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**SECURITISATION AND/OR WESTERNISATION:
DOMINANT DISCOURSES OF AUSTRALIAN VALUES AND THE
IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHER EDUCATION**

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ABSTRACT

Debates concerning the nature, purpose and importance of Australian values have resurfaced in Australia following the election of the Liberal-led Coalition government in September 2013. Two dominant discourses on Australian values have emerged within recent government rhetoric and public policy, both of which have included a demand for changes to how Australian values are taught and encountered within Australian education and schooling. In our analysis we suggest that the two dominant discourses, one focusing on securitisation and one on westernisation, have to this point operated separately, but have both focused on narrow, fixed and forced understandings of Australian values. Exploring the key themes of these two discourses, some important issues for teacher educators are set out, including the need to mediate these discourses against research evidence which suggests the importance of holistic and co-operative pedagogical relationships based on trust and humility for effective values education. Though our analysis focuses on the Australian context, the arguments made are likely to be of interest elsewhere given current debates about national values in education across a range of jurisdictions.

Keywords: Australian values, Securitisation, Westernisation, Teacher education

INTRODUCTION

In May 2015 the then Australian Prime Minister, Tony Abbott (2015), wrote an opinion piece in the Daily Telegraph calling for a ‘national conversation’ on what it means to be an Australian. The catalyst for the call was increasing tensions within Australia regarding radicalisation, the threat of terror, and Australian citizens (both single and dual nationals) fighting overseas in support of Islamic extremists. The call included some significant claims, not least Abbott’s positioning of Australian citizenship as a privilege that should be matched by an abiding commitment to our country’. Abbott situated the need for a conversation against ‘a grave concern’ that Australia ‘is being challenged by people who reject our values and who are prepared to resort to violence against us’, adding that ‘Australians are angry that this threat can come from people who have enjoyed our hospitality and generosity’. To support the conversation Abbott highlighted the government’s investment in counterterrorism capabilities in the fight against what he termed home-grown terrorism and made clear his intention that ‘an alternative narrative based on Australian values’ needed to be provided. In making these statements Abbott posited the following two rhetorical questions: ‘Are the responsibilities of Australian citizenship well enough known and understood?’ and ‘Do we sufficiently promote the value of citizenship, particularly among young people?’. Both of these questions raise particular and significant issues regarding the place and role education and schooling in promoting Australian values and preventing radicalisation and extremism.

The statements made by Abbott stand in some contrast to recent curricular debates in Australia. Critical of the content of the first ever Federal Australian curriculum introduced under the Labor governments of the late 2000s and early 2010s, on their election in September 2013 the Liberal-led Coalition government established a review of the curriculum,

to be led by two right-leaning conservatives, Kevin Donnelly of the Education Standards Institute think-tank and Professor Ken Wiltshire. The rationale for the review involved a number of assertions made by key members of the Australian government, including claims by Abbott and his then Minister for Education, Christopher Pyne, that the curriculum placed too little focus on Western civilisation and “Judeo-Christian values”. In October 2014 the final report of the review included a key recommendation calling for a greater focus on Western civilisation and the Judeo-Christian basis of Australian values.

Australian values have, then, re-emerged as of central concern to Australian politicians and public policy commentators in recent years, but have done so in different ways. In the analysis presented here we are interested in the way in which there appear to be two dominant discourses concerning Australian values and education that have largely operated in parallel rather than explicitly interconnecting. These discourses are located within an Australian context which is increasingly characterised by its diversity (nearly half of Australian citizens are either born overseas or have at least one parent born overseas) and which, as with many other comparable nations, has a recent history of trying to accommodate heterogeneity with some form of shared, common national identity (Moran, 2011). In the sections which follow we argue that the two discourses alluded to in this introduction have differently positioned Australian values within education and schooling, the first in terms of securitisation and the second in terms of westernisation. Drawing predominantly on political and educational discourse in the two years since the Liberal-led Coalition government was formed, we argue that the parallel operation of these discourses runs the risk of confusing educational goals and relationships pertaining to the teaching of Australian values. In England, for example, Arthur (2015, 324) has raised issues with the interpretation of promoting British values in schools within the school inspectorate (the Office for Standards

in Education, or OfSTED) whereby ‘there was a tendency to equate failure to promote British values with a failure to identify ‘extremism’’. Clearly, the conflation of different aims and goals for the promotion of values in schools raises important tensions, particularly when different discourses operate in tandem and uncritically. In the final section, we examine some implications of current discourses on Australian values for teacher education. Though our analysis focuses on the Australian context, the arguments made are likely to be of interest elsewhere given current debates about national values in education across a range of jurisdictions, including England, Scotland, the United States and Canada.

AUSTRALIAN VALUES: SECURITISATION AND WESTERNISATION?

As was suggested in the introduction, the call for a national conversation on Australian values was a direct response to the identified threat of terrorism (including so-termed home-grown terrorism, extremism and radicalisation). These debates are not new within the Australian context. Following the July 7th 2005 bombings in London, for example, the then Prime Minister John Howard held a summit of Muslim leaders to produce a Statement of Principles through which Muslim communities would commit to ‘resist radicalisation’ and to ‘pursue a ‘moderate’ Islam’ (Aly and Green, 2008). Nevertheless, it was noteworthy that the 2015 conversation (termed Australian citizenship – your right, your responsibility) was established and conducted by the Department of Immigration and Border Security. The discussion paper which accompanied the launch of the conversation includes the normative notion that commitment to Australian values should be the priority for all citizens, regardless of whatever other commitments they might have. The paper asserts that ‘regardless of our heritage, as citizens, our first duty is to Australia’ (Department of Immigration and Border

Security, 2015), while a large proportion of it focuses on the challenges of citizenship in relation to terrorism. Three of the paper's six sections focus on terrorism explicitly: 'the obligations of citizenship in an age of home-grown terrorism', 'revocation of citizenship for dual nationals *engaged in terrorism*' and 'suspension of privileges for Australian citizens *engaged in terrorism*' (DIBS, 2015; emphasis in original). While its focus is much broader than schools alone, the conversation includes a focus on the place of civics programmes in schools.

This positioning of education and schools within debates concerning radicalisation and terrorism in Australia has been common place within political discourse in Australia over the last two years. As the national conversation illustrates, a significant feature of such discourse has been the central and extensive role of those outside of education, and in particular individuals and groups connected to border/security departments and organisations. In this environment schools are seen increasingly as sites of intelligence gathering, with a 'blurring between intelligence, security and education' (Gearon, 2015, 272). In such conditions, national values become securitised and positioned, at least in part, as providing some form of protection of national security.

The increasing securitisation of Australian values in relation to education has manifested, at times explicitly and at others implicitly, in the idea that teaching, promoting and inculcating Australian values might act as a bulwark against radicalisation and violent extremism. In this securitising context, schools are viewed as being 'front and centre' of identifying and managing those at risk of radicalisation (Bergin et al., 2015, 53). While the existing challenges for Australian schools in dealing with radicalisation and extremism are somewhat contested (see Cook, 2015, for example), they are frequently cited with hyperbolic

language and are often made without real supporting evidence. The Deputy Director of the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, Anthony Bergin (2015; emphasis added), for example, has claimed that there are ‘growing numbers of schools grappling with the radicalisation of students’, and has claimed that there is a ‘startling speed at which ever younger wannabe jihadis are radicalising’. Bergin further claims that education authorities have ‘been reluctant to admit that there’s an issue with extremism in schools’. Such sentiments have also been picked up by the mainstream media, with headlines employing terms such as ‘jihadi watch’ (Crawford, 2015) and ‘schoolyard terror blitz’ (Meers, 2015) becoming common place in Australian newspapers. These headlines come in the context of a statement from the Federal Police Commissioner in August 2015 that there were ‘around ten’ school aged children engaged in community programmes aimed at preventing violent extremism (ABC, 2015). While not wishing to diminish the seriousness of children at risk from violent extremism, the extent of concern should be put into perspective given that there are approximately 3.5 million school-aged children enrolled in school (ABS, 2011) and also by the far greater rates of children and communities affected by other concerns, such as domestic violence (Richards, 2011) or poverty (ACSS, 2014). Clearly, concerns about radicalisation and extremism are not unfounded, but there is a tension here about the proportionality of rhetoric and language being used within, and applied to, educational spaces.

The types of rhetoric cited above are indicative of the way in which those with expertise in security have directly involved themselves in educational matters, including curriculum content. For example, in their report *Gen Y Jihadists: Preventing Radicalisation in Australia* (Bergin et al., 2015, 53), the Australian Strategic Policy Institute argue that the question of ‘what schools teach’ and ‘how they manage at-risk students’ is increasingly significant. The authors of the report continue: ‘on the curriculum front... there’s surely a

case to start discussing Australia's contemporary role in the Middle East – perhaps as a follow-on to studies on Gallipoli, which was also a key strategic challenge a century ago'. Referencing the History curriculum, and in particular Australia's place in the modern world, the suggestion is made that the focus 'should be broadened so that students can access balanced information on the Middle East and terrorism, rather than relying on radical online material' (Bergin, et al., 2015: 53; emphasis added). This latter assertion makes a number of assumptions, namely that teachers will be able to provide a balanced representation of the Middle East and terrorism (whatever that might mean) and that there are sufficient number of students relying on radical online material to validate the suggested changes to schools' curriculum. In addition, given evidence which suggests that teachers often find handling controversial and sensitive political issues challenging and frequently avoid such issues as a result (Oulton, 2004; Keating et al, 2010), it is likely to be the case that many teachers are not confident or comfortable enough to teach explicitly about representations of Islam in a balanced and informed manner.

In fact, there are few recent professional development and training resources for schools and teachers to support their teaching about Australian values in this area. In September 2015 the Minister for Counter-Terrorism, Michael Keenan, issued an information kit to raise issues around radicalisation and extremism as part of the Living Safe Together: Helping Communities Tackle Violent Extremism initiative. The kit defines radicalisation as occurring when 'a person's thinking and behaviour become significantly different from how most of the members of their society and community view social issues and participate politically' (Australian Government, 2015a, 1). In differentiating between radicalisation and violent extremism, the materials recognise that radicalisation 'is not necessarily a bad thing and does not mean these people will become violent', and that it is when 'a person or group

decides that fear, terror and violence are justified to achieve ideological, political or social change, and then acts accordingly' that 'violent extremism' occurs. The reasons as to why young Australians might radicalise to the extent of engaging or seeking to engage in violent extremism are multifarious, and are set out as including vulnerability and indoctrination. As Sieckelinck, Kaulingfreks, and De Winter (2015: 332) highlight however, there are some concerns with characterising young people with 'radicalised sympathies' in totalising ways as either 'victims' or 'villains'. The significant challenge here is that when young people are viewed as 'victim' an important understanding of the agency and commitment of individuals can be neglected (Sieckelinck, Kaulingfreks, and De Winter, 2015). Similarly, when young people with radical sympathies are viewed as 'villains' (real or potential), the educational relationship between teacher and student becomes blurred, carrying with it the danger that it collapses into surveillance in a way that might undermine trust, care and compassion. Such considerations are educationally relevant and, in turn, are likely to add to the complexity for teachers in comprehending how the securitisation of Australian values may change their role, practice and, crucially, their relationships with students.

Notably, a booklet entitled Preventing Violent Extremism and Radicalisation in Australia (Australian Government, 2015b) comprises a core part of the Living Safe Together kit, and includes a range of case studies of extremism (for example, white nationalists, Islamic extremists, environmental activists) as well as expert commentaries. The intention of the booklet is seemingly to provide schools with information about how to identify extremism. In the week following, however, the issuing of the resource to schools one of the experts cited in the booklet, Emeritus Professor Gary Bouma (quoted in Safi, 2015), spoke publically to clarify that he had contributed to the resource in the belief that it would be used for training sessions for community leaders with the aim of raising awareness 'of the

background of social and cultural factors that lead in very rare cases to radicalisation’.

Bouma raised his concern that the issuing of the resource should have been accompanied by training ‘in how to use it and how not to abuse it ... to simply throw it out there was not the intention’.

Significantly for our analysis here, within the kit violent extremism is juxtaposed with Australia’s ‘core values and principles, including human rights, the rule of law, democracy, equal opportunity and freedom’ (Australian Government, 2015b: 1). The educational implications of this are noteworthy, particularly with reference to values education. On the one hand teachers are expected to cultivate values, something which evidence suggests requires developing positive relationships and conducive, supportive learning environments (ESA, 2010; Lovat, 2010; Brady, 2011; Lovat et al. 2011; Mergler and Spooner-Lane, 2012). On the other hand, and simultaneously, teachers are in effect becoming security officials, expected to identify and report on students. As Arthur (2015) has suggested in relation to the “Trojan Horse” affair in England, recognition of the public nature of education and values requires us to think carefully about how schools are positioned within, and as active members of, the various communities they serve. Moreover, schools are not the only, or even the most important, organisation involved in monitoring and challenging radicalisation. Parents, families, faith-based groups and a range of other community-based organisations also play a significant role. We return to these issues in relation to teacher education in the final section.

As Bergin (2015) notes, a range of groups across society may need to ‘have the skills, capacity and awareness necessary to identify any worrying behaviours’ while not ‘oversimplifying radicalisation’. The point Bergin makes here about the dangers of oversimplifying radicalisation are important. Allied to the concern of oversimplification is the

ways in which some of the discourse on radicalisation runs the danger of problematizing Islam and Muslims. Indeed, it could be argued that the way Islam has been presented in much political discourse in the last two years has conformed to a trend identified by Revell (2015, 55), namely that ‘Islam has moved from a world religion associated with the Middle East to a religion many believe is a source of global insecurity and threat to democracy’. A recent report on the demographic, social and economic profile of Australian Muslims published by the Centre for Muslim and non-Muslim Understanding highlighted that ‘Muslims overwhelmingly agree that it is possible to be a good Muslim and a good Australian’, while pointing out that ‘studies consistently show... that Australian citizenship and identifying as an Australian are no protection from stereotypes and prejudice’ (2015, 14). The report also cites recent research that found a ‘strong sense among participants that Muslim communities were regarded as “suspect” resulting from the association between Islam and terrorism’, and that ‘participants spoke about a sense of being “under constant suspicion”... and labelled as a security threat’ (Murphy, Cherney and Barkworth, 2015, 11; see also Moran, 2011; Taylor, 2015). As Hillman (2015) suggests, however:

for the overwhelming majority of Muslims in Australia and around the world, their lives are a daily quest for one thing: peace. Understanding this better might turn out to be a more potent weapon against radicalisation than border protection, metadata storing or citizenship stripping (Hillman, 2015).

The Australian government’s response to the Syrian refugee crisis provides a further illustration of the rhetoric in which being Muslim is identified as problematic. A number of Australian government ministers argued that the intake of Syrian refugees to Australia should prioritise Christians, with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation reporting that some within the Coalition appealed to the Prime Minister that there should be “no more Muslim men” (Henderson and Uhlmann, 2015). Through such language Islam and Muslims are homogenised in singular and problematic terms. As such, the language employed by the

Australian government runs the risk of being exclusionary. Abbott's framing of Australian citizenship as an 'extraordinary privilege', for example, has been strongly criticised by Jones (quoted in Roberts, 2015) as ignoring the fact that there are many people who have 'fled countries, that have come to Australia because (they think) it's a safe and welcoming place. Unfortunately it's not as welcoming as a lot of people think'. The use of exclusive language implies that only some (largely Muslims) have learning to do, while others already know, understand and accept Australian values. Given the complexity and sensitivity of the context, there is the potential that this runs the risk of heightening rather than reducing radicalisation, as well as neglecting the importance of genuinely shared and unforced values in heterogeneous societies.

Running almost concurrently with the increasing securitisation of education, schooling and values in Australia has been the development, implementation and review of the first ever Federal Australian Curriculum. The establishment of the Australian Curriculum had been, at least in part, an outcome of the "history wars" in education. There is not scope here to provide detail about the nature and impact of the history wars in education (for more detailed commentaries, see for example Macintyre and Clarke, 2004; Peterson, 2015). However, it is important to note that the history wars have pivoted on an often unhelpfully polarised distinction. These are between a version of the teaching of history in schools which focuses primarily on the key elements and achievements of Western civilisation, and an approach to the teaching of history in schools that pays greater recognition to the experiences, histories and cultures of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, including their oppression at the hands of both the British and Australian governments. The inclusion of history as a discrete subject within the Australian curriculum (prior to which historical knowledge and understanding fell within combined form of humanities and social sciences)

owed a good deal to John Howard's commitment when Prime Minister to a re-balancing in favour of the former.

On their election to Federal government in 2013 the Liberal-led Coalition government acted on their concerns that the Australian Curriculum developed under the Labor governments of Kevin Rudd and Julia Gillard had not achieved the sort of re-balancing called for by Howard. Soon after taking office, the then Minister for Education, Christopher Pyne (2014), launched a review of the curriculum, declaring that he wanted:

the curriculum to celebrate Australia, and for students... to know where we've come from as a nation... There are two aspects to Australia's history that are paramount. The first, of course, is our Indigenous history, because for thousands of years Indigenous Australians have lived on this continent. The second aspect of our history is our beginnings as a colony and, therefore, our Western civilisation, which is why we are the kind of country we are today. It's very important the curriculum is balanced in its approach to that. It's very important the truth be told in our history. So, yes, the truth of the way we've treated Indigenous Australians should be told in our curriculum. But also the truth about the benefits of Western civilisation should be taught in our curriculum. And I think that there is some fair criticism that the curriculum is balanced one way rather than the other.

One of the two men placed in charge of the review (former teacher and head of the Education Standards Institute think-tank, Kevin Donnelly) had been heavily critical of the teaching of history in Australia. In 2005 Donnelly (2005: 56) claimed that 'subjects like history and civics are rewritten to embrace a politically correct, black armband view' and that 'across Australian schools, in areas like multiculturalism, the environment and peace studies, students are indoctrinated and teachers define their role as new-age class warriors'. In a piece entitled All cultures and religions are not created equal Donnelly criticised a resource to support teachers to include Islamic perspectives within their classrooms in 2011 for the fact that it 'ignored... what some see as the inherently violent nature of the Koran, where devout Muslims are called on to carry out Jihad and to convert non-believers'.

Recourse to the review's final report raises some significant points concerning the framing of Australian values. According to the review, while values were clearly stated in the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (MCEETYA, 2008), these values were not translated effectively into the Australian Curriculum. The values set out in the Melbourne Declaration were multiple. The document makes clear in its preamble that the core role of education in Australia is to play a part in building a 'democratic, equitable and just society—a society that is prosperous, cohesive and culturally diverse, and that values Australia's Indigenous cultures as a key part of the nation's history, present and future' (2008, 4). Elsewhere, it positions Australian education and schooling as developing the values of 'democracy, equity and justice' alongside 'personal values and attributes such as honesty, resilience and respect for others' (2008, 5).

While the review is explicit in its view that the Australian Curriculum does not adequately provide for the socialisation of students into an overarching narrative of Australian identity, it positions its focus on a specific interpretation of Australian values, that which celebrates Western civilisation and is based on Judeo-Christian values. It asserts, for example, that 'the history associated with Western civilisation and Australia's development as a nation is often presented in a negative light, ignoring the positives' (Australian Government, 2014, 181). The focus on Western civilisation and Judeo-Christian values is illustrated by the fact that within its nearly 300 pages the term "Western civilisation" is used more than twenty times, while "Judeo-Christian" is employed nearly 30 times. There are certain significant tensions regarding the use of the term "Judeo-Christian" to preface "values". The Tasmanian education minister, Nick McKim, for example, criticised the Abbott government's stance on the Australian Curriculum as being a 'brainwashing and propaganda mission' aimed at imposing 'extreme right-wing views on Australian students' (Hurst, 2014).

Mirroring the exclusive language central to discourses on extremism, it has also been argued that the term is used to exclude. As Patton (2014) has observed in her reflection on the use of the term, ‘the political intent driving its use’ is ‘one of exclusion in the post-September 11 era... when it [has] most often signified the challenges of Islam and Muslims’.

In contrast, however, to the discourse on the securitisation of Australian values, certain terms are either completely absent from the review or are referred to in relation to foci different to radicalisation and violent extremism: “radicalisation” (no references), “security” (several references, but in relation to global/food security), “extremism” (one reference, but by a respondent in relation to the arts), “terrorism” (one reference, but in relation to Canada), “Islam” (on reference concerning Australia’s multi-faith society), and “Muslim” (no references). As such, the report recommends that revisions be made so the curriculum will ‘properly recognise the impact and significance of western civilisation and *Australia’s* Judeo-Christian heritage, values and beliefs’ (Australian Government, 2014,181; emphasis added). In making these moves, the rationale for teaching Australian values framed around notions of Western civilisation and Judeo-Christian heritage is two-fold. The first, to advocate for the importance of, and to prioritise, young Australians learning about particular aspects of the nation’s past, namely, those which derive from, and relate to, its Western/Christian heritage. The second is a commitment to the view that placing national values as central to the education systems and curricular of educational jurisdictions that “perform” well in international tests, such as Finland, Hong Kong, South Korea, Shanghai and Singapore. At no time is there a connection between Australian values and counter terrorism.

Positioning Australian values in relation to Western civilisation and Judeo-Christian values presents particular challenges for teachers. Similarly to securitisation, but through a

differentiated frame, westernising values carries a responsibility to understand and teach the complex and contested historical and contemporary basis of Australian values, but carries the explicit danger that other significant perspectives (most notably those of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and Australians with religious commitments other than Christianity) are not appropriately recognised or represented. Once more this requires schools and teachers to engage in controversial and sensitive political and theological issues when, in fact, many are unlikely to be confident or prepared to do so.

IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHER EDUCATION

In his analysis of the securitisation of universities Gearon (2015: 275) posits the following question, which we believe is becoming increasingly prescient in the Australian context, as well as indeed elsewhere: ‘How should teachers, researchers, academics and students respond to the balance between issues of privacy, professional ethics and... demands of security and intelligence gathering in educational settings?’. From our perspective these questions, which we believe will become increasingly significant within the Australian context, provide a particular challenge for teacher education. Furthermore, we might also ask how the Westernisation of the curriculum, including the explicit focus on Judeo-Christian values, will impact on the work of teacher educators. In this final section we are specifically interested in the implications for teacher education. Our reason for doing so is three-fold. First, because evidence suggests that developing pre-service teachers’ understanding of values, values education and related pedagogies is not a straightforward task (Lovat, 2010; Brady, 2011; Lovat et al. 2011; Mergler and Spooner-Lane, 2012). Second, because, unlike in England where the teacher standards include a duty not to undermine fundamental British values, the

Australian Professional Standards for Teachers do not currently include such a statement. Nevertheless, the current trajectory of policy discourse suggests that pre-service teachers will need to have the opportunity to explore issues related to the securitisation and Westernisation of education and the curriculum. Third, there has been a notable lack of exploration or discussion of the role of, and implications for, pre-service teacher education in relation to teaching Australian values. To an extent, therefore, we are seeking to address this gap in the literature here. In doing so our concern is the extent to which both of the prevailing public policy discourses on Australian values may serve to undermine and confuse more holistic approaches to values education, thereby potentially undermining personal development and social cohesion. It will be argued that a key challenge for teacher education in Australia, therefore, is to support pre-service teachers to keep in mind the need for a holistic approach in teaching about, and for, values.

In their analysis of international research on values in education, Lovat et al., (2011, 62) argue that:

establishing values rich relationships with students is itself part of effective pedagogy and, in a circular effect, high quality teaching has its own positive impact on strengthening the value richness of these relationships, in turn impacting on the effectiveness of the learning ambience.

This reminds us that meaningful and positive relationships between teachers and students, as well as between students themselves, is a core constituent part of effective values education. In requiring teachers to protect Australian values through acting as informers and to promote an exclusive sense of westernised values, the pedagogical relationship based on care, mutual trust, epistemic openness and honesty appears to be fundamentally undermined. As such, there is a clear tension between supporting a commitment to democratic values

within Australia (such as trust, care, freedom, tolerance, and honesty) and the securitisation and westernisation rhetorics currently at play.

The pressure placed on the pedagogic relationship is particularly significant when there is an implicit assumption, often made explicit in mainstream political discourses, that elements of Australian society are not represented in the formulation of values or do not already support such values. From such a standpoint, certain groups in society are positioned as needing to shift to and conform to a somewhat proscribed set of values if they are to be fully “Australian”. It is in relation to this assumption, for example, that we see the Westernisation of Australian values as containing an inherent, and crucial, tension. Focusing on, and prioritising, Western civilisation and Judeo-Christian values within the curriculum immediately excludes many Australian citizens, including its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and its Muslim citizens, when the call is not accompanied by an explicit recognition that Australian values are not fixed or static, but are shaped by multiple perspectives. Again, the language is one in which it is some groups that are required to conform, rendering learning a one-way process whereby certain citizens are required to make their values compatible with the dominant model and there is no recognition that the dominant model may in turn have something to learn from non-Western perspectives.

A key role for teacher education, therefore, is to ensure that student teachers are able to develop a reflexive stance in relation to political and curricular dogmatism, aware that is of the political debates and perspectives which drive discourses on Australian values while also developing pedagogies and approaches through which all Australians, including Muslims and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, are able to feel included within the concept of contemporary Australian values. This is a significant challenge, and how this may occur

cannot be resolved within the confines of this paper. As such, it is important that the normative case does not mask the practical and pragmatic barriers required to develop an inclusive sense of, and commitment to, Australian values. Nevertheless, teacher educators have a significant responsibility to ensure that student teachers are exposed to a range of perspectives on Australian values, including how the values of different forms of Islam (and indeed other non Judeo-Christian faiths) as well as those of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples can add to a wider and more plural understanding of Australian values. Central to this is a reflexive approach to understanding their ‘personal values and how these may or may not align with their professional ones’ (Lovat et al., 2011, 68). This need for reflexivity can also be seen in relation to the extent to which Westernised accounts of Australian values are rarely invoked by right-leaning politicians and policy actors to counter and criticise Islamophobia within Australian contexts (Milman, 2014).

Such reflexivity is essential if we are to move beyond the securitisation and westernisation agendas, and will require teacher educators to take a proactive rather than reactive stance, something which Lovat et al. (2011) have suggested may require a shift in approach for the majority of teacher education courses. Moreover, given research which points to the central importance of shared vocabulary to values education, reflexivity on Australian values requires the development of a common language to frame conversations (Lovat, 2011; Mergler and Spooner-Lane, 2012; Arthur, 2010). Here, teacher educators can play an important role in two ways. First, in ensuring that the focus of student teachers transcends the current curricular arrangements and political rhetoric, to also include wider perspectives concerning Australian values as well as research evidence from Australia which highlights the importance and benefits of holistic approaches to values pedagogy (Lovat, et al., 2015). Second, in ensuring an inclusive approach to Australian values, which while not

ignoring security concerns or Judeo-Christian values, positions this within a wider, pluralist account of contemporary Australian and which eschews discourses of “us” and “them”.

CONCLUSION

At the time of writing, Tony Abbott has just been replaced as Australia’s Prime Minister and Leader of the Liberal-led Coalition government by the more moderate Malcolm Turnbull. With the change in leadership has come what seems to be an immediate difference in tone and style. Following the murder of a police worker by a 15 year-old schoolboy in October 2015, Turnbull (Taylor, 2015) changed the rhetoric from Abbott’s “Team Australia” and “us”/“them” to speak in collective terms of “we” and “ourselves”. In doing so, Turnbull clearly sought to prioritise a more collective sense of Australian values:

Violent extremism is a challenge to the most fundamental Australian values. Australia is the most successful and most harmonious multicultural society in the world... None of us... can look in the mirror and say "All Australians look like me." Australians look like every race, like every culture, like every ethnic group in the world. How have we been able to be so successful? It is because of a fundamental Australian value, mutual respect... Mutual respect... is the glue that binds this very diverse country together.

Once again, but with a differentiated tone, strengthening Australian values are posited here as a necessary response to and bulwark against violent extremism. As we have suggested, however, while this is one of the dominant discourses on Australian values in contemporary public policy, it is not the only one. Our concern here has been to distinguish between the two dominant current discourses on Australian values today, and to suggest that both serve to exclude given their lack of recognition and representation of multiple perspectives. For this reason, Australian values are being unhelpfully positioned in fixed and static terms, rather than as shared and unforced values, thereby privileging certain standpoints

to the exclusion of others. While the two dominant discourses we have focused on here have largely operated separately thus far, given the prevalence of a securitisation rhetoric there is a likelihood that the westernisation of Australian values within the revised Australian curriculum will become inter-linked with concerns regarding radicalisation and terrorism. For teacher educators in Australia, and the pre-service teachers with whom they work, this raises particular challenges regarding how such discourses can be mediated alongside a commitment to research evidence and practice which suggests that holistic and reflexive approaches to values education based on trust, humility and openness. While informed and shaped by a particular context, we would suggest that the challenges bear some similarities with those faced by teacher educators and pre-service teachers in other contexts within which forms of national values have been prioritised in recent years. Here we have tentatively pointed to some such challenges in the hope that further critical reflection on Australian values in the contemporary educational context will follow from others in ways which connect to similar discussions elsewhere.

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