. I deeply believe that’s not our mission. If we have to, if we don’t have a choice, if there’s not enough people to do this duty, not enough men, then okay, but I deeply believe this is not our mission.60

There were, moreover, other ways in which the women in this study felt that they could contribute to their new country. One avenue for participation in the Australian community lay in voluntary work. They were not alone in this view. The National Civics Survey of 1994 found that approximately 65 per cent of Australians participated in at least one form of voluntary work, and 41 per cent participated in two or more voluntary activities.61 There was a strong culture of voluntary work and participation among post-War women. Second and third-wave women were less likely to be involved in voluntary work, possibly because they were at a different stage of their lives. Post-War women were generally retired with grown children, while the later migrants were still juggling paid work and raising their families, and had less time. Moreover, some women had fiercely resented the expectations of the Polish Communist regime that they would continually volunteer their time without payment. Such duties

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60 Ibid.
were not really voluntary and had created a dislike for the whole idea of voluntary work, except at the specific request of friends or family:

I don’t do voluntary work, no. Everything was voluntary in Poland…. they expect you to do everything over there. Everything was ‘voluntary’, everything…. even at school, at high school, it was like we have to go out and plant the trees, because the Party asked us to do it. Everything was the Party. Party provides, you have to help.

The vast majority of post-War women, and around half of the other interviewees, however, had participated in voluntary work at some stage in Australia, and many had done so regularly throughout their lives. Some explained their participation largely in terms of meeting their own social needs while also helping others:

I looking something, because I feel lonely, very lonely, you know…. I looking something intellectual, I looking something help somebody. I looking for somebody with mind like me, talking in history, in literature, something more intellectual, and I find it. And it was good for me because I'm not getting down. Like, many Polish ladies they sit at home and cry. I know these Polish women, and they start drink, nobody understand English, they never go out, they not have good clothes or something, and they getting awful, and I think I don't want having the same for me.

Helping others was also a way for those who felt they had received a good deal from the Australian community to give back to it:

I just feel that I should do something for the country. I have time now. If I say no, everybody is going to say no, and who's going to do it? It’s not that I like it that much, but I feel that I have to do something for the

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62 Interview with Lila.
63 Interview with Gizela.
Interestingly, some women explicitly connected voluntary work and citizenship. Gutka, for example, had become a recognised judge of citizenship awards. When she judged nominees, she looked for community service:

This is citizen of the year, you are a good citizen - a person who has contributed a lot to the community...without remuneration or any special kind of gain, monetary gain or prestige gain or whatever...people who are not as well off as themselves, or people who are not as capable of looking after their own affairs as themselves.

Voluntary work, therefore, was sometimes viewed as constituting a performance of citizenship duties.

Much of this voluntary work took place in Polish associations. Common voluntary commitments included especially fundraising, teaching at the Polish Saturday school, visiting the sick and elderly in their ethnic community, and broadcasting ethnic radio. These activities might potentially be viewed as political, since they strengthened ethnic institutions and exercised their cultural rights. As argued earlier, multiculturalism changed the terms of citizenship for everyone, shifting the emphasis away from Anglo-Australian ethnicity and towards a model of rights and duties. These rights included cultural rights. Voluntary activity of this kind implicitly asserted that contributing to ethnic institutions and asserting their cultural rights was appropriate activity for Australian citizens, and good for the Australian community as a whole. The women involved in these activities, however, emphatically did not view what they did as political, and sometimes they did not even view it as multiculturalism in action. In contrast to politics, the sphere of personal ambition, lack of integrity and a potential threat to gender identity and the stability of their families, most interviewees thought of this kind of activity as an expression of being a "good person", a good woman and a good Christian. In their view, voluntary work and participation in ethnic organisations were not political but moral activities:

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64 Interview with Sylwia.
65 See Chapter Seven.
I like voluntary work. It is a noble thing to work for nothing. There is nobility in it. I don't take money, I work for nothing...it gives you a certain sort of, I wouldn't say superiority, but satisfaction. Real satisfaction.66

Moreover, a number of these interviewees did not actually support multiculturalism as a policy. One of the great ironies of the interviewing project was that some women who had found the assimilation period very difficult apparently did not support the discourses and institutions that maintained cultural rights. This was the case even among women who exercised those cultural rights. As Franciszka explained,

I don't like multiculturalism a lot. I am against it...It is time to finish with it because there is multiculturalism anyway. Why talk about it so much... I don't like our special ethnic community council, I hate it. We are Australians - why have it? It's the same as I am against Aboriginals having the health service or the law. Why? They are Australians - why not use everything that's for Australians? It's not necessary, I don't think.

Second and third-wave migrants generally approved strongly of multiculturalism, and the cultural rights they enjoyed. This approval was often qualified by their belief that these rights did not enjoy secure popular support, and that their own cultural differences were not entirely accepted by Australians:

I heard a lot of criticisms of multiculturalism, 'It's very superficial, it's a tokenism because really people don't really accept ethnic differences and all that stuff'. And that's quite true in a sense. But at the same time I feel I am sort of allowed to speak my language. I don't feel embarrassed when I speak to my partner in a shop in Polish, and that's important. It's important that I have access to Polish culture, to Polish books, movies, films. That's what multiculturalism for me is, and in that sense I feel quite okay. It's superficial in the sense that there is a bit of ambivalence, whether it's from the mainstream population or the

66 Interview with Franciszka.
government. On the one hand they say ‘It’s okay, yes we do accept that this is important. We acknowledge that it’s part of your culture and you are entitled to it’. But on the other hand, from the government and its policies, but perhaps more from the attitudes that people hold like mainstream population that you are a foreigner, you are different at some level. They want you to adjust to the same lifestyle they have, and if you don’t then you will always be an outsider.67

Such comments suggest that the women were once again unable to reconcile notions of equality and difference. They felt that difference, in this case ethnic rather than gender difference, signified inequality and exclusion in Australia.

Among the post-War migrants, however, there was a noticeable backlash against multiculturalism. As noted previously, the interviewing project was conducted in the context of the rising fame and influence of Pauline Hanson.68 A number of post-War migrants approved of her views, and some of them intended to vote for her party in the next federal election. These women protested at some length against what they saw as special treatment of new migrants, especially Asians, and Aborigines. They feared the motives of Asians buying land in Australia and generally distrusted Aboriginal land rights:

More and more they negotiate with Asians and the businesses and the land is going to them. They buying, and they let them! Why? Because probably when they see the land, how barren it is, while they have to be crowded in their own land, they just would like to get their hands on it.... In many things Pauline Hanson is too extreme, but in many things, she is right. Because I am an Australian, too, now. And when I went for a trip up north, and I am an Australian on Australian land, why do I have to pay to go in that Uluru place? Aren’t we Australians? Why should we pay and not them?69

67 Interview with Jasia.
68 See Chapters Two and Seven.
69 Interview with Olesia.
These views on immigration and Aboriginal issues, and their support for Pauline Hanson, were not easy to understand. After all, these Polish migrant women were from the group most active in their ethnic association, and valued their access to Polish culture in the form of community activities, or books, music and films. Post-War women perceived parallels between their own experiences of invasion in Poland, and experiences described by Aboriginal people. However, these parallels made only two women feel more sympathetic towards the Aboriginal cause:

I feel very deeply about Aborigines and what we've done to them. I have a feeling that we've, I didn't, my husband my children didn't, but as white race we did them a lot of grief, separating them from their children, taking their land, and I think we should compensate them. I'm not saying give it all back, but mining, we should ask them if we can and I'm sure they will allow it. I don't like that very conservative Australianism. Because you know I'm new, you know I'm an Australian, I was accepted as this wonderful Australia, but when I came it was still a white Australia. I didn't think about it deeply then, but I don't think it was a good government. Because they thought that whites were the superior race, and I hate that. That's what the Germans wanted to do.70

Most post-War women showed little appreciation of the Reconciliation movement in Australia. The remaining members of this group noted that they themselves had experienced invasion of their homeland but did not ask for apologies or compensation. Danuta withdrew her children from school for a day to avoid their participating in a "Sorry Day" ceremony.71 As Petra argued, they themselves had tried to forget the past in order to construct a new life, and Aboriginal people should do the same:

Every one of us has lost something due to the wars, and I am referring even to the claims by Aborigines. If you take every newcomer to this country, they lost something, that's why they're here. Why can't we

70 Interview with Sylwia.
71 Interview with Danuta, who was born in Australia in 1950. Her mother, a displaced person deported to Germany, became pregnant on the journey to Australia.
forget what happened in the past like we are trying to do? It's very difficult, because it's all vivid in the memory, and especially when you are older, you go back, everything is very clear what's happened. Just accept that this is the country as it is now, and we have to be unifying people, not splintering, not fragmenting. But every year we are doing more damage.

As is apparent from her comments, this “forgetting” had not been possible even for her. Like the other women, she viewed contemporary political and social questions in the light of her own past experiences and of the history of Poland.

The most unflattering explanation for criticisms of multiculturalism, Asian immigration and Aboriginal rights was given by a woman from the second wave who was analysing what she saw as the best and worst qualities of her own ethnic group:

Poles are racist. They are, they are. They don't tolerate if you are different.... They hate Jews. They hate, how they say, yellow people. They hate blacks. They hate people who are different. They do, they do. I never experience this in Poland, I tell you. Maybe they were racist there, but there were so many millions they were just lost. I can tell you that I had a big discussion with my fellow Poles not so long ago, about ‘dirty abos’ as they say.72

An examination of the ways in which post-War women expressed these views, however, raises a further possibility. Generally, criticisms were presented with both bewilderment and resentment that everyone in Australia could not simply be treated in the same ways and want the same things. This may reflect the impact on these women’s own thinking of the assimilation policy they themselves encountered in Australia. Moreover, the conflict between the view that the rights of citizenship in Poland should be available to all people within its borders, including minorities, and the view that Polish citizenship and nationality rested upon Polish ethnicity had not been settled in their own homeland before they left it. The conundrum of equality and

72 Interview with Katy.
difference had been a feature of their original homeland’s history. They had benefited from this conundrum as ethnic Poles even as they had suffered from it as women. However, multiculturalism and special programmes for Aboriginal people could be disliked because they suggested the existence of a number of forms of inclusion within the Australian community, of differing status, and therefore raised the possibility that their own status was inferior. As Jadwiga explained, she viewed what she was told about the position of Aboriginal people in Australia as having implications for her own position:

I remember the English classes in Perth, and what the young teacher said, when she was telling us Aborigines story. And when she said, ‘When white men came to Australia’, I was protesting ‘not white men, English men’, because this was the English men, not white men, not German men, not Polish men. And I was thinking ‘This is the politics, telling the white men’. And I remember the stories what we had from English classes. My friend was the German lady, and we discuss and we say ‘This is the same politics lesson for us. We must remember we must be good citizen, and we must learn English to cope with everyday life, but because of the situation with unemployment, they teach us up to a certain level, to be not allowed a higher position’. Because I don’t know, some people, professional people, they are saying that on top is the Anglo-Saxon people. But I think this is normal, because Australia was the Anglo-Saxon country.

In this context, Olesia’s cry of “Aren’t we Australians?” takes on a different and more poignant meaning.
Another possible meaning of Australian citizenship for Polish migrant women was a shift in national identity. Taking citizenship, after all, signifies membership of a new nation state. However, the potential shift in national identity implicit in taking Australian citizenship was a complex, partial process. Poland’s history of foreign occupation and partitioning has ensured that Polish national identity has been more closely bound up with Polish ethnicity, culture and language than with an actually existing nation state. Moreover, as theorist Nira Yuval-Davis has observed, the idea that the nation and the state are necessarily the same is generally a fiction. For interviewees participating in this project, therefore, commitment to a new nation state did not necessarily preclude a Polish national, as well as cultural, identity. Jasia reflected on the complex strands of her national identity:

I am an Australian citizen...but how do you want to define being Australian? ... I guess I wonder what’s the difference, I guess the difference is... the nation is being defined by the language, by the culture, customs, also geographical boundaries... Now I'm here, my geographical boundaries as anyone else living in Australia so I can call myself Australian, but my culture, my background is different, so I wouldn't call myself Australian, because this is not the same....it all depends how you define nationality as such. My history is different to Australian history, the culture that I came from is different, my language, my first language is different, my custom probably a bit different, so I don’t feel that I am Australian.

Most participants stated that they felt both Polish and Australian, and noted that this sometimes made them feel that they belonged fully to neither. A common phenomenon was feeling Australian when visiting Poland, but feeling Polish in Australia. Noticing their difference from Australians in Australia and from Poles in Poland meant feeling like a cultural outsider.

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73 See Chapter Four.
In some cases, interviewees tried to resolve these complexities by thinking in terms of "home":

It was funny feeling, because always I miss my family in Poland, and when I been in Poland, I was thinking Australia is my home. And when I returned, I was so happy, I was thinking 'Gosh, I love Australia, this is really my home'. This was 1992. And I was thinking 'Gosh, this was only one good thing from this two years in Yugoslavia, going back home'. And this is the truth what every immigrant is saying, 'We are not 100 per cent Polish, and we are not 100 per cent Australian'.

Perhaps because of the emotional closeness of the Polish family, and the idealisation of family and home, a sense of Australia as home took on much greater power when linked with family. Some women found that the birth of children or grandchildren meant they had made an irrevocable commitment to Australia because these children would never be Polish:

About three years ago I felt that Australia was home, when my grandson was born. I realised that when he was born. I was in Europe. I came out of the plane, and I was standing in the queue for the checkout, and then I realised 'I come home'. I realised that if you have children, and they were born back in Poland, you were all born there, so you were transplanted here, like a flower. But if you have children or grandchildren born in here, your roots are much deeper. You feel, even though you weren't born here, you feel as well more deeply into this soil, because you know that your grandson will never be a Pole. You know that you belong more here than there.

Metaphors of family, as well as of cultural roots and transplantation, were very common. Some understood their positions as migrants in Australia in terms of adoption, although in their case they were adopting a new mother:

75 Interview with Jadwiga.
76 Interview with Beata.
Because I was a good Pole, I am a good Australian. I believe in that. To be good Australian does not give me the right to deny my originality, my roots. The stronger I feel about my roots, the stronger citizen I am in my present country, because the strength pulls me through. I believed in the first, and I lost. I believe in the second one. It's the same like if you lose your mother, and you adopt another person – would you love her less? No, you would love her differently, because she replace something you have lost. So Australia replaced something that was very dear to me, so it is equally as dear, in a different way.  

Taking Australian citizenship could also enable participants to resolve some of these questions. To do so was often easier for second and third-wave women because they had been allowed to keep their Polish citizenship as well. This enabled them to experience and express dual national loyalties more appropriate to their dual national identity. First-wave women, and some of the other post-War interviewees, had lost their Polish citizenship before arrival in Australia, when they refused to return to Poland. Perhaps it was for this reason that they found it difficult not to see the taking of Australian citizenship as a renunciation of their former national and personal identity all the more painful because they had already suffered the loss of their original homeland, culture and family:

I was naturalised and I don't know why, but I was a bit tearful - just the whole idea of now renouncing whatever I was, although it wasn't necessary to renounce it. But the way I felt about it, that all the past that I had lived is now discounted because I've got to become someone else.

Other women who were not deportees also found it difficult, partly because it reminded them of forcible changes of nationality in occupied Poland:

At first, I thought I am traitor to my country. I was thinking that because

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77 Interview with Petra.
78 See Chapter Five.
79 Interview with Gutka.
in the war when was the Germans, they been forcing us to sign that we are not any more Polish, only Germans, and that makes me feel that I am doing still the same being here in Australia. But it was different, it was absolutely different. They didn't force us, they didn't say we have to. And afterwards they didn't ask me to give back my Polish citizenship, so I thought, why not?80

None of the women who had taken Australian citizenship regarded themselves as having also taken on an uncomplicated Australian identity. The taking of citizenship could itself be a marker of their difference: “Australian citizen is for people who come and settle here, but to be Australian is when you are born here. Then you are Australian - true Australian”.81 Over time, however, the combination of long-term settlement and Australian citizenship could result in an increasingly Australian national identity: “having this Australian citizenship, it makes it more Australian, you can call yourself Australian”.82 Many women found taking citizenship helpful because it resolved questions of their cultural and national identities in terms of being loyal to Australia, regardless of cultural differences: “I want to be loyal to this country...and a permanent place of belonging - that’s what it means to me”.83 The constant dislocations experienced by displaced persons, in particular, could lead to a yearning for a permanent home. With citizenship, “you belong to the country, you belong to the place, that’s what I think. It’s very important”.84 Jasia, who had said that she could not feel Australian, herself took citizenship, noting that “the rational decision was that we wanted to have the passport, but the other part was the need to belong. Migrants have this sort of dilemma. We never belong anywhere”. Edyta had not yet taken Australian citizenship, but planned to do so, partly because it would bring her closer to her new country:

I think that I will understand better when I will be a citizen. Because my

80 Interview with Ewa.
81 Interview with Alina, who was deported with her mother and brother to the Soviet Union. She came to Australia in 1970 with her mother and her husband, after long term settlement in Tanganyika and Kenya.
82 Interview with Krystyna.
83 Interview with Alina.
84 Interview with Elwira.
feeling will be closer to this country. If I am a citizen I belong to this country.85

Interestingly, Wanda, the only participant in the project who did not intend to take citizenship felt that "I imagine that if I decide to get citizenship it’s because I want to be part of Australia with my feelings and heart and everything". Having felt unwelcome in Australia, and unable to establish her new life due to changes in Australian immigration policy, she in turn held back from this kind of commitment.

Australian citizenship among all the women from each wave of migration signified a clear gain in personal security, in civil and economic rights, and a permanent place of belonging. Their experience of Australian citizenship has, however, been simultaneously an experience of their status as migrants and as women. They have interpreted its meaning according to both discourses of citizenship and nationality they experienced before arrival in Australia and their experiences of Australian government policy towards female migrants. Gender, however, appears to have been fundamental. Key duties of citizenship such as paid employment and paying taxation, military service and political participation were characteristically male rather than female activities. This may be why voluntary work was such a strong feature of their practice as citizens. It may also be why the taking of Australian citizenship mostly signified an emotional commitment of belonging to Australia, and an opportunity to resolve some of the complexities of national and personal identity. Citizenship viewed in this way constituted “some sort of a commitment” of real symbolic and personal meaning, despite their relative marginalisation from many of its formal duties. Significantly, however, and partly due to their status as women in the male-dominated Australian political community, Australian citizenship has rarely constituted an experience of political empowerment.

85 Interview with Edyta, a voluntary migrant who came to Western Australia in 1994, following her marriage to a “first wave” displaced person.
Conclusion

The context of this study was the extraordinary revival of interest in ideas of citizenship within both government and academic discourses in Australia. Both government and academic studies have warned of the consequences of political apathy and alienation and advocated the establishment of a revitalised model of "active citizenship". Moreover, some theorists, both in Australia and overseas, have highlighted the egalitarian potential of a revival of ideas associated with citizenship. Such a revival, therefore, appears to promise greater equality for marginalised groups such as Polish migrant women.

In this context, I wanted to ask Polish migrant women what they thought about citizenship in both Poland and Australia. There was, however, one nagging question: how could citizenship possibly matter to women surely dealing with more pressing issues? Why should they care about citizenship when they had experienced the incalculable losses of home, family and culture, and were struggling to create new lives for themselves and their families?

This study, and especially the interviewing project among thirty Polish women now settled in Australia, has confirmed for me the importance and complexities of citizenship. The interviews elicited life stories that showed how, at each stage of their lives, notions of citizenship have mattered. Ideas about citizenship have shaped the rights, freedoms, resources and opportunities to which these women have had access, and exerted a powerful impact on their personal pasts. Moreover, citizenship status has represented real rights and protections in both Poland and Australia.

When I began this project, I hoped that interviews with these women would provide new insights into dominant discourses of citizenship in both Poland and Australia. Citizenship does look different from their perspective. What surprised me was that Australian citizenship, even as it stands, looked so desirable to them. Accustomed to criticisms of civil rights as currently conceived, I had begun to wonder if
such rights were mere forms without much substance. For the post-War migrants, rendered so vulnerable by deprivation of their civil and even human rights, civil rights in Australia were of vital importance. For second and third-wave women, accustomed to the limitations on their civil rights under the Polish Communist regime, the difference Australian civil rights made to their quality of life was tangible. Economic rights, too, had a particular significance for these women. In Australia, some new discourses of citizenship have increasingly advocated the empowerment of the citizenry through the market. They have denigrated social rights as economic dependency. However, from the point of view of the women whom I interviewed, economic rights, and opportunities for a solid, reciprocal economic relationship with the state, have held great weight.

However, this study has also highlighted the ways in which citizenship is ultimately a highly ambivalent concept. Citizenship, as a political category, has historically been enmeshed in struggles for rights, equality, inclusion and empowerment. Citizenship may also legitimise inequality and exclusion, thereby entrenching it. Much of the recent citizenship literature has focused on the ways in which citizenship has either supported or undermined class inequality. However, citizenship has been a powerful factor in other forms of inequality. In particular, the status of citizenship has been said to confer an equality of civil, social and political rights upon its members. Almost all of the interviewees in this study, however, were citizens of both Poland and Australia, and in neither country did they exercise these rights on equal terms with men.

In both countries, notions of citizenship, and their characteristic rights and duties, were structurally male-centred. Carole Pateman has argued for the existence of a “sexual contract” within Western liberal democracies that assigns women a sexually specific status and sexually specific duties. This study has argued that a similar “sexual contract” has existed within Polish citizenship traditions and practices. In both Poland and Australia, women were simultaneously included and excluded on the basis of their capacity for motherhood. In Poland, although Polish women established other forms of citizenship activities, the dominant nationalist tradition venerated them primarily as mothers. National independence offered them the formal status of Polish citizens and
new political, civil, social and even cultural rights. The majority of women, however, remained subordinated as wives and mothers. Their new rights, moreover, were eroded by a shift to authoritarian government and disappeared with the end of national independence in World War II. The Polish Communist regime placed the equal participation of women as citizens at the heart of its programme. However, Communist discourses of female citizenship also defined women as citizens with a difference, with campaigns to raise the birthrate. Moreover, Polish women were frustrated by the limitations on their political and civil rights and finally by recurrent economic crises. The collapse of Communism brought new political and civil rights. However, women were even more firmly identified with motherhood in ways that cost them economic and reproductive rights. Once again, they were subordinated within new discourses of citizenship.

All of the participants in the interviewing project found that the citizenship bargain offered in Australia was also highly gendered. The key duties of formal citizenship were likewise characteristically male rather than female. Moreover, as in Poland, they were subordinated as women, with sexually specific status and duties bound up with motherhood. Second and third-wave women were surprised to find that, in many respects, they were less equal to men in Australia than they had been in Poland. Although some theorists and social movements have argued that reproductive capacities and duties should support, rather than diminish, female claims to equal rights and political empowerment, in both Poland and Australia, the exercise of these capacities has limited women's access to rights, ensured their subordination and entrenched their inequality as citizens.

Moreover, these women have not simply been included or excluded as women. This study has highlighted the ways in which categories of ethnicity and "race" have also been enmeshed with citizenship in both countries. Both Polish and Australian notions of citizenship emphasised citizenship as membership of an ethnic or national community. In Poland, while post-War women in this study were subordinated by gender discrimination, they also benefited from notions of citizenship as the exclusive right of ethnic Poles. In Australia, these same women were not discriminated against simply as women, but also as aliens, foreigners, migrants, other. While second and
third-wave women were treated more equally in this respect, whether this shift within Australian immigration policy can be maintained remains an open question. In theory, Australian citizenship has made a fundamental transition from an exclusive concept based on Anglo-Australian ethnicity to a more inclusive model of rights and duties. In practice, perhaps, it maintains both models in tension with one another.

Ultimately, neither Polish nor Australian notions of citizenship were able to resolve the conundrum of difference and equality. Citizenship, constructed upon the exclusion of female bodies, capacities and activities, could not simply then include women on equal terms. Citizenship founded upon a particular ethnicity both oppressed and excluded other ethnicities even when they were formally incorporated. For Polish women from all waves of migration, their experiences of citizenship in Australia has been of inequality, as much as equality, exclusion as much as inclusion. So far, Australian citizenship has been unable to encompass Polish women’s difference from Anglo-Australian men in ways that do not translate into subordination.

However, these women have not simply been acted upon. They have also acted. Post-War migrants did not simply accept the Australian citizenship bargain as it was offered to them. When they gained citizenship rights, they exercised them towards a model of equal rights, duties and participation, and established the notion of cultural rights at the heart of Australian citizenship. Second and third-wave women, dissatisfied with the limitations of Polish citizenship, sought a new citizenship bargain in Australia that would restore their civil and political rights and reestablish a reciprocal economic relationship with the state. Moreover, while participating in a range of voluntary activities as Australian citizens in their community, they have not discarded their national traditions or allowed the memory of their national and personal histories to be forgotten. Their work is not finished. As the Australian community debates questions of citizenship, such as how it can support female participation in paid employment or in the defence forces, as well as motherhood, they will contribute their unique perspectives. Polish women are already active citizens, and they have brought a rich culture, a remarkable personal and national history and proven capacity to survive and flourish to their new homeland.
Appendix: The Interviewing Project

1. THE PARTICIPANTS

All participants in the interviewing project were assured of their anonymity. They were told that their names and any other information that might identify them would not be used. Accordingly, they have been assigned fictitious names. All original tapes and edited transcripts of the interviews are retained by the author, with copies held by participants. See Chapter One, and especially pp. 14-16, for further information on the interviewing process.

Alina Alina was deported with her mother and brother to the Soviet Union. She came to Australia in 1970 with her mother and her husband, after long-term settlement in Tanganyika and Kenya. She was interviewed on 14 July 1998, when she was in her sixties. The transcript of this interview was corrected for grammar, at her request.

Anna Anna was a voluntary migrant who came to Australia to join her daughter a political refugee, in 1996. She was interviewed on 9 July 1998, when she was in her seventies.

Beata Beata arrived as a political refugee with her husband and two daughters in 1985. She was interviewed on 11 October 1999, when she was in her forties.

Danuta Danuta was born in Australia in 1950. Her mother, a displaced person deported to Germany, became pregnant on the journey to Australia. Danuta was interviewed on 13 May 1998.
Edyta

Edyta arrived in Australia as a voluntary migrant in 1984, following her marriage to a first-wave displaced person. She was interviewed on 12 June 1998, aged in her fifties.

Elwira

Elwira was deported to the Soviet Union with her family. She came to Australia with her husband in 1962, after long-term settlement in Tanganyika and Rhodesia. She was interviewed on 10 July 1998, when she was in her sixties.

Ewa

Ewa stayed in Australia as a “voluntary” migrant with her husband after they became stranded during a short holiday from work in Indonesia in 1962. They wanted to return to Poland but were unable to do so. She was interviewed on 21 December 1999, when she was in her seventies.

Franciszka

Franciszka was deported to Germany and used for forced labour. She arrived in Australia with her husband in 1950. She was interviewed on 13 June 1998, when she was in her seventies. The transcript of this interview was edited to delete some material and correct her grammar, at her request.

Gizela

Gizela came to Australia in 1964 in order to marry a displaced person who had been deported to Germany. She was interviewed on 16 July 1998, when she was in her seventies.

Gutka

Gutka was deported with her mother to the Soviet Union. She arrived in Australia with her mother in 1950. She was interviewed on 4 June 1998, when she was in her sixties.

Jadwiga

Jadwiga arrived in Australia as a political refugee with her husband and son in 1983, after short-term settlement in Spain. She was interviewed on 14 April 1999, when she was in her fifties. The transcript of her interview was corrected for grammar at her request.
Jana arrived in Australia as a political refugee with her husband in 1982, after short-term settlement in West Germany. She was interviewed on 8 October 1999, when she was in her thirties.

Jasia arrived in Australia officially classified as a political refugee, with her husband in 1981, after spending a short time in England. She considered herself to be a voluntary migrant rather than a political refugee. She was interviewed on 15 June 1998, when she was in her forties.

Jolanta arrived in Australia as a voluntary migrant with her husband in 1987. She was interviewed on 28 December 1999, when she was in her thirties.

Kalina arrived in Australia as a voluntary migrant in 1993 after marrying a second-wave political refugee. She had previously emigrated to Canada in 1986, but had returned to Poland. She was interviewed on 21 September 1999, when she was in her thirties.

Kamilla arrived in Australia as a political refugee with her husband and child in 1981. She was interviewed on 7 April 1999, when she was in her fifties.

Kassia arrived in Australia as a political refugee with her husband and two children in 1982. She was interviewed on 16 December 1998, when she was in her fifties.

Katy arrived in Australia as a political refugee with her husband and son in 1981, after short-term settlement in Libya. She was interviewed on 23 February 1999, when she was in her fifties.
Krystyna

Krystyna was deported to the Soviet Union with both parents. She came to Australia in 1986, after long-term settlement in England, to be reunited with her daughter, a political refugee. She was interviewed on 21 July 1998, when she was in her seventies.

Lila

Lila arrived in Australia as a political refugee with her husband and son in 1980. She was interviewed on 21 July 1998, when she was in her forties.

Maria

Maria was deported to the Soviet Union with her family. She arrived in Australia as a voluntary migrant with her husband and three children in 1983, after long-term settlement in England. She was interviewed on 13 October 1999, when she was in her fifties.

Natia

Natia arrived in Australia as a political refugee in 1981. She was interviewed on 17 September 1999, when she was in her forties.

Olesia

Olesia was deported to Germany and used for forced labour after the Warsaw Uprising of 1944. She arrived in Australia with her husband in Australia in 1949. She was interviewed on 11 June 1998, when she was in her seventies.

Paulina

Paulina arrived in Australia as a political refugee with her husband and child in 1987, after a short stay in Austria. She was interviewed on 9 April 1998, when she was in her fifties.

Petra

Petra was deported to the Soviet Union with her family. She arrived in Australia with her mother and siblings in 1950. She was interviewed on 12 May 1999, when she was in her sixties.

Stefania

Stefania arrived as a political refugee with her husband and daughter in 1989. She was interviewed on 6 October 1999, when she was in her fifties.
Sylwia  
Sylwia was deported to the Soviet Union with her mother. She arrived in Australia with her mother in 1950. She was interviewed on 14 June 1998, when she was in her sixties.

Teresa  
Teresa arrived as a political refugee with her parents in 1989. She was interviewed on 6 October 1999, when she was seventeen.

Walentyna  
Walentyna arrived in Australia as a political refugee with her husband and two children in 1989. She was interviewed on 14 May 1999, when she was in her forties.

Wanda  
Wanda came to Australia as a voluntary migrant with her Australian husband in 1997. She was interviewed on 21 May 1998, when she was in her thirties.
2. THE CONSENT FORM

"Citizenship, Gender and Nationality: Polish Migrants in Western Australia, 1946-1996"

Consent Form

The findings of this study will be reported in a doctoral thesis by Margot Clifford, at the Department of History at the University of Western Australia, and may also be published. Interview content will be quoted by Margot Clifford in these contexts, but the names of participants, and any other information which might identify them, will not be used.

The contents of the questionnaire are intended to determine how representative the participant might be of other women from her ethnic group. Information from the questionnaires will be kept completely confidential to Margot Clifford and to Dr. Samina Yasmeen at the Department of Political Science at the University of Western Australia. Information which might identify participants will not be used.

A cassette tape of the interview will be provided to participants within 21 days of the interview, and before any publication. Participants may withdraw their consent to the use of any particular questionnaire of interview content at any time without prejudice in any way. In such a case, if the participant wishes, all records of such material will be destroyed. Participants are also entirely free to withdraw their consent to participate in this study at any time without prejudice in any way. In such a case, if the participant wishes, all records of the questionnaire and the interview will be destroyed.

I, ____________________________, agree to participate in this study, subject to the above conditions. I have read these conditions, and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.

I agree/do not agree that my interview may be taped.

Participant ____________________________ Date ____________________________
**Interview Guide: Deportees to the Soviet Union**

**Life in Poland**

- Which part of Poland does your family come from? What work did they do in Poland? How old were you when you left?
- What do you remember about life in Poland before the War?
  - What was your family like?
- What sort of schools did you go to?
  - The same the whole way through?
  - Single sex school or mixed?
  - Boys and girls take different subjects then?
- Were you ever a member of organisations like the Polish Scouts?
  - What do you remember about the start of the War? What were the biggest changes in Poland that you remember?
  - Could you still go to school?
- Did you know why you were taken to the Soviet Union? Where were you taken?
- Can you tell me what happened to you there?
  - Can you describe what life was like there? What did you do there?
  - Were you able to keep your Polish citizenship in the Soviet Union? Did you take Soviet citizenship? What did this mean to you?
Settlement in Africa

- How did you come to be in Africa – can you tell me about that?
- How do you think your experiences before you arrived in Africa affected you?
- Can you tell me what life was like in the camps in Africa? How old were you when you left?
  - What sorts of things did you learn there?
  - Was it mostly women? What difference did that make?
  - What sort of community was created there?

Arrival in Australia

- How did you come to Australia?
- Were you classified as a displaced person? What do you remember about the process of applying to come to Australia?
  - Did you know what the selection criteria were?
- Did you think that you would stay in Australia?
- Why did you think Australia wanted to take migrants?
- Did you arrive with any members of your family?

Impact of Cultural Policies

- Where did you live when you first came to Australia? What was it like?
- What work did you do when you first arrived? If at school, tell me about your school days in Australia?
- Do you remember you/your family receiving any help to adjust to a new culture?
- Do you remember any contact with organisations like the Good Neighbour Council?
  - What did it try to do, what was it like?
- Did you have particular goals that were important to you at the beginning?
• Did you speak English when you first came to Australia? Did you get any help with English? What impact did language issues have on you?

• What did “assimilation” mean to you? Does it still mean the same thing? What do you think “multiculturalism” means? Has it changed anything for migrants?

• Did you feel accepted in Australia?

• Were Australians friendly? Were you ever invited to their homes? Did you want to be invited?

• Did you/your family have any Australian friends?

**Adult Life/Employment**

• When did you marry? How did this change your life?
  
  - What sorts of differences did you notice between Australian families and your own family?
  
  - Do you still notice these differences?

• Do you think you have raised your children differently to the way your parents raised you? In what ways?

• What do you think of your working life? What sorts of jobs have you had? How important has employment been to you?

• Have you ever been unemployed? What was it like?

• Have you ever collected welfare benefits or a pension? Do you think they should be affected by being married?

• Have you ever taken a break from employment? Why/Why not?

• What arrangements did you make for children? Did your husband also look after the children? Did you receive any other help?

• When did you retire? Was it at the time you wanted to?
Specific Citizenship Questions

- Are you an Australian citizen? When did you take citizenship?
  - How soon after you arrived? How soon after you were eligible?
- What made you decide to take/not take or delay/not delay taking citizenship?
- How did you feel about your Polish citizenship at this time? Were you still a Polish citizen?
- Can you tell me about your Australian citizenship ceremony? How did you feel about it? What did it mean to you?
- Can you tell me what you think the main rights and duties of an Australian citizen are?
  - What do you think of when you think of the word “citizen”?
  - Are there other aspects that should be included in the ways to be a good citizen?
  - Where do you think you picked up these ideas?
  - Have these ideas changed since arriving in Australia, or over time? How? Why?
- Have you ever been asked to serve on a jury? Did you? What were your impressions?
- What do you think about the defence of Australia and citizenship? Does defending Australia apply to women? Were women ever soldiers in Poland?
- Do you think that to be an Australian citizen is the same as to be an Australian? What is the difference between them?
- Do you feel “Australian”? Do you feel “Polish”?
  - Just think for a moment about ideas like “Australian” and “Polish”. What sorts of ideas do you associate with them?
  - What makes you feel particularly Australian or particularly Polish?
- Do you think other Australians accept you as an Australian? At work? Socially? How and why “yes” or “no”?
- What nationalities and backgrounds are the people you associate with?
Participation

- Do you belong to any clubs or organisations? What motivates you to get involved?

- Have you ever helped to organise them? Do you feel that they achieve their aims?

- Have you ever done any voluntary work, or been involved in a community project? What was that like?

- Are you involved in a church? How important is the church to you? Do men and women have different roles in your church?

- Have you ever been involved in a women's organisation? What was it like?

- Have you had contact with ethnic organisations, or the Ethnic Community Council? What do you think of them? What do they try to do?

Politics

- Do you feel that you understand the Australian political system? How do you feel about it?

- How do you feel about elections and voting? Do you feel that you can influence the system or the government?

- Have you ever been involved in politics? Why/why not? What was your experience?

- Are there political issues you are especially interested in? Do you discuss politics much?

- What do you think of women who are involved in politics? Do you think women have a different idea of how politics should be than men do?

Is there anything else you would like to add or say?
Interview Guide: Deportees to Germany

Life in Poland

• Which part of Poland does your family come from? What work did they do in Poland? How old were you when you left?

• What do you remember about life in Poland before the War?
  - What was your family like?

• What sort of schools did you go to?
  - The same the whole way through?
  - Single sex school or mixed?
  - Boys and girls take different subjects then?

• Were you ever a member of organisations like the Polish Scouts?
  - What do you remember about the start of the War? What were the biggest changes in Poland that you remember?
  - Could you still go to school?

• Did you know why you were taken to Germany? Where were you taken?
  - Can you describe what life was like there? What did you do there?
  - Were you able to keep your Polish citizenship in Germany? Did you take Germany citizenship? What did this mean to you?

Arrival in Australia

• What happened to you between being in Germany and coming to Australia? Where were you and how long for?

• How did you come to arrive in Australia?

• Were you classified as a displaced person? What do you remember about the process of applying to come to Australia
  - Did you know what the selection criteria were?
• Did you think that you would stay in Australia?

• Why did you think Australia wanted to take migrants?

• Did you arrive with any members of your family?

Impact of Cultural Policies

• Where did you live when you first came to Australia? What was it like?

• What work did you do when you first arrived? If at school, tell me about your school days in Australia

• Do you remember you/your family receiving any help to adjust to a new culture?

• Do you remember any contact with organisations like the Good Neighbour Council?
  - What did it try to do, what was it like?

• Did you have particular goals that were important to you at the beginning?

• Did you speak English when you first came to Australia? Did you get any help with English? What impact did language issues have on you?

• What did “assimilation” mean to you? Does it still mean the same thing? What do you think “multiculturalism” means? Has it changed anything for migrants?

• Did you feel accepted in Australia?

• Were Australians friendly? Were you ever invited to their homes? Did you want to be invited?

• Did you/your family have any Australian friends?

Adult Life/Employment

• When did you marry? How did this change your life?
  - What sorts of differences did you notice between Australian families and your own family?
  - Do you still notice these differences?
• Do you think you have raised your children differently to the way your parents raised you? In what ways?

• What do you think of your working life? What sorts of jobs have you had? How important has employment been to you?

• Have you ever been unemployed? What was it like?

• Have you ever collected welfare benefits or a pension? Do you think they should be affected by being married?

• Have you ever taken a break from employment? Why/Why not?

• What arrangements did you make for children? Did your husband also look after the children? Did you receive any other help?

• When did you retire? Was it at the time you wanted to?

Specific Citizenship Questions

• Are you an Australian citizen? When did you take citizenship?
  - How soon after you arrived? How soon after you were eligible?

• What made you decide to take/not take or delay/not delay taking citizenship?

• How did you feel about your Polish citizenship at this time? Were you still a Polish citizen?

• Can you tell me about your Australian citizenship ceremony? How did you feel about it? What did it mean to you?

• Can you tell me what you think the main rights and duties of an Australian citizen are?
  - What do you think of when you think of the word “citizen”?
  - Are there other aspects that should be included in the ways to be a good citizen?
  - Where do you think you picked up these ideas?
  - Have these ideas changed since arriving in Australia, or over time? How? Why?

• Have you ever been asked to serve on a jury? Did you? What were your impressions?
• What do you think about the defence of Australia and citizenship? Does defending Australia apply to women? Were women ever soldiers in Poland?

• Do you think that to be an Australian citizen is the same as to be an Australian? What is the difference between them?

• Do you feel “Australian”? Do you feel “Polish”?

- Just think for a moment about ideas like “Australian” and “Polish”. What sorts of ideas do you associate with them?

- What makes you feel particularly Australian or particularly Polish?

• Do you think other Australians accept you as an Australian? At work? Socially? How and why “yes” or “no”?

• What nationalities and backgrounds are the people you associate with?

Participation

• Do you belong to any clubs or organisations? What motivates you to get involved?

• Have you ever helped to organise them? Do you feel that they achieve their aims?

• Have you ever done any voluntary work, or been involved in a community project? What was that like?

• Are you involved in a church? How important is the church to you? Do men and women have different roles in your church?

• Have you ever been involved in a women’s organisation? What was it like?

• Have you had contact with ethnic organisations, or the Ethnic Community Council? What do you think of them? What do they try to do?

Politics

• Do you feel that you understand the Australian political system? How do you feel about it?

• How do you feel about elections and voting? Do you feel that you can influence the system or the government? Do you feel that you can influence the system or the government?
• Have you ever been involved in politics? Why/why not? What was your experience?

• Are there political issues you are especially interested in? Do you discuss politics much?

• What do you think of women who are involved in politics? Do you think women have a different idea of how politics should be than men do?

Is there anything else you would like to add or say?
Interview Guide: Groups 2 and 3

Initial Immigration

- Can you tell me why you came to Australia? Do you plan to stay?
- Which part of Poland are you from?
- How do you feel about being in Australia? Are these feelings changing?

Impact of Cultural Policies

- Do you have a job here? Is it the same as you did in Poland? Why/why not?
- What kind of help have you received to adjust to a different culture or just to settle in?
- Are Australians friendly? Are you ever invited to their homes? Do you want to be invited?
- What sorts of differences do you notice between Australians and Poles?
- Have you heard words like “assimilation” or “multiculturalism”? What do they mean to you?

Life in Poland

- What was life like in Poland when you were growing up?
- What kinds of schools did you go to?
  - The same the whole way through?
  - Single sex school or mixed?
  - Boys and girls take different subjects then?
- Were you ever a member of the Polish Scouts or something similar? What was it like?
- Do you remember what rights you had in Poland?
• How much freedom did you have? Could you say and do what you liked? Could you move around freely?

• Can you tell me about what martial law was like?

**Adult Life/Employment**

• When did you marry? Have children? How did this change your life?

• How important has having a job been to you?

• Have you ever been unemployed? In Poland? In Australia? What was that like?

• Have you ever taken a break from employment?

• Have you ever collected welfare benefits? What do you think of the welfare system here? Is it similar to Poland’s?

• Do you think welfare benefits should be affected by being married? Would you prefer to be treated as an individual or as part of an economic unit with others?

• What arrangements did women make in Poland when they had children? Did they receive help from the government? Did they keep working?

• Did your partner also look after the children?

• Do you think Australians and Poles have different ideas about families? What differences do you notice?

• How are the lives of women similar and different in Poland and Australia?

• Is it important to you to have your own income and another role outside the family?

• Do you think you have raised your children differently to the way your parents raised you? In what ways?

**Specific Citizenship Questions**

• Have you taken/plan to take Australian citizenship? What would prompt you to do that?

• Did you keep your Polish citizenship? How did you feel about that?
• Do you think that citizenship meant something different in Poland?
• Can you tell me what you think the main rights and duties of an Australian citizen are?
  - What do you think of when you think of the word “citizen”?
  - Are there other aspects that should be included in the ways to be a good citizen?
  - Where do you think you picked up these ideas?
  - Have these ideas changed since arriving in Australia, or over time? How? Why?
• Can you tell me about your Australian citizenship ceremony? How did you feel about it? What did it mean to you?
• Have you ever been asked to serve on a jury? Did you? What were your impressions?
• What do you think about the defence of Australia and citizenship? Does defending Australia apply to women? Were women ever soldiers in Poland?
• Do you think that to be an Australian citizen is the same as to be an Australian? What is the difference between them?
• Do you feel “Australian”? Do you feel “Polish”?
  - Just think for a moment about ideas like “Australian” and “Polish”. What sorts of ideas do you associate with them?
  - What makes you feel particularly Australian or particularly Polish?
• Do you think other Australians accept you as an Australian? At work? Socially? How and why “yes” or “no”?
• What nationalities and backgrounds are the people you associate with?

Participation

• Do you belong to any clubs or organisations? What motivates you to get involved?
• Have you ever helped to organise them? Do you feel that they achieve their aims?
• Have you ever done any voluntary work, or been involved in a community project? What was that like?

• Are you involved in a church? How important is the church to you? Do men and women have different roles in your church?

• Have you ever been involved in a women's organisation? What was it like?

• Have you had contact with ethnic organisations, or the Ethnic Community Council? What do you think of them? What do they try to do?

Politics

• What was the political system like under Communism? How did you feel about it?

• What were elections in Poland like? Were they similar to the way they are in Australia?

• How did things change when the system fell? How do you feel about it now?

• Have you ever joined a political party or been involved in politics? Why/why not? What was your experience?

• Are there political issues you are especially interested in? Do you discuss politics much?

• Do you feel that you understand the Australian political system? What do you think of it?

• Did you feel that you would be able to influence the system or the government in Poland? Do you feel you could in Australia?

• What do you think of women who are involved in politics? Do you think women have a different idea of how politics should be than men do?

Is there anything else you would like to add or say?
4. THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Personal Information

1. Person’s age last birthday
   Please specify: _______________
   (if more comfortable for interviewee, give a range; eg. 16-20 or 35-40 etc.)

2. Person’s present marital status
   () Never married
   () Widowed
   () Divorced
   () Separated but not divorced
   () Married

3. Year of Marriage
   () Please specify: _______________

4. Person’s address one year ago
   () Same as present
   () If elsewhere in Australia, please specify:
   Town/city: _______________________
   State/Territory: _________________
   Postcode ________________________
   () Other country, please specify: _______________

5. Person’s address five years ago
   () Same as present
   () Same as in question 3
   () If elsewhere in Australia please specify:
   Town/city: _______________________
   State/Territory: _________________
   Postcode ________________________
   () Other country, please specify: _______________


6. Person's religious denominations

( ) Christian
( ) Muslim
( ) Jewish
( ) Bahá'í
( ) Buddhist
( ) Hindu

( ) Other – please specify

( ) No religion

7. Country in which person was born

Please specify: ________________________________

8. Country in which mother was born

Please specify: ________________________________

9. Country in which father was born

Please specify: ________________________________

10. Language other than English spoken at home

( ) No

( ) Yes. Please specify:

1) ________________________________

2) ________________________________

3) ________________________________

11. Level of English: Spoken:

( ) Very well

( ) Well

( ) Not well

( ) Not at all

Written:

( ) Very well

( ) Well

( ) Not well

( ) Not at all

Reading:

( ) Very well

( ) Well

( ) Not well

( ) Not at all
12. Is the person attending a school or any other educational institution?
   () No > go to Q 14
   () Yes – full time student
   () Yes – part time student

13. Type of educational institution being attended
   Secondary school
      () Government
      () Private – specify: ____________________________
   Tertiary institution
      () Technical or further educational institution
         (including TAFE College)
      () University or other higher educational institution
      () Other educational institution
         please specify: ____________________________

14. Age of person when they left secondary school
   () Still at secondary school
   () Never went to school
   () Please specify: ____________________________

15. Has the person completed a trade certificate or any other educational qualification since leaving school?
   () No > go to Q 20
   () No, still studying for first qualification > go Q 20
   () Yes, trade certificate/apprenticeship
   () Yes, other qualification

16. Highest qualification the person has completed since leaving school
   Full name of qualification: ____________________________

17. Main field of study for person’s highest qualification completed
   Field of study: ____________________________
18. Institution at which the person's highest qualification was completed

Name of institution: __________________________

19. Year person completed their highest qualification

Please specify: __________________________

20. How many children has the person ever had?

Please specify: __________________________

21. Year first child was born?

Please specify: __________________________

22. Ages of all children?

Please specify: __________________________

23. Are you guardian to any children other than your own?

Please specify ages and relationship to them: __________________________

24. How many people live in your household?

Please specify numbers: __________________________

25. What is your relationship to the people living in your household?

Please specify: __________________________
26. What is the gross income (including pensions and allowances) that the person usually receives each week from all sources?

( ) $1500 or more per week ($78,000 or more per year)
( ) $1000 - $1499 per week ($52,000 - $77,999 per year)
( ) $800 - $999 per week ($41,600 - $51,999 per year)
( ) $700 - $799 per week ($36,400 - $41,599 per year)
( ) $600 - $699 per week ($31,200 - $36,399 per year)
( ) $500 - $599 per week ($26,000 - $31,199 per year)
( ) $400 - $499 per week ($20,800 - $25,999 per year)
( ) $300 - $399 per week ($15,600 - $20,799 per year)
( ) $200 - $299 per week ($10,400 - $15,599 per year)
( ) $160 - $199 per week ($8,320 - $10,399 per year)
( ) $120 - $159 per week ($6,240 - $8,319 per year)
( ) $80 - $119 per week ($4,160 - $6,239 per year)
( ) $40 - $79 per week ($2,080 - $4,159 per year)
( ) $1 - $39 per week ($1 - $2,079 per year)
( ) Nil income
( ) Negative income

27. What is your employment status?

( ) Full time employment
( ) Part time employment
( ) Casual employment
( ) Unemployed
28. Type of employment you have:
   ( ) Work for payment or profit
   ( ) Unpaid work in a family business
   ( ) Other unpaid work: please specify:

29. Please identify your employment status:
   ( ) A wage or salary earner
   ( ) A helper not receiving wages

   Conducting own business in a limited liability company
   ( ) without employees
   ( ) with employees

   Conducting own business which is not a Limited liability company
   ( ) without employees
   ( ) with employees

30. What is the person’s main occupation?

31. What are the main tasks the person herself usually performs in that occupation?

32. How many hours does the person work in all jobs?

   Please specify:
Select Bibliography

The key primary sources for this study are the interviews with thirty Polish women now settled in Western Australia. Please see the Appendix to this thesis for further details of these interviews.

PRIMARY SOURCES

Australian Government Publications


**General**


SECONDARY SOURCES

The Polish Context


**General**


Long, Jane, Gothard, Jan and Brash, Helen (eds), *Forging Identities: Bodies, Gender and Feminist History*, Nedlands: University of Western Australia Press, 1997.


