Paul Kelly and George Megalogenis: Media Intellectuals in Australian Politics

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT v
DECLARATION vi
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS vii
ABBREVIATIONS viii
INTRODUCTION 1
Paul Kelly 4
George Megalogenis 6
Gaps in the literature 7
Methodology/approach 8
Argument 10
Chapters 11
CHAPTER ONE 18
THE BOOKS OF PAUL KELLY 18
The Dismissal 'Trilogy' 19
The Hawke Ascendancy 30
The End of Certainty 32
Future Tense 41
100 Years: The Australian Story 51
Hard Heads, Soft Hearts: A New Reform Agenda for Australia 55
Cunningham Lecture 57
Howard's Decade 58
The March of Patriots 60
Triumph and Demise 64
Critical consensus? 68
Neoliberalism or not? 78
Inequality, insecurity and debt 79
Conclusion 83
CHAPTER TWO 86
JOURNALISM 86
Globalisation 90
The Iraq war 106
Social issues 112
The Rudd and Gillard prime ministerships 119

Kelly and religion 125
Conclusion 127
CHAPTER THREE 131
GEORGE MEGALOGENIS 131
The Journalism 147
Conclusion 159
CHAPTER FOUR 162
JOURNALISTS, PUNDITS AND DEMOCRACY 162
Rupert Murdoch, News Ltd and The Australian 175
Twilight of the elite columnists? 185
Conclusion 190
CHAPTER FIVE 193
KELLY AND MEGALOGENIS: JOURNALISTS AS PUBLIC INTELLECTUALS 193
Kelly, Megalogenis and political history 203
Whitlam 204
Fraser 205
Hawke 206
The Keating and Howard governments 231
The Rudd and Gillard governments 245
Conclusion 250
CONCLUSION 253
The end of the Australian moment? 256
BIBLIOGRAPHY 265

ABSTRACT

Paul Kelly and George Megalogenis are Australian journalists and political historians who have been influential in their interpretation of contemporary Australian political history. This thesis supports the claim made – sometimes critically – by scholars ranging from James Walter to Robert Manne, and politicians ranging from Gareth Evans to Tony Abbott, as well as fellow elite journalists, that they have both been significant figures in articulating, in Australian political discourse, the effectiveness of market-orientated policies as the foundation of national political and economic success since 1991. Their central point is that the Australian version of what may be categorised as neoliberal policies, which Kelly has called `Australian exceptionalism' and Megalogenis has labelled variously `pragmatic deregulation' and `the Australian miracle', constitutes a unique achievement in Australian history. The research finds this remains, with some caveats, a valid interpretation.

Yet, as the first comprehensive survey of their books and journalism, it also finds the former have some limitations; particularly that insufficient attention is given to the problems of political disengagement, economic insecurity, inequality and the effect of the media on political discourse. Nonetheless, it finds their books remain valuable as historico-qualitative accounts of Australian executive government, from the Whitlam government onwards, and they have strengths that give them continuing relevance alongside current and subsequent academic histories that offer explanations from a broader range of perspectives.

The research also addresses criticisms concerning their role as journalists for *The Australian*, Rupert Murdoch's News Limited's flagship newspaper. A content analysis of their commentary demonstrates that while their journalism is, on economic matters, broadly in line with their employer's ideological world view, they are also practitioners of what American scholars call `knowledge journalism'. That is, they bring a degree of contextual explanation and analysis to their commentary which enhances debate in the Australian political public sphere – even in an era of declining newspaper revenues and readerships where their salience in the space of opinion has clearly waned.

The thesis also adds to the literature on public intellectuals in Australia and finds they should be classified as such on a number of grounds. Specifically, it confirms the assessment that they operate as `organic' intellectuals who, in effect, speak to the elite group of politicians, political operatives, policy-actors, journalists and politically-engaged voters who constitute the political class. Their championing of a particular model of political leadership and economically liberal policy directions has indeed been referenced and recruited by a range of politicians, journalists and policy actors. The research confirms their status as `super achievers' among Australian political journalists stems from a range of factors including: their skills across a range of media platforms; recognition from journalistic peers; access to the highest levels of official power and their commitment to writing political `history of the present.' It is this status which underpins their authority as media intellectuals in the increasingly complex and multifaceted space of mass-mediated opinion that is a central feature Australian federal politics.

DECLARATION

This thesis contains no material that has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any other university or tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text of the thesis.

I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being made available for photocopying and loan subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968. I also give permission for the digital version of my thesis to be made available on the web, via the University's digital research repository, the Library Search and also through web search engines, unless permission has been granted by the University to restrict access for a period of time.

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Signed: …… Date:……

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABC	Australian Broadcasting Corporation
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACOSS	Australian Council of Social Services
AEC	Australian Electoral Commission
AJA	Australian Journalists Association
ALP	Australian Labor Party
AJPS	Australian Journal of Political Science
ANZUS	Australia, New Zealand, United States
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
ASX	Australian Stock Exchange
ATO	Australian Tax Office
ATSIC	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GFC	Global Financial Crisis
GST	Goods and Services Tax
G8	Group of Eight
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IR	Industrial Relations
MUA	Maritime Union of Australia
OECD	Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development
RBA	Reserve Bank of Australia

By its nature, journalism is a calling for reluctant, timid souls – people who watch others doing things of note and then write about it in the isolated safety of their press-gallery cubicles. If they were strong, gutsy personalities they would be politicians themselves… people who are doers in life, not voyeurs.[1]

It is thanks to its claim of being able to offer the citizenry important and reliable knowledge that journalism justifies its position as a constitutive institution in a democratic society.[2]

INTRODUCTION

Paul Kelly and George Megalogenis are prominent Australian political journalists who may also be considered as media intellectuals. They have, at different times in their careers, been lauded as the most influential political commentators of their respective generations. Their reputations as elite journalists were established by both the quality of their regular journalism and several books on aspects of Australian political history. Over time these political histories have, in addition to being recognised by their peers, also been increasingly cited in academic publications as authoritative sources despite what some critics describe as their 'triumphalist' tone. As historian David Lowe says, `Journalists often shape public mood which in turn provides historians with the key issues warranting more attention.'[3] This means that historians often `have to follow the contours of what they [journalists] define as important and that in Australia this is particularly true of our military and political history.'[4] This thesis, in part, examines the extent to which Kelly and Megalogenis have shaped debate and defined the 'contours' which historians have had to follow.

Paul Kelly, the older of the two, was, in 1996, described as `possibly the most influential political journalist of his generation.'[5] In 2002 he was listed among the 10 most culturally

[1] Mark Latham, 'Bad News Correspondence', Andrew Charlton*, Quarterly Essay, Man-Made World: Choosing between Progress and Planet*, Issue 44, Black Inc., Collingwood, Victoria, 2011, p. 114.
[2] Mats Ekstrom, 'Epistemologies of TV Journalism: A Theoretical Framework', vol. 3, no. 3, 2002, p.260.
[3] David Lowe, 'The Journalist as Historian', http://www.deakin.edu.au/research/stories/2012/05/15/the-journalist-as-an-historian, viewed March 21, 2012.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Margo Kingston and Michael Millet, 'Kelly slips as the son rises', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Nov. 23, 1996, p. 38.

powerful Australians.[6] As recently as 2009 Robert Manne, later a strong critic, claimed that Kelly was `the country's most important political commentator' who `has become a player of real significance in national politics' and that no political journalist `commands even remotely equivalent respect among the political elite.'[7] There is a further indication of this status in John Howard's remarks in his review of one of Kelly's books, where he stated that Kelly and the late Alan Reid are the only journalists who `have been serious chroniclers of their times' and `the only ones to attempt to tell a sustained story of Australian politics.'[8] Leading Labor political figures including Keating, Hayden, and Evans have also strongly endorsed Kelly's analyses of the Hawke-Keating era. Evans, for example, described his depiction of the ALP in government as `brilliant'.[9] Conversely, Dickenson and Scalmer argue his career means `a book contract is essential for any aspiring commentator' and that `his flaws – his pomposity, intoxication with the powerful, lack of detachment and undisguised self-regard – have become models of journalistic and historical practice.'[10] Dickenson also suggests his work is an example of the effects of celebrity culture on political writing as it is dominated by the personalities of journalists and politicians.[11]

The latter would also apply to George Megalogenis, who, as shall be seen, initially appeared to follow Kelly's career in some ways was, in 2015, described by Dennis Altman as `arguably the most important Australian political commentator of his generation.'[12] Fellow political journalist, Annabel Crabb, called him `Australia's best explainer.'[13] Editor and journalist, Gay Alcorn's comment that Megalogenis `is is one of the country's leading intellectuals' concurs

[6] Brook Turner, 'The 10 most culturally powerful Australians', *The Australian Financial Review*, Sept. 27, 2002, p.28.
[7] Robert Manne, 'The Insider: Paul Kelly's "The March of Patriots"', *The Monthly*, October 2009, p. 22.
[8] John Howard, 'The Transformation of the Australian Economy', *Quadrant*, v. LIV, no. 3, 2010, p. 8.
[9] Carol Johnson, *Governing Change: From Keating to* Howard, 2nd edition, Australian Scholarly Classics Series, Network Books, Perth, 2007, p.6.
[10] Sean Scalmer and Jackie Dickenson, 'March of the Insider', *Overland*, 199, 2010, p. 25.
[11] Jackie Dickenson, 'Journalists writing Australian political history' in *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, vol. 56, no.1, 2010, p. 118.
[12] Denis Altman, 'Stirring the melting pot', *The Australian*, 17 October, 2015, p 22.
[13] Annabel Crabb, quoted in D. Lowe, 'Shaping History', *Geelong Advertiser*, 25 May, 2012, p. 25.

with the conclusions of this thesis.[14] These epithets encompass his journalism and his body of independent scholarship which, like Kelly's, is significant, if not as extensive.

This thesis analyses their role in the Australian public sphere from three main perspectives – as journalists, as political historians, and as media or public intellectuals.[15] Indeed I argue that the quantity and quality of their output means they should be considered as major public intellectuals, by a number of definitions of that somewhat contentious term , even though it is a description Kelly dislikes as he regards `it as slightly alien to both traditional Australian egalitarianism and journalistic pragmatism.'[16] Megalogenis is also uncomfortable with the term preferring to see his role as somewhere between that of a `working journalist' and a `specialist'.[17] Nonetheless, Walter, for example, says that Kelly is `an observer just as gifted as (Francis) Fukuyama in capturing the ideological moment.'[18] While Johnson acknowledges that he has played an influential role in shaping conceptions of change in Australia in the 1980s and 1990s.[19] Weller also states his account of this period has `become part of the orthodoxy' and that Kelly is among the small group of writers who `give the greatest insight' into how the politics of executive power works and `the mechanics and processes by which policy is made there.'[20] While the quality of their journalism consistently provided a level of detailed, reasoned analysis which gave them status as elite columnists, there were, and, are other journalists as well as some politicians and academics, who also utilised the newspaper column in a similarly authoritative manner. Few, however, have

[14] Gay Alcorn, 'The Great Explainer', *3010: Melbourne University Magazine*, Issue 2, 2016, p. 10.
[15] Kelly and Megalogenis should, as will be discussed in chapter four, be considered public intellectuals but they began, and continue to be, prominent figures in the Australian media.
[16] Pat Buckridge, 'Editors as Intellectuals' in Ann Curthoys and Julianne Schultz, (eds.), *Journalism: Print, Politics and Popular Culture*, UQP, St. Lucia, Queensland, 1999, pp. 199-200.
[17] George Megalogenis, Interview with author, March 3, 2016.
[18] James Walter with Todd Moore, *What Were They Thinking?: The Political Ideas of Australia*, University of New South Wales Press Ltd., Sydney, 2010, p. 299.
[19] Johnson, *Governing Change*, p. 5.
[20] Patrick Weller, 'Investigating Power at the Centre of Government', *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, vol. 64, no.1, 2005, p. 36.

combined the regular production of commentary over a long period of time with the writing of contemporary Australian political history.

A brief delineation of their careers further indicates the salience of their roles in Australian journalism, politics and intellectual debate.

Paul Kelly

After joining the Canberra Press Gallery in 1971 Paul Kelly became chief political correspondent for *The Australian* from 1974-75. This role continued at *The National Times* from 1976-78. He then became deputy editor until 1979. From 1981 – 1984 he was chief political correspondent for *The Sydney Morning Herald* but then returned to *The Australian* as national affairs editor from 1985 to 1991. Kelly became Editor-in-Chief from 1991 to 1996 and has been Editor-at-Large since then.[21]

Kelly, as has been said of the doyen of American political columnists, Walter Lippmann, has led `two lives. One of books and one of newspapers where each helps the other.'[22] Seven of his nine historical books virtually constitute a history of Australian federal politics since 1974. The first two, *The Unmaking of Gough* and *The Hawke Ascendancy – A Definitive Account of its Origins and Climax, 1975–1983* are narrative histories that were both popular and critically acclaimed – with the former reprinted twice and adapted into a television series. These were followed by *The End of Certainty: The Story of the 1980s*, *The March of Patriots: The Struggle for Modern Australian,* and *Triumph and Demise: The Broken Promise of a Labor Generation* which combine narrative with political and historical analysis. The first of these remains his most influential text and has been described by Robert Manne as the most influential political book written in Australia since Donald Horne's *The Lucky Country*.[23] Kelly

[21] 'About Paul Kelly', *The Australian*, 31 August 2006, viewed 1 March 2012 < http://www.theaustralian.com.au/about-paul-kelly/story-fna7dq6e-1111112103353>, and *Academy of the Social Sciences of Australia*, viewed 1 March 2012, <ahttp://www.assa.edu.au/fellows/list_all.php?id=ahttp://www.assa.edu.au/fellows/list_all.php?id=k>.
[22] Walter Lippmann cited in Barry D Riccio, *Walter Lippmann: Odyssey of a Liberal*, New Brunswick, NJ, 1994, p. xi
[23] Manne, 'The Insider: Paul Kelly's "The March of Patriots"', p.22.

has updated his history of the constitutional crisis with two more books: *November 1975: The Inside Story of Australia's Greatest Political Crisis* and *The Dismissal*: *In the Queen's Name*. In addition, he has published *Paradise Divided: The Changes, the Challenges, the Choices for Australia*, a collection of speeches and journalism dealing with key issues Australia faced in the latter part of the 1990s.

There are also several briefer works ranging across issues such as politics and ethics, the tension between religion and politics and the Howard government's foreign policy. In addition, Kelly has co-edited two books that outlined policy making ideas from a range of journalists, academics and public policy experts, *Future Tense: Australia Beyond Election 1998* and *Hard Heads, Soft Hearts: A New Reform Agenda for Australia* as well as writing *100 Years: The Australian Story*, an ABC television series and accompanying book on the history of Australia since federation.

Yet even though his books are widely reviewed and aspects of his historical work have been widely critiqued there is no substantial analysis or commentary on Kelly's contribution to Australian political debate. This anomaly is further highlighted by the publication of a full length biography, by Ross Fitzgerald and Stephen Holt, of Alan Reid, who for much of his 48 year career was the leading journalist in the Canberra press gallery. Reid, nicknamed 'the Red Fox', was notable for being both a reporter and sometimes a participant in the events he reported on, and his three books are widely regarded as pioneering the `art of writing books on current political history in Australia' and making `it a popular genre'.[24] Paul Kelly was influenced by Reid and went on to take this genre to a new level. Indeed, the scope and scale of Kelly's work is much greater than Reid's. Reid's acclaimed books cover the period from the death of Holt to the fall of Whitlam. Kelly is now in his fifth decade as a political commentator and his publications so far, cover the 26 year period from the Whitlam

[24] Ross Fitzgerald and Stephen Holt, *Alan "The Red Fox" Reid*, University of NSW Press Ltd, 2010, p. 2.

government's second term to the end of Howard's second term in 2001, with still, at least another volume to come. In addition, Kelly has forged strong links within academia as a fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences and as a visiting lecturer at Harvard University. He was also Adjunct Professor at the University of Queensland from 1999 to 2005 and a fellow of the think tank, the Lowy Institute. If, as Laurie Oakes claims `that it is not possible to write the political history of Australia' or `to discuss the evolution of [Australian] political journalism…without an examination of Alan Reid's methods, motives and influence.'[25] Then a detailed study of Paul Kelly yields a further insight into Australian political history and journalism.

George Megalogenis

After graduating from University of Melbourne with an economics degree, Megalogenis joined *The Sun-New Pictorial* as a cadet journalist in 1986. He then worked as an economics correspondent for News Limited from 1988 to 1990. After eleven years in the Canberra press gallery, from 1988 to 1999, Megalogenis returned to Melbourne to become a senior feature writer for *The Australian* (Interestingly, he was the first journalist Paul Kelly hired after he became Editor-in-Chief at *The Australian* in 1991).

His first book, *Faultlines: Race, Work, and the Politics of Changing Australia*, published in 2003, was an analysis of the effects of immigration and feminisation on the labour market and the likely social and cultural changes which may follow. His second book, *The Longest Decade* was an account of the Keating and Howard governments. This was followed by a Quarterly Essay, *Trivial Pursuit and the End of the Reform Era*, which was a commentary on the 2010 federal election and a critical analysis of the failure of federal government reform. In 2012, *The Australian Momen*t, a history of economic reform from the Whitlam government onwards was published. His fourth book, *Australia's Second Chance*, chronicles

[25] Laurie Oakes, `Preface' in Ross Fitzgerald and Stephen Holt, *Alan "The Red Fox" Reid*, p. xi.

the relationship between immigration and Australian prosperity, while a second Quarterly Essay *Balancing Act* looks at the threats to national prosperity and proposes policy changes to protect an increasingly fragile economy.

Megalogenis resigned from *The Australian* in 2012 to work as a writer and documentary-maker – he adapted *The Australian Moment* into an ABC television series, *Making Australia Great*. By tracking Megalogenis's career path this also reveals another trajectory of a media intellectual in the Australian public sphere.

Gaps in the literature

A comparison with the American literature on political journalism also highlights the paucity of Australian literature on Australian political journalism. There are many more general histories of the American profession, including, for example, a six volume series by Stephen Hess, published over a twenty five year period. While many American journalists of a similar status to Kelly have received various book length treatments, including biographies. For example, Bob Woodward, a chronicler of the US presidency over the same period Kelly has been covering Australian politics and, like Kelly, relies heavily on his `insider' status to secure interviews with key players in each administration, has at least one volume tracing his career.[26] While the career of Walter Lippmann `the dean of American newspaper columnists' in the twentieth century has produced, in addition to a Pulitzer-prize winning biography, at least a dozen studies.[27] This further highlights the gap in the Australian literature on Australian political journalism where the few longer texts such as the Reid biography, Derek Parker's *The Courtesans* and Margaret Simon's *Fit to Print* are comparatively rare. In addition, detailed studies of individual journalists are not a feature of the work of academic

[26] See Alicia C. Shephard, *Woodward and Bernstein: Life in the Shadows of Watergate*, Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley, 2007.
[27] See Ronald Steel, *Walter Lippmann and the American Century*, Atlantic Monthly Press, Little, Brown & Company, USA, 1980.

specialists in the area of media and politics such as Julianne Schultz, Rodney Tiffen and Sally Ann Young.[28]

This thesis therefore aims to add to the literature in these areas and, also the literature on Australian public intellectuals as the scholarly writing on Australian public intellectuals, is relatively thin. In the last major book on the topic of Australian intellectuals, *The Ideas Market*, published in 2004, David Carter listed six books published in the previous decade, only one of which – Robert Dessaix's *Speaking Their* Minds, a collection of interviews with prominent Australian public intellectuals, specifically addressed the topic. Carter does not mention Head and Walter's, *Intellectual Movements and Australian Society* perhaps because its 1988 publication does not fit with his argument that interest in public intellectual activity was given renewed impetus by the election of the Howard government in 1996. Again, this thesis will add to the literature in this area and constitutes an original contribution in its analysis of how political journalists function as intellectuals in the public sphere.

Methodology/Approach

The methods for this investigation include a content analysis of journalism in relation to key events in Australian politics and a critical analysis of their books. Kelly and Megalogenis's prolific output in the public domain is analysed in order to assess their role in shaping the dominant interpretations of historical and political debate in Australia from the 1970s onwards. This analysis provides both an insight into the place of the political journalists as a public intellectual in the Australian public sphere and an evaluation of their contribution to political culture and debate. This assessment of Kelly and Megalogenis's writing examines their articulation of the most influential ideas in Australian politics and public policy during the period of his commentary, particularly neoliberalism and related arguments about

[28] See, for example, Julianne Schultz, *Reviving the Fourth Estate: Democracy, Accountability and the Media*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 1998 and Sally Young, *Government Communication in Australia*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 2007.

globalisation. Indeed, despite Kelly's rejection of the influence of the former (in all its manifestations)[29], the policy responses to these phenomena and the consequences for Australia's economic prosperity are among his, and Megalogenis's, abiding concerns. The primary research for this thesis comprised all their published books to date and selected journalism (articles, speeches and interviews) in both print and electronic forms. It also includes citations referring to Kelly and Megalogenis in parliamentary speeches and in journalistic and academic texts. Paul Kelly and George Megalogenis have also been interviewed.

A wide range of secondary sources were canvassed including academic literature and relevant primary sources pertaining to the key issues Kelly and Megalogenis address, particularly with regard to the policies and actions of Australian federal governments from Whitlam to Abbott. Academic and media reviews of their books, as well as academic literature on the history of Australian political journalism, punditry and political commentators were drawn on for chapters one, three and four. Academic literature and media articles on public intellectuals were consulted for chapter five.

In addition, a range of academic analyses of neo-liberalism, globalisation and democracy in the Australian context were utilised in conjunction with reports from think tanks and government departments and independent government bodies, in order to properly assess the effectiveness of the sort of neoliberal policies endorsed by Kelly and Megalogenis. Other literature consulted includes academic analyses of Kelly's historiography and political and intellectual biographical texts referring to Kelly and Megalogenis.

[29] Steger and Roy conceptualise neoliberalism as: '(1) an ideology; (2) a mode of governance; (3) a policy package' in Manfred B. Steger and Ravi K. Roy, *Neoliberalism: a Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2010, p. 11.

Argument

This thesis argues that both journalists have been influential proponents of 1) the version of neoliberal economic policies which have been pursued by Australian governments since 1983, 2) the view that those policies have played a crucial role in the long run of Australian economic growth since 1991, and 3) the view that a very high standard of political leadership was needed to implement those policies. In addition to their significant role in making this narrative of Australian prosperity the dominant view of Australia's political class, I argue Kelly and Megalogenis continue to have a strong basis for their assessment of Australia's political and economic success.

The research also supports, to some extent Walter's contention that, Kelly and Megalogenis may be classified as `organic' intellectuals who – as opposed to `traditional' intellectuals – speak to a particular class, but this, I argue, does not significantly diminish the value of their journalism or their historical interpretations. Indeed, given the diversity of opinion within the political class it would be accurate to say they speak *to* this group. This is supported by, an analysis of their political commentary which reveals they bring a level of contextual explanation which is characteristic of what some scholars describe as `knowledge journalism'.[30] This is a level of discourse which enhances the public sphere. A major limitation of their analyses in their books and journalism – is that insufficient attention is given to the problems of political disengagement, insecurity, inequality and the role of the media in public debate. Their books, nonetheless, remain valuable in their elucidation of executive power in Australian politics and as historical accounts of federal governments from Whitlam onwards. This is despite the limitations of general histories written for a broad, non-specialist audience in comparison to accounts written by academics or other political insiders.

[30] Thomas E. Patterson, *Informing the News*: *The Need for Knowledge-Based Journalism*, Vintage, New York, 2013,

Indeed, the comparison, in chapter five, between the political histories authored by journalists and those authored by academics – including both books and peer-reviewed articles – illustrates some of the on-going tensions between the two forms of writing. It also reveals the gaps and omissions in the journalists' one volume histories, and the various, sometimes conflicting, interpretations of the different governments over time. It is, nonetheless, argued that the journalists' accounts remain useful, empirically grounded and highly accessible, interpretation of key aspects of Australian political history.

Chapters

The first chapter is an overview of Kelly's books which virtually constitute a history of Australian federal politics from 1974 to 2013. The balance between narrative and analysis, and proposing solutions, changed significantly after the first two books as a strong prescriptive element would feature prominently in Kelly's subsequent publications. It was one which essentially advocated what could broadly be considered neoliberal policies, but which Kelly regards as a `new model…faithful to Australian values of economic pragmatism, social egalitarianism and practical utility.'[31] I analyse and evaluate Kelly's books through textual analysis and `critique the critics', that is, I survey the critical responses to his books in light of subsequent political and economic developments which, I argue, have generally tended to confirm the value as historical accounts. This is despite criticism of their over reliance on confidential interviews, their limited acknowledgement of secondary sources and absence of theory.[32]

The textual strategies Kelly uses, particularly in his portrayal of economic liberalism and what he calls `Australian exceptionalism', and his rejection of the influence of neoliberal ideology, are shown to be key elements in his success as in making what are, in fact, highly contested ideas (Bell, for example, warned of a growing `neo-liberalisation' of the Australian

[31] Kelly, *The March of Patriots*, p. 267.
[32] Sean Scalmer and Jackie Dickenson, 'March of the Insider'.

state[33]) acceptable for the political class – that `group that includes politicians, leading public servants, business people and the most politically engaged citizens.'[34] The contemporaneous impact of these books on the political class is partly revealed by the survey of the various reviews which from a wide range of sources in the quality press and from the academy. Indeed, some of Kelly's books have had considerable impact which has extended beyond a general readership to the academy, which is one of the means by which Kelly's political accounts have become widely accepted by the political class. Particularly notable are: Kelly's accounts of the Whitlam dismissal, his conception of the Australian settlement, his accounts of how executive power operates and his formulation of the orthodox account of economic reform.

There is, however, evidence that he has overstated the significance of these reforms and that he is too accepting of the seemingly intractable nature of the inequality, insecurity and indebtedness, both personal and national, that have accompanied national prosperity. This chapter identifies the way Kelly, utilises ideas and the extent they correspond to, or are in conflict with, the prevailing ideas of his times.[35]

A central issue here is Kelly's promulgation of his conception of the Australian settlement in his most significant book, *The End of Certainty*. His argument, drawing on the work of earlier historians, that post-federation Australia was founded on the five pillars of wage arbitration, industry protection, the white Australia policy, state paternalism and, what he calls, imperial benevolence has seen the term `increasingly come into use as a way of framing political

[33] Stephen Bell, 'Globalisation, Neoliberalism and the Transformation of the Australian State', *Australian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 32, no. 3, 1997, pp. 345-367.
[34] Robert Manne, 'Bad News: Murdoch's Australian and the shaping of the nation', *Quarterly Essay*, Issue 43, Black Inc., Melbourne, Victoria, 2011, p. 5.
[35] For example, with regard to globalisation, Kelly is placed among those who see it 'as an international imperative, forcing domestic adjustment' which in turn supports 'the message globalisation limits what the political process can achieve' in Tom Conley, 'Globalisation and the Politics of Persuasion and Coercion', *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, vol.39, no. 2, May 2004, p. 184.

history and Australian political thought.'[36] It has, however, been challenged by historians such as Stuart Macintyre and Geoffrey Stokes.[37] This debate and Kelly's historiography is surveyed, particularly criticisms that he writes 'mandarin history'[38] which largely ignores the role of social movements and has little interest in the 'politics of difference'.[39] But, conversely, the fact that Kelly is writing contemporary Australian political history does not, as Melleuish alleges, necessarily reveal deficiencies in the work of Australian historians which are, in turn, symptomatic of a crisis in Australian intellectual life.[40] Rather his books are symptomatic of the convergence of academic and journalistic writing because, according to Dickenson, 'journalists are now university-trained and thus more familiar with academic disciplines, and partly because academics are more conscious of popular readership.'[41]

The second chapter examines Kelly's role as an elite columnist and pundit in the Australian context. The former write of columns for major newspapers over a long period of time; these are usually experienced professional journalists. While the latter are a broader group who are 'anointed by the media to give their opinion on things.'[42] Elite columnists may, therefore, be considered as pundits but not all pundits have a newspaper column. This involves surveying his commentary in several key areas of his journalism after 2001. Prior to this period the central issues of the period emerge through Kelly's contemporary historical works, the last of which covers the period up to the end of the Gillard governments in 2013. Working from the chapter one explication of issues in the books, chapter two confines the

[36] Geoffrey Stokes, 'Australian Settlement' in Brian Galligan and Winsome Roberts, (eds.), *The Oxford Companion to Australian Politics*, Oxford University Press, http://www.oxfordreference.com.proxy.library.adelaide.edu.au/view/10.1093/acref/9780195555431.001.0001/acref-9780195555431-e-38?rskey=dS5COr&result=38, viewed March 1 2012.
[37] See Stuart Macintyre, 'Whatever Happened to Deakinite Liberalism' in Paul Strangio and Nicholas Dyrenfurth, (eds.), *Confusion: The Making of the Australian Two Party System*, Melbourne University Press, 2008 and Geoffrey Stokes, "The 'Australian Settlement' and Australian Political Thought", in *Australian Journal of Political Science,* vol. 39, no. 1, March 2004, pp. 5-22.
[38] Guy Rundle, 'The long, plodding March of Patriots', *Crikey*, Nov. 6, 2009, http://www.crikey.com.au/2009/11/06/rundles-friday-book-review-the-long-plodding-march-of-patriots/, viewed March 10, 2012.
[39] Johnson, *Governing Change*, pp. 58-61.
[40]See, for example, Greg Melleuish, *Australian Intellectuals: Their Strange History and Pathological Tendencies*, Connor Court Publishing, Ballan, Australia.
[41] Dickenson, 'Journalists writing Australian political history', p. 117.
[42] Eric Alterman, *Sound and Fury: The making of the punditocracy*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, 1999, p. 5.

focus to the key issues such as political leadership, economic reform, and foreign policy. From this, an assessment is made of the relationship between the books and the journalism, and, more importantly, Kelly's effectiveness as an independent thinker given his closeness to the centres of media and political power and his long association with *The Australian*, News Corporation's flagship national daily newspaper.

With regard to economic reform, particularly Kelly's role in the ongoing debate around neoliberal reforms and the related issue of globalisation, there is a closer examination of what Kelly means by these terms and the validity of his depiction of their economic and social effects. Another category, concerning key social issues, focuses on Kelly's commentary on multiculturalism, indigenous issues and education. Finally, his writing on the key foreign policy issues concerning the Iraq war, the US alliance, and border protection is delineated and critiqued with regard to dissenting views from a range of sources.

The third chapter is an overview and evaluation of the books and journalism of George Megalogenis who, once seemed to be Kelly's `heir apparent'. Like Kelly, he has written books of contemporary Australian political history focussing on key national public policy reforms over much the same period as Kelly, but with significant differences in style and substance. Unlike Kelly, Megalogenis explored the effects of particular policies through the lens of gender and race and demographics. But ultimately he reaches the same conclusion regarding Australia's economic resilience and the heroic role of political leaders, particularly Paul Keating.

Megalogenis does differ from Kelly on some social issues and often employs different rhetorical strategies. But, nonetheless, I argue that both act as media intellectuals who analyse issues through their critical scrutiny of policy arguments and in their broad historical framing of contemporary issues. They are (or were in Megalogenis's case), also – in line with

their newspaper's world view – both boosters of reform that promotes economic growth which is meant to be `inclusive'.

Megalogenis does discuss more extensively than Kelly the problems of income inequality and the increasing pressures on major cities and natural resources that have accompanied the growth in national prosperity. But, like Kelly, he has, until 2016, suggested that a combination of market signals and technological innovation can successfully overcome these challenges. However, Megalogenis's thinking has evolved in a different direction to Kelly as the younger man urged a greater role for the state to ensure Australia's future prosperity.

The main purpose of the fourth chapter is to explain and classify their roles in the context of Australian political debate. It considers their relationship with *The Australian*, Rupert Murdoch's flagship newspaper in Australia, which has been criticised for its aggressive ideological campaigning approach to particular issues and its general propagation of free markets, the US alliance and globalisation. It has been accused, by Manne and others, of damaging the quality of Australian democracy.

Kelly, in particular, has sporadically been singled out for criticism from different sources. He has been described as `the ultimate insider' who 'knows that should he become an outsider (a systematic and forthright critic of an Australian government)' he would forfeit his access to power which is his most valuable asset.[43] Others go further to suggest – somewhat simplistically – that he supported Howard and criticised the ALP after 1996 because he is: `Awed by power and needing to retain access to it' and that this insider status `subordinates intellectual freedom to power.'[44] These assessments are addressed in light of Kelly's view that `the role of intellectuals…is to expose lies and promote truth. But to be effective this

[43] Manne, *The Insider*, p. 27.
[44] Scalmer and Dickenson, pp. 22-23 and p. 25.

demands a recognition of the nature of politics'.[45] Kelly's editorship of *The Australian* from 1991-1996 and his subsequent role as a defender of the paper's agenda setting campaigns and tactics under Chris Mitchell's editorship are discussed with regard to the traditional journalistic ideal of 'speaking truth to power'.[46]

Yet, I argue that Kelly and Megalogenis, in bringing a historical perspective and a grasp of economics, to their journalism, provide the sort of thoughtful, expansive journalism which different theories of complex democracy claim as a necessary element of mediated democratic deliberation. They are practitioners of what some media scholars call `knowledge journalism', a level of discourse which enhances, rather than diminishes, the political public sphere. This is particularly important in an era of growing `oppositional and conflict-driven journalism' where, as Lumby says, `academic voices are not just being sidelined' but 'in some cases they are being openly ridiculed'.[47]

The fifth chapter examines their role as public intellectuals in Australia. It supports the claim made by Walter that Kelly and Megalogenis (for much of his career) have acted as `organic intellectuals'. It details their influence by adapting Richard Posner's method of measuring the status of public intellectuals.[48] This involves referencing the number and nature of their academic citations, the references to them in the quality media, citations in Parliamentary debate and their engagement with other public intellectuals through different media platforms.

The bulk of this chapter, however, evaluates their key historical interpretations in the light of other contemporary and subsequent interpretations from, mainly, academics but also from

[45] Paul Kelly, 'Time for a Rethink', *Australian Literary Review,* Oct. 3, 2007, p. 15.
[46] Edward Said cited in David Carter, 'The Conscience Industry: The Rise and Rise of the Public Intellectual' in David Carter, (ed.), *The Ideas Market*, p.15.
[47] Lumby, 'Outside In: Journalists and Academics in the Public Sphere', ibid., p. 217.
[48] Richard Posner, *Public Intellectuals: A Study of Decline*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2003, pp. 167-168.

other journalists and political insiders. While some may claim `the truly divided knowledge cultures of our times are not the sciences and the humanities but journalism and academia', this chapter suggests that, in the Australian context at least, the gap is not so great as there are some significant similarities in the interpretations of the historians and the journalists.[49]

After having delineated their roles as media intellectuals and the various means by which they act as `bearer(s) of ideas'[50] concluding comments identify if their ideas still have currency in a post-GFC world where it seems most of the economic reforms they have advocated are in place. They both remain advocates for the marriage of an open, internationalised `economy within a framework of social justice and equity' but differ significantly on how this should be achieved.[51] There is some truth in the description of Kelly as one of those generation of `established political pundits' who `have completely run out of ideas, but go on `flaunting faded social-democrat credentials even as they have embraced and often campaigned hard for neo-liberal economics or punitive social policies.'[52] Megalogenis has demonstrated more flexibility in his political thinking which seems to both reflect, and contribute to, a shift in the political discourse which has seen a growing number of voices urging a greater role for the state in the face of several threats to Australia's continuing prosperity. In any case it seems their role as media intellectuals debating issues in the Australian public sphere will continue for some time to come.

[49] Marjorie Garber cited in Catharine Lumby, 'Outside In: Journalists and Academics in the Public Sphere' in David Parker (ed.), *The Ideas Market*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, Vic., 2004, p. 202.
[50] James Walter, *What Were They Thinking?*, p. 31.
[51] Paul Kelly, *The End of Certainty: Power, Politics and Business in Australia* (Rev. ed.). St Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1994, 1992, p. 686.
[52] Mark Davis, 'Great White Noise' in David Carter, (ed.), *The Ideas Market*, p. 194.

CHAPTER ONE

THE BOOKS OF PAUL KELLY

Political histories by Australian journalists have been classified in three ways: `the quickie, the longer history and the investigative work.'[53] The books Kelly is most known for not only fall into the first two categories but have been significant in shaping those forms. While there is a long tradition of journalists writing Australian political history it was given great impetus by the publication of Alan Reid's *The Power Struggle* in 1969 which was ground breaking in the Australian context as it was published immediately after `the events it described' making it `the first quickie or contemporary history'.[54] It was a critical and popular success and Reid followed it with two more books of `instant history' covering the Gorton and Whitlam governments.[55] The next forty years saw the publication of over one hundred Australian journalistic political histories (compared to eleven written in the previous forty).[56] Paul Kelly – with eight books of political history (in addition to several other publications on related issues) – has been among the most prolific contributors to this genre and set the standard by which the longer history must be measured. His books `elevate his prestige and underlie his authority' and are, therefore, a crucial factor in his influence with the political class. The following outline identifies the major features of his style and details the arguments and interpretations which have had the most impact in the Australian political public sphere. Particular emphasis is given to assessing the validity of his depiction of those policies which Kelly argued were most significant in contributing to Australia's post-1991 economic expansion.

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[53] Jackie Dickenson, 'Journalists writing Australian political history', p. 105.
[54] Ibid., p. 108. Dickenson points out that, Warren Denning published his *Caucus Crisis: The Rise and Fall of the Scullin government*, Parramatta, NSW, 1937; revised edition, Sydney 1982 is regarded as the progenitor of the tradition but, unlike Reid's book was published several years after the events it describes.
[55] Ross Fitzgerald and Stephen Holt, *Alan "The Red Fox" Reid: pressman par excellence*, p. 199.
[56] Dickenson, p. 105.

The Dismissal 'Trilogy'

Kelly's first book, *The Unmaking of Gough* was one of several published immediately in the aftermath of the Whitlam government's dismissal. At the age of 29 and with six years' experience as a journalist (Reid was 54 and a political reporter for over 30 years when he wrote *The Power Struggle*) Kelly's debut showed he had built on the template established by Reid. While the book is a work of contemporary political history that features many elements of the 'quickie' its length (over 200,000 words), immense detail and the period it covers – from the start of Whitlam's second term in May 1974 to just after Whitlam's re-election by caucus as ALP leader in early 1976 – also indicates it has some of features of `the longer history'. Indeed, it was, at that time, the longest work of contemporary political history by a journalist ever published in Australia. It seemed as if Kelly wanted to deliberately demonstrate his rapid rise in the Canberra press gallery by using his swiftly established insider status to establish a new standard of comprehensiveness in this particular field. This insider status is defined by McNair as `the degree to which' a columnist `has access to elite political sources willing to divulge privileged information.'[57] For McNair, `insider status is probably the most essential skill required of the political columnist' because it has the effect of `signifying to the reader that here is a journalist who can penetrate the sub-surface levels of the political process and can reveal them to us as readers.'[58] *The Unmaking of Gough* both demonstrated Kelly's insider status and intellectual heft.

Like Reid's work it employs the narrative form but not in a strictly linear way. It begins, as does Reid's, with a scene of political intrigue, Gough Whitlam's meeting in Sydney on 8 December with two members of Iraq's Ba'ath Socialist Party to secure a $US500,000 donation to the ALP. Like Reid's work it also employs the devices of descriptive colour, reconstructed conversations and pen portraits of key figures. These are, according to

[57] Brian McNair, *Journalism and Democracy: Evaluation of Political Public Sphere*, Routledge, London and New York, 2002, p. 69.
[58] Ibid., p. 69.

Dickenson, characteristics of the quickie which also include being `written around a specific event...using inside knowledge gained by the journalist in the course of their duties' as well 'as a focus on personalities and conflict at the expense of impersonal forces, a restricted context, a lack of interest in formulating and testing causation, and limited research' involving a `rehash' of `material that already exists in the public domain.'[59]

Although *The Unmaking of Gough* does fulfil this description in some ways there are differences which also prefigure the direction of Kelly's later histories. The book does primarily concern one event – the dismissal of Prime Minister Gough Whitlam by the Governor-General John Kerr on November 11, 1975 – and the context is restricted in the sense that there is no discussion of wider economic and social forces (the former would become a key feature of Kelly's later work, the latter less so). There is, nonetheless a highly detailed account of the key events, of Australian federal politics from mid-1974, leading to the constitutional crisis and the five months following it. The focus, however, is entirely on domestic politics. A major omission is that there is no mention of Indonesia and East Timor; Kelly would later come to write extensively about Australia's relationship with these countries.

The book highlights some of the strengths and weaknesses of Kelly's mode and style. In following the template laid down by Reid and others, *The Unmaking of Gough* can be critiqued as a `recognisably generic' story of `the self-destruction of the newly powerful' which privileges `personalities as the drivers of history.'[60] As part of this process the text is composed as a drama which emphasises conflict over analysis. This approach is further highlighted by Kelly's use of Shakespearean analogies – also a feature of his later work – where, for example, an aspect of Fraser's Prime Ministership is seen as `tragedy' and

[59] Dickenson, p. 111 and p. 13.
[60] Scalmer and Dickenson, pp. 20-21.

Whitlam is described as `Banquo-like'[61] Kelly acknowledges that he sees politics as `a drama about people. It is human drama writ large' and his `first task is to reveal the personality and character of the main players to unlock the understanding of what is happening.'[62]

But to say it is only `political history as a chronicle of great, flawed individuals and the world they make' is an oversimplification.[63] *The Unmaking of Gough* was one of several books produced in the aftermath of the fall of the Whitlam government and was regarded by Blewett as `a more substantial and ambitious work than the others, and in many ways is a model of lucid instant history.'[64] The depth and vividness of Kelly's pen portraits of the central figures were also notable. Kelly's depiction of Malcolm Fraser was seen as `the most subtle and sympathetic available'[65] up to that time Blewett, however, pointed out that all these books, Kelly's included, were `lacking in economic perspective' and needed `a thorough explanation and assessment of the links between the international context, domestic malaise and government response.'[66] Such criticism may seem overstated in a book that has two chapters on the Loans Affair and individual chapters on the 1974 and 1975 budgets. Yet the minutiae of decision-making making are conveyed ahead of establishing the broader context of these events; and a deeper analysis of the significance of major decisions is wanting. There is, for example, no canvassing of the global developments such as the 1973 oil crisis and the emergence of stagflation in the major western economies, which saw many of them change government at the same time as Labor. Figures for inflation and unemployment are cited but no medium or long-term comparisons are made to enable an understanding of how damaging these seemed in the context of the post-war

[61] Paul Kelly, *The Dismissal: Australia's most sensational power struggle – the dramatic fall of Gough Whitlam*, Angus & Robertson Publishers, Melbourne, 1983, p.139 and p. 228. (*The Unmaking of Gough* was republished in its original form under this title in 1982).
[62] Paul Kelly, Personal communication, December 28, 2017.
[63] Scalmer and Dickenson, p. 21.
[64] Neal Blewett, Review Article, 'A Day in November', *Politics*, vol. xi, no.2, November, 1976, p. 230.
[65] Ibid.,, p. 220.
[66] Ibid., p.219.

boom. Similarly, budgetary outlays are given but not as a percentage of GDP or in comparison with previous governments' spending. Major decisions, such as the 1973 Tariff cut are discussed mainly in terms of their political impact rather than their wider significance in the history of industry protection. Nonetheless, the book remains a useful account of as an account of the interactions of the key political figures of the period.

McQueen, in his own review of the contemporary texts dealing with the dismissal, went further to assert that `the absence of the international dimension' in all of these books revealed `the bankruptcy of political journalism' at that time.[67] This was an omission that Kelly would only address fourteen years later in his third book.

Journalistic histories like, *The Unmaking of Gough* may also be seen as `commodities designed to maximise profit for publishers and newspapers.'[68] Certainly, the book was a popular and critical success being reprinted twice (again unusual for a `quickie' which `usually has a very short shelf life as events overtake it'[69]) and also adapted into a television mini-series, entitled *The Dismissal*, in 1983. It was reprinted under this title in order to accompany what is one of the very few examples of Australian political history to be dramatized on a commercial television network. This, in itself, could be seen as a significant achievement for at least attempting to portray a complex constitutional issue to a broad general audience. It also raises the question: is this process of commodification necessarily inimical to writing political history? McQueen, for example, still ultimately judged *The Unmaking of Gough* as `Essential for detail' and the `Best buy as permanent record.'[70] Indeed, *The Unmaking of Gough*, remains one of the most detailed chronological accounts of the period.

[67] Humphrey McQueen, 'The view from the non-members bar' *Nation Review*, June 11-17, 1976, p. 864
[68] Scalmer and Dickenson, p. 20.
[69] Scalmer, 'Journalists writing Australian political history', p. 108.
[70] McQueen, 'The view from the non-members bar', p. 864.

Another key feature of the genre, exemplified by *The Unmaking of Gough* is its reliance on the interview as the primary source of evidence and the minimal use of secondary sources. In the first edition there was, in fact, no bibliography or endnotes. It was not until the third edition that Kelly included the latter and these do reveal that the source material consisted largely of extensive author interviews with the key players. This promulgation of the political insider's point of view raises questions about how the political insider's proximity to power affects his role as a critic of government and how it mediates his analysis of the conceptual framework of domestic and international politics. These questions would be become more prominent in Kelly's later books which would increasingly feature more commentary and analysis along with historical description.

Kelly revisited the 1975 Constitutional crisis 20 years later in his fourth major book, *November 1975*. Its subtitle suggests the author believed a second volume was required as the dismissal was `Australia's greatest political crisis'. (Although, he does somewhat contradict this by acknowledging Malcolm Fraser's argument that the ALP split in the 1950s and the conscription debates in World War I were both more damaging to social cohesion carried 'much weight'; but, for Kelly, `The issue, however, is not whether 1975 caused more social and political divisions than other great crises. It is, rather whether the 1975 crisis that Fraser initiated was necessary').[71]

The twenty year gap between the two books does not ultimately lead Kelly to any new conclusions. In 1976 Kelly argued that Kerr's conduct meant he could be accused of partisanship and his actions were `certain to change the nature of the office of governor-general and provoke a new assessment as to what sort of person should fill it.'[72] Moreover, the period was `marked by a dangerous breakdown in constitutional conventions, without

[71] Paul Kelly, *November 1975*: *the inside story of Australia's greatest political crisis*, Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, NSW, 1995, p. 288.
[72] Kelly, *The Dismissal*, p. 296.

which the democratic system cannot survive' which `have clearly altered the pattern of Australian politics and tilted the system towards instability.'[73] The fact that the opposite – stability in constitutional matters – has occurred indicates a limitation of the contemporary political history.

The new account, published for the twentieth anniversary of the dismissal, saw Kelly employ a wider range of resources, although not wide enough for one critic who chides Kelly for not acknowledging or overlooking some key sources.[74] Again as in the first book Kelly emphasises the clash of personalities. Kelly believes, `The key to 1975 lies in the personalities and characters of Whitlam, Fraser, Kerr and their judgments of each other.'[75] Kelly is, this time, much more explicit in his criticism of Sir John Kerr who, he says, `assumed the role of Crown's executioner against a majority leader of the Representatives' which `guaranteed a divided community, an alienated Labor Party and a campaign against him until his own resignation.'[76] All of which could have been avoided but for Kerr's `abdication of the responsibility of the Crown's representative' in failing `to counsel or warn Whitlam.'[77]

Lovell, however, claims that Kelly often employs `a pop psychology where speculation is presented as fact, and which is – more importantly – unnecessary.'[78] In addition Kelly's criticism that Kerr damaged the office of Governor-General `ignores a fact…so pervasive it seems to become invisible: that Whitlam and Fraser both predicated their strategies on a thorough contempt for their office.'[79] Conversely, Manne found *November 1975* to be `the

[73] Kelly, *The Dismissal*, p. 353.
[74] J. B. Paul, 'Paul Kelly on the Dismissal' in *Quadrant*, December 1976, pp. 53-55. Paul, in defence of Kerr, says Kelly does not acknowledge a key analysis of the Senate's powers: Harrison Moore's *The Constitution of the Commonwealth of Australia* (1910) and that Kelly quotes I. Jennings to support his argument while overlooking other remarks that are contradictory.
[75] Kelly, *November 1975*, p. 2.
[76] Ibid., p. 306.
[77] Ibid., p. 300.
[78] David W. Lovell, 'Revisiting the Whitlam Dismissal', *Policy*, Summer 1995-96, p.45.
[79] Ibid., pp. 46-47.

most penetrating analysis of the dramas which overtook Australian politics in the spring of 1975.'[80]

The new account also reflects a broader perspective. In *The Unmaking of Gough* Kelly ultimately seemed more interested in the ramifications of the dismissal for the political parties rather than the constitutional implications. In assessing the legacy of the dismissal in *November 1975* Kelly does identify a number of the broader consequences. Party politics is still important as, `The crisis left a legacy of paranoia and bitterness on both sides.'[81] Fraser's actions "represented the last gasp of the Menzian `born-to-rule' Liberal Party" and the `1975 election rejection left the ALP discredited and divided' as it ended `the Whitlam era' which began `in optimism and idealism' and `finished in despair and anger.'[82] Kelly makes the unremarkable conclusion that the conflict between a federal system with a Senate that can block supply and the convention that government is formed in the lower house remains unresolved. Kelly also acknowledges that Labor governments have `been unable to resolve the question of powers at the heart of the dismissal because the community remains fundamentally divided about them.'[83]

Kelly goes further with his claim that becoming a republic `will achieve Australian independence' although, in typically cautious fashion he says 'its ability to resolve outstanding constitutional issues must not be exaggerated.'[84] He claims `a President would be more secure than a Governor-General' and Kerr's argument that his actions were necessary to protect the Crown would be made redundant.[85] Finally, the argument that Australia is already a `crowned republic' is actually "an argument for taking the final

[80] Robert Manne, 'November 1975: Character and Crisis', *Quadrant*, vol. 39, no. 12,1995, p.83.
[81] Kelly, *November 1975*, p.310
[82] Ibid., p.311.
[83] Ibid., p. 315.
[84] Ibid.
[85] Ibid., pp. 315-316.

step...making Australia's `crowned republic' a true republic."[86] Kelly's advocacy of the republican idea was, as will be seen, frequently returned to in subsequent books and journalism; but a significant, ongoing, division among republicans over the preferred model – Kelly champions a president chosen by parliament while opinion polls indicate a directly elected head of state is preferred by the majority of the pro-republican electorate remains the major obstacle to any transition to a republic.

Macintyre sees Kelly's two books on Whitlam as offering `the fullest record of the Whitlam government's demise.'[87] Yet the approximately 400 000 words on the events surrounding the constitutional crisis represented by these two books are still not necessarily comprehensive. Even with regard to Whitlam himself, it has been acknowledged that Kelly, as the journalist who has probably interviewed Whitlam the most extensively, did `assiduously and skilfully muster both the positive and negative qualities of Whitlam as leader' only to `finally erect them in counterpoint as a baffling paradox.'[88]

For the fortieth anniversary of the dismissal Kelly produced yet another book on this event. *The Dismissal: In the Queen's name* was Kelly's first co-authored book; Kelly's co-writer Troy Bramston was a fellow journalist at *The Australian* and the author or editor on several books concerning ALP history and the party's current status. The third book included new archival material but did not reach new conclusions about the causes and consequences of the 1975 constitutional crisis. Despite one critic's remark that `new discoveries of minutiae rarely provide much insight' the book gained much attention and was generally well received.[89] Kelly's position and status ensured – as with the previous books – extensive publicity in his

[86] Kelly, *November 1975,* p. 316.
[87] Stuart Macintyre, 'Political History' in Graeme Davidson, John Hirst and Stuart Macintyre, (eds.), *The Oxford Companion to Australian History*, Melbourne, 1998, p. 313.
[88] James Walter, *The Leader: A Political Biography of Gough Whitlam*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, Queensland, 1980, p. 4.
[89] Michael Lucy, 'It's time (to move on), *The Monthly*, 11 November 2015, viewed 17 July, 2016, <https://www.themonthly.com.au/today/michael-lucy/2015/11/2015/.../it-s-time-move>.

newspaper prior to the book's official launch by Malcom Turnbull, the first Liberal prime minister to disagree with Kerr's actions on November 11, 1975. It was followed by extensive interviews with the authors, at writers' festivals, book shops, the ANU and on ABC radio and television. All of these are sites are where the book's expected audience – politically-engaged citizens – could best be engaged in order to both promote discussion and maximise sales.

Most critics found the book to be as authoritative as its predecessors thanks to the sheer amount of evidence adduced by the authors to support their conclusions. Indeed, Ross Fitzgerald commends the authors' use of new and existing evidence but goes on to state that `the reality is that, using the same extremely valuable information Kelly and Bramston have supplied in this usefully illustrated book, one can draw somewhat different conclusions.'[90] Fitzgerald, against Kelly and Bramston's interpretation, concludes, `Kerr, for all his faults, emerges as someone who was consistent, especially in relation to the reserve powers.'[91] Kelly's extensive deployment of the existing evidence makes his books the most authoritative analyses of these events but his interpretation is still contested on both the left and the right.

The assessment of former Howard staffer and Conservative commentator, Gerard Henderson, concurs with Fitzgerald's. Henderson contested a key piece of new evidence – a note from Fraser which apparently confirms Kerr called Fraser on the morning November 11 to inform him of his intention to dismiss Whitlam. More importantly, Henderson argues Kelly and Bramston rely too much on the possibly faulty recollections of players long after the

[90] Ross Fitzgerald, 'Updating the dismissal', *The Australian*, 28 November 2015, p. 19.
[91] Ibid.

event. Moreover, the authors `misunderstand this matter' while 'Kerr understood the reality – and acted to resolve the deadlock.'[92]

Henderson is an example of those on the right who support Kerr's defence of his actions. In contrast there are those on the far left, such as journalist Guy Rundle, who, drawing on earlier material from other journalists such as John Pilger and Brian Toohey, argue Kelly and Bramston ignore evidence pointing towards CIA involvement in the constitutional crisis. In three long articles Rundle cited evidence – much of it circumstantial – that he claims Kelly and Bramston omit or fail to properly address in their book.[93] Kelly, as in his previous books on this period, refutes the claims of a CIA conspiracy on a number of grounds. For Kelly, and Bramston, it remains – without `new and definitive evidence' – `nothing but a myth.'[94]

Such polarised reactions – admittedly from the minority of reviewers – indicate that despite Kelly's tongue-in-cheek claim that each of his books `is the definitive account' – the constitutional crisis will continue to be the subject of future interpretations.[95]

With regard to Garber and Lumby's concerns about the division between academic and journalistic discourse, an instructive comparison may be made with *The Dismissal Dossier: Everything you were never meant to know about November 1975* by academic Jenny Hocking which was published in the same year as Kelly and Bramston's book. Like the journalists, Hocking is highly critical of Fraser and Kerr but goes further to claim that Buckingham palace had a greater role in the dismissal which had not been revealed in previous accounts. This

[92] Gerard Henderson, 'Evidence, Memory and the Dismissal', *The Sydney Institute Review*, Sydney Institute, Sydney, February 2 2016, viewed 2 June 2016, < *review.thesydneyinstitute.com.au/2016/02/02/evidence-memory-and-the-dismissal/>.*

[93] Guy Rundle, 'Rundle: Kelly and Bramston ignore evidence that the CIA undid Gough', *Crikey*, December 7, 2015, viewed July 10. 2016, *https://www.crikey.com.au/.../**rundle**-**kelly**-and-**bramston**-ignore-evidence-that-the-cia...>.*

[94] Paul Kelly and Troy Bramston, *The Dismissal: In the Queen's Name*, Penguin Australia Pty Ltd, 2015, p. 270.

[95] 'Paul Kelly and Troy Bramston discuss the dismissal', *Experience ANU,* ANU, Canberra, 11 November 2015, *viewed 20 July 2016, <https://soundcloud.com/experience_anu/the_dismissal_anu>.*

assertion and claims about the role of High Court judge, Anthony Mason were grounds for criticism in academic and journalistic reviews of the book.

Henderson, as noted above, disagreed with some aspects of Kelly and Bramston's interpretation but described *The Dismissal: In the Queen's name* as a `substantial, and well researched book' while Hocking is criticized for a lack of hard evidence to support some of her claims and for overstating the role of High Court judge, Anthony Mason (Henderson points out that he was the first to reveal Mason's influence in a 1994 newspaper column).[96] Academic, Paul Rodan, also argues that Hocking's evidence lacks substance with regard to her claim that Kerr had kept Buckingham Palace informed about the possibility of dismissal to a much greater extent than previously revealed.[97] Interestingly Rodan concluded the journalists' book was `the more important contribution' – it certainly accesses a wider range of resources – which in turn demonstrates an argument of this thesis that journalists can indeed produce scholarly work that stands with work produced from within the academy.

Nonetheless, Walter, on the other hand, argues that Kelly's books of `descriptive journalism… make a limited contribution to political science' as `they share no common grounds of debate' with the other types of books on Whitlam (`the caustic critique…the political history').[98] This is contestable as Kelly's books are clearly in the category of political history. Certainly, Walter's `psychobiography' of Whitlam is almost as widely cited as all of Kelly's books on the dismissal put together but it does not have the advantage of being in print. Kelly has had a book on the dismissal in print for much of the period since November 1975 and the new evidence is included each edition. As a result, Kelly's interpretation of

[96] Gerard Henderson, 'Evidence, Memory and the Dismissal'. Henderson argues that Hocking relies too much on after-the-fact interviews which were 'given on the understanding that they will not be made public until after the interviewee's death' and 'are worthless as historical accounts – since there is no way of subjecting the person concerned to cross-examination.'

[97] Paul Rodan, 'Some of the things we weren't meant to know about the Dismissal', *Inside Story*, 10 November 2015, viewed July 10. 2016, <http://insidestory.org.au/some-of-the-things-we-werent-meant-to-know-about-the-dismissal>.

[98] James Walter, *The Leader: A Political Biography of Gough Whitlam*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, Queensland, 1980 p. 4.

events periodically attains prominence in the public sphere and becomes the account against which other interpretations are measured. Through this process these books achieve the status as `standard' reference texts regarding the dismissal and some key events of the Whitlam era, but the emergence of new material will, no doubt, see reinterpretations of this event.[99]

The Hawke Ascendancy

In 1984 Kelly published his second book *The Hawke Ascendancy: A Definitive Account of its Origins and Climax 1975-1983*. This account of Australian federal politics from the fall of Whitlam to the election of Bob Hawke is another book that had the features typical of contemporary political journalistic history written up until that time. It was, like its predecessor, `newspaper-friendly, personality-focused, dramatically-rendered and insider-oriented'.[100] But unlike *The Unmaking of Gough*, Kelly was clearly more judicious in his selection of material. The excessive detail of the first book was gone.[101] In the new book Kelly managed to cover a longer time period in less detail and produce a more compelling narrative.

The individuals at the centre of this story are Malcolm Fraser, Bill Hayden and Bob Hawke. For John Howard, `Kelly's account of the political interplay' between the three men 'provides a fascinating insight into Australian politics.'[102] Once again the source material consisted largely of Kelly's interviews with key figures of the period and newspaper articles. Kelly claimed the text did `not favour any individual or party over another' (although, of course,

[99] There is, for example, correspondence between Sir John Kerr and Buckingham Palace which may not be released until at least 2027. At that point, official approval will still be needed from Government house and the Queen's private secretary. Kelly and Bramston believe 'these policies… are not consistent with Australia's independence' (*The Dismissal: In the Queen's Name*, p. 313.) and raised this issue formally with then prime minister Tony Abbott and the Attorney-General George Brandis.

[100] Scalmer and Dickenson, p. 19.

[101] Kelly's inclusion of some minor details, were puzzling in that they added little to achieving verisimilitude and slowed the narrative. For example, the use of superfluous dialogue: '…Taylor and Brogan raised the issue with the prime minister when they accidentally bumped into him outside his office." Can we see you for a moment," (sic) Brogan said suddenly and they went to Whitlam's office...', *The Dismissal*, p. 72.

[102] John Howard, *The Hawke Ascendancy* in *Quadrant*, April 1984, p. 20.

the very titles of his first books suggest the author's primary interest was the ALP and its leadership).[103] Yet there was also, as Howard pointed out, some indication of the `author's personal views', notably an enthusiasm for reformist government.[104] This enthusiasm was to become more significant in Kelly's subsequent books and journalism.

It was primarily seen in Kelly's endorsement of the Whitlam government's achievements and assessment of Fraser's failures. Kelly regarded the `early phase of the Whitlam years' as the most recent and successful period of genuine reform'.[105] In identifying the reasons for Whitlam's ultimate failure Kelly reveals, all too briefly, his understanding of how that generation of ALP politicians was isolated from Australia's power elites which include: `the bureaucracy, international capital, the media, the opinion-making elites and the basic middle-class yearnings dominated by aspirations for personal security and opposition to sudden unexplained change.'[106] Analysing the conflict between the need for political, economic and social change in the face of constituencies unwilling to accept it would be a recurring in theme in Kelly's writings – and one which he would come to address in much more depth.

Aspects of Kelly's future preoccupations are touched on in his criticism of Fraser's protection of Australian industry, his mishandling of industrial relations and his social conservatism `which had little understanding of and no sympathy for the new social forces changing the traditional family structure.'[107] These were ideas Kelly would return to in his subsequent books and journalism but here they are not addressed, let alone explored– they only imply, at this stage, the author's support for economic liberalism and social progressivism. Nor is the source of these ideas apparent; there are fleeting references to

[103] Paul Kelly, 'Foreward' to *The Hawke Ascendancy: A Definitive Account of its Origins and Climax 1975-1983*, Angus & Robertson Publishers, London, Sydney, Melbourne, 1984.
[104] John Howard, 'The Hawke Ascendancy', *Quadrant*, vol.28, no.4, 1984, p.22.
[105] Kelly, *The Hawke Ascendancy*, p. 421.
[106] Ibid., p. 423.
[107] Ibid., p. 429.

`Fraser's lurch towards Keynesian economics' and that `He was never a monetarist, never a Margaret Thatcher.'[108] Kelly even hypothesised that Howard's `free-market decentralised wages system represents the wave of the future' – a tenet of neo-liberalism Kelly would come to embrace completely.'[109]

But, overall, it remains a book typical of its genre in that it is more about political manoeuvrings and personalities rather than public-policy ideas or historical analysis. For example, in listing Fraser's achievements there is no mention of Fraser's acceptance of Vietnamese refugees – a policy Kelly came to regard as crucial in Australia's acceptance of the end of the White Australia policy. Kelly also thought, the Hawke government's `most enduring achievement was the upholding of the High Court of the Commonwealth's constitutional power to halt the Gordon-below-Franklin dam in Tasmania.'[110] Kelly does not mention the decisions of that year which he came to cite in his next book as the most significant – the floating of the dollar and the deregulation of the financial system. Instead, `The most fascinating decision for Hawke' was not a policy issue but `when to seek re-election.'[111] In his analysis of this power struggle Kelly did cite evidence to presciently conclude `that the decade of the 1980s will belong to Hawke.'[112] As with his first book *The Hawke Ascendancy* remains a compelling, highly readable narrative and one of several useful references to this period in Australian federal politics.

The End of Certainty

With his first two books Kelly had established himself as Alan Reid's heir apparent (Reid retired in 1985); the other leading Canberra Press gallery journalists had also written books but none had achieved the critical and popular success of Kelly's tomes. With his third he surpassed the master and set a new standard for journalists writing contemporary histories

[108] Kelly, *The Hawke Ascendancy*, p. 429 and 425.
[109] Ibid., p. 441.
[110] Ibid., p. 444.
[111] Ibid., p. 451
[112] Ibid., p. 452

of Australian politics. Released in 1992, *The End of Certainty: The Story of the 1980s* reveals how Kelly's interest in public policy and the Australian historical context had clearly deepened. With this book Kelly was as interested in how political power was used to achieve change as well as how it was won and lost. The book was well received although the initial reviews did not always suggest that this would be Kelly's most significant book – one that Manne would come to regard as `perhaps the most influential Australian political book written since Donald Horne's *Lucky Country*.'[113] Manne's meaning is indicated when he goes on to suggest that Kelly's interpretation of the historical period `is significant in shaping Australia's future.'[114] Whether it will have the ongoing resonance of Horne's book remains to be seen. It has not, so far at least, been subject to the `decades of misappropriation and distortion' that befell *The Lucky Country*.[115]

Even though Bill Hayden described it as an `eminently readable, well-documented and invaluable historical source',[116] McEachern said it was characterised by `a fairly restricted conception of …politics' and was `replete with a simplifying narrative structure, goodies and baddies' and `a desire to side with the victors of history.'[117] Henderson went further saying that the problem of using reconstructed conversation (and Kelly's failure to `discuss the evidentiary problems raised by his methodology') meant `*The End of Certainty* is not history. Rather is it (sic) a high class interpretative and opinionated journalism.'[118] Henderson went on to identify several minor errors of fact in how his relationship with Howard and the Liberal Party was characterised. Other academic reviews were less critical but certainly not effusive; Roberts, for example, said its `strengths…are also it weaknesses', it was `an old-

[113] Manne, 'The Insider', p. 22.
[114] Ibid.
[115] Carl Reinecke, 'The Lucky Country Turns Fifty', *Inside Story*. 1 December 2014, viewed 12 October, 2017, <http://insidestory.org.au/the-lucky-country-turns-fifty>.
[116] Bill Hayden, 'The End of Certainty' (Book review), *The Australian Quarterly*, vol. 64, no. 4, Summer, 1992, p. 457.
[117] Doug McEachern, 'Book Reviews', *Australian Historical Studies*, vol. 26, no. 103, p. 333.
[118] Gerard Henderson, 'Paul Kelly's Tome – A Great Read; but is it History?', *Media Watch*, Sydney Institute, no. 24, October-December 1992, p. 3.

fashioned cabinet history' that showed `a small elite, driven by ideology and egotism, deciding the future of the nation in the comfortable isolation of Canberra'.[119] While Coghlan merely concluded that Kelly had `made a valuable contribution to the subject of deregulation induced by Social Democracy.'[120]

Much of the impact of the book stems from the introduction which has been `widely used to introduce students of Australian politics to the history of key themes in the field.'[121] Here, Kelly adumbrates a description of post-federation Australian history he calls the `Australian Settlement'. It consisted of the laws and institutions which could be categorised as `White Australia, Industry Protection, Wage Arbitration, State Paternalism and Imperial Benevolence.'[122] This framework created a `Fortress Australia' which was endorsed by both major parties and had wide support that cut across class and religious divisions. Kelly claimed this meant the post-federation 'political contest' was not `about ideology – the system and its institutions – but rather about the terms and conditions on which they operate.'[123] It was about equality – `the division of national income more than the generation of national income.'[124]

Kelly uses this historical interpretation to highlight the significance of the policy changes introduced throughout the 1980s which started the process of dismantling the settlement which was `introspective, defensive, dependent' to replace it with a new settlement of `sustained economic progress' that `was more outward looking.' As a result of this, Kelly argues, the fundamental division in post -1983 politics is no longer between the ALP and the

[119] Malcolm Roberts, 'Book Reviews', *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, vol. 39, no. 3, 1993, p. 445.
[120] Martin Coghlan, 'Reviews' in *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, vol. 27, no. 1, 1997, p.129.
[121] Geoffrey Stokes, 'The 'Australian Settlement' and Australian Political Thought', *Australian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 39, no. 1, 2004, p. 5.
[122] Paul Kelly, *The End of Certainty: The Story of the 1990s*, pp. 1-2.
[123] Ibid., p. 13.
[124] Ibid., p. 13.

Liberal coalition , even though partisan `differences were real and bitter.'[125] The division cuts across party lines to be `between the international rationalists and the sentimental traditionalists.'[126] The former `know the Australian Settlement is unsustainable', the latter `fight to retain it.'[127]

Kelly's conception draws on the work of number of historians particularly W. K. Hancock for his analysis of protection and State Paternalism. The work of Frederick Eggleston was also utilised for the latter and Edward Shann and Leon Glezner for the former. Kelly condensed and shaped this source material for what he considered to be the key developments of Australia's post-federation history into a cogent model which has had remarkable resonance.

There were also other precedents. Frank Castles had, as De Angelis argues, `developed the idea of an Australian Settlement before Kelly did, and in a broader perspective, both historical and comparative.'[128] Whilst Gerard Henderson pointed out he used the term "Federation trifecta" in his book *Australian Answers*, published in 1990, `to describe the bipartisan consensus which was reached in the first decade of the Commonwealth on centralised industrial relations, protection all round and White Australia.'[129] Kelly's "Australian settlement" was simply his '"Federation trifecta" plus two.'[130]

Yet Kelly's conception of the Australian settlement `despite its flaws and omissions, is widely recognised by scholars to have captured something of the essence of Australia's twentieth century policy paradigm.'[131] It has stimulated several critiques which have contributed to

[125] Kelly, *The End of Certainty: The Story of the 1990s*, p. 2.
[126] Ibid.
[127] Ibid.
[128] Richard DeAngelis, "A Comment on the 'Australian Settlement' Symposium", *Australian Journal of Political Science'*, vol. 39, no. 3, 2004, p. 657.
[129] Gerard Henderson, 'Nothing Like a Bit of Free Publicity', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 7 November, 1995, p. 15.
[130] Ibid.
[131] Seth Nicholls, *Structuring the Bounds of the Possible: Neoliberalism and the Discursive Hegemony of Neoclassical Economics*, PhD thesis, April 2010, p. 92.

further understanding of the policies and institutions which shaped post-federation Australia.[132] Others have critiqued it in order to develop or defend more sophisticated conceptions of post-federation Australian history.[133] But as Stokes, a prominent critic of the concept, has said, `Kelly has made a distinctive contribution to the study of politics…his brief account of the Australian Settlement sets the criteria of significance by which we ought to assess the recent evolution of Australian politics.'[134] Interestingly, the lasting potency of the concept is evidenced by its uncritical acceptance of some prominent journalists[135] and, occasionally, academics.[136]

The 34 chapters of the text alternate between commentary on the key policy initiatives of the period and the traditional generic accounts of the power struggles within the parties. The initial chapters set the pattern where Kelly depicts the `market reformers as winning the contest [of ideas] through their intellectual force and freedom from sectional interests while opponents of deregulation are trapped in the past or are vested interests such as powerful trade unions, sections of manufacturing industry…and public sector professionals.'[137] The first chapter analyses the changes in the ALP from Whitlam to Hawke where `an heroic fusion between the revised neo-classical economic wisdom and Labor's Accord commitment

[132] See, for, example, Paul Smyth and Bettina Cass, (eds.), *Contesting the Australian Way: States, Markets and Civil Society*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998 or Alan Fenna, 'Putting the 'Australian Settlement' in Perspective' in *Labor History*, no. 102, May 2012, pp. 99-118.
[133] See, for example, Geoffrey Stokes, The 'Australian Settlement' and Australian Political Thought' in *Australian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 39, no. 1, pp. 5-22.
[134] Geoffrey Stokes, 'A Rejoinder' in *Australian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 39, no. 1, 2004, p. 47.
[135] Laura Tingle, 'Great Expectations: Government, Entitlement and an Angry Nation', *Quarterly Essay*, 46, June 2012, Black Inc. Press, Collingwood, Victoria, 2012, p. 9.
[136]Judith Brett, 'What Malcolm Turnbull might have learned from Alfred Deakin', *The Conversation*, August 15 2017, viewed, December 13 2017, < https://theconversation.com/what-malcolm-turnbull-might-have-learned-from-alfred-deakin-82444>. Brett writes: 'In his brilliantly succinct description of Australian settlement, Paul Kelly identified the core policies of the early Commonwealth with Deakin, and compulsory arbitration and the basic wage with his Liberal colleague, Henry Bournes Higgins.'
[137] Marion Sawer, 'Comment: The Australian Settlement Undone' in *Australian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 39, no. 1, 2004, p. 35.

to growth and employment' was attempted.[138] The second chapter depicts the reaction to Fraser and the rise of the free market lobby within the Liberal Party. Kelly refers to the `political revolutions of Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan' and the intellectual influence of Adam Smith, F. A. Hayek and Milton Friedman to comment that `Economic libertarianism was an idea whose time had come.'[139] Kelly asserts and acknowledges their influence but does not offer an analysis of their thought.

In addition, the specific dismantling of each pillar of the Australian Settlement does not constitute the bulk of the text. Conflict between and within the parties is still paramount, although it is often mediated by the struggle between the defenders of the Australian Settlement and their opponents. In regard to actual policy analysis, Kelly argues that the most important decision made by the Hawke government to modernise the economy was the floating of the dollar and the deregulation of the financial system. It was for Kelly the first and most significant move away from the Australian Settlement.

In his chapter on the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission Kelly extensively canvases the debate over centralised wage fixing, particularly the arguments of Gerard Henderson, John Howard, Ian Macphee, Hugh Morgan and, finally, John Stone who, Kelly says `brought his destructive logic down on Justice Higgins.'[140] Kelly later cites the Accord Mark III and IV and the subsequent weakening of the IRC as the first steps towards enterprise bargaining which constituted the undermining of the third pillar of the Settlement, Wage Arbitration.

Kelly examines the ongoing consequences of the collapse of the first pillar, the White Australia policy through beginning with the immigration debate provoked by Geoffrey Blainey's comments on Asian immigration in 1984. The author argues a non-discriminatory

[138] Kelly, *The End of Certainty*, p. 31.
[139] Ibid., p. 35.
[140] Ibid., p. 122.

immigration was in the `national self-interest,'[141] and concludes that it while it 'touched a nerve-centre of discontent with many aspects of immigration and multiculturalism' particularly `within non-Labor politics', White Australia was finished 'with a majority of (sic) both sides likely to support a multicultural future.'[142]

Surprisingly, Kelly does not have a specific chapter on tariff reduction. It is, like many of the issues, discussed as they arise in the narrative. He concludes that financial deregulation was a necessary precondition to the March 1991 Industry Statement which was `an historic milestone.'[143] It contained significant tariff reductions which `effectively terminated Australia's century of Protection.'[144] Nor is State Paternalism examined in a specific chapter, in fact Kelly does not identify any specific decisions as pivotal in its decline. Rather the suite of deregulatory and privatising policies introduced by the Hawke government is, by implication, the destroyer of this pillar.

Imperial Benevolence receives the least commentary. Kelly briefly refers to Keating's accession to the prime ministership and his launch of a campaign for a Republic and a new flag as `a naked assault upon the final settlement belief.'[145] Hawke and Keating's foreign policy is barely referred too. This was another issue which Kelly would, in his books, and journalism, come to take a much greater interest.

Kelly acknowledges that these `economic rationalist' policies `were seen by the community to be devoid of any moral base and to have produced immoral results.'[146] Yet, `the argument of the free market right becomes compelling' because: `Its proposition is simple – the faster Australia hastens its reforms and becomes more productive, the sooner it can return to the

[141] Kelly, *The End of Certainty*, p. 127.
[142] Ibid., p. 134.
[143] Ibid., p. 665.
[144] Ibid., p. 666.
[145] Ibid., p. 679.
[146] Ibid., p. 684.

path of sustained growth and employment creation.'[147] This, in turn, has created a `crisis of ideology' for the ALP where the `the only real choice' is to `try to strike a reconciliation between market efficiencies and government intervention.'[148]

Manne, in his initial review, thought the book was `a genuine *tour de force*' but was not convinced by Kelly's claims about the main economic reforms of the period and argued that the recession of the early 1990s and the explosion in foreign debt `called into question the whole thrust of…economic rationalism.'[149] Kelly was aware of the problems: `free markets have the potential to destroy the social status quo. They can uproot communities...and demolish long-established social ties and employment habits.'[150] He concluded in his introduction to the 1994 edition that the 1993 election of Keating `was neither a repudiation nor an affirmation of the new order polity replacing the Australian Settlement.'[151] Kelly claimed that despite the recession `no alternative policy paradigm was produced to reverse the direction of the 1990s' and `This was testimony to the continued power of free market ideas.'[152] Kelly also predicted `that Australia would experience a sustained low-inflation recovery for several years assisted by the structural changes of the 1980s, deepening integration with the Asia-Pacific and a more diversified and efficient economy.'[153] And it does seem that much of this, with the exception of diversification, has largely happened. The Australian economy has not had a recession since 1991 (after experiencing five in the previous 20 years).[154] By several other measures the Australian economy has experienced `the longest boom in its history.'[155] Quiggin, although unpersuaded by this conclusion

[147] Kelly, *The End of Certainty*, p. 681.
[148] Ibid., pp. 685-686.
[149] Robert Manne, 'The World – As Seen from Canberra' in *Quadrant*, December, 1992, p.74.
[150] Kelly, *The End of Certainty*, p. 418.
[151] Kelly, *The End of Certainty: Power, politics and business in Australia*, Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, NSW, Rev. ed., 1994, [1992], p. ix.
[152] Ibid., p. xxii.
[153] Kelly, *The End of Certainty: Power, politics and business in Australia*, p. xxviii
[154] John Edwards, *Quiet Boom: How the Long Economic Upswing is Changing Australia its Place in the World*, Lowy Institute Paper 14, Longueville Media, 2006, p. vii
[155] Ibid.

acknowledges the book as `the authoritative account of the political process that drove market liberal reform in Australia.'[156] While Warhurst and Chalmers regard it as `a modern classic' that, despite being 'lightly sourced,' is `the best starting point for Hawke scholars.'[157] Such responses, from academics and politicians (Chalmers was elected to the Australian federal parliament in 2013) are a further indication of Kelly's intellectual influence.

Unlike Kelly, Shanahan argued that exchange rate deregulation is not the Hawke government's most significant achievement.[158] Its `more important legacy is `a change in thinking' about how Australia `could meet the challenge' of globalisation in a socially just way.[159] If this is the case then it may be argued that this gives the book added significance. That is, given the commercial success of *The End of Certainty* (a second edition was printed two years later), and that almost any account of the Hawke-Keating era needs to refer to it, it could be said that this book was, in itself, a key text in promoting `the view that a failure to respond to international market signals would result in a long-term decline in living standards.'[160]

Another aspect of *The End of Certainty* is that Kelly's advocacy of economic rationalism was closely linked to his portrayal of globalisation. Kelly uses the term largely in its economic and political aspects, rather than as a contested idea involving `a multidimensional set of social processes that resists being confined to any single framework.'[161] It is a concept that also has cultural, ecological and ideological dimensions but Kelly's focus is on the economic aspect of

[156] John Quiggin, 'As luck would have it', *Inside Story*, 28 June, 2012, viewed 1 November 2013, <http://inside.org.au/as-luck-would-have-it/#sthash.eyA70H7N.dpuf>.
[157] John Warhurst and Jim Chalmers, 'Studying the Hawke Government: A bibliographical essay' in Susan Ryan & Troy Bramston, (eds.), *The Hawke Government: A Critical Retrospective*, Pluto Press Australia, North Melbourne, Victoria, pp. 441-442.
[158] Martin Shanahan, 'Economic Policy of the Hawke Years' in Gerry Bloustein, Barbara Comber and Alison Mackinnon, (eds.), *The Hawke Legacy*, Wakefield Press, Kent Town, South Australia, 2009 p. 174.
[159] Ibid.
[160] Ibid.
[161] Manfred B. Steger, *Globalization: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, 2009, p. x.

this complex process and the effects on the Australian economy. For Kelly, `globalisation of markets' is `ongoing and irresistible.'[162] Drawing on the work of social researcher Hugh Mackay, Kelly acknowledged the essential tension between the forces unleashed by globalisation and their effects on social stability and security. He was, not quite yet, a `hyperglobaliser.'[163]

In addition, Kelly understood that: `A pure theory of economic efficiency cannot satisfy most democratic electorates where social, human and moral requirements will often outweigh the economic.'[164] Kelly concluded that: `That the challenge for Australian leadership is to internationalise the economy within a framework of social justice and equity thereby retaining the deepest and oldest Australian values.'[165] The idea of trying to reconcile economic rationalism with social democracy became the essential concern of Kelly's next three books.

Future Tense

Following the 1998 election the *Australian* produced *Future Tense: Australia beyond Election 1998*, a collection of essays by its journalists writing in their specialist policy areas. The rationale for the book was, according to the Introduction, the failure of the major parties to articulate policies in a range of areas particularly education, health, welfare, native title, immigration and rural policy, as well as a larger national `vision' for the new century. Paul Kelly's contribution was a long essay entitled *The Paradox of Pessimism*.

It was subtitled *Australia today-and tomorrow* and, in line with this, Kelly describes contemporary Australia as a place `beset by a paradox' – the `economy and standards of living have never been stronger or higher' but the public `mood' of apprehension and

[162] Kelly, *The End of Certainty*, p.ix.
[163] A term used to describe those who support the economic dimension of globalisation. See Manfred B. Steger, *Globalisation: A Very Short Introduction*.
[164] Kelly, *The End of Certainty*, p. 419.
[165] Ibid., p.686.

uncertainty' suggested `a confused, insecure nation pessimistic about its future.'[166] Kelly lists a series of social problems including, inter alia, the high level of divorce (he cites no statistics), the increased percentage of the population on welfare and the significant electoral support for the One Nation party as symptomatic of the national mood. Yet this existed alongside high economic growth accompanying seven years of sustained recovery, relatively low inflation and interest rates. The failure of much of the population to appreciate this has created a `culture of complaint'.[167] Kelly returns to the central theme of his magnum opus to say the 1990s have been dominated by `the clash between the economic imperative of globalisation and the community's demand for security and safety in a mesmerising world.'[168]

Keeping with this theme: `The enduring legacy of the 1993 election was that Australians wanted economic reforms limited by a social compassion',[169] but Keating moved too far left by focussing on the Republic, reconciliation and Asia-Pacific and lost to the Liberal Party which in desperation had turned to John Howard. For Kelly, Howard's second victory revealed that `globalisation and scepticism' required `a new politics' involving `a better integration of economics, social policy, values and leadership.'[170] This, in turn, meant market reforms had further to go as the forces of globalisation created a crisis for social democracy. Kelly is, on the one hand more explicit in his prescriptions about what needs to be done to restore faith in government, promote public confidence and sustain democracy; but, on the other, is often lacking in detailing concrete policy solutions.

[166] Paul Kelly, 'The Paradox of Pessimism' in Murray Waldron (ed.), *Future Tense: Australia beyond election 1998*, Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, NSW, 1999, p. 1.
[167] Kelly appears to have appropriated this term from Robert Hughes's earlier book on American politics and culture, *Culture of Complaint: The Fraying of America*, Warner Books Inc., New York, 1993.
[168] Kelly, 'The Paradox of Pessimism', p. 7.
[169] Ibid., p. 9.
[170] Ibid., p. 18

Kelly's pronouncement, that `the remarkable Keynesian age' was `gone forever' was, in the context of the GFC, premature.[171] Kelly added, `Government should not try to run businesses in competitive markets' so, therefore, the first step is to reduce the public's expectation of government but he does not say how this is to be achieved.

Second, welfare dependency needs to be reduced. He cites Howard's `mutual obligation' which he says should also be applied to business but again does not specify how this would be achieved. Third, governments need to redefine their relationship with markets. This could also use further explanation as Kelly's prescription that they `must operate within democratically elected sanctions'[172] was, self-evidently, in the Australian context, already in place. This is further evidenced by his recommendation that bodies such as the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission and the Productivity Commission are essential in this process.

Fourth, Kelly acknowledges that no country has reconciled globalisation with the rising inequality it creates. He proposes – but does not explain – the concept of individuals becoming `stakeholders' in such entities as superannuation and pension funds. More importantly, unemployment must be decreased and this would include moving away from centralised wage fixing. This is consistent with Kelly's prior advocacy of market-based solutions but rural areas will need `governments to again commit to sizeable social and economic adjustment funds.'[173] Kelly provides no detail on what these would entail.

His fifth proposal also, surprisingly, requires state intervention. Improved infrastructure, he says, `will require a deeper collaboration between governments and private sector across a range of industry.'[174] This will also require `a new approach to university education,

[171] Kelly, 'The Paradox of Pessimism', p. 23.
[172] Ibid., p. 26.
[173] Ibid., p. 29.
[174] Ibid.

communications and technology.'[175] Kelly offers no explanation of what this means, perhaps, because State funding would clearly be required. Finally, social inclusion is essential for a diverse and harmonious society. This involves Aboriginal reconciliation which also requires significant State intervention as `special programs for Aboriginal advancement are needed' and `means an implicit acknowledgement that a full restoration of past injustice cannot be achieved, and will never be achieved.'[176] This last element is essentially a conservative interpretation and, arguably, extends into Kelly's view that multiculturalism is a problematic term which should be replaced with the term, `Many races: one Australia' which `is clearer since it captures diversity and unity.'[177]

In urging a renewed support for immigration Kelly restates the necessity to reduce unemployment, thus linking it with the economically liberal policies he advocates. In fact, Immigration should be linked more explicitly to the national interest and nation-building. Kelly concludes by restating his central idea: globalisation needs to be made to work and a `market-orientated growth economy' must be made compatible `with a caring, diverse and interdependent society.'[178]

Kelly repeatedly returned to many of these ideas but has not always reconciled the contradictions – further market reforms are needed even though globalisation creates a crisis for social democracy; yet the likelihood that such reforms would exacerbate the crisis is not considered. Less must be expected from government but sizeable social and economic adjustment funds are needed to ensure social inclusion. In short, the tensions between a `market-orientated growth economy' and `a caring, diverse and interdependent society' need a fuller analysis.

[175] Kelly, 'The Paradox of Pessimism', p. 30.
[176] Ibid., p. 31.
[177] Ibid., p. 32.
[178] Ibid., p. 35.

Paradise Divided

The publication of *Paradise Divided* in 2000 was further indication of Kelly's status as a political commentator. It was a relatively rare example of a practising Australian political journalist having his recent work selected and published during his working life. It consisted of a collection of columns miscellaneous speeches and longer articles, as well as material written to introduce what Kelly regards as the key issues facing Australia's political leadership on the cusp of the new millennium. Some of these issues were explored in the earlier books, others were only referred too. These included globalisation, political leadership, democracy, the constitution and republicanism, as well as reconciliation, immigration and multiculturalism. This book also reveals Kelly's growing interest in foreign policy – particularly Australia's relations with Indonesia.

Many of the articles reiterate Kelly's central theme, which by this stage had become something of a mantra – `the clash between the economic imperative of globalisation and the community demand for reassurance',[179] or as he says more succinctly, `Social and economic policy must go together.'[180] Economou described this collection as `the cosmopolitan view in which economic reform is seen as critically important, in which engagement with Asia is advocated, in which multiculturalism is venerated and where immigration is viewed as an important economic policy issue.'[181] In retrospect this may seem Kelly is simply in step with the prevailing policy directions of the 1990s, but, as the following, outline indicates, there were significant intellectual and policy debates around these issues.

The book's first piece is a speech, `Australia in the Global Economy' which essentially rehashes the prescriptions in `The Paradox of Pessimism.' In it Kelly repeats a phrase he

[179] Paul Kelly, *Paradise Divided: The changes, the challenges the choices for Australia*, Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, NSW, 2000, p. viii.
[180] Paul Kelly, 'Australia in the Global Economy' in ibid., p. 5.
[181] Nicholas Economou, 'Book Reviews', *Australian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 36, no. 2, 2001, p. 385.

appropriated (unattributed) from Schumpeter and previously used in *The End of Certainty* – `Capitalism is a process of creative destruction' and suggests that globalisation and the reform process is in its nascent phase which means that `change is permanent.'[182] This leads Kelly to explicitly advocate another key tenet of neo-liberalism: `governments need to privatise and outsource' yet also make `markets work for the community.'[183]

Kelly's concern with globalisation is reflected in the number of pieces that are on international politics. These include profiles on Clinton, Blair, and several on East Timor and a response to Samuel Huntington's, *The Clash of Civilisations* where Kelly refutes Huntington's critique of the Keating government's policy of aiming for enmeshment in Asia. For Huntington this, mistakenly in Kelly's view, constitutes an `attempt to defect from the West.'[184] This will, in turn, fail because economics cannot override culture. Kelly says the thesis is wrong because:

> Enmeshment with Asia does not mean that Australia becomes an Asian society or tries to switch civilisations. It means, in fact, we become a more pluralistic, multicultural society, more influenced by Asia and, in turn, influencing Asia.[185]

With regard to his thought Kelly is, in a speech to the St James Centre, more explicit in elucidating his understanding of liberalism. Kelly argues that Western liberalism is in crisis because it has left `mankind too devoid of moral purpose' and liberal tolerance rests on `an acceptance that truth is relative.'[186] This process manifests itself politically in minority groups seeking `special treatment to enable them to achieve equality or equal status with the rest of society.'[187] Kelly does not critique this process but wonders if `the idea of equality is now being used to justify and entrench new distinctions in society when the original idea

[182] Kelly, 'Australia in the Global Economy', p. 5.
[183] Ibid., p. 10.
[184] Samuel Huntingdon cited in Paul Kelly, 'The Myth of Australia as a Torn Nation' in Kelly, *Paradise Divided: The changes, the challenges the choices for Australia*, p. 120.
[185] Kelly, 'The Myth of Australia as a Torn Nation' in ibid., p. 121.
[186] Kelly, 'Liberty and Equality' in Kelly, *Paradise Divided: The changes, the challenges the choices for Australia*, p. 56.
[187] Ibid.

was of equality was to unite society.'[188] In another column, written in the same year as this speech he reiterates his argument `there should be an explicit constitutional commitment to racial non-discrimination as the cornerstone of our society.'[189]

Kelly also writes more extensively on democracy. He synthesises the analysis and commentary of a number of contemporary American public intellectuals, Fukuyama, Arthur Schlesinger Jr, Fareed Zakaria, Robert Kaplan and Jonathan Schell to answer the question, `Can democracy survive?' Kelly is not sure genuine liberal democracy can, at least not in its current form. In the near future technology will allow representative democracy to be replaced by direct democracy. The process will be exacerbated by `three of the great trends: the decline of State power; the rise of the corporation; and the scientific method of winning elections.'[190] Kelly looks at the possible scenarios including the paradox that scientific methods give politicians a greater insight than ever into voter behaviour so they can `regurgitate what the people say' but `the people's contempt for their leaders only grows.'[191] This point has proved prescient given the rise of populism in Western democracies following the GFC.

Kelly also examines the events of Clinton's second term to consider another element weakening the effectiveness of democratic government. The scandal leading to impeachment proceedings is described as the `debasement of politics to soap opera; the triumph of entertainment over ideology.'[192] He draws on another American intellectual, Neil Postman to conclude that, `The US, with its enormous intellectual resources, is drowned in

[188] Kelly, 'Liberty and Equality' in Kelly, *Paradise Divided: The changes, the challenges the choices for Australia*, p. 56.
[189] Kelly, 'Values and the Constitution' in Kelly, *Paradise Divided: The changes, the challenges the choices for Australia*, p. 124.
[190] Kelly, 'Can Democracy Survive' in Kelly, *Paradise Divided: The changes, the challenges the choices for Australia*, p. 133.
[191] Ibid., p. 134.
[192] Kelly, 'Bill Clinton and American Democracy' in Kelly, *Paradise Divided: The changes, the challenges the choices for Australia*, p. 13

trivia. Its political system has lost the ability to discern value.'[193] Again, this is another point that resonates with the election of populist candidate Donald Trump to the American presidency in 2016.

In another essay Kelly demonstrates how these forces contributed to the rise of Pauline Hanson. First, globalisation undermined the State's problem solving ability which, in turn fuelled voter resentment which Hanson could then exploit. Second, the `convergence between the media, entertainment and political industries' means `the media treats politics as a product to lift its ratings and win revenue-witness the... Pauline Hanson phenomenon.'[194] and, finally, `the scientific approach to politics' identifies the electoral cynicism and encourages politicians to pursue a negative campaign line and also may have prevented a more effective response to Hanson as parties are influenced by market research.[195]

Kelly's growing interest in foreign policy is reflected by the inclusion of several columns and articles on East Timor. Kelly's analysis is from a realist perspective. He judges that there was no evidence that Whitlam gave tacit approval of the 1975 incorporation of East Timor but it remains Whitlam's `worst foreign policy failure.'[196] In quoting Viviani's, (the Australian foreign minister's aide in 1975), reasons why an independent East Timor's was not achievable to conclude the article, Kelly argues that media accusations of appeasement are dishonest. He says media critics need to give an `honest, reasoned answer' to the question, `should Australia have gone to war over East Timor?'[197]

[193] Kelly, 'Bill Clinton and American Democracy', p. 13
[194] Kelly, 'Hanson, A Symptom of a Deeper Problem' in Kelly, *Paradise Divided: The changes, the challenges the choices for Australia*, p. 152
[195] Ibid., p. 153.
[196] Kelly, 'The East Timor Legacy' in Kelly, *Paradise Divided: The changes, the challenges the choices for Australia*, p. 183.
[197] Ibid.

Kelly's realpolitik is again seen in his assessment Suharto as `a far better than average leader of a developing nation.'[198] Kelly operates from the basic premise that an Indonesian policy must be governed by Australia's national interest and this, in turn, demands engagement involving a strategy of encouraging gradual economic and political liberalisation. Kelly basically endorses Howard's approach to Indonesian President B. J. Habibie's policy on East Timor's self-determination but criticises the process. For example, why didn't Howard or Foreign Minister Downer deal with Habibie face-to-face?

But in his final assessment Kelly returns to realpolitik. The Australian government could not have argued that that Habibie's policy was reckless as there would have been a domestic backlash against Howard for being seen to delay a vote for democracy in East Timor. Particularly, as: `No politician, columnist or newspaper in Australia took this line at the time.'[199] Realism is the final measure of foreign policy.

In the next section of *Paradise Divided* Kelly includes his responses the 1998 Constitutional Convention and the 1999 referendum defeat of the Republic model. Kelly opposed the model for a popularly elected president on the grounds that it would politicise the office of the president and gives it the strength of popular support. This would destroy `the traditional governor-general's role as a unifying and impartial status above politics.'[200] Popular election would also require the codification of the president's powers which may be `an insurmountable political task.'[201] Kelly regarded the referendum defeat as `a threat to a cohesive and successful Australia as it tries to adapt to the globalised economy of the new

[198] Kelly, 'The Indonesian Tragedy' in Kelly, *Paradise Divided: The changes, the challenges the choices for Australia*, p. 198.
[199] Kelly, 'An Uncertain Future' in Kelly, *Paradise Divided: The changes, the challenges the choices for Australia*, p. 207.
[200] Kelly, 'Not Yet Time Elected for a Direct Elected President' in Kelly, *Paradise Divided: The changes, the challenges the choices for Australia*, p. 250.
[201] Ibid.

millennium' which reflected a `distrust in the political class and its agenda of 1990's reform.'[202] Such alarm proved to be misplaced.

In part IV of the book Kelly returns to his defence of immigration and continues the critique of multiculturalism begun in `The Paradox of Pessimism.' Kelly offers a succinct explanation of the growing opposition to immigration in the late 1990s of which Hansonism was a symptom but again argues that `a non-discriminatory immigration program is a non-negotiable element of Australian polity integral to our society, security and prosperity.'[203] Kelly endorsed the reforms the Liberal Party made to the program in its first term as necessary to restore public confidence.

With regard to multiculturalism Kelly again quotes Hugh Mackay as well as academic Jerzy Zubrzycki to support his point that the term was significantly flawed and needed to be replaced with `2001: Many races, one culture', which for Kelly, was a definition that had,

> three merits - it declares our destiny as a multiracial and diverse society; it declares our unity and repudiates any fragmentation into a nation of tribes; and it projects towards a new civilisation since the evolving culture is neither Asian nor European but a unique Australian creation.[204]

Despite Kelly's position at this time as perhaps the most influential political columnist in Australia the new term was not adopted. Indeed, it is an indication of the limits on even the most prominent political columnists.

Kelly concludes the book with a column written in February 2000 entitled `National Disgrace' which is probably his most scathing critique of Australian political leadership. It is particularly revealing in terms of later criticism that after Keating lost the 1996 election. Kelly `began to justify Howard and criticise the Opposition' because he was: `Awed by power and needing to

[202] Kelly, 'Result of the Vote' in Kelly, *Paradise Divided: The changes, the challenges the choices for Australia*, p. 252.
[203] Kelly, 'Immigration in Retreat' in Kelly, *Paradise Divided: The changes, the challenges the choices for Australia*, p. 265.
[204] Ibid., p. 272.

retain his access to it.'[205] How does this square with this particular analysis. He begins by saying, 'John Howard and Kim Beazley have failed themselves, their parties and the country.'[206] He goes on to describe Howard as the most knee-jerk, poll reactive, populist prime minister in the past 50 years' while Labor's campaign under Beazley against the GST – `a tax it intends to keep' was `political fraud on a grand scale.'[207]

Kelly excoriates both parties for both failing to meet the on-going challenges of globalisation. Howard had not articulated a post-GST reform agenda and `his populist rhetoric largely confirms the worldview of the talkback jocks that globalisation is an evil' whilst `the ALP runs off an anti-globalisation fear agenda devoid of any policy solutions.'[208] These criticisms must go some way to contesting the argument that Kelly's insider status prevents genuine critique of Australian government.

100 Years: The Australian Story

Kelly's next book, *100 Years: The Australian Story* was a departure from his previous works. This was an attempt at popular history. It was written to accompany an ABC television series both narrated and written by Kelly to commemorate the 100th anniversary of federation. One media critic, concluded 'that although the series was alive with ideas and arguments, rich in historical sources and with some of the best film footage Australia has to offer, the book…is more satisfying to read than the series itself was to watch.'[209]

The book consists of five essays separated by Kelly's interviews with then Prime Minister John Howard and the four previous PMs from Whitlam to Keating as well as opposition leader Kim Beazley. The essays give a more detailed historical account of the five pillars of

[205] Scalmer and Dickenson, pp. 22-23.
[206] Kelly, 'National Disgrace' in Kelly, *Paradise Divided: The changes, the challenges the choices for Australia*, p. 275.
[207] Ibid., p. 275 and p. 276.
[208] Ibid., p. 277 and pp. 277-278.
[209] Sue Castrique, '100 Years: The Australian Story', *Meanjin*, 2, 2001, p. 219.

the Australian settlement as first outlined in *The End of Certainty* as well as an analysis of the key features influencing Australian democracy and nationalism.

In chapter one, `Child of Empire' Kelly downplays the role of ideas in the creation of the new nation in 1901, except to say that `core beliefs were implanted by their British heritage and the French Revolution.'[210] He argues that evolution away from Britain's influence was so slow `because Empire loyalty and Australian nationalism went hand-in-hand...for excellent reasons.' Historians such as McQueen and Ward overstated the strength of `radical nationalism and misjudged the true balance in Australia between radicalism and conservatism, between nationalism and British tradition.'[211]

Kelly believes Australian history should be `liberated from the triumphalist and the black armband stereotypes.'[212] But he goes on to state that, `The 1901-14 era saw a vigorous and constructive Australian nationalism bent to the task of nation-building.'[213] While World War I `represented Australia's spiritual birth through bloodshed'[214] and that `Gallipoli became a mighty legend because it was founded in a reality.'[215]

Kelly goes on to outline the significance of the interwar Imperial Conferences that granted Australia greater independence which was not accepted. The influence of Menzies, the 1975 Constitutional Crisis, Keating's republicanism and the 1999 referendum are considered as Kelly concludes that the historical orthodoxy `that being pro-Empire meant betraying Australia's real interests…is a tragic interpretation' which `turns Australia's history into a caricature.'[216]

[210] Paul Kelly, *100 years: The Australian Story*, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, NSW, 2001, p. 1.
[211] Ibid., p. 7.
[212] Ibid., p. xii.
[213] Ibid., p. 8.
[214] Ibid., p. 9.
[215] Ibid., p. 10.
[216] Ibid., p. 29.

In chapter two, Kelly traces, as the title suggests, the `Rise and Fall of White Australia.' Pluralism eventually replaced a policy that was nothing less than 'the essence of national identity.'[217] Kelly further develops his critique of multiculturalism as a concept that by claiming it `does not have the political power to replace White Australia as the embodiment of national identity.'[218] Yet, `the success of this reinvention is impressive.'[219] There is also continuity in his emphatic insistence on continuing a large-scale immigration program as essential for economic growth.

In the third chapter, `Land of the Fair Go', the author returns to the theme most familiar from his earlier publications – the evolution of industry protection, wage arbitration and state intervention in the economy since 1901. Kelly again marshals evidence to correlate various adverse economic effects of these elements of the Settlement on the Australian economy up to the Hawke-Keating reforms. He again restates his conclusion from *The End of Certainty* – government must make `the open economy work' by `giving the community a stakeholding in its benefits.'[220] Again, he does not elaborate how this could be achieved.

Chapter four, `Unfinished Business,' is Kelly's most sustained piece of writing on Indigenous issues. Kelly provides a potted history of the political response to the Aboriginal population since 1901. From this account of `dispossession, destruction, denial of rights, assimilation, equality and the overthrow of terra nullius',[221] Kelly sharply criticises the Howard's government's reaction to the reconciliation process. The Howard government's unwillingness to endorse the words of the document of reconciliation in 2000 was `a tragedy' as was his response to the `Bringing Them Home Report' where its 'preoccupation

[217] Kelly, *100 years: The Australian Story*, p. 52.
[218] Ibid., pp. 80-81.
[219] Ibid., p. 81.
[220] Ibid., p. 142.
[221] Ibid., p. 192.

with denial destroyed its credibility as mediator between past and present.'[222] Nonetheless, Kelly's need to consider the economic aspect also figures as he finishes his account by welcoming the emergence of Noel Pearson and Aiden Ridgway as Aboriginal leaders who `talk a new language of responsibility and self-help.'[223] Kelly argues that more indigenous parliamentarians are needed (but does not say how this should be achieved) and in a recommends that `Aboriginal people...must abandon, eventually, their victim mentality.'[224] This, perhaps surprisingly given what went before, seems to be an endorsement of key elements of Liberal policy.

In the final essay, `Farewell Great and Powerful Friends' Kelly surveys the post-federation evolution of Australian security dependence on Britain and the United States to shape his argument that Australia manipulated 'the great and powerful as much as they manipulated Australia.'[225] Kelly is a foreign policy realist who claims reliance on Britain and the USA was necessary given Australia's location and population. Whitlam again emerges as a key figure as his foreign policy was decisive in projecting `an independent Australian vision' after Menzies `colonialism.'[226]

Kelly wrote that, `Australia seems now to have reached a stage of national maturity defined as accepting responsibility for its own fate and place in the world.' This was, of course, written before the September 11 attacks on the USA mainland which would see the deepening of Australian-American relations and the divisions over the war in Iraq.

100 Years did not receive any attention from academic historians. Nor did it have a bibliography but Kelly refers to, and quotes from, a range of historians. For example, the final chapter on Australia's military entanglements quotes from Neville Meaney, David

[222] Kelly, *100 years: The Australian Story*, p. 189.
[223] Ibid., p. 190.
[224] Ibid., p. 193.
[225] Ibid., p. 241.
[226] Ibid., p. 240.

Horner, Jeffrey Grey, Bob O'Neill, Allen Martin, and Peter Edwards. The book and the series are confirmation of Kelly's abilities as a synthesiser of information rather than an original thinker. It also confirms the continuity in Kelly's own political thought with its mix of economic liberalism, social liberalism and conservatism. The last of these is seen in his generally orthodox historical interpretations and his emphasis on broad, `big-picture', political and economic change. The significant developments in twentieth century Australia in relation to gender, social mores and culture are not addressed and this omission would prove a source of criticism in Kelly's later work.

Hard Heads, Soft Hearts: A New Reform Agenda for Australia

Kelly produced his third book in three years but was as co-editor, rather than sole author of *Hard Heads, Soft Hearts: A New Reform Agenda for Australia* with academic Peter Dawkins. It was the outcome of a 2002 conference organised by *The Australian* and the Melbourne Institute for Applied Economic and Social research at the University of Melbourne. Its purpose was, according to the editors, to repair `the disconnect in Australian politics…between our political dialogue and our real needs.'[227] This makes it similar to *Future Tense* but instead of featuring journalists the book summarises the findings of a range of policy analysts in a number of key areas. The overall aim was once again in keeping with the central theme of Kelly's writings since *The End of Certainty*. Here he phrases it as: `How can market forces be translated into widespread benefits across the whole of society?'[228] It requires `a hard-headed and soft-hearted approach' where `economic advance and social equity can march in harmony.'[229] It was, in effect, a book of, and for, the political class.

[227] Peter Dawkins and Paul Kelly, 'Hard Heads, Soft Hearts: Introduction' in Peter Dawkins and Paul Kelly (eds.), *Hard Heads, Soft Hearts: A New Reform Agenda for Australia,* Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, NSW, 2003, p. 3.
[228] Ibid.
[229] Dawkins and Kelly, 'The Way Forward: The Editors' View' in Dawkins and Kelly, (eds.), *Hard Heads, Soft Hearts: A New Reform Agenda for Australia*, p. 212.

Kelly and Dawkins summarise and comment on the findings of each of the analysts. Despite some dissenting views Kelly reaches similar conclusions to his previous books. A decade after *The End of Certainty*, the `national debate…is still a battle between economic reformers and sentimental traditionalists' and ongoing change is needed for `a prosperous economy' where 'democracy, inclusion and egalitarianism is upheld.'[230]

In practical terms Dawkins and Kelly propose several priorities based on the expert analysis presented in the individual chapters. The first is that unemployment must be reduced preferably through `an employment tax credit' and `a means-tested welfare system' along with less reliance on increasing minimum award wages.[231] Others reforms are suggested in the areas of Education, Health, Population, Immigration the Environment, microeconomic reform (including Competition Policy, Privatisation and tax reform) and Industrial Relations. The last of these would be a consistent feature of Kelly's journalism over the next decade. The book confirms Kelly as a hyper-globaliser as he argues `globalisation should be viewed as a positive force breaking down barriers between countries.'[232] As part of this process Australia should therefore raise its level of overseas aid and increase its humanitarian and refugee intake as well as promoting forms of trade `liberalisation that can help the world's poor in the most immediate way.'[233] Population growth should also continue as should a foreign policy that needs to balance deeper integration in Asia while maintaining the U.S. alliance.

Even at the time of publication many of the ideas were not necessarily new but it was, and remains, an example of how policy ideas gain currency among policy makers. The conference from whence the book came attracted over 400 participants, most of whom were, in various

[230] Dawkins and Kelly, 'The Way Forward: The Editors' View', p. 199.
[231] Ibid., p. 201.
[232] Ibid.
[233] Ibid., p. 210.

ways, involved in making and implementing public policy. It included federal and state ministers (and opposition shadow ministers), prominent academics, business and union leaders, community group leaders and public service heads. Kelly's, not insignificant role, in disseminating the ideas indicate his emphasis on the need for evidence-based solutions to contemporary social and economic problems. It also indicates his willingness to use his status to play a role in attempting to influence policy-makers to help `politicians to put genuine problem solving back onto the political stage.'[234]

Cunningham Lecture

In 2005, Kelly gave the Cunningham Lecture for the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia. The resulting publication of *Rethinking Australian Governance – The Howard Legacy* constitutes a slim, but not insignificant, contribution to Australian political science. Kelly analyses the evolution of executive power under Howard's prime ministership where there has been an increase in executive power achieved by invoking popular support. By appealing to public sentiment and Australian values Howard `invokes public approval to legitimise any changes to governance that might diminish accountability.'[235] These included stronger security laws (which enabled Howard to act `as national security chief'[236]) and restrictions on the public service. Howard has strengthened ministerial power over the public service to such an extent that `it is too protective of its political masters and too responsive for good governance.'[237]

[234] Dawkins and Kelly, 'Hard Heads, Soft Hearts: Introduction' in ibid., p. 3.
[235] Paul Kelly, *Rethinking Australian Governance – The Howard Legacy,* Cunningham Lecture 2005, Occasional Paper Series 4/2005, Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia, Canberra, 2005, p. 2
[236] Ibid., p. 14.
[237] Kelly, *Rethinking Australian Governance – The Howard Legacy,* p. 7.

Howard often used inquiries to achieve a predetermined policy stance or, at other times `prefers his contestability to be informal and non-traceable.' This creates the `risk that policy becomes more divorced from evidence-based research.'[238]

Kelly infers that the Howard government's style has contributed to `an emerging crisis of ideas' and that as Howard completes the economic reforms began under Hawke 'there is no apparent source of intellectual renewal.'[239] Kelly's suggested reforms include a code of conduct for ministerial advisers and reform of government advertising laws. Kelly says Howard's use of executive power has stimulated the debate over a Bill of Rights. His conclusion, however, that this may become a major debate was not the case. The lecture, however, in analysing the greater centralisation of power in the office of prime minister has been frequently cited in contemporary Australian political science literature on federal government power. It was another also indication that Kelly's insider status did not compromise his role as a forthright critic of political power.

Howard's Decade

Paul Kelly's interest in foreign policy had its fullest expression in a paper for the Lowy Institute in 2006. *Howard's Decade: An Australian Foreign Policy Reappraisal* is a largely favourable analysis of the Howard government's foreign policy from1996-2005 and stands in contrast to the 'National Disgrace' column which concluded *Paradise Divided*. Kelly highlights the significance of Howard's foreign policy by first conceptualising the 'Foreign Policy Establishment' which comprised `the retired public servants, retired senior military officers, intellectuals, academics, economists and journalists involved in the international

[238] Kelly, *Rethinking Australian Governance – The Howard Legacy*, p. 9.
[239] Ibid., p. 10.

policy debate.'[240] Kelly utilises this concept to highlight how Howard and his foreign affairs minister, Alexander Downer, significantly changed `the character, priorities and style of policy'[241] while maintaining the fundamental strategic direction of reconciling the alliance with the USA with Asian engagement.

Kelly outlines how Howard overcame a number of early missteps, particularly his failure to see the foreign policy implications of the emergence of Pauline Hanson. Kelly characteristically downplays the role of ideology. Rather, the Howard foreign policy was `an exercise in practical politics based upon the national interest and Australian values' which ultimately deepened the relationships with the United States, China and Indonesia.[242] Kelly, somewhat predictably acknowledges that Howard's strong support of the Bush administration's policies meant that developments in Iran and Afghanistan and the incidence of Islamic terrorism will be crucial in any future assessment of Howard's foreign policy. In light of the growing consensus about the pernicious consequences of the Iraq war Kelly's own criticisms would, for opponents of the war, seem too restrained. Yes, there were miscalculations that seemed to mirror those which occurred in Vietnam and, yes the `intelligence assessment process was too narrow and too massive' and this `is linked with a deeper failure – the absence during the decision-making process of strategic scepticism from the departments of foreign affairs, prime minister and cabinet and defence.'[243] But Kelly does not comment on the wider moral and geo-political consequences of the war and he concludes the Howard government's foreign policy was guided by pragmatism and `professional political judgments.'[244] Yet it is widely understood that neoconservative thought was highly influential in the establishment of the `Bush doctrine' – the guiding

[240] Paul Kelly, *Howard's Decade: An Australian Foreign Policy Reappraisal*, Longueville Media, Lowy Institute for International Policy, Double Bay, NSW, 2006, p. 6.
[241] Ibid., p. 73
[242] Ibid., p. 3.
[243] Ibid., p. 58.
[244] Ibid., p. 7.

principle of US foreign policy under George W. Bush. This was a principle that the Howard government endorsed in `the new intimacy in Australian-American relations' that was achieved following the 9/11 attack on the United States.[245] Some of this material was incorporated into Kelly's next book. This paper, however, usefully covers some of the period not covered in *The March of Patriots.* As, will be seen below Kelly, in this book, made many forthright judgments about various Howard government policies. In comparison, Kelly in this paper, merely outlines, but does not comment, on Labor's commitment to the UN and its opposition to war before uncritically summarising the Howard government's foreign policy. It is an even-handed but bland conclusion to an otherwise useful analysis of an important period in the history of Australian foreign policy.

The March of Patriots

This was Paul Kelly's sixth wholly-authored book and the sequel to *The End of Certainty*. It brought the total of Kelly's published writing outside of his journalism to well over 3000 pages. Subtitled *The Struggle for Modern Australia* the historical period covered begins with Keating's accession to the prime ministership December 1991 and ends with Howard's re-election for a third term in 2001. Kelly's methodology, as Edwards points out, is "the `great man' theory of leadership."[246] Indeed, Kelly argues that the uncertainty created by globalisation has `made national leadership more important.'[247] The decade was dominated by the two prime ministers, Paul Keating and John Howard. In addition, Kelly claims that the most significant divisions in politics are generational rather than ideological so, as members of the same generation, the two leaders had much in common which belied their fierce political rivalry. Kelly, Thus, the similarities in their policies outweighed the differences. These included most of those assessed in *The End of Certainty*: de-regulating the exchange

[245] Kelly, *Howard's Decade: An Australian Foreign Policy Reappraisal*, p. 47.
[246] John Edwards, 'Australia after the global financial crisis', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 64, no. 3, June 2010, p. 366.
[247] Paul Kelly, *The March of Patriots: The Struggle for Modern Australia*, University of Melbourne Press, Carlton, Vic., 2009, p. 1.

rate and the financial system, tariff reduction, establishing an independent central bank targeting inflation, enterprise bargaining and labour market deregulation and privatisation.

Keating and Howard had a joint role in dismantling the pillars of the Australian settlement and replacing it with a `model built upon new ideas' which gave effect to `a new Australian project.'[248]

Its values were pragmatic and egalitarian, the proof of its success was Australia's sustained economic growth in the face of massive global economic shocks, particularly the 1997-98 Asian crisis and the 2008 GFC.

Kelly's eminence was attested to by the then Prime Minister Kevin Rudd launching the book. But Rudd, and others found much to critique in Kelly's analysis, particularly his claim that neither Keating or Howard were swayed by `some abstract neo-liberal ideology'[249]; and that John Hewson's 1993 election defeat `terminated the neo-liberal political experiment'[250] Manne, however, argued Kelly is mistaken in believing that `neo-liberalism exists only if it is imposed as a universal philosophy.'[251] He says the key ALP reforms lauded by Kelly – `financial deregulation, privatisation, free trade, competition policy – come straight out of the neo-liberal textbook.'[252] But Manne also admits that `the impact of neo-liberalism from the early 1980s was shaped by the character of Australian political culture and by many practical considerations,' which `dissatisfied neo-liberal purists.'[253] This qualification is getting close to Kelly's own argument that neither the Keating nor Howard government was neo-liberal. Altman agrees with Kelly's assessment saying that Howard was not `in any real sense a genuine neo-liberal.'[254] Kelly's evidence includes the key fact that the Howard

[248] Kelly, *The March of Patriots: The Struggle for Modern Australia*, p. 2.
[249] Ibid., p. 278.
[250] Ibid., p. 75.
[251] Manne, 'The Insider', p. 27
[252] Ibid.
[253] Ibid., p.28.
[254] Denis Altman, 'View from the top' *The Australian*, Australian Literary Review, 7 October, 2009, p. 6.

government was the highest taxing and spending government since Whitlam's and its reduction of public debt and delivery of surplus budgets was not a neo-liberal tenet but, according to Kelly, `prudent economics and brilliant politics.'[255] In addition, Howard maintained both Medicare and `a targeted welfare state' that saw a redistribution `in income terms…from the top 20 per cent to the bottom 60 percent' according to a range of NATSEM studies.[256] And like Keating, Howard `sought to…retain regulatory authority' and `guarantee a strong social safety net.'[257]

Nonetheless, Manne also regards `as astonishingly myopic' Kelly's description of Howard's ideology (`economic liberalism, social conservatism, cultural traditionalism and national security vigilance') as a unique fusion.[258] It is, rather, neo conservatism minus religion. While Altman says, `Howard seems less unique than remarkably shrewd' in 'combining strong beliefs with popular decisions that seem to contradict them.'[259]

The March of Patriots contains much more extensive foreign policy analysis (including many of the conclusions from *Howard's Decade*) than its predecessor. Both Altman and Manne find aspects of Kelly's argument regarding continuity between Keating and Howard as unconvincing. Both think Kelly exaggerates Howard's desire for East Timorese independence and Manne speculates that the transition to independence would have occurred without the harm (albeit temporary) done to Australian-Indonesian relations. Manne also believes Keating would have chosen a different and far less embarrassing and disastrous course with regard to the post 9/11 American alliance. Such an assertion, of course, remains unproven and Manne's critique does not acknowledge Kelly's fundamental point: both Keating and

[255] Kelly, *The March of Patriots*, p. 284.
[256] Ibid., p 301.
[257] Ibid., p. 268.
[258] Manne, 'The Insider', p. 28.
[259] Altman, *View from the top*, p. 7.

Howard managed to deepen Australia's relationship with the United States, China and Indonesia.

Manne offers a more convincing critique of Kelly's trope that both leaders are cultural patriots. This description `is true but also meaningless.'[260] Keating's vision was a cosmopolitan critique of `Australia's racist and colonial and Anglophile past, implicit in his advocacy of …closer Asian engagement, the republic, multiculturalism and reconciliation.'[261] Howard was a nationalist who opposed this agenda and, in doing so, delayed `the cultural transformation concerning questions of ethnicity and race.'[262]

The reason for Kelly's failure to understand the significance of the cultural conflict leads to Manne's most serious criticism: as an insider Kelly has been too close to both leaders and has `internalised at different times, the world views of both Keating and Howard.'[263] Manne's contention, however, does not explain how, given the serious divisions, between the two men Kelly could support such contradictory views. Manne does not say how this process of internalisation occurs or what it involves – is it a conscious act or a case of intellectual `slippage'? Yet with regard to the republic, reconciliation and multiculturalism Kelly has, in this book, and his previous ones, particularly *Paradise Divided* and *100 Years*, been an advocate of the first two and a sympathetic critic of the third. With regard to indigenous policy Kelly said Howard `squandered an opportunity to successfully redefine indigenous policy. It was a failure of politics, morality and imagination.'[264] In these areas Kelly clearly has not assimilated Howard's world view.

Altman also points out that Kelly's focus on leadership means little attention is given to the effects of `education, immigration and new attitudes towards gender and race' in Australia

[260] Manne, 'The Insider', p. 26.
[261] Ibid., p. 27.
[262] Ibid.
[263] Ibid.
[264] Kelly, *The March of Patriots*, p. 341.

during the period.[265] Rundle goes further to state that `there are moments when some mention of the social context is essential.'[266] This omission is, according to Rundle, because of Kelly's `almost visceral dislike of some amorphous group, variously known as "progressives", "the Left" etc'. This is evidenced, Rundle says, by Kelly's failure to quote people from this group. Although he does acknowledge that `Kelly could not be expected to undertake a social-political history of Australia in one volume' he infers that if, as seems likely, Kelly writes a second volume on the Howard era he needs to give much greater emphasis to how `social movements would transform the relationship of politics to policy.' [267] The weakness of this critique is seen in the preceding caveat – not only would it be difficult to write a national one volume socio-political history, it was clearly not Kelly's intention and, therefore, the book must be judged on its own terms as contemporary political history. Matchett's assertion that `for all its limitations, Kelly's argument and evidence will establish the context for political debate and scholarly research'[268] on these years has been partially borne out in the, albeit relatively brief, period since the book's publication, as the final chapter of this thesis will demonstrate.

Triumph and Demise

The second volume on the Howard years did not arrive. Instead the turbulence of the Rudd/Gillard years provoked Kelly to write *Triumph and Demise: the broken promise of a Labor Generation*. As the sub-title suggests, his ninth book was an often harshly critical account of the politics and policies of the federal Labor governments from 2007-2013. As Kelly states in the preface, the book makes three main arguments: the Rudd-Gillard partnership proved disastrous for the Labor government; `that Labor in office was burdened

[265] Altman, 'View from the top', p. 7.
[266] Guy Rundle, 'The long, plodding March of Patriots', viewed March 7, 2012, < http://www.crikey.com.au/2009/11/06/rundles-friday-book-review-the-long-plodding-march-of-patriots/>.
[267] This and the preceding quotes from ibid.
[268] Stephen Matchett, 'Review of the Reviewers', *The Sydney Institute Quarterly,* Issue 36, December 2009, p. 37.

by an institutional malaise that went to identity, policy and strategy; and that Australia's political system is in a crisis that threatens the delivery of national interest outcomes.'[269]

The initial response this time was the most mixed to any of Kelly's books, although it was highly regarded by some. Paul Williams agreed entirely with Kelly's arguments and deemed the book `another excellent volume in a long line of his comprehensive analyses.'[270] Tom Switzer regarded it as `the most authoritative and authentic account yet' of' this period, although Kelly was too pessimistic about the state of Australian politics – after all, Switzer contends, negative campaigning was a feature of previous eras such as the Fraser years.[271] This was in contrast to Kelly's long-time interlocutor Robert Manne. Where Switzer found Kelly `objective and well-informed', Manne concluded it was `superficially plausible but stridently partisan and ideologically loaded history.'[272] Manne condemns Kelly for his `arrogant and foolish running commentary on climate change.'[273] Switzer, on the hand, notes Kelly cannot admit that he was wrong, in 2009 to criticise those Liberals who were opposed need to an emissions trading scheme.[274]

Manne goes on to chastise Kelly on a number of grounds: Kelly was wrong to `conflate the problem of Rudd with the crisis of Labor'; he underrated Labor's economic management; he has too narrow a conception of `reform' which is seen in how Kelly's use of the `adjective "Whitlamite" has been stripped of its connection to the idea of social justice and reduced to a synonym for fiscal recklessness'; Kelly is blithely unconcerned about inequality'; and, above all, he dramatically downplays the influence of Murdoch's media in these years.[275]

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[269] Paul Kelly, *Triumph and Demise: the broken promise of a Labor Generation*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton Victoria, 2014, p. vii.
[270] P. D. Williams, 'Triumph and Demise: The Broken Promise of a Labor Generation', *Australian Journal of Politics & History*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2016, p. 146.
[271] Tom Switzer, 'A penetrating look at the flaws in life at the top', *The Age*, 25 October 2014, p. 29.
[272] Robert Manne, 'Kelly Country', *The Monthly*, 105, October 24, 2014, p. 12.
[273] Ibid.
[274] Switzer, 'A penetrating look at the flaws in life at the top', p.29.
[275] Ibid.

This prompted a lengthy defence of Kelly from his newspaper's literary critic, Peter Craven. Craven argues that `Kelly comes so manifestly from the dead centre of Australian political judgment — that agnostic space that comprehends the continuum between Hawke and Keating and John Howard' that Manne's summation (`stridently partisan and ideologically loaded') is `a ludicrous misrepresentation of his book.'[276] Craven attempts to establish this point by systematically contesting aspects of Manne's arguments. Craven, for example, points out, with regard to Murdoch's influence, that Manne does not mention that *The Australian*, endorsed Rudd in the 2007 election. Craven could also have added that Manne's point about the News Corp having `undue influence over the way daily politics is interpreted and values are shaped' is contestable when declining readerships and advertising revenues, along with the growth of other online media sources, suggest this influence is waning. This leads Craven to the conclusion that Rudd and Gillard were `exceptional political figures — one brilliant and ghastly, one diligent but tin-eared — were not the victims of a media conspiracy. Between them they brought it on themselves.' This is, of course contestable, particularly with regard to some of the discourse Gillard was subject to as Australia's first female prime minister; but as the comparative analysis in chapter five demonstrates, nearly all accounts attribute a degree of blame to the errors of judgment made by both leaders in this period.

Other academic reviews were more qualified in their criticism. Paul Rodan endorses Kelly's portrait of Rudd's various leadership inadequacies and policy failures, as well as his view that Gillard was naïve not to properly consider how Rudd would react after being replaced. Rodan is less convinced about Kelly's arguments regarding Labor's `institutional malaise' questioning why Kelly would be uneasy with Labor's loss of ideology when 'without this loss

[276] Peter Craven, 'Fair and balanced account of the Rudd-Gillard fiasco draws an over-the-top critical response', *The Australian*', 1 November, 2014, p. 20.

of ideology, Hawke and Keating could never have implemented Kelly's beloved 'reform'."[277] Rodan sees Kelly's contention about the crisis in Australia's political system as highly debatable and his prescription of what seems to be more neoliberal reform even more so.

Walter, in his review, points out that only in Kelly's conclusion does `a narrative that has been plausible in particulars but perplexing in overview…become coherent.'[278] Like Manne, he is critical of what he describes as Kelly's overbearing commentary on his otherwise impressively researched material. Walter also highlights one of the book's major inconsistencies – Kelly argues the way Gillard's removed Rudd resulted in insuperable problems for her governments, but then goes on to detail Rudd's personal and political failings to indicate the extent to which his leadership had become untenable. Moreover, like Manne and Rodan, he objects to Kelly's framing of the reform agenda in a way that does not `acknowledge the crises now besetting global market economies, or' give consideration to `alternative views.'[279] This point is particularly salient given how Megalogenis has, in his most recent work to date, the quarterly essay *Balancing Act,* outlined this crisis more specifically than Kelly does; and, more significantly, proposes a very different policy direction – one involving a more active role for government, something which Kelly would be unlikely to countenance.

No matter the debates engendered by the book's interpretation of the `history of the present' and its recommendations for future action, the media and academic reactions give Kelly's arguments prominence in the political public sphere that other analyses may not achieve. This is also seen at book's launch, where again Kelly secured the current prime minister, Tony Abbott, who disagreed with Kelly that the system was broken. `It's not', he

[277] Paul Rodan, Love's labor lost? [Book Review] *The Australian Universities' Review,* vol. 58, no. 1, 2016, p. 96.
[278] James Walter, 'The pontiff of political commentary: Paul Kelly's perspective on the Rudd-Gillard governments', *Australian Book Review*, no. 366, 2014, p. 22.
[279] Ibid.

said, `the system which is the problem; it is the people who, from time to time, inhabit it' and he wanted his government to 'show that the age of reform has not ended, it was merely interrupted.'[280] Given the fate of Abbott's prime ministership, his remarks may subsequently be interpreted by some as the ironic confirmation of Kelly's thesis.

The book's status within the political class was further enhanced by Kelly's winning two major awards, the John Button prize and the Walkley book award. The former is an annual award for the best non-fiction writing on politics and public policy as deemed by a panel of five judges. The latter is the peer-reviewed award for quality journalism. Such awards, and the publicity they generate, give a degree of cache which may heighten the author's authority and, therefore, influence and this gives Kelly the sort of cultural power in the public sphere that may overwhelm academic criticism of his work.

Critical Consensus?

Kelly's works, as even his critics acknowledge, help explain `the activity of elites' and `therefore enhances knowledge and potentially strengthens debate.'[281] The argument that Kelly's insider status `positions the voter as a perennial outsider, sending the message that there is a separate political sphere of which they are not, and never can be a part' is highly contestable. Rather than `make politicians seem more remote, their decisions impossibly complex…far beyond ordinary understanding.'[282] Kelly's work, arguably, does the opposite, by demystifying how political power actually operates at the highest level of Australian government.

A continuation of this argument is the claim, by Manne for example, that as an insider Kelly's role as a genuine critic of power is mitigated by his being too close to political leaders. This is also highly contentious. There are too many examples of his criticism of political leaders,

[280] Sid Maher, 'Abbott optimistic reform can still triumph', *The Australian,* 27 August 2014, p. 7.
[281] Scalmer and Dickenson, p.24.
[282] Ibid., p.22.

which refute this claim. Kelly, for example, argues that Keating's interpretation of Australian history `was insulting. Its attitude to the Australian people was patronising'[283] while Keating's reaction to his 1993 election win 'was shameless, schizoid and idealistic'[284] and, with regard to foreign policy, 'his vision was often egocentric'[285]. Kelly had also condemned Howard, along with Kym Beazley for having 'failed themselves, their parties and the country.'[286] Kelly excoriates both parties for both failing to meet the on-going challenges of globalisation. At one point Howard had not articulated a post-GST reform agenda and 'his populist rhetoric largely confirms the worldview of the talkback jocks that globalisation is an evil' whilst `the ALP runs off an anti-globalisation fear agenda devoid of any policy solutions.'[287] Such criticisms go some way to contesting the argument that Kelly's insider status prevents genuine critique of Australian government.

It is Kelly's overall endorsement of major policy directions particularly 'the float, financial deregulation…tariff reductions…competition policy and privatisation, enterprise bargaining'[288] that promoted market solutions to key areas of public policy which have perhaps led his detractors to ignore the evidence of Kelly's critiques of Australian political leadership. Sawer, for example, says Kelly, `presents market reformers as winning the contest through their intellectual force and freedom from sectional interests while opponents of deregulation are trapped in the past or are vested interests such as powerful trade unions, sections of manufacturing industry of "new class" teachers and public-sector professionals.'[289] But this is a feature of the story of economic reform in the 1983-2001 period and those opposed are, if not `trapped,' can fairly be regarded as defenders of past

[283] Kelly, *The March of Patriots*, p.72
[284] Ibid., p. 91.
[285] Ibid., p. 176.
[286] Kelly, 'National Disgrace' in Kelly, *Paradise Divided*, p. 275
[287] Kelly, *The March of Patriots*, p. 277 and pp. 277-278.
[288] Ibid., p.266.
[289] Marion Sawer, 'Comment: The Australian Settlement Undone', *Australian Journal of Political Science,* vol. 39, no. 1, p. 36.

practices. Finally, like Keating, Howard `sought to…retain regulatory authority' and 'guarantee a strong social safety net.'[290]

Another area of criticism is Kelly's methodology. The histories have been criticised for their over reliance on confidential interviews, their limited acknowledgement of secondary sources and lack of theory. This highlights the claim that `the truly divided knowledge cultures of our times are not the sciences and the humanities but journalism and academia.'[291] Yet in writing what some call `the history of the present' it is arguable that `Any reportage worth reading involves rearranging material, highlighting, and, to some extent, turning real people into characters in a drama' and that `the virtues of good journalism and good history are very similar: exhaustive, scrupulous research; a sophisticated, critical approach to the sources; a strong sense of time and place; imaginative sympathy with all sides; logical argument; clear and vivid prose.'[292]

Despite these criticisms even the most the most vehement critic acknowledged the significance of his major books and Kelly's status as a journalist, a historian and a public intellectual or at least some combination of these three. In 1991, in an analysis of the Canberra Press Gallery, Kelly said: `There are no Hemingways, Walter Lippmanns or even Bob Woodwards.'[293] Yet there are some striking parallels between of the careers and intellectual contributions of Kelly and Lippmann as is revealed by a cursory examination of some of the analyses published on the latter. A brief comparison with the American regarded `as probably the most powerful and famous American journalist' of the twentieth century is instructive.[294] Lippmann was said to have `tackled enduring political and moral

[290] Kelly, *The March of Patriots*, p. 268.
[291] Marjorie Garber cited in Catharine Lumby, 'Outside In: Journalists and Academics in the Public Sphere' in David Parker (ed.), *The Ideas Market*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, Vic., 2004, p. 202.
[292] Tim Garton Ash, 'History of the Present Essays, Sketches, and Dispatches From Europe in the 1990s', viewed July, 13, 2013, <*www.nytimes.com/books/first/a/ash-present.html*>,
[293] Paul Kelly, 'Who Runs Australia?: The Press Gallery or the Parliament' in *Media Watch*, June-July 1991, p.21.
[294] Edward Said, 'Grey Eminence' in Edward W. Said, *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 2000, p. 105.

controversies in an unaffected idiom, accessible to the general educated reader.'[295] In addition, Lippmann's thinking was not parochial, he was open to a diversity of intellectual influences.[296] Further, he appears to have understood and accepted the idea of globalisation before that term was in widespread use.[297] Lippmann was also `dissatisfied as much by the superficiality of journalism as by the pedantry of academic philosophy.'[298] Yet the very nature of his chosen profession meant what could be written about was subject to various constraints – the daily political context, the interests of the audience, the limitation of space, the need to keep some information `off the record' in order to maintain access to wide range of sources. All of this could, arguably, only be achieved with `some loss of intellectual freedom.'[299] Finally, `Lippmann repeatedly displayed a strong attraction to officeholders who wielded power.'[300] Kelly's publications demonstrate that these descriptions of Lippmann's methods and thought are equally applicable to the Australian who began his career in the year the American wrote his final article.

But what, more precisely, do Kelly books reveal about his thought? They do reveal how his engagement with political ideas has broadened over the course of his career. He has gone beyond seeing Australian federal politics – in his first two books – as predominantly a struggle for power between ambitious individuals to, also, a contest struggle for ideas in a wide range of policy areas. In addition, his analyses have, usually, made his advocacy – or opposition – an often significant part of political debate. So is it too simplistic to categorise him as a conservative as Davis suggest or an advocate of neo-liberalism as Manne implies?[301]

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[295] D. Steven Blum, *Walter Lippmann: Cosmopolitanism in the Century of Total War*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, 1984, pp. 10-11.
[296] Ibid., p. 11.
[297] Ibid., p. 12.
[298] Ibid., pp. 164 – 165.
[299] D. Steven Blum, *Walter Lippmann: Cosmopolitanism in the Century of Total War*, p. 178.
[300] Larry L. Adams, *Walter Lippmann*, Twayne Publishers, 1977, p. 185.
[301] Davis says, '*The End of Certainty* both naturalises the market ascendancy and lovingly (even sometimes brilliantly) details every single step required to get there.' Mark Davis, *The Land of Plenty: Australia in the 2000s,* Melbourne University Press, Carlton, Vic., 2008, p. 95.

At different times in his books and papers Kelly implicitly praises `pragmatism' particularly as exercised by Hawke, Keating and Howard or as part of Australia's policy-making tradition. Kelly's definition of pragmatism is a narrow one as he means it in terms of those who subordinate ideology to make `practical' decisions for the benefit of what he regards as the national interest. This idea that, `Australian society is pragmatic, lacking in principle and instructed by no great philosophies' is widely held and Kelly has been significant in reinforcing it.[302] In addition, the `Australasian political tradition has often been described in terms of utilitarianism' where `Policy was to be directed to achieving the greatest happiness for the greatest number' and `no moral judgments were to be made' about individual preferences.[303] Kelly's conception of the settlement also contributes to this perspective. Many theorists, however, argue that no political action is value-free and therefore all policy is ideologically determined.

Certainly a number of consistent policy positions have clearly evolved. The most obvious is consistent advocacy of economic liberalism with regard to the application of free market principles in economic policy, including the key features of neoliberalism – deregulation, liberalisation and privatisation. Even though he advocates continuous `economic reform with championing of the disadvantaged' tends to emphasise the former.[304] Economic policy must be matched by a social policy appropriate for `a caring, diverse and interdependent society' but Kelly's focus, in his books, has largely been on the economic and political, rather than the social.[305] Kelly's economic liberalism is an ideology which does demonise special interest `pleading' but which Kelly, links to `a range of liberal social polices…by forging what

[302] Graham Maddox, *Australian Democracy in Theory in Practice*, Pearson Education Australia, Frenchs Forest, NSW, 2005, p. 327.
[303] Marion Sawer, *The Ethical State?: Social Liberalism in Australia*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton Vic., 2003, pp. 2-4.
[304] Dawkins and Kelly, *Hard Heads, Soft Hearts*, p. 200.
[305] Kelly, 'The Paradox of Pessimism', p. 35.

appear to be close links with several shibboleths of the educated middle class: multiculturalism, republicanism and reconciliation.'[306]

So if Kelly espouses a combination of clearly defined economic liberalism which is not entirely at ease with a less clearly defined social liberalism, to what extent is he also conservative? Aly says conservatism is `inherently broad and pluralistic in a way that progressive, ideological politics so often is not,'[307] and it has made a `modern marriage' with liberalism, which has makes it `fundamentally a conservative political ideology.'[308]

So how should Kelly's central ideas be categorised: his avowed republicanism, his affirmation of reconciliation and a diverse multiracial society, his defence of a non-discriminatory immigration policy and dismissal of Hansonism, his argument for increasing foreign aid, his acknowledgment that both `policies designed separately for different categories of life-style preferences…could be justifiable' and policies which `help create a world in which childbearing is perhaps more evenly spread across the population.'[309] Under Aly's definition some of these may be seen as traditionally conservative positions yet in the Australian party political context these would be considered as closer to policies of the ALP and the progressive sections of the Liberal Party. So Kelly's position is in effect a centrist one; it is the moderate stance of `the sensible centre.'

Hence in 2008 Paul Kelly was described as `the most influential proponent of the Keating-Howard-Latham view of the world.'[310] A view that advocates `policies which roll back past social accomplishments, and…assaults…those affected by market adjustments.'[311] Dow says Kelly `has wanted…to celebrate the policy shifts which facilitate globalisation and are

[306] Buckridge, 'Editors as Intellectuals: Three Case Studies', p. 199.
[307] Walid Aly, 'What's Right?:The Future of Conservatism in Australia', *Quarterly Essay* , Issue 46, Black Inc., Collingwood, Vic., 2012, p. 15,
[308] Ibid.
[309] Dawkins and Kelly, *Hard Heads, Soft Hearts*, pp. 121-122.
[310] Geoff Dow, 'The Institutional Intractability of Recession', Journal *of Political Economy*, no. 61, June 2008, p. 148.
[311] Ibid.

condescending towards those traditions which argued that institutions shouldn't be haughtily degraded.'[312] Such criticism of the economic policies Kelly explicates and endorses in his books and journalism surely requires a detailed analysis of their social, economic and political outcomes. The fundamental point of contention is around Kelly's central claim that `the political triumph of economic liberalism' has enabled Australia `to enter a low inflation growth cycle of such robust resilience that it became the longest expansion in the nation's history.'[313] This `expansion transformed Australian society – it more than doubled the size of GDP, delivering vast increases in household incomes and wealth, jobs, corporate profits and investment returns.'[314] Moreover, it was achieved in the face of three external economic shocks – the Asian financial crisis of the late 1990s, the U.S. recession in the early 2000s and the 2008 GFC. As Lloyd points out, such a period

> of growth without even a slight recession, indeed not even a quarter of recession or anything approaching it, of 16 years [currently 20 years] is unprecedented in its length in Australia and a big contrast with the 20 year boom-bust period that preceded it. Furthermore, no Australian State has experienced a recession in that period either – the growth has been across the whole country.[315]

On the face of it this seems to demonstrate two of Kelly's most fundamental contentions. First, that the Hawke-Keating reforms enabled one of the strongest and longest performances by the Australian economy in its history. Second, the economic model that marked the long expansion was `a Labor-Liberal shared achievement' that Kelly described as `Australian Exceptionalism.'[316] It was characterised by economic pragmatism, social egalitarianism and practical utilitarianism' and both Labor and Liberal `sought to empower market forces, retain government regulatory authority, guarantee a strong social safety net

[312] Dow, 'The Institutional Intractability of Recession', p.149.
[313] Kelly, *The March of Patriots*, p. 5.
[314] Ibid., p. 6.
[315] Christopher Lloyd, 'Australian Capitalism since 1992: A new regime of accumulation?' in *Journal of Political Economy*, no. 61, June 2008, p. 30.
[316] Kelly, *The March of Patriots*, p. 267.

and promote a more entrepreneurial and competitive capitalism.'[317] For Kelly `the results were imperfect but conspicuous for more success than failures.[318]

Yet there are dissenting voices as some academic analyses attempt alternative assessments of this era. There seems to be a division with some academic economists and political scientists challenging what has become the orthodox explanation given by political journalists, policy-makers and business economists about the constitution and causes of what is widely known as `the long boom'. As Cahill pointed out in 2008, there has been a surprising lack of analysis of the boom and its foundations, and much of what has been done is from outside of the academy. In addition to Kelly's work the most well-known analyses of the boom include two books by Kelly's onetime colleague, George Megalogenis, a widely regarded paper by the economist John Edwards and former Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA) governor Ian MacFarlane's Boyer lectures.[319] More recently, there have been more comprehensive accounts from journalist Peter Hartcher and, particularly, academic economist Ian McLean.[320]

In contrast to this group's analyses Lavelle, for example, argues the strength of the boom is overstated and neglects the extent to which poverty and disadvantage has continued throughout this period.[321] Lavelle points out that Australia's economic performance `in the first half of the 2000s was worse than the second half of the 1990s and worse than the 20th century average.'[322] But in his analysis Lavelle does not mention that in this period Australia

[317] Kelly, *The March of Patriots*, pp.267-268.
[318] Ibid., p. 268.
[319] See George Megalogenis, *The Longest Decade*, Scribe, Carlton North, Victoria, Australia, 2006, 2008, and *The Australian Moment*, John Edwards, *Quiet Boom: How the Long Economic Upswing is Changing Australia its Place in the World*, Lowy Institute Paper 14, Longueville Media, 2006 and Ian MacFarlane, *The Search for Stability: Boyer Lectures 2006*, ABC Books, Sydney, 2006.
[320] Peter Hartcher, *The Sweet Spot: How Australia made its own luck and could now throw it all away*, Black Inc., Collingwood, Victoria, 2011 and Ian W. McLean, *Why Australia Prospered: The shifting sources of economic growth*, Princeton University Press, Princeton and Oxford, 2013.
[321] Ashley Lavelle, 'The Boom, the left and capitalism' in *Journal of Political Economy*, no. 61, June 2008, p. 297.
[322] Ibid., p. 298.

avoided two major global recessions – the East Asian economic crisis of the late nineties and the 2001 American recession which followed the collapse of a bubble in ICT stocks on the US stock market. The latter achievement was even more significant as it was the first time in Australian history that the country did not follow America into recession.[323] Lavelle also argues `that the current boom does not constitute a return to the peak performance of the 1950s and 60s'[324] but this was the case for all developed nations.

Broomhill also believes the effects of the long boom are overstated, arguing that the long boom is part of a pattern in the history of Australian capital accumulation.[325] He acknowledges the economy has performed well at an aggregate level in this period but it was accompanied by `a housing affordability crisis, escalating debt levels, a substantial trade deficit, the emerging threat of climate change and…greatly increased social and economic inequalities.'[326] But he too does not address the significance of the avoidance of the first two international economic crises in the period and then – writing in 2008, the year of the GFC – says 'indicators exist that the current `economic boom' have reinforced Australia's vulnerable position within the global economy' before Australia subsequently again avoided recession.[327]

Dow goes further in refuting the description of the period as a boom. He argues that the definition of a recession is problematic as it allows for increasing economic growth alongside `continuing mass unemployment – over 4 percent' by 2008. But Dow at least acknowledges

[323] George Megalogenis, *The Longest Decade*, Scribe, Carlton North, Victoria, Australia, 2008, p. 249.
[324] Lavelle, 'The Boom, the left and capitalism', p. 298.
[325] Ray Broomhill, 'Australian economic booms in historical perspective' in *Journal of Political Economy*, no. 61, June 2008, p. 12.
[326] Ibid., p. 23.
[327] Ibid.

that unemployment had been in steady decline since 1992-94.[328] He also admits that aggregate growth had `been comparatively impressive' from the 1980s onwards.[329]

Lavelle has also argued that the boom `is built partly on good, old-fashioned increase in exploitation' seen in the fact that `the share of national income accounted for by profits in 2003-4 was higher than at any time since 1959-60.'[330] But as Bell and Quiggan point out, `Australia's inflation problem, especially during the 1970s and early 1980s, was largely driven by pressures from labour markets' evidenced by recessions which `saw large spikes in labour's share of national income.'[331] The boom period avoided the problem of high inflation because `it did not see a return of rapid wages growth of the kind that had previously fuelled inflation.'[332] In their analyses this was achieved for a number of reasons including those regarded as significant by Kelly, notably Labor's introduction of both enterprise bargaining and lower protection. These changes meant employers were less willing to agree to wage rises because increased competition meant they were `less willing and less able to pass on cost increases' to consumers.[333] Quiggin and Bell also acknowledge that the floating exchange rate was crucial in combatting the effects of the 1997-98 Asian financial crisis and seeing Australia, unlike Canada and New Zealand, avoid a recession.[334]

Although Cahill does not specifically identify Kelly, he is critical of those who `fail to analyse in any detail the shifting balances of class forces associated with neo-liberalism and their relationship to the boom.'[335] Yet, like Kelly, he regards `the transformations of the state and economy under Labor between 1983 and 1996 were some of the most significant in

[328] Dow, p. 135.
[329] Ibid., p. 136.
[330] Lavelle, p. 305.
[331] Stephen Bell and John Quiggin, 'Beyond stop/go?: explaining Australia's long boom', *Journal of Political Economy*, no. 61, June 2008, p. 73.
[332] Ibid.
[333] Ibid., p. 77.
[334] Ibid.
[335] Damien Cahill, 'Labo(u)r, the boom and the prospects for an alternative to neo-liberalism' in *Journal of Political Economy*, no. 61, June 2008, p. 325.

Australia's history.'[336] These, in turn, 'facilitated the conditions of Australia's current economic boom.'[337] Lloyd also acknowledges that the economic reform began in the 1980s was a significant reason for this phase of growth.[338] Likewise Chester includes the post-1983 reforms among those characteristics which define `the institutional architecture and configuration of the Australian neoliberal growth regime.'[339]

Although there appears, to varying degrees, agreement that the Hawke-Keating reforms were an essential component in the long boom the debate continues about the weight they should be given. Howard and King, for example, tend to give, as do many others, equal weight to the mining boom and the growth of China.[340] But Kelly and Megalogenis also acknowledge the significance of these developments, and none have gone so far as to suggest a new paradigm – the cycle will end but its exceptional length will surely demand more in-depth academic analysis.

Neoliberalism or Not?

The role of economic reform after 1983 also involves a further debate about whether the policy regime was an example of neoliberalism in action. On the face of it, financial deregulation, privatisation, decentralised wage determination and competition policy seem unambiguous examples of neoliberal policy making. Kelly's rejection of the influence neoliberal ideology on Australian public policy in this period is contentious but not without foundation.

Thurbon, for example, contends it is a mistake `to conflate *market-oriented* policies (read: liberalization, deregulation and privatisation) with *free-market* or *neo-liberal* policies when

[336] Damien Cahill, 'Labo(u)r, the boom and the prospects for an alternative to neo-liberalism' p. 327.
[337] Ibid., p. 333.
[338] Christopher Lloyd, 'Australian Capitalism since 1992: A new regime of accumulation?' p. 36 and p.50.
[339] Lynne Chester, 'The Australian variant of neoliberal capitalism' in Damien Cahill, Lindy Edwards and Frank Stilwell, (eds.), *Neoliberalism: Beyond the Free Market*, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham, UK, 2012, p. 153.
[340] M.C. Howard and J. E. King, 'Reflections on the long Australian boom' in *Journal of Political Economy*, no. 61, June 2008, pp. 56-70.

the two are far from the same thing.'[341] In the area of industrial governance, Thurbon concludes `that the Howard Government maintained a pragmatic and opportunistic approach to industrial governance that…was not consistent with neoliberal norms and practices.'[342] While Spies-Butcher says `Labor's Third Way strategy' incorporated social forces into its policymaking which resulted in an `expansion of the social wage, the limitations on radical neoliberalism, the gradualism of restructuring and the slow shift towards recognizing the independent role of women in the economy.'[343] Nonetheless, Kelly's claim that the long boom was the result of a policy-making model he describes as Australian exceptionalism does not, as he argues, rule out the influence of neoliberalism. Rather, the Australian example shows how neoliberalism has `evolved, as an ideological and institutional project, in tight relation with locally, regionally, and nationally specific regulatory arrangements, crisis tendencies, and political struggles.'[344]

Inequality, Insecurity and Debt

If, as Quiggin says, `large scale unemployment' is one of the key factors in 'reducing social welfare' then the Australian variant of neoliberalism has clearly had more benign consequences than in any other nation. It has delivered increases in aggregate wealth and, *pace* Dow, relatively low unemployment rates. But the problems of inequality and increased job insecurity reveal its limitations.[345] Accompanying the debates about the causes of the boom are debates about the benefits of the post-1992 expansion, particularly with regard to inequality in income distribution. Meagher and Wilson found `that high income households appear to have benefited most from changes to the non-cash government benefits between

[341] Elizabeth Thurbon, 'Ideas and industrial governance: has the influence of neoliberalism been overstated?' in Damien Cahill, Lindy Edwards and Frank Stilwell, (eds.), *Neoliberalism: Beyond the Free Market*, p. 182.
[342] Ibid., p. 199.
[343] Ben Spies-Butcher, 'Markets with equity? Lessons from Australia's Third Way response to neoliberalism' in Damien Cahill, Lindy Edwards and Frank Stilwell, (eds.), *Neoliberalism: Beyond the Free Market*, p. 220.
[344] Jamie Peck, Nik Theodore and Neil Brenner, 'Neoliberalism, interrupted' in ibid., p.18.
[345] Spies-Butcher, 'Markets with equity? Lessons from Australia's Third Way response to neoliberalism' in ibid., p. 221.

1993-4 and 2003-04' while the redistribution of `benefits from higher to lower income earners was somewhat diluted between 1993-4 and 2003-4.'[346]

Yet compared with other developed nations it is also argued that `Australia has managed to contain rising inequality' as it `has below income inequality' compared to other Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) nations.[347] This was because `Labor strengthened the social safety net, with increased family benefits superannuation and government spending on public health and education.'[348] The Howard government maintained, with modifications, the basic elements of Labor's social compact including superannuation and Medicare as well as high family payments.

But international comparisons remain problematic for an increasingly insecure Australian workforce that has become one of the most casualised in the world and where, since the 1970s full-time wages for the median employee (the fiftieth percentile) have increased 35 per cent, after inflation (from $43,000 to $58,000). For a worker in the tenth percentile, wages have risen only 15 per cent (from $32,000 to $37,000). For someone in the ninetieth percentile, wages have risen 59 per cent (from $65,000 to $103,000). If workers in the tenth percentile had enjoyed the same wage gains as those in the ninetieth, they would be earning an extra $14,000 a year.

Among top corporate executives, earnings have increased even faster. From 1993 to 2009, average earnings of Australian Stock Exchange top 100 CEOs rose from $1 million (17 times average earnings) to $3 million (42 times average earnings).The top 20 CEOs earn more than 100 times the average wage, with a significant number earning eight-figure salaries.[349]

[346] Gabrielle Meagher and Shaun Wilson, 'Richer, but more unequal: Perceptions of inequality in Australia 1987-2005' in *Journal of Political Economy*, no. 61, June 2008, p.225 and 226.
[347]Spies-Butcher, 'Markets with equity? Lessons from Australia's Third Way response to neoliberalism', p. 205.
[348] Lindy Edwards, *The Passion of Politics*: *The role of ideology and political theory in Australia*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 2013, p. 165.
[349] Andrew Leigh, 'Mind the Gap', *Australian Financial Review*, viewed 10 August, 2013, <http://www.smh.com.au/comment/mind-the-gap>.

Further, the numbers of those living in "relative poverty", that is on less half the median income, has grown in the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s.[350] This has been in period where for much the top of the OECD economic growth table and outperformed the USA in terms of both growth and inflation.

The boom period has also been characterised by high personal debt levels. In 2007 they were, as a proportion of GDP, twice as high as they were in the 1930s.[351] In 2010 Keen said `Australia is headed for a very painful, deleveraging-induced recession.'[352] But in 2013, the twenty-first year of the long boom, Keen reported that `the decline in household debt growth was arrested and Australia avoided outright deleveraging.'[353] Yet, as Quiggin and Bell pointed out in 2008, these decades have also seen a steady increase `in the ratio of external debt to GDP' and it was not clear `at what level, if any, this ratio will ultimately stabilise and whether this process…will be smooth or painful.[354] In 2016 this uncertainty remains.

All of these problems require a counterfactual. Without the reforms of the post-1983 period what would be the levels of inequality, job insecurity and personal and household debt? If it is reasonable to assume that without the reforms economic growth would be lower and unemployment levels higher then would these problems be ameliorated? For McLean, it is `the *interactions* between the principle determinants of growth' which have been central to Australia's prosperity and these outweigh `the role of any one factor – such as investment, institutions or resources.'[355] McLean acknowledges `the considerable value of single-themed interpretations' of which the works of Kelly et al, with their emphasis on public policy, are

[350] Leigh, 'Mind the Gap'.
[351] Lavelle, 'The boom, the left and capitalism', p. 301.
[352] Steven Keen, 'Why a fifth of our income is vanishing', viewed 14 August, 2013. <http://www.businessspectator.com.au/article/2010/5/25/interest-rates/why-fifth-our-income-vanishing>.
[353] Steven Keen, 'Who's responsible for Australia's debt crisis?', viewed 14 August, 2013, <http://www.businessspectator.com.au/article/2013/8/5/economy/whos-responsible-australias-debt-crisis?>
[354] Bell and Quiggin, 'Beyond stop/go?: explaining Australia's long boom', p. 85.
[355] McLean, *Why Australia Prospered*, p. 9.

examples. He suggests that in their advocacy of `the significance of the chosen factor or influence they thereby facilitate an assessment of its importance relative to other factors or influences.'[356]

McLean's own analysis sees the 1980s as the most active part of a much longer process in the gradual opening up of the Australian economy that included the 1957 treaty with Japan and the export of minerals that were previously banned; the abandonment of restrictive immigration and the Whitlam's government 1973 tariff cut. For McLean the 1980s policy shifts `represent a point of inflection in a longer historical trajectory rather than a major discontinuity.'[357] Moreover, he argues there is not a clear causal relationship between those policies and the increase in productivity from 1991 onwards. First, there was no significant improvement in the productivity of the manufacturing sector over the last decades when this was one of the sectors supposed to benefit from tariff reduction. In addition, Australia's level of productivity throughout the 1970s and 1980s was about 80 percent of the level of the United States and grew to just over 85 percent during the late 1990s but fell back again just after reaching this level. Indeed, after a productivity surge in the 1990s Australian productivity growth has returned to around its historic level.

Nonetheless, even if the productivity effect of the 1980s reforms was short lived, McLean does acknowledge that the floating of the exchange rate is an essential element in the Australian economy's resilience in the face of external shocks. Nor does he reject other reasons put forward for this resilience such as `the greater flexibility in the domestic economy resulting from pervasive microeconomic reforms', `robust financial market institutions, and a good track record of monetary and fiscal policy outcomes.'[358]

[356] McLean, *Why Australia Prospered*?, p. 9.
[357] Ibid., p. 223.
[358] Ibid., p. 244.

While McLean's analysis presents a more problematic assessment of the post-1983 economic reforms than the analyses of the journalists and policy makers it does not discredit the effects of micro-economic reform but rather, indicates their limitations by putting them in a broader economic context. Importantly, it also indicates the very significant emerging obstacles facing policymakers in their efforts to prolong the long boom.

Academic economists and political economy specialists have produced extensive work on theories of neoliberalism, their relationship to the GFC and their ongoing effects in various national and global contexts.[359] Yet with regard to the relationship between neoliberal policies and the long period of economic expansion in Australia from 1992 onwards, political journalists, policy makers and business economists have tended to produce the most detailed accounts. Perhaps it is both the contemporaneous and exceptional nature of the boom, particularly as the oft-predicted recession has not yet materialized, that has confounded earlier analyses and made academic observers defer judgment. As Conley has said, `Waiting for the recession…was a bit like waiting for Godot.'[360]

Conclusion

Of the journalists, policy makers and business economists who attempt much of the explication of the period, Paul Kelly was the first of this group to emphasize the public policy innovations of the Hawke-Keating-Howard governments as an indispensable requirement for Australia's economic progress. Yet, in helping to establish this as an orthodoxy he has, arguably, overstated the significance of these reforms. So much so, that, former Labor political advisor Michael Cooney blames Kelly for propagating `a myth about what went on in the politics of Australia before 1983' which, in turn, has had a negative effect on the Labor

[359] See for example Steven Keen, *Debunking Economics: The Naked Emperor of the Social Sciences*, Zed books, London and New York, 2001 and John Quiggin, *Zombie Economics: How dead ideas walk among us*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 2010.

[360] Tom Conley, 'The politics of prosperity' in *Griffith REVIEW*, no. 28, 2010, p. 101.

Party in the twenty-first century.[361] Cooney argues that this has led to the wrongful disparaging of `the whole progressive Australian model of a stable economy and moderate social protections' of twentieth century Australia.[362] As a result, Labor made the error of conducting `policy debates through the lens of the past generation's personal and intellectual rivalries' which was likely to lead to `the wrong decisions' – for Cooney, the example of the Hawke-Keating era does not have the answers for contemporary problems.[363] Similarly, Dyrenfurth claimed `political nostalgia around the Hawke (and Keating) era is an increasingly repressive force upon Labor, weighing like a nightmare on the brain of the living.'[364] Another former Labor advisor, Tom Bentley also lamented the `mythologizing' of 'the economic achievements of the 1980s and early 1990s' which promoted `micro-economic reform techniques that lost their potency.'[365] The extent to which Kelly is responsible for this view of the past being so widespread within the ALP is difficult to determine, but by the time of the 2015 election it did not seem apparent as Kelly thought Bill Shorten's `fidelity to union power' and `big spending agenda…reveals the distance Labor has travelled…since the Hawke-Keating economic policy era' which `belongs to a different political planet.'[366] Yet in a column discussing then Labor shadow treasurer Chris Bowen's book, *The Money Men: Australia's 12 Most Notable Treasurers,* Kelly wrote that Bowen `aspires to the spirit of Keating reformism updated.'[367] While Bowen, in his book, referenced Kelly several times and acknowledged him as `Australia's pre-eminent modern

[361] Michael Cooney, 'Dragon's Tail Correspondence', *Quarterly Essay*, Issue 55, July 1, 2014, p. 81.
[362] Ibid., p.84.
[363] Michael Cooney, 'In the Shadow of Giants: The Paradox of Modernisation in the Second Generation', Henry Boote Address. 26 September, 2014, viewed 2 March 2015 < http://www.chifley.org.au/in-the-shadow-of-giants-the-paradox-of-modernisation-in-the-second-generation/>.
[364] Nick Dyrenfurth, 'Back to the Future: 1983 and all that', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, December 28, 2013, viewed 2 March, 2015, < http://www.smh.com.au/national/back-to-the-future-1983-and-all-that-20131227-2zzhl.html>
[365] Tom Bentley, 'Nostalgia for the Hawke-Keating years is holding Labor back', *The Guardian*', June 7, 2014, viewed 2 March, 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/jun/08/nostalgia-for-the-hawke-keating-years-is-holding-labor-back>.
[366] Kelly, 'Shorten reveals Labor's big policy shift over the decade', *The Australian*, 28 May 2016, p. 19.
[367] Kelly, 'Keating and Swan Loom Large in Bowen's Thinking', *The Australian*, 7 October, 2015, p. 14.

political historian' and thanked him for his help with the chapters on Jim Cairns, Bill Hayden and John Howard.

Kelly's rejection of the influence of neoliberal ideology on Australian policy-makers is also contentious. Kelly's depiction of this contested term is simplistic, yet, it should be acknowledged that his argument about the pragmatism of the Australian public policy model does reflect how `actual policy packages associated with neoliberalism have been variable over time, and between countries.'[368] More importantly Kelly's depiction of the effects of post-1983 economic reform is too accepting of the seemingly intractable nature of the inequality, insecurity and indebtedness, both personal and national, that have accompanied the long boom.

Nonetheless the cogency and consistency of Kelly's analyses, and the prominence they are given through books that are widely publicised and acclaimed by media and policy-making elites contributes to discursive frames which, in effect, legitimises a neoliberal policy agenda. This process, as will be seen in the next chapter, has continued with an even louder and seemingly less nuanced emphasis in his recent journalism and is accompanied by an increasing conservatism on social issues.

[368] Jamie Peck, Nik Theodore and Neil Brenner, 'Neoliberalism, interrupted' in Damien Cahill, Lindy Edwards and Frank Stilwell, (eds.), *Neoliberalism: Beyond the Free Market*, p. 26.

CHAPTER TWO

JOURNALISM

In *Paradise Divided* Paul Kelly selected the journalism that explored what he regarded as the most significant national and international political issues affecting Australia in the 1990s. The majority of the articles, however, were written after 1996 and the election of the Howard government. While this follows on chronologically from the last edition of *The End of Certainty* there is little on the Keating government. This is partly, perhaps, because Kelly returned from his managerial and leadership role as Editor-in-Chief of *The Australian* to a position of International Editor which was later changed to Editor-at-Large in 1996. This title, an indication of Kelly's status, gave Kelly the freedom, given to few journalists, to comment on a very broad range of issues.

Kelly's new position at the paper saw him largely fulfil the role of political columnist. In the United States the political columnist has become `a commodity in his (and, less frequently, her) own right' through syndication which involves `selling his columns to newspapers across the country.'[1] In Australia, political columnists are closer to the British model where, `the columnist has usually been associated with a particular newspaper becoming part of its brand.'[2] Kelly has, for most of this career, worked at *The Australian* which was established by Rupert Murdoch in 1964 as Australia's first national broadsheet and `one upon which Murdoch staked his claim to political influence and respectability.'[3] Despite falling circulation and being unprofitable for much of its existence it is, according to Manne – one of the paper's most prominent critics – `the country's most important newspaper' and Australia's `only genuinely national general newspaper…able to employ many of Australia's best

[1] McNair, *Journalism and Democracy: Evaluation of Political Public Sphere*, p. 64.
[2] Ibid., p. 61.
[3] Denis Cryle, 'Murdoch's flagship: *The Australian* newspaper two decades on', *Pacific Journalism Review*, October 2012, vol. 18, no. 2, 2012, p. 42.

journalists.'[4] Beecher also observed, in 2009, that despite its `often strident right-leaning editorial and ownership basis…it does not publish political commentary and analysis viewed exclusively through a single lens.'[5] Indeed, he claimed, *The Australian* dominated Australia's `political debate' and `its op-ed and feature pages have usurped the Fairfax broadsheets as the originator of Australia's liveliest ideas and commentary.'[6]

Kelly's relationship with *The Australian* is one that has resulted in mutually enhanced prestige and it also provides a way of assessing his role as a political columnist and making a judgment about his function as a public intellectual. McNair usefully categorises three basic types of political column:

- the *polemical*, dispensing anger and outrage
- the *analytical-advisory*, characterised by in-depth and considered exploration of current issues and events
- and the *satirical*, founded on the use of irony and humour[7]

In over 1000 columns since 1996 Kelly has written largely in the analytical-advisory mode which, in turn, `has an expected and ritually drawn structure (oftentimes, statement of the problem, discussion of legitimate alternatives, argumentative defense of one choice and attack of others, conclusion, and recommendation).'[8] Yet Kelly has sometimes, as will be seen, operated in a mode identified by Holmes as `licensed contradiction', where a newspaper wishes to be seen as encouraging a wide range of opinion and therefore allows a

[4] Manne, 'Bad News: Murdoch's Australian and the Shaping of the Nation', p. 3 and p. 4.
[5] Eric Beecher, 'Introduction' in Eric Beecher (ed.), *The Best Australian Political Writing*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 2009, p. xvi.
[6] Ibid., p. xv.
[7] McNair, p. 64.
[8] Dan Nimmo and, James E. Coombs, *The Political Pundits*, Praeger, New York, 1992, p. 13.

viewpoint in opposition to its editorial line.[9] Cryle, for example, says that in the 1980s Kelly and T*he Australian's* Canberra bureau provided the paper's `liberal counter-voice.'[10] While Max Suich, writing in a rival broadsheet, *The Sydney Morning Herald,* described Kelly, in this period, as 'an independent-minded journalist who can flourish under Murdoch, and who routinely disagrees with *The Australian's* editorial opinions and gets front-page leads for his insolence.'[11] In either mode Kelly utilises `a variety of authority claims and different forms of expertise, including historical knowledge, empirical facts, academic theories (less so), and an insider's knowledge of the political process.'[12]

Elite political columnists such as Kelly may also be characterised as a type 'of media intellectual' who sees its model reader as an `information-processing citizen' who requires `objective facts and dispassionate analysis.'[13] Indeed, Kelly is, like most columnists, a journalist by profession, and journalism is a profession where `professional autonomy became linked to the idea that only journalism can provide the accurate and objective information that democratic citizens needed.'[14] In a rapidly changing media environment Kelly's commentary offers a case study in the relevance and value of this traditional model of journalism in an era of rapid change where it seems to be under threat.

Kelly's return to weekly journalism in 1996 coincided with the `major shifts in the political landscape' resulting from the Keating-Howard transition as well as `the emergence of …national issues' particularly `Indigenous or *race* (author's italics) issues…multiculturalism

[9] Tim Holmes, 'Creating identities, Building Communities: why comment?' in Richard Keeble, (ed.), *Print Journalism: a critical introduction*, Routledge, London, 2005, p. 165.
[10] Denis Cryle with Christina Hunt, *Murdoch's Flagship: The First Twenty Five Years of the Australian Newspaper*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, Victoria, 2008, p. xi.
[11] Max Suich, 'The Power to Change and the Power to Prevent Progress: It's Murdoch's Choice, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 October, 1988, p.21.
[12] Ronald N. Jacobs and Eleanor Townsley, *The Space of Opinion: Media Intellectuals and the Public Sphere*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2011, p. 27.
[13] Ibid., p. 74.
[14] Ibid., p. 75.

…refugees and asylum seekers.'[15] *Paradise Divided* features Kelly's ongoing responses to these issues but it by no means indicates the scope of Kelly's concerns from 1996 onwards. The diversity of Kelly's columns, articles and speeches from this time to the present provide the most detailed evidence to classify his political thought and assess his role as a public intellectual. Not surprisingly, the key elements of economic reform (particularly industrial relations), Australian foreign policy, party politics and political leadership also continue to feature prominently among the very wide range of issues he examines in this period. Duffy thought *Paradise Divided* showed that Kelly's journalism had `provided a more coherent and possibly more effective intellectual opposition to the (Howard) Government than the ALP.'[16] Yet Kelly would come to acknowledge and defend Howard's achievements in a number of key policy areas.

Many other issues Kelly has addressed in this period also need to be considered in any assessment of his output. These include higher education, schools, religion (particularly the Catholic Church), climate change, his assessments of prominent figures in Australian political life such as B. A. Santamaria, and former prime ministers. With the last of these Kelly is writing a particular type of column that may be classified as the political portrait.[17] These may be written on the death of a political figure or in response to a published biography. In these columns Kelly assesses the contribution of particular individuals to Australian political development. A second type of column has seen Kelly writing in the mode of `*the Columnist as Teacher*'.[18] These columns consider the historical significance of major events in modern Australian history (including, for example, key military actions, the Snowy Mountains scheme and the 1967 referendum).

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[15] David Carter, 'The Conscience Industry: The Rise and Rise of the Public Intellectual' in David Carter, (ed.), *The Ideas Market: An alternative take on Australia's intellectual life* (2004) Melbourne University Press, Carlton, Vic., 2004, p. 17
[16] Michael Duffy, 'One voice on the party line', *The Australian*, 10 June 2000, viewed November 11, 2015, < https://global-factivacom.proxy.library.adelaide.edu.au/ha/default.aspx#./!?&_suid=151347281950103535560524384274>.
[17] Jacobs and Townsley, p. 28.
[18] Ibid., p. 27.

Kelly's also wrote on international political developments that occurred outside of the Australian context such as Israel, Kosovo and the formation of the EU. The advent of the new century led Kelly to ponder the significance of the 9/11 terrorist attack, the Iraq war (not just the Australian foreign policy response but the broader implications), the role of the High Court and the role of the media. During these years Kelly opposed a bill of rights, euthanasia and gay marriage and traced the decline of the ALP. This is Kelly's most common mode and may be classified as `*The Columnist as a Policy Advisor*'.[19] In responding to these issues Kelly is usually endorsing or criticising specific policies. He also employs this format at different times through this period when he responded to academic works he considered noteworthy, usually – but not exclusively – by those who were also significant as public intellectuals, These included books or articles by, inter alia, Stephen Fitzgerald, Joseph Nye (often), Francis Fukuyama, John Mearsheimer, Noel Pearson, Judith Brett, Christopher Hitchens, Robert Kagan, Stuart Macintyre, Mancur Olson, Fareed Zakaria, Ross Garnaut (often) and, sometimes, very directly, Raimond Gaita and Robert Manne.

Globalisation

In this period Kelly's interpretation of globalisation, and the domestic economic reforms needed to adjust to it, continued to be at the foundation of his commentary. While his emphasis on the centrality of globalisation has remained consistent, his analysis has arguably lacked the depth and nuance of academic analyses. As with his books Kelly does not explain in detail his understanding of globalisation or even define the term. Kelly is constrained, like all members of `the press,' by its very basic function which has been compared to `the beam of a searchlight that moves restlessly about, bringing one episode then another out of darkness into vision.'[20] It means that inevitably the media must focus on `episodes, incidents

[19] Jacobs and Townsley, p. 25.
[20] Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1957, p. 364.

and eruptions' which mitigates the possibilities for sustained analysis.[21] From his writings it can be inferred that for him globalisation is largely about trade liberalisation, improved communications, financial markets and `global integration' (this term is also undefined).

Writing in 1997 after the Howard governments first year in office Kelly wrote the main challenge was to `reconcile democracy with 1990s-style competitive capitalism in a globalised economy' and this required some degree of acceptance of a `more flexible labour market, lower youth wages, greater disparity of wage rates and job insecurity to secure a full employment economy' – all neoliberal prescriptions.[22] In 2000 Kelly argued that the anti-globalisation movement posed `a threat to Australia in particular and the poor nearly everywhere.'[23] An `alliance of trade unions, greens, students and old-fashioned industry' threaten trade liberalisation even though it has bi-partisan support and Australia's `farmers, miners, and manufacturers depend on it.'[24] In another article that year, Kelly cited the arguments of Michael Keating and Glyn Davis as `a more empirical view' of globalisation than the `hyperbole' of Thomas Friedman and the `hysterical view' of Kenichi Ohmae.[25] Such references to academic specialists (Keating and Davis) and public intellectuals (Ohmae and Friedman) are typical of Kelly's style. It shows how the elite columnist claims authority, which is `the right to speak on a particular topic.'[26] This is also a widely accepted strategy to make an argument `persuasive, legitimate, or compelling.'[27] In this case Kelly appears to agree with the academics:

> That the capacity of national government has not been diminished by globalisation; That globalisation has changed the means by which governments can achieve their aims; that the era of economic liberalism produces more inequality and this means

[21] Lippmann, *Public Opinion*, p. 364.
[22] Kelly, 'Global opportunities versus social justice', *The Australian*, 5 March, 1997, p. 11.
[23] Kelly, 'Biting the hand that needs it', *The Australian*, 6 September, 2000, p.15.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Kelly, 'Lessons in governance for all sides', 14 June, 2000, p. 13. In this article Kelly explicates the findings made by Keating and Davis in Glyn Davis and Michael Keating, (eds.), *The future of governance*, Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, NSW, 2000.
[26] Jacobs and Townsley, p. 152.
[27] Ibid., p. 153.

> governments must work to ensure the gains are spread fairly; and that government is now prone to the malaise of "short-termism"[28]

While their conclusions fit with Kelly's own argument regarding a uniquely Australian tradition of public policy innovation which has resulted in a stronger Australian economy, his acknowledgement of the role of the state and rejection of the more simplistic arguments of Ohmae and Friedman is an example of Kelly adopting a typically centrist stance. Indeed, relying on markets alone is untenable and `markets need to be ameliorated by government support in the cause of fairness and to prevent any backlash that might lead to economic re-regulation' – one of Kelly's oft stated conclusions but, as so often, he does not suggest specific policies that may achieve this.[29] Indeed, Kelly's failure to specify the nature of the redistributive policies needed to compensate the groups who did not benefit from globalisation saw his commentary become increasingly predictable.

In 2016, for example, many of Kelly's columns lamented the state of Australia's political system and what he saw as its failure to manage series of problems, many stemming from a structural federal budget deficit. Kelly worried that `the issue for the nation is whether it moves to a higher, permanent plateau in spending and taxation' and quotes former treasurer Peter Costello description of `the Orwellian world of Canberra where `a tax rise is now described as a budget "save".'[30] For Kelly, `momentum towards bigger government is a product of the current age and always sanctioned by "fairness"' which was `the gospel of progressive politics', was a further cause for concern.[31] This seemed a far cry from his conclusion in *The End of Certainty* that urged political leaders to create a better integration of liberal economic policies with social policies in order to maintain a society based on the

[28] Kelly, 'Lessons in governance for all sides', *The Australian*, 14 June, 2000, p. 13.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Kelly, 'In all fairness, can Australia escape its past?, The *Australian,* 17 September, 2016, p. 20.
[31] Ibid.

foundation ideals of social justice and egalitarianism. Kelly understood that `the current age of low growth, weak wages, economic transition, high deficits and retreating national income' was creating `real world hurt' that `drives the psychology of broken trust.'[32] Budget repair was fundamental to dealing with these problems, but at no point would Kelly countenance tax increases, even though they were proposed by a range of contributors to the debates on fixing the federal budget.

Kelly, while always a consistent supporter of globalisation, had at other times communicated its associated problems. In 2002, he cited the key findings of a World Bank study, *Globalisation, Growth and Poverty* which found that globalisation had been a force for reducing poverty and therefore `the social agitators, liberal columnists, union leaders and clergy who push an anti-globalisation agenda should be asked whose interests they champion and what moral cause they serve.'[33] These findings support Kelly's general view that globalisation is a problematic process but it is a net benefit for those nations which embrace it. In 2005 Kelly acknowledged some of these problems more specifically:

> Globalisation has created blowback. Islamist terrorists, G8 protesters, environmentalists, narco-insurgents and others oppose, in different ways, the US-led model of globalisation because it attacks their values, interests and way of life.[34]

Later in that year Kelly wrote that `the market-based economy and globalisation dictated that in a harsher, tougher workplace, parents are spending more time on their job and less time on their families: a trend that needs to be reversed.'[35] Kelly acknowledges that most of the 'recommendations…strike at established interests in the cause of a new and often

[32] Kelly, PM must contain populists to win the battle of ideas, *The Australian*, 10 August 2016, p. 12.
[33] Kelly, 'Anti-globalisers lag behind', *The Australian,* 13 April, 2002, p.28.
[34] Kelly, 'Ideas will be crucial to victory', *The Australian,* 10 August 2005, p. 12.
[35] Kelly, 'Society ignores the plight of children at its peril', *The Australian,* 30 November, 2005, p. 14. This was in a column discussing what Kelly regarded as 'one of the most important books of the year,' *Children of the Lucky Country: How Australian society has turned its back on children and why children matter* by Fiona Stanley, Sue Richardson and Margot Prior. Kelly also states he is a board member of the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth.

contentious conception of public interest.'[36] Kelly's commentary over time does convey some of the complexity of the issue and, as Jacobs and Townsley argue, a marker of the elite columnist is the ability to communicate to general readers and policy makers `the complexity surrounding an issue, the relative advantages and disadvantages of various approaches to the problem, and the unintended consequences of different policy choices.'[37] But his unwillingness to consider solutions that involved a greater role for the state became more problematic over time.

The following year Kelly still maintained that: `Globalisation has been the underlying question of Australian politics for the past 20 years' and in a `more competitive world of globalisation, success will come to those economic and political systems that are more flexible and accessible.'[38] The next month Kelly, wrote that `globalisation, contrary to much of the literature, makes the nation-state more, not less important' as individuals `react to globalisation by affirming national and cultural origins, not by declaring themselves global citizens.'[39] This at least suggests that Conley, for example, should not place him among those commentators and scholars who believe 'globalisation had neutered domestic politics.'[40]

Kelly makes few direct references to globalisation in the following years. In 2011 he says in discussing global food prices and their relationship to uprisings in Arab nations that `unless globalisation is made to work based on enlightened national interest then the hopes of such revolutions will only be dashed.'[41] The following year in a column on US economic decline Kelly says: 'The globalised world will deliver new, highly paid jobs to a dynamic minority in hi-tech and finance.'[42] But many of the new American jobs are in low skilled, low paid areas.

[36] Kelly, 'Society ignores the plight of children at its peril', p. 14.
[37] Jacobs and Townsley, p. 51.
[38] Kelly, 'Clever nation notion', *The Australian,* 22 July, 2006, p. 18.
[39] Kelly, 'West's unite notions', *The Australian,* 16 September 2006, p. 20.
[40] Tom Conley, 'Globalization, Schmobalization', *Australian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 43, no. 1, 2008, p. 145.
[41] Kelly, 'High Food Prices Feed Unrest in Developing World', *The Australian,* 16 March, 2011, p. 12.
[42] Kelly, 'As Real Income Tumbles, The American Dream Withers', *The Australian,* 18 July, 2012, p. 12.

Kelly does not critique this and only concludes the USA remains `the best laboratory to study of the impact of globalisation in the West.' Again the unwillingness to go further with implications of these observations indicates the limitations of Kelly's understanding of the concept.

This survey reveals that while Kelly regards globalisation as the most important force affecting domestic politics he has, in fact, not written about it in any sustained fashion (this also applies to his books). There is little sense that globalisation is `a complex, contradictory and uneven phenomenon' or `a (contested) set of ideas'.[43] Nor has the GFC and it ongoing ramifications led to Kelly to reconsider the effect of `global integration'. Kelly argues that the GFC was `100 per cent external' and `the origins of the crisis lie in the overseas financial sector where…there has been a comprehensive failure of regulation, transparency, lending practices, credit agencies, US government direction of the mortgage market and monetary policy.'[44] The crisis also leads him to again acknowledge the significant role of the nation state: `The world is a highly dangerous and unpredictable place,' he wrote as the GFC began but `Australia is a stand-alone nation that will succeed or fall in its own efforts to negotiate the globalised world.'[45]

This is, to some extent, a repudiation of Kelly's view at the time of the second Clinton inauguration where he wrote that a more experienced President

> has learned that government's ability to solve problems is in decline; that leaders no longer win elections by "tax and spend" programs; that expectations about government must be reduced and aspirations for the individual, family and community increased; that budgets must be tackled…Clinton invites a historic assessment of the 1996 US election – that it represents the final stage in the death of Keynesian economics…[46]

[43] Conley, 'Globalization, Schmobalization, p.142.
[44] Kelly, `Fix it, don't break it', *The Australian*, 13 June 2009, p. 18.
[45] Kelly, 'Euroland Lesson For A Stand-Alone Nation-State', *The Australian,* 19 May 2010, p. 12.
[46] Kelly, 'President addresses himself to platitudes', *The Australian,* 22 January, 1997, p. 1.

Kelly has not reassessed the role of Keynesian policies in the wake of the GFC, even though much of his journalism focuses on what could be classified as developments in domestic and international political-economy. Kelly continued to adhere much more closely to his newspaper's ideological line or `values' which Kelly himself defined as opposed to `a heavily government-controlled and regulated economy', and `on guard against a revival of regulation, protectionism or Keynesian economics.'[47] This was a stance that, as will be seen, limited Kelly's policy prescriptions and tended to confirm the claims of his critics.

This tendency to address issues sporadically and relatively briefly throughout this period means some of Kelly's journalism is useful as reporting rather than analyses. It is of course also symptomatic of the media cycle – while Kelly has the freedom to write on some issues in more detail he must, as his role as a journalist requires, continue to respond to new developments as they arise. Edwards has pointed out, a feature of Kelly's journalism is a tendency to make `a very strong statement (which) is progressively qualified until it is all but contradicted.'[48] But it should be emphasised that in doing so Kelly conveys some of the complexity of an issue and this is considered `a rhetorical marker of distinction' for the elite political columnist.[49]

This can also be seen in his writings on welfare reform. In 1998 Kelly wrote that, `the abolition of welfare' was the `pinnacle of America's political revolution in the late 1990s.'[50] Kelly points out that: `In the US, welfare…doesn't refer to the entire social security system' but 'refers to the single mother's benefit tied to an entrenched, typically black, underclass.'[51] He then links the fall in welfare rolls to a corresponding decline in crime, poverty and teen pregnancies two years after the Clinton introduced the new legislation. But then concludes

[47] Kelly, 'The Paper and the Nation: 50 Years of the Australian', *Media International Australia*, vol. 157, Issue 1, 2015, p. 39.
[48] Edwards, 'Australia after the global financial crisis', p. 368.
[49] Jacobs and Townsley, p. 52.
[50] Kelly, `A revolt against government', *The Australian*, 27 July, 1998, p. 9.
[51] Ibid.

that despite such a seemingly effective outcome, `Clinton's policies have turned Americans away from Washington…Such distrust of government can be both liberating and dangerous.'[52] Kelly has, however, been consistent in promoting this type of policy, which is one which aims to reduce welfare dependency. In 1999 he highlighted the Blair government's welfare reforms which aimed to create `a new rights/responsibility compact between the individual and the state' by placing more responsibility on welfare recipients, moving `from universality to needs-based benefits' and increasing education and health services.'[53] Such policies, however, did not alleviate the rising inequality in these countries which, in turn, fuelled a growing populist discontent.

Kelly's analyses of domestic welfare policy favoured similar outcomes. For example, in 1998 he used treasury data to challenge the statement from the Australian Council of Social Services (ACOSS) that the Howard government tax package was inequitable. Kelly's acknowledges that ACOSS had revealed flaws in the Howard-Costello package but chides the pressure group for failing to reach evidence-based conclusions, particularly with regard to the overall impact on low income groups and the move toward a more progressive tax system.[54] In subsequent columns Kelly was instrumental in advocating the ideas of Noel Pearson who he saw as `an Aboriginal leader with moral authority' whose `speeches are virtually destroying the status quo "progressive" welfare position.'[55]

If a `key component of the (Howard) government's neo-liberal agenda was a belief in the notion of welfare dependency' and `the notion of Mutual Obligation' then Kelly's columns reveal an uncritical acceptance of these concepts.[56] If, also, the Howard government has also constructed a debate that omits `serious discussion about the collective obligation of the

[52] Kelly, `A revolt against government', p. 9
[53] Kelly, 'Working model for welfare', *The Australian,* 6 April 1999, p. 7.
[54] Kelly, 'Cracks in foundations of welfare lobby attack', *The Australian*, 22 August 1998, p. 8.
[55] Kelly, 'Welfare reform suits PM values', *The Australian*, 23 August 2000, p. 15.
[56] Philip Mendes, 'Welfare Reform and Mutual Obligation' in Chris Aulich and Roger Wettenhall, (eds.), *Howard's Second and Third Governments*, University of New South Wales Press Ltd., Sydney, 2005, p.136 and p. 138.

state and community to defend the rights of the poor and disadvantaged, or about the specific role of the welfare system in promoting greater equity' then Kelly has not challenged this discursive frame.[57] Kelly opts for a more simplistic explanation: `The main gulf is between the rich and the rest, and this needs to be addressed. So must the fate of those at the bottom where the issue is poverty not inequality. Finally, more inequality does not constitute an argument against reform but rather the need to re-think and improve the reform process.'[58] In subsequent columns Kelly periodically referred to rising inequality in several columns but does elaborate on what constitutes an improved reform process. It was only with the re-election of Pauline Hanson in 2016 that Kelly showed a clearer understanding of the electoral consequences of rising inequality.

Instead Kelly continues to emphasise principals of economic liberalism. In 2000 Kelly lamented the quality of the debate about inequality in Australia. He referred to data showing that the distribution of wealth had become more unequal but `to demand more tariffs, a tax concession, even higher marginal tax rates for middle-class achievers,' are `measures that won't help equity or work, or won't benefit the community overall.'[59] Carroll baldly summarised Kelly's response thus:

> For a moment, unlike most of his fellow economic rationalists, he worried about the social ravages caused by his theory. Then the defence: What else could we have done? Globalisation rules![60]

Five years later Kelly gave prominence to research from the National Centre for Social and Economic modelling which found 'that the Australian tax and welfare system under Howard' was `a powerful engine to redistribute cash and resources from the better-off to the lower

[57] Mendes, 'Welfare Reform and Mutual Obligation', p. 148.
[58] Kelly, 'Why are we still running scared from reform?', *The Australian*, 12 November 2003, p. 15.
[59] Kelly, 'Rhetoric is no remedy for equity', *The Australian*, 21 June 2000, p. 13.
[60] John Carroll, 'Rise of the corporate carnivores', *The Australian Financial Review*, Weekend Review, 6 October, 2000, p. 4.

income-deciles.'[61] It was supported by data from the Melbourne Institute's Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA survey) which showed that poverty rates were relatively high but declined in the 2000-2003 period and that `the number of people at risk of persistent poverty was clearly less than the numbers in poverty for any single year.'[62] Then in 2008 he wrote that `contrary to the propaganda and repeated phony surveys about income equality RBA figures showed that, in contrast to the USA, real disposable income had risen significantly' and this was `spread "fairly evenly" across all income quintiles.'[63] Kelly does not return to the issue until 2010 when he devoted two columns to the ALP policy of quarantining welfare payments across parts of the Northern Territory, a policy also endorsed by Pearson and one which `shatters 100 years of Labor tradition in the cause of mutual responsibility and attacking passive welfare.'[64]

The pattern emerges that Kelly's treatment of this policy area is governed both by the exigencies of the media cycle and his perception of its importance. So even though: `the welfare state, broadly defined, makes up in budgetary terms by far the largest share of what government does' and has been `from its inception the most contentious issue within democratic governance.'[65] This is not really reflected in the attention given to the issue in Kelly's columns over the period since 1996.

The larger problem is the failure to address rising inequality in a substantive way. It is true that disposable incomes for all groups have risen but the increase has been greater for wealthier Australians. In the 1994-2010 period, for example, `the richest 20 per cent of the Australian population gained 44 per cent of all income growth…while the poorest 20 per

[61] Kelly, 'The Howard Surprise – Sustaining Prosperity', *The Australian*, 2 April 2005, p.39.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Kelly, 'Poised for the storm', *The Australian*, 1 November, 2008, p. 20.
[64] Kelly, 'Big news but no one's listening – NATIONAL INCOME MANAGEMENT', 19 June 2010, *The Australian*, p. 13.
[65] Alan Fenna & Alan Tappa, 'The Australian Welfare State and the Neoliberalism Thesis', *Australian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 47, no. 2, 2012, p. 155.

cent gained 6.4 per cent.[66] By several other measures, including levels of wealth per capita, the increasing levels of inequality in Australia have been described as `the great divergence.'[67] By not acknowledging inequality as a real problem Kelly, of course, does not consider its impact on social mobility and democracy. Given the growing evidence of inequality in Australia, Kelly's failure to address the issue in any depth arguably constitutes a serious omission in his journalism. It suggests Kelly is unwilling to admit all the consequences of the key policies he has advocated.

By contrast, industrial relations are a subject of dozens of Kelly's columns since 1996 and his stance is consistent. In response to the waterfront dispute of the following year, Kelly summarised it as not `an attack on unionism' but an attack on the MUA (Maritime Union of Australia) monopoly which `concerns the rights of non-unionists (a majority) and of companies and, then, of all Australians, to see their economy adjust to global competition.'[68] But it was after the introduction of the Howard government's Work Choices legislation in 2005 that the majority of columns were written. Initially Kelly misjudged their significance: He thought the new reforms would `not be the big issue of the next election and they will not provoke the demise of the Howard government.'[69] Indeed, as Lewis points out, the new laws `were not radical or a major departure from the path of reform begun by Hawke and Keating.'[70] However, a month later he wrote that the debate was `not just about industrial relations but about Australia's political culture' which `sees Australia stranded about between its new post-1983 market-based economic policy and its political culture still too anchored in the pre-1983 protectionist and paternalist age.'[71] In October of that year Kelly

[66] Peter Whiteford, *Australian: Inequality and Prosperity and Their Impacts in a Radical Welfare State,* H. C Coombs Policy Forum, Discussion Paper, 2013, p. 70.
[67] Andrew Leigh, *Battler & Billionaires: The Story of Inequality in Australia*, Redback, Collingwood, Victoria, 2013, p. 50.
[68] Kelly, 'Old war is fought with new rules', *The Australian*, 15 April, 1998,
[69] Kelly, 'Economics the key to opposition victory', *The Australian*, 20 July 2005, p. 15.
[70] Phil Lewis, 'Industrial relations and the labour market' in Chris Aulich and Roger Wettenhall, (eds.), *Howard's Fourth Government*, University of New South Wales Press, Sydney, 2008, p. 185.
[71] Kelly, 'A looming clash over IR culture', *The Australian*, 17 August 2005, p.14.

linked the campaign against the new laws to the need to reform the minimum wage system. Kelly argued that the system needed to be reformed on social, economic and moral grounds and, in the process, condemned `the churches' for `their intellectual failure...to accept the moral foundations of a market economy and market-based mechanisms to deliver equity (which) dooms them to historic marginalisation.'[72]

Prior to the 2007 federal election Kelly stated that Kevin Rudd's opposition to the Work Choices laws, which was `one of the key reforms of the last two decades', would compromise both his political authority and his integrity.[73] Kelly went further as the election date approached: the ALP's industrial relations policy `documents Labor's main failure since Paul Keating left office: its refusal to revise its views on industrial power and workplace ideology.'[74] Kelly, typically taking the centrist position, acknowledged that Howard had gone too far in favouring employers' interests but contended that Rudd was `repeating the mistake in the opposite direction.' He argued, essentially, that abolishing individual contracts instead of reforming them was `more about power than fairness' and the idea `that fairness must be imposed by universal laws applying from the smallest to the biggest enterprise' would result in `more costs, less flexibility, more litigation and lower productivity.'[75] Three months later Kelly cautiously endorsed changes made to the ALP policy and, at the end of his analysis concluded that it remained to be seen if it `delivers fairness with flexibility or fairness at the price of flexibility.'[76] However, as Lewis points out, the laws nonetheless `represented a significant deregulation of the labour market compared to pre-Howard days and…angered many union leaders.'[77]

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[72] Kelly, 'Half measures could thwart equity goals', *The Australian*, 26 October 2005, p. 16.
[73] Kelly, 'Onus is on Rudd to spell out his position on IR', *The Australian*, 28 March 2007.
[74] Kelly, 'For Labor, balance is code for union power', *The Australian,* 2 May 2007.
[75] Ibid.
[76] Kelly, 'Rudd is still an IR radical – Policy Battleground Election 07 – The Workplace – Election 2007', *The Australian*, 1 September 2007.
[77] Phil Lewis, 'Industrial relations and the labour market', *The Australian*, p. 184.

With the introduction of the bill into parliament Kelly's made his original criticisms more vehemently in another analysis which drew on the work of Freehills, a prominent law firm specialising in industrial relations. It was, he wrote, `a significant step into the past' that suggested 'Australia's workplace relations system exists in some interterrestrial immunity from the rest of the economic world.'[78] The next year, federal opposition leader Tony Abbott was berated for his retreat from the Howard government policy which Kelly saw `as a turning point in Australia's economic debate' which meant `any hopes for genuine reform seem postponed for many years' and sacrificed `national interest policy on the altar of short-term poll driven politics.'[79] Abbott was again criticised in 2011 for using a major industrial dispute that resulted in the grounding of the Qantas to attack to attack the Prime minister, Julia Gillard, rather than highlight the flaws in the act.[80]

Several months prior to this dispute, Kelly drew on report by the Australian Industry Group to claim the ALP's legislation, the Fair Work Act, had `weakened productivity, flexibility and workplace change' and that its failure to improve productivity meant `that the economic justification for the Fair Work Act…was a fraud.'[81] Kelly's frequent contributions to the IR debates resulted in accusations of his analyses being `simplistic, misleading, lazy and hopelessly partisan' and embellishing `the assertions of the usual suspects from the business lobby…'[82] Kelly did not respond but was undeterred. Two months later he was speculating on the possibility of Coalition government election victory resulting in an inquiry into the Fair Work Act which emphasised productivity and also a judicial inquiry into union corruption. Indeed, Kelly's commentary on industrial relations became a central feature of his analysis of the viability of the ALP itself in the new century.

[78] Kelly, 'IR reforms asking or trouble', *The Australian*, 29 November 2008, p. 19.
[79] Kelly, 'Abbott waves white flag on labour market reform', *The Australian*, 21 July 2010, p. 14.
[80] Kelly, Blame game misses need for IR reform', *The Australian*, 2 November 2011, p. 12.
[81] Kelly, 'Gillard caught in workplace trap'. *The Australian*, 2 April, 2011, p. 11.
[82] Ibid. Chaney was then chair of Woodside Petroleum and the National Australia Bank.

In 2012 a government appointed independent panel reviewed the effects of the legislation and found that the Fair Work Act had not harmed productivity.[83] In response, Kelly did not assess the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data which supported the conclusion nor offer commentary except to say that the review should have been conducted by the Productivity Commission. Still, the act did reverse some of the post-1983 reforms by increasing the power of tribunals and unions in dispute resolution and wage setting which supports one of Kelly's key points concerning reduced labour market flexibility.[84] The increased employment flexibility under Hawke, Keating and Howard is now seen as a key factor in preventing employment from rising as much as expected following the GFC.[85]

In parallel with Kelly's IR commentary is a growing critique of the role of trade unions and their relationship with the ALP. In one of three articles on the 1998 waterfront dispute Kelly concluded that the MUA had `had too much power for too long' and had `leveraged that power too much on its own behalf at the cost of political liberty and economic performance.'[86] Moreover: `The key to Labor's electoral successes in recent decades, lies in broadening its base, not invoking class ties with unions.'[87] This contention would be argued more stridently and at greater length over subsequent years. The following year in a column on Bill Kelty's resignation as ACTU secretary, Kelly, in effect praised Kelty for his work in making `Australian workers much better off' even though his decisions helped unleash forces that ultimately weakened the union movement.[88]

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[83] The ABS data 'showed productivity growth averaged 1.1 per cent per year between 2003-04 and 2007-08, compared to 2.4 per cent in the previous five years. Between 2007-08 and March, annual growth averaged 1.7 per cent. The review pointed to a range of factors – including the resources investment boom – for the sub-par performance, which has lagged behind many developed economies.', Jacob Greber, 'Too early to tell: Eastlake, *Australian Financial Review*, 3 August 2012, p. 9.

[84] Anne Garnett and Phil Lewis, 'The economy' in Chris Aulich and Mark Evans, (eds.), *The Rudd Government: Australian Commonwealth Administration 2007-2010*, ANU E Press, Canberra, 2010, pp. 190-191.

[85] Ibid., p. 191.

[86] Kelly, 'Howard must glean a policy gain from the fracas', *The Australian*, 7 May 1998, p. 11.

[87] Ibid.

[88] Kelly, 'A Napoleon in the labour wars – Exit Bill Kelty, Union Boss – 1983-1999', *The* Australian, 18 August 1999, p. 1.

In 2002 Kelly called a report by Bob Hawke and Neville Wran into reforming the ALP `as a victory for tradition, sentiment and prevailing institutional power' and `a modest reform…to save the status quo' which sent `conflicting signals' which, Kelly implied, is embodied in reaffirming union ties yet wanting to reduce the influence of factions and `open up the party.'[89] Four years later Kelly wrote that the ALP had failed to learn the lessons from the electoral success of Tony Blair. Many of his initiatives were `anathema to Australian Labor', including weakening Labour's trade union links, and Blair's `success betrays the failure of his Australian colleagues.'[90] Throughout 2010 – 2013 Kelly wrote a series of articles explicitly identifying union influence within the ALP as one of the most important factors in the decline in the party's primary vote in this period. Column headings such as `Gillard must conquer the bosses', `Oldest Party Cracked at Foundation' , `It's not just the leaders, it's the party', and `Clueless, Leaderless and Blind' trace Kelly's increasingly scathing analysis of the ALP's fortunes. In the last of these Kelly described any reform of the party that did not address the issue of 50 per cent union voting power at ALP conferences when union membership in the private sector stood at 14 per cent of the private sector showed the ALP's `structure was obsolete' and the party was `psychologically incapable of its reinvention.'[91]

A few months later Kelly highlighted the arguments of former ALP federal minister Lindsay Tanner – principally that modern Labor's only purpose is to achieve and exercise power. The loss of a higher purpose suggested that the party had reached its endpoint as it may have fulfilled its `century-long mission of raising the living standards of working people may now be completed' and this seemed to be part of a global development affecting `trade union-

[89] Kelly, 'Conflicting signals can stall a revival', *The Australian*, 14 August 2002, p. 11.
[90] Kelly, 'New Labour ignored here', *The Australian*, 27 March 2006, p.1.
[91] Kelly, 'Clueless, Leaderless and Blind', *The Australian*, 7 December, 2011, p. 12.

based global democratic parties.'[92] Kelly does not, however, consider the deeper questions about what these developments mean for the `economic function' of, and need for, social democratic parties and why voters would 'find them preferable to conservative parties that claim to manage the market better?' [93]

Rather, Tanner needed to specifically address the issue of union influence in the party's policy conferences. This commitment to traditional union ties indicates the party was `not appealing to the political centre or swinging voters or the investment class.'[94] Gillard's rhetoric may have put and `emphasis on markets and the reciprocal obligation of citizens to strive hard'[95] but the results were `"true Labor"' policy initiatives in areas such as disability insurance, dental care, school funding, restricting corporate tax relief and superannuation concessions for higher income earners.[96] Kelly does not analyse the merits of these individual policies in terms of their economic and social benefits, instead he claims they are `the opposite strategy to the Hawke-Keating 1980s reform era' which `enshrined the notion of aspirational voters attracted by deregulation of markets, tax reform, superannuation benefits and investment opportunities.'[97] Yet they are the kind of social policies that Kelly has always said are needed to maintain social cohesion in the face of the upheavals wrought by globalisation.

Nonetheless Kelly elaborated these contentions after the announcement of the 2013 federal election date. The ALP had no choice but to change: `Union influence is stamped all over Labor's current flaws – its alienation from the corporate sector, small traders, aspirational voters, a suffocating industrial relations policy and hostility to market-based reforms.'[98]

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[92] Kelly, 'Tanner shines a light on party's hollow core', *The Australian*, 29 September, 2012, p. 15.
[93] Carol Johnson, 'Gillard, Rudd and Labor Tradition', *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, vol. 57, no. 4, 2011, p. 579.
[94] Kelly, 'Tanner shines a light on party's hollow core', p. 15.
[95] Johnson, 'Gillard, Rudd and Labor Tradition', p. 579.
[96] Kelly, 'Tanner shines a light on party's hollow core', p. 15.
[97] Ibid.
[98] Kelly, 'Gillard trapped as an agent of old Labor', *The Australian*, February 23 2013, p. 14.

Therefore, reform requires a reduction in union representation at ALP conferences from 50 per cent to 20 percent which better reflects union membership in the workforce; and as that membership declines so should the level of representation at conferences.

In his extensive commentary on unions Kelly does not address the consequences of the decline in union membership with regard to inequality. As Leigh points out there is `a fairly strong inverse relationship between inequality and union membership.'[99] Borland has found that a decline in Australian union membership in the 1986-94 period is correlated `with approximately 30 per cent of the increase in the variance of earnings of full-time male employees…and 15 per cent of the increase in the variance of earnings of full-time female employees.'[100] The OECD also found that union membership in Australia `appears to raise the income of low-income workers the most, meaning that unions are beneficial for equality among the employed.'[101] Correlation does not definitively establish causation but Kelly's failure to address the body of empirical evidence suggesting such links may be considered a significant omission in the considerable commentary in his journalism on the role of unions.

The Iraq war

The Iraq war featured strongly in Kelly's commentary from late 2001 and it provides an instructive case study into his thought, mode and style. Kelly has commented on a broad range of foreign policy issues including some that are not directly linked to issues of national interest. For example, in 1999 attacked President Clinton's use of an analogy with World War II and Hitler to justify the NATO bombing of Serbia as `dishonest' and showing the `confusion at the heart of NATO's strikes.'[102] Kelly cited Kissenger's arguments that the conflict was self-contained and did not threaten Europe, nor was it in America's national

[99] Leigh, *Battlers & Billionaires*, p. 72.
[100] Jeff Borland, 'Earnings Inequality in Australia: Changes, Causes and Consequences', *The Economic Record*, vol. 75, no. 229, 1999, p. 194.
[101] OECD 2012, 'Inequality in labour income – What are its drivers and how can it be reduced?', *OECD Economics Department Notes*, no. 8. January 2012, p. 5.
[102] Kelly, 'Kosovo strategy a dangerous failure', *The Australian*, 31 March 1999, p. 13.

interest. In addition the bombing was not fulfilling its objectives and may have been counterproductive in other ways such as `deepening the victim mentality of the Serb people' and provoking a greater refugee crisis.[103]

Yet three years later, when responding to the Bush administration's delineation of the doctrine of pre-emption, Kelly believed the Kosovo intervention was `justified because it is now widely agreed there are limits to state sovereignty and because the evidence is that the campaign saved many thousands of lives.'[104] Kelly, unsurprisingly, did not refer back to his original stance.

From 2001 to 2007 the build-up to the invasion of Iraq, the war itself and the aftermath were a major subject of Kelly's writings. Kelly supported the Australian involvement in Afghanistan but canvassed at length the reasons for and against a US incursion into Iraq. Kelly's writings in this period may also be considered in the context of his paper's editorial line on the war which was, like 175 of the Murdoch's News Corporation publications, in favour of the Bush administration's policy of pre-emption.[105] It is against this background that Kelly's function as a public intellectual should be assessed.

Kelly was an early critic of the Bush administration's `lack of clarity over objectives' in the immediate aftermath of the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001.[106] A few months later in column that demonstrates many of the strengths of Kelly's mode and style Kelly succinctly analysed what he called `the Bush doctrine' of `pre-emptive military action' by referencing a wide range of influential thinkers.[107] In the space of 1600 words Kelly summarised Secretary of State's Colin Powell's statements on the new agenda and then highlighted the key arguments of Brzezinski and Nye against unilateralism, coupled this

[103] Kelly, 'Kosovo strategy a dangerous failure'.
[104] Kelly, 'United we stand and Hussein falls', p.13.
[105] Roy Greenslade, 'Their master's voice', *The Guardian*, 17 February, 2003, p.2.
[106] Kelly, 'Fight for a way of life', *The Australian,* 13 October 2001, p.28.
[107] Kelly, 'Strength and Peril', *The Australian*, 16 February, 2002, p. 23.

with reference to Salman Rushdie's warning about the global rise in anti-Americanism but conveyed US fears with salient quotes from Allison and former New York mayor Rudolph Giuliani. Kelly then lists the increased spending commitments required by the Bush government and cites criticisms from the *Financial Times* and the *New York Times*. Kelly goes on to quote the differing responses of Paul Kennedy, CIA director George Tenet and, finally, Christopher Hitchens to conclude that Bush's policy `plays into the hands of the US's enemies.'[108] This familiarity with a wide range of international opinion and commentary and the ability to marshal and balance the conflicting arguments to arrive at a clear conclusion is a prime example of Kelly's strength as a columnist where, again, his ability to convey the complexity of an issue acts `as a rhetorical marker of distinction.'[109] Here, Kelly demonstrates how the elite columnist operates at the nexus between journalism and academia.

Three months later Kelly' criticism deepened: the Bush administration was `strong on scares yet weak on a credible global agenda' and there was `plentiful evidence' that `Bush's leadership is unconvincing in the world and ineffective at home.'[110] Presciently, Kelly argues that among Bush's defects is a failure to understand that `nation building is just as important as regime destruction' and that an invasion of Iraq would involve the post-war presence of US forces for many years.[111] But even though Kelly continued to fear the growth of anti-Americanism which `feeds upon the image of a unilateral, militaristic, self-absorbed superpower'[112] Kelly argued that Australia's ANZUS obligations meant it would have to be involved in a war against Iraq. Kelly quoted Paul Dibb to this effect and concluded with: `It's a tough call saying that keeping Hussein in power – a war criminal who has used weapons of

[108] Kelly, 'Strength and Peril', p. 23.
[109] Jacobs and Townsley, p. 51.
[110] Kelly, 'Next wave exposes Bush', *The Australian*, 25 May, 2002, p. 30.
[111] Ibid.
[112] Kelly, 'The indispensable nation, *The Australian*, 20 July, 2002, p.17.

mass destruction on two occasions – is a better risk than deposing him.'[113] This uncertainty was also accompanied by a statement of the obvious: `For Australia… there is no escaping the core proposition that September 11 has changed the American mindset and constitutes a strategic shift. It would be folly for Australian analysts to deny this.'[114] Besides being self-evident Kelly was couching the issue only in terms of national interest and not admitting the reasons he had previously cited against unilateral action, let alone in terms of Iraqi civilian casualties or the cost in blood and treasure for the USA and its partners.

Kelly's shift in tone continued in his next column, which referenced the works of Samantha Powers and Richard Butler regarding Saddam Hussein's crimes. Kelly's conclusion suggests that after canvassing all the arguments he was unable to resolve them:

> The reality is that not even the record of genocide, murder and defiance of the UN that defines Hussein alone justifies pre-emption. But it's the place to start a proper debate in Australia. Australians should consider two questions. First, at what point does a leader forfeit the right of protection via the principle of national sovereignty; and, second, if Hussein deserves to be removed, under what conditions should this occur?[115]

This shifting of position seemed apparent in the following column which featured the arguments of Kissenger and Scowcroft against pre-emption, viz. the American pursuit of this strategy would encourage other nations to follow suit and thus create a much more dangerous world. In addition, acting alone would deepen rifts with some longstanding and potential allies thus harming global action against terror.[116]

Kelly followed this with a column restating his contention that Australia was by no means a `lapdog' of the USA in its relationship with the USA. Instead Australia was a junior partner

[113] Kelly, 'National interest and the balance of risk', *The Australian*, 24 July, 2002, p. 11.
[114] Ibid.
[115] Kelly, 'An evil to be reckoned with', *The Australian*, August 17, 2002, p. 30.
[116] Kelly, 'Tangled up in Washington's war scheme', *The Australian*, 21 August 2002, p. 13.

skilled at manipulating relations with the greater power to its advantage.[117] Kelly had elaborated on this interpretation earlier in *100 years* and it is one that has continued to gain wider acceptance. Cox and O'Connor for example, have argued that as a more complete archival record has emerged it indicates, with regard to Australian involvement in Vietnam and Iraq, Australia acted as `more of a hound dog than the obsequious lapdog often portrayed by commentators.'[118] That is Australian governments, as Kelly has also argued, believed, `the benefits of military support for the US would, ultimately, far outweigh the costs'[119] and the Australian commitment `posed considerably less risk for Australia than for the Americans, in terms of the number of troops committed per capita and the type of military missions undertaken.'[120]

In the following months Kelly went on discussing the options. He cited many arguments against any attack on the Iraq that did not have UN backing but thought a `unilateral strike' was the `second worst' option – the worst was to do nothing.[121] In this process Kelly brought to the attention of his readers a range of important publications, usually American, that influenced his thinking and in doing so gave the opinions and ideas of prominent public intellectuals a wider circulation. The main reason for Kelly's refusal to rule out war and unreservedly support deterrence and containment seemed to be the result of his analysis, an analysis that, in summary, attributed the situation of impending war to `Hussein's evil, George W. Bush's reckless assertion and Europe's irresponsibility.'[122]

So on the eve of the invasion Kelly still expressed some hesitation rather than complete conviction. The ability of the Bush administration to cope with its imperial burden and the

[117] Kelly, 'No lapdog, this partner has clout', *The Australian*, 28 August, 2002, p. 13.
[118] Lloyd Cox & Brendan O'Connor, 'Australia, the US and the Vietnam and Iraq Wars: 'Hound Dog, not Lapdog', *Australian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 47, no. 2, 2012, p. 12.
[119] Ibid., p. 184.
[120] Ibid., p.175.
[121] Kelly, 'First Strike on Iraq could backfire', *The Australian*, 11 October, 2002, p. 13.
[122] Kelly, 'Craven trudge to moral morass', *The Australian*, 19 February, 2003, p. 11.

American public's acceptance of this burden was to `be seriously doubted.'[123] And if the US succeeded in this task it would `face huge pressures to intervene in the Middle East and impose a settlement upon Israel and the Palestinians.'[124] Finally, he reiterated that the problem of renewed anti-Americanism would aid the cause of global terrorism. Kelly again argued that the humanitarian case remained strong but the strategic case was weak and that, from the Australian perspective John Howard had `failed to mount a persuasive argument that a war to disarm Iraq… when the risks are so vast and the national interest could be prejudiced.'[125]

Given his paper's editorial line both before and after the war consistently supported the Bush administration's actions Kelly's willingness to canvas all the arguments and his ultimate opposition to it on strategic grounds is indicative of his autonomy as a public intellectual. Nonetheless, it also leaves him open to the accusation of failing to interpret `events outside an "us and them" dichotomy.'[126] His opposition to the war on strategic grounds only is contestable on other grounds. Indeed, it is significant that for all his mounting criticisms of the Bush administration's post-war problems in Iraq, Kelly never discusses estimates of civilian casualties and only makes a general reference to them from a strategic focus, particularly their impact on anti-American sentiment.

Nonetheless, McKnight and McNair found that while there is a clear link `between the views of CEO Rupert Murdoch and those broadly expressed by his news media' which is `attributable to his ownership', the diversity of opinion – as represented by Paul Kelly and

[123] Kelly, 'Imperial US stares into growing abyss', *The Australian*, 26 February 2003, p. 13.
[124] Ibid.
[125] Kelly, 'The hapless persuader', *The Australian*, 15 March 2003, p.30.
[126] Antony Loewenstein, 'Iraq: What Other Voices?', *New Matilda,* 15 November, 2006, viewed June 10 2015,<antonyloewenstein.com/2006/11/16/what-other-voices/>. The author goes on to ask if Kelly was 'seriously suggesting that opposing the war on anything other than strategic grounds was giving comfort to terrorists?'

others - allowed in some outlets such as *The Australian* is significant.[127] It suggests that News Corporation's outlets `are affected by local laws and political culture' which, in turn, indicates `the limitations placed on proprietorial control by the realities of the media market in a globalised news culture.'[128] More specifically, William Shawcross, in his biography of Rupert Murdoch, revealed that upon returning to *The Australian* in 1985, Kelly `received and demanded guarantees of independence' and he `was told that he could write precisely what he wanted, and that promise had been honoured.'[129]

Social Issues

Kelly was much more willing to employ a range of arguments on some social issues, notably euthanasia and same-sex marriage. As Editor-in-Chief of *The Australian* Kelly led a campaign against euthanasia on the `grounds of practicality and principle.'[130] Several years later Kelly urged the Labor government to reject a bill introduced by Green's leader Bob Brown that attempted to restore the rights of the Northern Territory government to reintroduce euthanasia laws. In article that largely considered the opposing arguments Kelly only quoted from anti-euthanasia lawyers, ethicists and politicians to conclude that: `It is an ethical and intellectual failure to pretend that euthanasia is merely a human right awaiting recognition.'[131]

Kelly's first column on same-sex marriage largely analysed the issue in terms of party politics in response to a Green strategy to garner support for a proposed bill. However, he concluded that ALP support would: 'constitute the starkest repudiation by the Labor Party of

[127] David McKnight and Brian McNair, `The empire goes to war: News Corporation and Iraq', *Australian Journalism Review*, vol. 34, no. 2, p. 16.
[128] Ibid.
[129] William Shawcross, *Rupert Murdoch: Ringmaster of the Information Circus*, Pan Books, 1993, p. 438.
[130] Michael Gordon, 'Holy Alliance', *The Australian*, 29 March, 1997, p.19.
[131] Kelly, 'Brown's Euthanasia Bill a Perilous Test for Gillard', *The Australian*, 29 September 2010, p. 14.

its long ties with the Christian tradition. Its abandonment of the traditional idea of marriage will disturb religious and non-religious people.'[132]

In two subsequent columns Kelly explicated his arguments in more detail. He claimed such a law `erects a libertarian construct of marriage and, once opposite-sex exclusivity is terminated, it opens the way for a variety of postmodern and cross-cultural constructs where marriage can encompass a range of sex options and people.'[133]

This, in turn, constitutes an assault on the legal status of fatherhood and motherhood as they are part of `an obsolete view of marriage' which brings state and church into conflict. Kelly argues that this will put greater pressure on the different religions to permit gay marriage and their exemption from state law will also be attacked over time. Therefore, Kelly reasons, such a law would ultimately be an attack on religious freedom. Yet the then Prime minister argued that `churches should be explicitly exempt' from conducting same sex marriages but `the state should be free to perform marriage services for both heterosexual and same sex couples.'[134] For Kelly, however, the issue of religious freedom also overrides the issue of equality where it is considered unreasonable `to deny rights to some Australians only on the basis that they are not heterosexual,' and their relationships are less valued `in law and in practice.'[135] Kelly does not acknowledge these arguments in his commentary.

Kelly's opposition to gay marriage was another element of his commentary on the place of religion in a secular state. In the same column Kelly linked this argument with his (and the churches') opposition to a bill of rights: `The churches opposed the rights charter because its

[132] Kelly, 'MPs wont jump on same-sex bandwagon', *The Australian*, 27 August 2011, p. 13.
[133] Kelly, `Passion for same-sex marriage a problem for Labor', *The Australian*, 30 November 2011, p. 14.
[134] Kevin Rudd, 'Church and State are able to have different positions on same sex marriage', May 2013, viewed 15 December, 2013, <http://www.kevinruddmp.com/2013/05/church-and-state-are-able-to-have.html>.
[135] Penny Wong, 'Labor's platform perpetuates inequality. It's unconscionable', *The Age*, 19 November 2011, p. 18.

anti-discriminatory provisions could be applied to churches and their institutions (schools and charities) to remove their religious character.'[136]

Indeed, Kelly has consistently argued against an Australian bill of rights which would, he argues, `change Australia's governance to entrench protection of human rights and minority interests by giving fresh authority to judges.'[137] This was, in turn, a product of a `''charter of rights'' culture that…cannot conceive that representative democracy is the best means of guaranteeing human rights.'[138] Kelly contended it was a legal culture that distrusted representative government and was hostile to executive power. Finally, and perhaps the most unlikely, these were legal advocates `ignorant about the vast array of measures in Australian governance that safeguards human rights.'[139]

Such attacks on the legal profession were not only in the context of the bill of rights debate. In response to barrister Julian Burnside suggesting in a public forum that it should be made an offense for politicians to lie, Kelly was equally aggressive. For Kelly, such talk revealed

the depth of delusion and mad hubris beating at the heart of this legal culture. The lawyers are weak on political science. Influenced by the feeble and defective analysis of Australian governance, they actually believe the Howard Government has suppressed dissent, corrupted the political system and destroyed accountability, and they see themselves as the last line of defence.[140]

These statements are typical of Kelly's assault on the civil rights lobby at various times, whether it was in defence of the Howard government's security laws or opposition to the Rudd government's ultimately failed attempt (welcomed by Kelly) to implement a bill of rights.

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[136] Kelly, 'Passion for same-sex marriage a problem for Labor', p. 14.
[137] Kelly, 'Unchartered Waters', *The Australian*, 13 December 2003, p. 17.
[138] Ibid.
[139] Ibid.
[140] Kelly, 'At war over the law', *The Australian*, 21 July, 2007.

A pivotal issue in Australia, particularly since 2001, has been the national response to a global refugee crisis. Kelly's initial columns about the increasing number of asylum-seekers between 1998-99 were largely reportage. The lack of criticism, however, of the detention policy suggested tacit approval of the status quo. Kelly was much more explicit following the Howard government's response to the arrival of the Tampa which he described as `an inept saga of crisis management.'[141] It constituted `a failure of national policy' that left Australia `looking mean.'[142] It also reflected `a blatant and patronising lack of respect for Indonesia' yet he was not willing to criticise the policy on moral grounds and suggested that those who focussed purely on humanitarian concerns were misguided.[143] For Kelly, the Howard government's response may have been electorally popular but would not work in the long-term. Kelly's proposed solution was put in typically broad strokes – it would require `quick processing, a short appeal process, an end to judicial law-making, a regional agreement, an increase in Australia's offshore intake…and an international effort to address the global problem. None of this is easy.'[144]

Throughout his commentary Kelly regarded the central issue as the conflict between state sovereignty and the rights of refugees and that with regard to the former, historically all Australian prime ministers were strong border protectionists. This framing of the debate inferred that a government's electoral survival precluded a more generous policy approach to refugees. For Kelly those groups that advocated `full acceptance of boat arrivals' such as `the Greens, the lawyers and the refugee lobby' were only encouraging `more boats and the growth of the people smuggling industry' with its attendant deaths at sea.[145]

[141] Kelly, 'First step – a deal with Indonesia', *The Australian,* 29 August 2010, p. 11.
[142] Kelly, 'We of never never land', *The Australian*, 8 September, 2010, p. 27.
[143] Kelly, 'Mandate will rock the boats', *The Australian*, 7 November, 2010, p. 15.
[144] Kelly, 'That rear vision thing', *The Australian,* 10 November, 2010, p. 32.
[145] Kelly, 'Reality bites on boats', *The Australian*, 25 May 2011, p. 16.

Nonetheless Kelly initially hailed the Rudd government's softening of the coalition's policy but the subsequent increase in asylum-seeker boat arrivals was one of the serious problems that made the federal Labor government appear `weak, unconvincing and hostage to its many dilemmas.'[146] Kelly was critical of `the Greens, the lawyers and the refugee lobby' who urged the full acceptance of boat arrivals, they were only encouraging `more boats and the growth of the people smuggling industry to Australia.'[147]

By the following year Kelly was highly critical of what he saw as a failure of border control policy, and the Houston report which revived Nauru and Papua New Guinea as offshore processing centres did not provide a definite solution. Yet Kelly did not have a specifc solution either and instead declaiming that `an epic task in diplomacy and politics' was required, butthat begged the question: `…will it stop the boats or will this fragile political deal end in a deeper humiliation for Australia?'[148] During the debate Kelly was accused of `playing a pathetic game of catch-up, trying to guess which way the debate dumps-telling the left they have "learnt nothing," two days before the foreign minister gets up and says the sort of things that anti-mandatory detention demonstrations were saying in 2001.'[149]

Kelly consistency was more evident in his response to climate change. In 1996 Kelly outlined what he believed was Australia's core problem in relation to the emergence of climate change: Australia could not be party to any treaty that required it `to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to the same benchmark as other nations' as this `would impose a disproportionate economic and income penalty upon Australia.'[150] This would continue to be the foundation of Kelly's position: he accepted the science – but not enough to outweigh the economics. Ten years later, in response to the Stern report, Kelly wrote `our [Australia's] primacy as an

[146] Kelly, 'Prime Minister's crisis of authority', *The Australian,* 6 November, 2010, p. 11.
[147] Kelly, 'Reality bites on boats', p. 16.
[148] Kelly, 'Can Houston package stop the boats', *The Australian*, 15 August 2012, p. 12.
[149] Guy Rundle, 'Rundle: Asylum at last from the sado-conservatives', *Crikey*, 21 October 2009, viewed 20 August, 2013, <http://www.crikey.com.au/author/guyrundle/>.
[150] Kelly 'Greenhouse – why flat targets won't work', *The Australian*, 4 June, 1997, p. 13

economic power imposes strict limits upon the necessary and serious stance Australia must adopt towards climate change.'[151] Two years after this he attacked the Rudd government's Renewable Energy Target as 'unjustified in economic terms'.[152]

Kelly certainty on the need for an economically viable response to climate change initially led him to mistake Rudd as `a master of climate change politics' and to further misstep by stating that `Coalition politicians who think that fighting Rudd on a climate change election actually makes sense are deluded.'[153] But Rudd's subsequent deferral of policy action was an `Australian public policy failure' which, for Kelly, had wider implications. It may have been an historical turning point that represented `the end of the reform age that started in 1983 with the Hawke government pioneering a new political courage for pro-market reform.'[154] Kelly compared Rudd's backdown unfavourably with Whitlam's 1974 double dissolution election on Medicare and Howard's 1998 GST election.

With the Gillard government's eventual introduction of a carbon price scheme Kelly did not dwell on the morality of a broken promise but analysed the politics and economics of its implementation. As an advocate of market-based solutions Kelly agreed that carbon pricing was the most effective way to reduce carbon emissions. His columns in this period provided a detailed analysis of the key aspects of carbon pricing for the general reader. Kelly summarised much of his analysis of what he called the carbon war in one column as consisting of four features:

1. Kevin Rudd 'made climate change integral to its [Labor's] moral and political legitimacy.'
2. `The push for carbon pricing originated from the Treasury as a pro-market economy-wide reform whose great advocates were Ken Henry, Martin Parkinson and Ross

[151] Kelly, 'Conserving energy at the core of politics', *The Australian*, 4 November, 2006.
[152] Kelly, 'Renewable target is mad, bad, tokenism', *The Australian*, 19 August 2009, p. 12.
[153] Kelly, 'Clever tactic, poor policy', *The Australian*, 25 November, 2011, p. 16.
[154] Kelly, 'Climate goals unviable amid policy disarray', *The Australian*, 1 May 2010, p.11.

Garnaut with their ideas holding sway with John Howard, Rudd and Gillard as successive PMs.'

3. The idea `of the inevitability of global action based on the science' was `critical to Australian insider calculations. It fed the conviction that Australia must act, prove its credentials as a responsible global citizen and protect itself against retaliation as the rich world's highest per capita greenhouse gas emitter via cheap coal.

4. Tony Abbott's rejection of bipartisanship made carbon pricing an electoral issue which could destroy the `political constituency Labor has so brilliantly sustained since the early 1970s' Whitlam era…the alliance of the tertiary educated, socially progressive vote keen on climate change action with the working-class and lower-middle-class traditional Labor voter facing cost and job pressures from de-carbonisation of the economy.'[155]

Again Kelly depicts the complexity of the issue through measured, sober discourse that identifies the respective roles of the key policy actors, deploys an historical reference and avoids moral hectoring. Overall, however, for Kelly the economics and, more so, the politics, of the policy were his key concerns rather than any outcomes regarding emissions abatement. In 2012 he concluded another column on the implementation of the policy with:

> Sadly for Labor, it cannot escape the epic political blunders that have led to this point: Rudd's climate change retreat in early 2010; Labor's failure to seek a mandate against Abbott for its scheme at the 2010 poll, thereby settling the issue politically; Gillard's immediate post-election reversal as part of a self-interested ''breach of trust'' deal with the Greens over minority government; and, finally, Labor's blunder in allowing Abbott to walk all over it and brand the scheme a tax.[156]

These conclusions were echoed in the initial academic analysis of the Rudd government's policy actions which generally concluded that `the opportunity for reform was squandered through a combination of incompetence, political myopia and bad luck.'[157]

In many of these columns Kelly drew on reports by the economist Ross Garnaut.[158] The research and opinions of this `policy entrepreneur' in a range of areas has been cited in

[155] All quotations from Kelly, 'Boom or Bust for ALP's ideology', *The Australian*, 9 July 2011, p. 11.
[156] Kelly, 'Bad timing, wrong price: carbon tax risks failure', *The Australian*, 4 July 2012, p. 12.
[157] Andrew Macintosh, Deb Wilkinson and Richard Denniss, 'Climate Change' in Chris Aulich and Mark Evans, (eds.),*The Rudd Government: Australian Commonwealth Administration 2007–2010*, ANU E Press, Australian National University, Canberra ACT 0200, Australia, p. 213.
[158] These were the *Garnaut Climate Change Review* (GCCR) and *The Garnaut Review 2011: Australia in the Global Response to Climate Change*.

dozens of Kelly's columns. It has been argued that: `Few people, inside or outside government, have had a greater impact on public policy in Australia than Professor Ross Garnaut' and that the role of the media has been significant element in Garnaut's influence. Beeson and Stone suggest that the coverage of climate change in *The Australian* was one of the factors that prevented rational debate in response to Garnaut's climate change reports and, in turn, mitigated their impact on policy makers.[159] Ignoring the space Kelly gave the reports' findings and his interviews with Garnaut does not necessarily weaken their argument but the reverse may also apply in other cases. Kelly has frequently acted as a disseminator of Garnaut's research and commentary in dozens of columns allowing Garnaut to explain his views to a wider audience.

In doing so Kelly offers an example of how the media may act, first, `as a communicator in a policy environment' and, second, as a magnifier of `movements that have already started elsewhere.'[160] Kelly's interviews with Garnaut and his commentary on Garnaut's findings enhance Garnaut's authority and further emphasises the significance of his prescriptions. Kelly and Garnaut are also an example, in the Australian context, of how the functions of the public intellectual and the policy entrepreneur operate and how `there can be considerable overlap between the ideas of policy entrepreneur and public intellectual, and neither term is stable.'[161]

The Rudd and Gillard prime ministerships

Kelly's long experience as a columnist, historian and public intellectual meant that by the election of the Rudd Labor government in 2007 that Kelly was among those who probably understood `political context, history and nuance in a way that exceeds most of the

[159] Mark Beeson and Diane Stone, 'The Changing Fortunes of a Policy Entrepreneur: The case of Ross Garnaut', *Australian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 48, no. 1, 2013, p. 10.
[160] John W. Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*, second edition, Longman, New York, 2003, p. 59 and p. 60.
[161] Ibid., p. 2.

politicians…and most of the political staffers who service their needs.'[162] As can be seen with his treatment of a range of issues Kelly was, and remains, a central figure in both chronicling the economic reforms of the Hawke, Keating and Howard years and advocating their continuance of this process. Kelly came to judge the Rudd and Gillard prime ministerships through the lens of reform and by comparison with their three immediate predecessors.

Kelly's initial assessment of the new PM was astute: `While hardworking and blessed with the skills of political spinning, it is not obvious the Rudd Government has the red blood of reform and policy innovation running through its veins.'[163] As a long standing critic of John Howard's refusal to apologise in parliament to indigenous Australians Kelly welcomed Rudd's apology as `a critical step' that, was not an affirmation of the black armband view of history,' and `was conspicuous for coupling the ideas of mutual respect and mutual responsibility with the apology.'[164] But Kelly was also among those who used it as a benchmark to judge the Rudd government's failure to improve indigenous living standards when, in the following year a Productivity Commission report revealed that `in most areas Aboriginal disadvantage is static or deteriorating.'[165]

In addition to the apology Kelly hailed the Rudd government's stimulatory measures in the face of the GRC as an `Australian response to globalisation that is impressive and that should mean Australia is less damaged by the coming crisis than many other comparable nations.'[166] As his initial fears about Rudd's leadership gradually accumulated Kelly's commentary over the term came to constitute an orthodox account of the Rudd government's problems and

[162] Beecher, 'Introduction' in Beecher (ed.), *The Best Australian Political Writing*, p. xvi.
[163] Kelly, 'The Rudd Agenda', *The Australian* 22 December 2007, p. 1.
[164] Kelly, 'We are sorry', *The Australian,* 14 February 2008, p. 1.
[165] Kelly, 'Indigenous policy on trial', *The Australian,*4 July 2009, p. 18. Two months later, Kelly also wrote ('Labor's character test', *The Australian*, 2 September 2009, p.12.) that a report documenting 'defects in the Aboriginal remote housing program' was 'not just a failure of finances but goes to Rudd's political integrity' and 'goes to the legitimacy of Kevin Rudd's February 2008 apology.'
[166] Kelly, **'**Command economy', *The Australian*, 18 October 2008, p. 1.

progress. In late 2009 he wrote that Rudd `talks of evidence-based policy but always delivers highly political outcomes. The gap between his rhetoric and his deeds is widening.'[167]

Not long before its end Kelly gave what can be seen as the standard assessment: `The Rudd experiment is in serious trouble. At its heart is a dysfunctional government motivated by good intentions but plagued by its penchant for greater state control by various methods of spending, tax, ownership and regulation, and a focus group mindset that has produced spectacular blunders.'[168] Indeed Kelly's assessments of the Rudd government's few successes and more significant failures over the two years and 204 days of its existence is generally supported by the initial academic analysis of the period where `it is clear Rudd promised much but due to a number of circumstances, his government disappointed overall.'[169]

Kelly stated that Rudd's replacement by Julia Gillard `shatters the rule book of Australian politics' but had no sympathy for Rudd who `was his own worst enemy' and he 'failed the tests of judgment and character.'[170] For Kelly, `Gillard represented a more formidable opponent who shows toughness, clarity and an affinity with ordinary people.'[171] However, the nature of the change revealed a `party governed not by ideas but powerful interests that span networks of factional, trade union, family and special interest group connections that thrive on the patronage, finances and appointments that only incumbency can deliver.'[172]

Moreover, the subsequent election campaign was `conspicuous for lack of ambition in policy agendas and lack of frankness in addressing the issues.'[173] Kelly saw wider implications: `It

[167] Kelly, **'**It's not Rudd's strength that matters. It's his weakness', *The Australian*, 14 November, 2009. p. 5.
[168] Kelly, 'Government that knows best', *The Australian*, 5 June 2010, p. 11.
[169] Chris Aulich, 'It was the best of times; it was the worst of times' in Chris Aulich and Mark Evans, (eds.),*The Rudd Government: Australian Commonwealth Administration 2007–2010*, ANU E Press, Australian National University, Canberra ACT 0200, Australia, p. 9.
[170] Kelly, 'Leadership coup tears up Labor rule book', *The Australian*, 25 June 2010, p. 12.
[171] Ibid.
[172] Kelly, 'Factions, patronage and survival', *The Australian*, 26 June 2010, p. 11.
[173] Kelly, 'Campaigns characterised by complacent timidity', *The Australian*, 28 July 2010, p.12.

revealed a complacent nation, politically timid, psychologically divorced from the economic crisis across the North Atlantic zone and reluctant to canvass the dilemmas inherent in its success as a high immigration, high growth, China-dependent, flexible economy, short on savings and deficient in infrastructure investment.'[174] Nonetheless, he thought, incorrectly as it turned out, that her eventual accession as Prime minister may give `the pragmatic Left the most success and respectability it has enjoyed in this country for many decades.'[175]

Later Kelly explained Gillard's declining popularity as stemming from a number of contradictions:

> They [the electorate] saw Gillard as loyal to Kevin Rudd until the evening she knifed him. She warned Rudd against pricing carbon and then seized this policy. She pledged no carbon tax and then embraced a de facto carbon tax. Despite her long and strong origins with the Victorian Left, Gillard has become a champion of Israel, the American alliance and the war in Afghanistan. She campaigned against a Big Australia and then dropped the rhetoric. She partly re-regulated the labour market and then paraded as pro-market reformer. Having declared no passion for foreign affairs she now works to leave her mark on foreign policy.[176]

A few months prior to the return of Rudd the following commentary was typical of Kelly's analysis: `The key to the decisions of the past fortnight – the assault on the 457 visa scheme, the raft of industrial law concessions to the unions and the media package – is that they appease the party and indulge the faithful but discredit the government.'[177] Gillard's discourse may have advocated 'the centrality of markets' but for Kelly this was not reflected in its policy program.[178] Rather, `its addiction to new forms and levels of government intervention in virtually every area of public policy in the utopian delusion that more regulation is the sure path to progress and public satisfaction.'[179]

[174] Kelly, 'Campaigns characterised by complacent timidity', p.12.
[175] Kelly, 'Gillard leans to the Left', *The Australian*, 14 August 2010, p. 11.
[176] Kelly, 'Will the real Julia please stand up?', *The Australian*, 23 March 2011, p. 12.
[177] Kelly, 'Gillard creating far too many enemies playing to the faithful', *The Australian*, 16 March 2013, p. 15.
[178] Carol Johnson, 'Gillard, Rudd and Labor Tradition', *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, vol. 57, no. 4, 2011, p. 579.
[179] Kelly, 'Gillard creating far too many enemies playing to the faithful', p. 15.

Gillard did attempt to continue `the next stage of Hawke and Keating policy in her attempts to address the "patchwork" "two speed" impact of the internationalised economy on Australia'.[180] For Kelly the failings of Gillard Labor were highlighted by such comparisons with Hawke and Keating who `won five elections, managed internal dissent, kept the leadership on ice until the third term, revitalised the private sector via deregulation, boosted the profits share, got the budget to a pre-recession surplus, boosted international competitiveness and ran on growth with equity.'[181] Kelly's commentary indicates that he regards the capacity to achieve reform – that is `methodological attempts to achieve far-reaching changes in key beliefs and behaviours and behaviours within a community and the governance structures underpinning them'[182] – is the chief criterion for judging the effectiveness of a government.

Hence this analysis of the Gillard government:

> was pro-market and pro-government intervention. It believed in business but was pro-union. It was pledged to action on climate change but horrified when it realised such action might be unpopular.
>
> It abolished with moral flair John Howard's punitive boat policy without realising the boats might return. It replaced a mining tax that was too onerous with a mining tax that was too soft.
>
> When it suited her, Gillard broke an election promise not to legislate a carbon tax. She entered an alliance with the Greens while warning they had the wrong values. Desperate to become fiscal conservatives after their big spending splurge, the Prime Minister and the Treasurer pledged a budget surplus only to fail their own test.
>
> With the great 20th-century ideological divide fading, there is more agreement than before inside the Labor Party yet more confusion about how to manage a new age and new problems with a party still anchored in an earlier century.
>
> Labor, as ever, awaits a political messiah with the answers. Look hard in the gloom. That bumpy road to the light on the hill is empty of messiahs.[183]

[180] Johnson, 'Gillard, Rudd and Labor Tradition', p. 579.
[181] Kelly, 'Labor's tragedy: a lack of strategy to govern for all', *The Australian*, 30 March 2013, p.11.
[182] Paul 't Hart, 'Epilogue: rules for reformers' in Evert A. Lindquist, Sam Vincent & John Wanna, (eds.), *Delivering Policy Reform: Anchoring Significant Reforms in Turbulent Times*, ANU E Press, Canberra, 2011, p. 204.
[183] Kelly, 'Labor's tragedy: a lack of strategy to govern for all', p.11.

Hence, also, Kelly has been a consistent advocate for – and defender of – the Productivity Commission which he regards as `a remarkable achievement of Australian governance – an institution whose sole purpose is to promote public policy excellence.'[184] Gary Banks, Productivity Commission chairman from 1998-2012, claims, in turn, that Australian economic journalists `have been important… not only in educating public opinion, but also political opinion.'[185] Banks does not specify any particular journalists, nor is Kelly strictly an economic journalist but given Kelly's consistent advocacy for the Productivity Commission over a long period it is hardly surprising that Banks previously described Kelly as `Australia's pre-eminent policy journalist.'[186] Kelly's columns have also featured similar support for the heads of Treasury and the Reserve Bank which, along with his aforementioned backing for Garnaut suggests that they may all appear to be part of an `epistemic community' which is `responsible for generating new ideas and disseminating them among national policy makers…'[187]

In mid-2012 Kelly, despite his previous criticism, called for Rudd's return as the only way to improve the ALP's collapsing primary vote in the short term. Rudd's defeat of Gillard in a caucus ballot the following year was characterised thus: `The political death of our first female prime minister is a tragedy that invests Labor with new hope' but Rudd's repeated broken promises and the intense criticism from party colleagues who supported Gillard `will be rich pickings for the Coalition campaign.'[188]

If reform, for Kelly, is the chief criterion for government then it can only be achieved through public leadership. A successful transition will need a new reform agenda and that can

[184] Kelly, 'Foreword' in Gary Banks, *An Economy-wide View: Speeches on Structural Reform*, Productivity Commission, Melbourne, 2010, p. v. The Productivity Commission is the Australian Government's principal independent research and advisory body on a range of economic, social and environmental issues.
[185] Gary Banks, 'Economics, economists and public policy in Australia', *Agenda*, vol. 18, no. 3, 2011, p. 28.
[186] Gary Banks, *Successful Reform: Past Lessons, Future Challenges*, (Annual Forecasting Conference of the Australian Business Economists, 8 December, 2010), Productivity Commission, Canberra, p. 1.
[187] John L. Campbell, 'Ideas, Politics, and Public Policy', *Annual Review of Sociology*, vol. 28, no. 1, 2002, p. 30.
[188] Kelly,' A daunting task to keep Labor ship afloat', *The Australian*, 27 June 2013, p. 6.

emerge only from leaders pledged to change the political culture of the past decade. So, paradoxically, although Kelly sees globalisation as constraining policy options his journalism emphasises the importance of political leadership in achieving successful policy reform. It as Lindquist and Wanna conclude, a product of `anticipation, contingency planning considerable prudential judgment and strategic leadership.'[189] Thus Hawke, Keating and to a lesser extent Howard are the exemplars of `transactional' leaders who, in a political culture where `citizens take the rule of law and the democratic authenticity of the state largely for granted (ignoring their fundamental value and precariousness)', deliver `safety, prosperity, care, sustainability…'[190]

Kelly and Religion

In the period from 1996 Kelly has written from time to time on religious issues with a particular emphasis on the Catholic Church. In that year Kelly dedicated a column to interviewing Cardinal Martini, a progressive figure within the Catholic church and someone whom Kelly claimed represented 'a synthesis between tradition and modernism'.[191] In a later column Kelly addressed the crisis in the American Catholicism created by the revelations of child abuse and the failure of its leaders' response.[192] As an advocate of economic liberalism Kelly also condemned the Australian churches `intellectual failure… to accept the moral foundations of a market economy and market-based mechanisms to deliver equity.'[193] When would the Catholic Church in particular, he asked, `discover one of the elementary precepts of the 18th century, namely the moral laws built into economic liberalism?'[194]

[189] Eveet A. Lindquist and John Wanna, 'Delivering policy reform: making it happen, making it stick' in Evert A. Lindquist, Sam Vincent & John Wanna. (eds.), Delivering *Policy Reform: Anchoring Significant Reforms in Turbulent Times*, p. 11.
[190] Paul 't Hart, 'Epilogue: rules for reformers', p. 202 and p. 203.
[191] Kelly, 'What Matters to Martini', *The Australian*, 16 August 1996, p. 11.
[192] Kelly, 'Dirty little secret's out', *The Australian*, 18 May 2002, p. 30.
[193] Kelly, 'Half measures could thwart equity goals', *The Australian*, 26 October 2005, p. 16.
[194] Ibid.

Essentially Kelly, however, was, as seen in his writings on the bill of rights and gay marriage, defender of religious freedom. For example, Kelly attacked `the liberal Sydney media' in 2004 for treating Cardinal George Pell and Tony Abbott as "hate figures" – `Pell is detested because he favours a muscular Christianity' and `Abbott is detested because he wants to inject Christian values into politics.'[195] For Kelly this was a specific domestic example of the rising tensions between secularism and religion Shah and Toft had identified as a twenty first century global phenomenon.[196] Kelly tried to apply their analysis to the Australian context arguing that there was growing disillusionment with `arid secularism' and that religious-based and values-based organisations' were seeking greater political influence which was `unravelling… the values-based neutrality of the modern secular state.'[197] Yet Kelly did not provide examples of this trend and made the obvious conclusion that there will be `a changing public debate in which religion and religious values (encompassing different religions) will be far more prominent in both its domestic and foreign policy.'[198]

In line with this Kelly saw the 2008 visit of Pope Benedict XVI as `an affirmation of the true and mature secular state' but worried that `it is resisted by many who…represent an aggressive new secularism…that aspires to…the creation of atheism as the de facto established religion to drive real religion from the public domain.'[199] Something which `constitutes one of the most radical and intolerant projects in Australian political history.'[200]

Despite the urgency of his tone Kelly has rarely addressed these issues since. Although Kelly has been described as a `prominent catholic' he has, as the above indicates, been a critic of

[195] Kelly, 'Media can't handle the truth,' *The Australian*, 6 October 2004, p. 17.
[196] Kelly refers to Timothy Samuel Shah and Monica Duffy Toft, 'Why God Is Winning', *Foreign Policy* , no. 155 (Jul. - Aug., 2006), pp. 38-43.
[197] Kelly, 'A new kind of true believer', *The Australian*, 23 August 2006, p. 14.
[198] Ibid.
[199] Kelly, 'Test of spirit', *The Australian,* 12 July 2008, p. 19.
[200] Ibid.

some of its practices, but primarily a defender of religious freedom.[201] Kelly's Catholicism is an element of his political thought but it is not explicit in his books or journalism. At best it may be may be a foundation of his concern for social inclusion in a globalised economy.

Conclusion

Interestingly, Kelly hardly refers to political theory in his books or journalism but in one column he lauds the public choice theory of Mancur Olson. Kelly endorses Olson's thesis that 'the struggle between the national interest and section interest is at the heart of democracy' which, in turn, means that the more parties focus on redistribution, the more they become agents of special interest positions.'[202] Kelly quotes Ian Marsh regarding the counter theories to Olson: Australia's increasingly diverse population is `reflected in the growth of interest groups and social movements' which is `fundamental to democracy' and makes it `hard to overstate the degree to which Australia has become a group-based community.'[203]

Kelly acknowledges that Hawke and Howard did `pander to special interests' but `they mounted their campaigns for economic reform and liberalisation on…a national interest platform.'[204] For Kelly, the arguments against Olsen's thesis `are now the orthodoxy within the progressive left' but implies that Olson's theory is borne out by the success of the post-1983 governments `that delivered national interest and majority outcomes and resisted the tide of special interest accumulation.'[205] Moreover, the theory clearly resonates with Kelly's own worldview, as evidenced by his critiques of groups –such as unions, the Greens, activist lawyers, the refugee lobby and so on – whom he perceives as prioritising their special interests ahead of the national interest with regard to key areas of federal government public policy.

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[201] Kelly has been described as a `prominent Catholic' in Tony Walker, 'Is Abbott up to it' (sic), *The Australian Financial Review*, 24 May 2010, p. 52.
[202] Kelly, 'New act in power play', *The Australian*, 24 September 2005, p. 20.
[203] Ian Marsh quoted in ibid.
[204] Kelly, 'New act in power play', p. 20.
[205] Ian Marsh quoted in ibid.

None of this is necessarily incompatible with model of traditional journalism Kelly commentary is steeped in. It is evident that he is committed `to the value of facts and the idea that the thoughtful detached non-partisan analysis of major alternative policy choices' is necessary `for complex democracies to function.'[206] As Bourne points out, Kelly's commentary contains more policy analysis and less focus `on the game of politics' than fellow `god correspondents' Laurie Oakes and Michelle Grattan.[207] In fulfilling this role Kelly is a leading figure in continuing `the traditional project of professional objective journalism…as the irreplaceable purveyor of good factual information to…rational information-processing citizens.'[208] But this does not preclude the argument – notwithstanding Kelly's own rejection of the term – that Kelly's journalism contributes to a discursive frame that legitimises neo-liberal policy agendas and delegitimises opponents.[209]

As in his books, the political thought of Kelly's journalism is characterised by, first and foremost, economic liberalism – an ideology which demonises special interest `pleading' – but which Kelly, as Buckridge has pointed out, links to `a range of liberal social polices…by forging what appear to be close links with several shibboleths of the educated middle class: multiculturalism, republicanism and reconciliation.'[210] Typically, Kelly wrote in 2013 that the transition of the Australian economy as the mining boom faded meant `an end to the "no losers" mantra, an end to the notion that politics is about redistribution, not investment and productivity, and an end to our recent grand deception that progress is achieved by truckloads of social and environmental regulation. These have been the false gods.'[211] To this should be added his advocacy of non-discriminatory immigration policy and long-

[206] Jacobs and Townsley, p. 245.
[207] Saskia Bourne, 'It's a Rat Race: The Prevalence of the Game Frame in Prominent Opinion Columns', *Australian Political Studies Conference*, Melbourne, 2010, p. 10.
[208] Jacobs and Townsley, p. 245.
[209] Damien Cahill, 'Ideas-Centred Explanations of the Rise of Neoliberalism: A Critique', *Australian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 48, no. 1, 2013, pp. 71-84. Cahill argues 'that neoliberal think tanks were more successful in articulating discursive frames that legitimated neoliberal policies…than in wielding direct policy influence…'
[210] Pat Buckridge, 'Editors as Intellectuals: Three Case Studies', p. 199.
[211] Kelly, 'Rude awakening after the long boom', *The Australian*, 29 May 2013, p. 10.

standing advocacy of Australian integration into Asia. But as Kelly has addressed a broader range of issues over time his social conservatism has become more apparent on range of issues – gay marriage, euthanasia and a bill of rights. His opposition to the Iraq war on strategic grounds, his enthusiasm for the alliance with the USA and closer ties to China also suggest, (before critical theory rendered such a position as problematic), his pragmatism.

Kelly has criticised Hawke, Keating and, particularly Howard on different grounds in his columns but, in his final analysis, he lauds them for creating and maintaining a reform process that constructs what he considers to be an open economy and an open society. Kelly's commentary suggests the heroic nature of achieving such reform. It is a process where `only winners all of the time are few and far between' and there are `redistributive effects' which `shake up the status quo.'[212] Thus, for Kelly, policy inertia or any policy retreat that opposes – or worse – reverses economic liberalisation were the sources of his critique of the Rudd and Gillard prime ministerships. Kelly's ongoing elaboration of economic liberalisation with a degree of social liberalism and growing moral conservatism is at the heart of his political thought and creates a tension that is not completely resolved.

Still, the overview of Kelly's journalism in this chapter is evidence that Kelly produces a type of public discourse that often `brings ethical, historical and policy issues together within the frame of the national…'[213] Rather than being a purveyor of `formulaic and ritualistic…political punditry' that Nimmo and Combs suggest is a poor `substitute for political debate' Kelly's journalism has, at its best, represented `a hybrid cultural practice, somewhere between the academic scholar and the expert adviser'.[214] In this role he may also be regarded as a policy entrepreneur (keeping in mind this term is interchangeable with public intellectual) who, in a variety of formats, framed and promoted policies for `the mass public, specialized publics

[212] Paul 't Hart, 'Epilogue: rules for reformers', p. 204.
[213] David Carter, 'The Conscience Industry: The Rise and Rise of the Public Intellectual', p. 37.
[214] Nimmo and Coombs, p. 172 and Jacobs and Townsley, p. 29.

and the policy community itself.'[215] It is understandable then, as Altman points out, Kelly's `distinguished career in Australian political journalism' sees him, at times, `echo the received wisdom, so much of it which he has helped create.'[216] Or as Duffy puts it: `Many journalists have a shared agenda that they seek to impose on the political process at every opportunity, Kelly has by far been the most successful at this.'[217]

Yet Kelly, in his fifth decade of journalism has seen key elements of his agenda remain unrealised. Australia continues as a constitutional monarchy where the economic reform agenda appears to have stalled, public debate continues to be highly polarised and governments seem to be unable to deal with the challenge of reconciling budgetary constraints with the demands of entrenched interests. Kelly was also on the losing side of the debates about same-sex-marriage and, so far, constitutional recognition of indigenous peoples. This does not, however, also mean there has been a significant diminution in his stature as political columnist. Kelly continued to have a high level of access to political power. For example, John McTernan, Julia Gillard's prime ministerial communications director adopted the strategy of `sketching the grand arc of the government's narrative to influential commentators' with `Paul Kelly, the dean of the commentariat…a high priority.'[218] On other occasions political leaders have sought Kelly's views.[219] Above all, he continued to deploy his expertise to comment and analyse the issues of the day and, as will be demonstrated in chapters four and five, this has been integral to his role as a major media intellectual in the Australian public sphere.

[215] Kingdon, p. 205.
[216] Altman, 'View from the top', p. 5.
[217] Duffy, 'One voice on the party line'.
[218] Nick Bryant, 'The Strategist: Julia Gillard's hard-nosed director of communications', *The Monthly*, Issue 85, December 1, 2012, p.27.
[219] See, for example, Chris Mitchell, *Making Headlines*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, Victoria, 2016, pp. 43-44 where, in 2007, Kevin Rudd as opposition leader, sought Kelly's suggestions on the ALP's industrial relations policy.

CHAPTER THREE

GEORGE MEGALOGENIS

George Megalogenis, followed the example of Paul Kelly, first as political journalist and then as political columnist for the *Australian* by addressing the major contemporary issues in Australian politics. As elite columnists they identify the main points of difference in opposing arguments `by using reasoned analysis rather than political interest as their chief method.'[1] A further defining feature of the political columnist is `to brand himself through the cross-promotion of his distinctive voice across a range of different media sites.'[2] Megalogenis has been even more adept at this than Kelly. Both men have appeared frequently in the traditional electronic media. Kelly gave his commentary on political events on ABC television's *Insiders* 2001-2010 then appeared regularly on *Australian Agenda*, a political affairs program on the News Ltd-owned Sky News channel. In addition, Kelly has been frequently interviewed and participated on various panels, particularly for the ABC. He has given lectures for think tanks such as the Centre for Independent Studies and the Australia Institute as well as the Lowy Institute. In addition to television and radio appearances (he has made regular appearances on *Insider*) Megalogenis has, unlike Kelly, made extensive use of digital media. His *Meganomics* blog was written in addition to his print columns at the *Australian* and he has also used twitter extensively.

The development of arguments and analysis in such a variety of formats is essential for establishing a columnists' autonomy.[3] Of all these formats books still remain the preferred means for detailed elaboration of ideas and arguments. They are still an essential requirement, even in the digital age, for the political columnist who operates as a public

[1] Jacobs and Townsley, p. 26.
[2] Ibid., p.30.
[3] Ibid.

intellectual. George Megalogenis has written six books and, following Kelly's example, the first three concerned Australian federal politics. Like Kelly he also wrote a broader historical work but looking specifically at the history of immigration to Australia after 1788.

His first book, *Faultlines: race, work, and the politics of changing Australia* focussed, as Kelly's do, on aspects of contemporary Australian federal government public policy but it has significant differences in style and substance. Unlike Kelly, Megalogenis explored the effects of particular policies through the lens of gender and race using a rhetorical style that, at times employed colloquial language and references to popular culture. Another point of difference is his use of unpublished census data to help explain contradictions between the political culture and the wider culture.

In *Faultlines*, Megalogenis argues that the Australian-born children of post-war immigrants and `the university-educated daughters of old Australia' are redefining the middle class.[4] This group he classifies as `Generation W' (standing for women and `wogs'). He draws on his own experiences as member of this generation as an anecdotal representation of their integration into middle-class Australia. When combined with the formation of a female majority in the professional workforce (53 per cent according to the 2001 census) this, says Megalogenis, constitutes a `social revolution' but not a political one.[5] It seems the prosperity achieved by these groups has made them reluctant to participate in party politics.

Indeed there is often a mismatch between key policies of the Howard government and social outcomes. Policies that distributed monies to families with children such as the baby bonus and family tax benefits did not stop the movement of mothers into the workforce and the growth in two income families. In this analysis Megalogenis does not neglect to identify inequality. He recognises single mothers as exceptions to the trend of working mothers

[4] George Megalogenis, *Faultlines: race, work and the politics of changing Australia*, Scribe Publications, Melbourne, 2003, p. 1.
[5] Ibid., p. 13.

returning to paid employment. He concludes that `Australia's work-family debate has been concerned with how to preserve a middle-class lifestyle, not how to help the underclass.'[6]

Megalogenis also analyses voting patterns, wealth distribution by postcode and the patterns of immigrant populations in Melbourne and Sydney to offer an insight into attitudes to immigration, race and refugees. It reveals the former to be more tolerant city whereas the latter – which Megalogenis argues was affected by the housing market and a `shock jock' radio culture that exploited racial issues – was more responsive to the Howard government's hard line on refugees in 2001.

The author goes on to explore how the three `Rs' of the republic, reconciliation, and refugees reveal about Australian attitudes to gender and race. His analysis of Newspoll showed a gender gap in support for the republic, with more men than women in favour. Megalogenis links this to the low female readership of the quality print media – giving support to `a media truism the person who buys *The Australian*, the *Sydney Morning Herald*, or *The Age* is a middle-aged man who either runs the country, wants to run the country, or wished he still ran the country.'[7] He also presents compelling statistical evidence demonstrating the low levels of female representation in senior business and political positions. All of which he says `are symptoms of a society that, at best doesn't understand or, at worst, tries to ignore women.'[8] This concern with gender issues is a key point of difference with Kelly although he concurs with the latter's basic argument that `deregulation and a decent social policy' can co-exist[9]; and Megalogenis's solution of lower personal tax rates `to reduce the tax traps that apply to women when they move back to work' is compatible with the economic liberalism advocated by Kelly. Where he diverges is his

[6] George Megalogenis, *Faultlines: race, work and the politics of changing Australia*, p. 46.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid., p. 106.
[9] Ibid., p. 113.

suggestion to have a much earlier non-compulsory pre-school starting time to maximise options for working mothers.[10]

With reconciliation, Megalogenis describes John Howard's `almost surreal balance between policies and pragmatism' which he implies has been a factor in turning `reconciliation into a blood sport.'[11] The abolition of ATSIC was warranted, but, like Kelly, he is critical of Howard's response to the Wik decision and the emergence of Pauline Hanson and the One Nation party. And the widespread resentment across the electorate created by the implementation of the GST was a factor in `Howard's war on boat people.'[12] (Kelly has described this as `an over-reaction and a departure from the enlightened self-interest that guides Australian immigration policy'[13]). Megalogenis's analysis of AEC returns and census data indicated that this issue returned One Nation supporters back to the coalition.

In the book's postscript, Megalogenis perfunctorily critiques Howard's decision to support the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003. He concludes that both the coalition and Labor needed `to get over the idea that we need to be an unquestioning ally to secure United States protection.'[14] Kelly, as seen in the previous chapter, was also a critic of the Iraq decision and the Bush administration's prosecution of the war but he has remained a cheerleader of the alliance. Yet in his journalism, Kelly offered a much more detailed analysis of the reasons for both the American invasion and Australia's participation.

Political scientist, Nick Economou, despite some misgivings that Megalogenis's language was at times `disturbing, even offensive', regarded the book `as useful and timely, arriving when there is a hint that the Howard era might be coming to an end and that a new generation of leaders (including some generation W people, no doubt) will emerge to take up the cudgels

[10] George Megalogenis, *Faultlines: race, work and the politics of changing Australia* p. 188.
[11] Ibid., p. 125.
[12] Ibid., p. 179.
[13] Kelly, *The March of Patriots*, pp. 584-585.
[14] George Megalogenis, *Faultlines: race, work and the politics of changing Australia*, p. 204.

to further modernise Australia.'[15] But the book was, in fact, not widely reviewed few and it did not have the impact of Kelly's debut (*The Unmaking of Gough* was more widely reviewed, reprinted twice and adapted into a television series). Nor has it been widely cited. Some of the ideas and methodology, however, were continued in his next book, *The Longest Decade*. This was a more ambitious work and one that seemed to be influenced, to some extent, by the structure and content of *The End of Certainty*. It continued the historical story from where Kelly's book left off and supports Kelly's central arguments for economic reform, the centrality of those reforms to Australia's prosperity and the importance of political leadership. Indeed, it further pre-empts Kelly's own account of the period – which for Megalogenis begins with Keating's 1990 'recession we had to have' press conference and ends with Howard's election loss in 2007 – by positing the view that reform driven prosperity was a joint Keating-Howard project.

Published in 2006 and reprinted in 2008 the book anticipates Kelly's thesis in *The March of Patriots* which argued the similarities in Keating and Howard's economic policies built on the reforms of the Hawke government and delivered one the longest periods of prosperity in Australian history. Indeed, while different in style and emphasis both books share essentially the same assessment of Keating and Howard's similarities in economics and differences in social policies. Unlike his first book, his second was widely and favourably, for the most part, reviewed by political journalists and political scientists.

Megalogenis attempts to convey the interaction between political and cultural change through the use of `snapshots' at the end of each chapter. These include, for example, an analysis of the popularity of the film *Muriel's Wedding* which the author says reflected the growing feminisation of the workforce in the 1980s and 1990s, or his drawing an analogy

[15] Nick Economou, 'A wog's-eye view', *The Australian*, 13 December, 2003.

between the career of test cricketer Steve Waugh and Australia's economic progress and Keating and Howard.

This trope was the most contentious aspect of the book. Among academics, Nettle's view that through this device `the book comes into its own as a history of the last decade' was the exception.[16] More typical was Walter, for example, who averred that in some of the snapshots Megalogenis mistook `evidence of voting intention and leader support as evidence of broader psychic identification with the Keating/Howard project.'[17]

McIntyre claimed that Megalogenis `has a covert admiration for Keating, the smart-arse bully boy of parliament who got the whole reform process going, in contrast to his impression of a duplicitous, unfeeling Howard, with his overly harsh border-protection policies, and the present more selfish, divided Australia.'[18] But it is hardly covert. Consider the following: `With Howard the electorate learned how to put out its hand, and to take prosperity for granted.'[19] Howard left `office with the economy stronger than he found it, but with a reform legacy less substantial than Hawke and Keating because he went too far with the labour market and because he seemed more interested in offering bribes over policy substance.'[20] In *The End of Certainty* Kelly established the Hawke/Keating eras as the most significant period of economic reform since federation. *The Longest Decade* supported this thesis with the added dimension of demonstrating the impact of the changes on the electorate through an analysis of polls and voting data. Unlike Kelly, he also acknowledges more specifically that not all have benefitted from the boom. However, to only cite the figure that one in five children live in welfare-dependent, single parent households and this

[16] Andrew Nette, 'Remembering the Nineties: The Longest Decade', *Australian Universities Review*, vol. 49, no. 1/2, 2007, p. 51.
[17] James Walter, 'Book Reviews', *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, vol. 65, no. 4, 2006, p.124.
[18] Andrew McIntyre, 'The reformist's decade', *Institute of Public Affairs Review: A Quarterly Review of Politics and Public Affairs*, vol. 58, no. 2, 2006, p. 50.
[19] George Megalogenis, *The Longest Decade*, Scribe, Carlton North, Victoria, revised edition, 2008, p. 316.
[20] Ibid., p. 363.

risks creating `a permanent underclass' demands more detailed consideration of the problem.[21]

Megalogenis's central thesis that the Hawke-Keating governments, and what he dubs `Howard Mark I' (the Howard government's first two terms from 1996 – 2000), are the exemplars of serious major policy reform was continued in his next long publication. This was a contribution to the Quarterly Essay series[22] and its title summarises his critique of Australian federal governments in the twenty-first century: *Trivial Pursuit: leadership and the end of the reform era*. Here Megalogenis argues that deregulation has reduced the tasks of government, and prosperity has made voters complacent. These have been the main factors underlying the political abandonment of significant economic reform and an exaggeration of the trivial in public life. Timid political leaders, a shallow media, self-interested business and unions and an electorate divided along generational lines, have combined to produce a political malaise characterised by a broken reform model.

In response Leigh argued that the Rudd/Gillard government should be acknowledged for its investment in infrastructure, its education policies and the introduction of a new hospital funding model.[23] In addition, by the end of her time as prime minister, the reforms of the Gillard government included: better pay for low-paid workers, the National Disability Insurance Scheme, a carbon price and implementation of the Murray-Darling water management scheme, among many others.[24] As Johnson points out, the Gillard government's `legislative record…compares very favourably with that of previous government's from all sides of politics.'[25]

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[21] George Megalogenis, *The Longest Decade*, p. 315.
[22] Founded in 2001, the Quarterly Essay is an Australian periodical that publishes single-extended essays on wide range of political and cultural topics.
[23] Andrew Leigh, 'Trivial Pursuit Correspondence' in *Quarterly Essay*, Issue 41, Black Inc., Melbourne, 2011, p. 61.
[24] Carol Johnson, 'The Credit She Deserved: Gillard and the Labor Legacy' in Samantha Trenoweth, (ed.), *Bewitched & Bedevilled: Women Write the Gillard Years*, Hardle Grant Books, Richmond, Victoria, 2013, pp. 141-142.
[25] Ibid., p. 142.

Another criticism levelled against Megalogenis was his reproach, also made by Kelly, of Gillard's linking of immigration numbers to the debate about a sustainable Australia as merely a populist ploy. O'Connor pointed out that Megalogenis does not consider evidence from a wide range of sources (inter alia, the Australian Academy of Science, the Australian Conservation Foundation, various economists…) indicating the detrimental effect of population growth on natural and urban environments, or the contentious nature of claims about the wealth effect of high immigration.[26] In response, Megalogenis could only insist that he would err on the side of population growth as it mitigated the effects of an aging population and, rather more optimistically, may be more likely to produce an innovative individual who would have the solution to the environmental problems created by the policy.[27] Megalogenis went on to reinforce his depiction of economically liberal reform in Australia with his most original analysis, *The Australian Moment*: *How We Were Made For These Times*.

In this book, he builds a narrative about what he considers to be the key economic policy reforms – implemented from the Whitlam government to the Rudd Prime Ministership – which have led to what he calls `The Australian Moment'. Megalogenis does not identify precise dates but implies the post-2009 period may be considered as an era in which Australia has emerged as `the West's last best role model.'[28] The long boom (although he does not use this term) and the evasion of three external recessions suggests `Australia has cracked globalisation's secret code for prosperity.'[29]

The author attempts to make his case by tracing the policy responses to external shocks over a forty year period. The end result is a book Quiggin, an articulate critic of economic

[26] Mark O'Connor, 'Trivial Pursuit Correspondence', *Quarterly Essay*, Issue 41, Black Inc., Melbourne, 2011, pp. 68-73.
[27] George Megalogenis, 'Response to Correspondence', Ibid., p. 92.
[28] George Megalogenis, *The Australian Moment*: *How We Were Made For These Times*, Hamish Hamilton, Camberwell, Victoria, 2012, p. 365.
[29] Ibid., p. 10.

liberalism, says `is probably the best exposition of Australia's political history over the period of market liberal reform, and from the viewpoint of the reformers, that we have seen, or are likely to.'[30] Yet Quiggin's praise is qualified by two criticisms, one very convincing, the other less so.

The element of the journalist's analysis which is based on the concept of different 'generations' is, says Quiggin, seriously flawed. He cites examples such as Megalogenis using a 1972 opinion poll of voters to demonstrate the selfishness of the 'baby boomer' generation when the majority of that generation – those born after 1951 (the boomer generation is usually defined as those born between 1946 and 1963 or 64) – would have been unable to vote. Moreover, it is not merely a problem of dates – differences in gender, class and family structure surely, Quiggin purports, outweigh generational differences.

But he concedes the generational approach's lack of analytical utility does not impede the book's overall argument. Quiggin, however, also says that there is no link between the microeconomic reforms of the 1990s and Australia's subsequent macroeconomic outperformance. Yet, putting aside the fact that the reforms began in the 1980s, and as discussed in the previous chapter, there is significant evidence to suggest that while they were not the only factor in the long boom they were a crucial element. As Gittins points out, `supply-side reform and greatly improved demand management have brought…ever-rising real incomes and more than 20 years since the last severe recession – something no other rich country can say.'[31]

Quiggin also argues that `the current structure of our financial system is a result of the rejection of market liberal policy reforms. Most notably, the four pillars policy against bank mergers, long derided by supporters of financial deregulation, prevented the banks from

[30] John Quiggin, 'As luck would have it', *Inside Story*, 28 June, 2012, viewed 1 March, 2015, < http://insidestory.org.au/as-luck-would-have-it/>.
[31] Ross Gittins, 'More to life than going along with big bosses', *The Sydney Morning Herald,* 13 February 2013, p. 9.

adopting risky strategies in the pursuit of competitive advantage. But this is entirely in keeping with the book's thesis that Australia's economic resilience was based on a `pragmatic version of deregulation.'[32] It is a major strength of the Australian policy model that it `stopped short of a full embrace of deregulation', policy makers had learnt from the last recession `that financial markets have to answer to independently minded regulators.'[33] Megalogenis, like Kelly, endorses policy reforms, even if only in retrospect, they are seen to have promoted or aided economic growth. Indeed, for Megalogenis, 'national greatness' can only be achieved `if we are prepared to keep growing.'[34] Thus regulation, like the four pillars banking policy, or the establishment of the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority, which helped to ensure the function of the banking system through the GFC – and therefore helped maintain growth – are examples of growth-protecting reforms that are not incompatible with market liberalism.

A more pertinent problem, also germane to the earlier books and Kelly's analyses, is as Altman points out in a critical review, the absence of any sustained commentary on the problem of rising inequality.[35] Further, there are environmental consequences to perpetual growth but, for Megalogenis, `climate change is just another policy area, meriting only a few mentions and even then purely in the context of the ebb and flow of political contest.'[36] Conservative critics also objected to the emphasis which the reform record of Labor governments received in comparison to the attention given to the Fraser and Howard governments. Brown, for example, objects to the view `that unless one is changing society with progressive reforms, it's not worth examining.'[37] But given the emphasis Megalogenis has consistently placed on centrality of reform in evaluating political effectiveness in all of

[32] Megalogenis, *The Australian Moment*: *How We Were Made For These Times*, p. 345.
[33] Ibid., p. 367.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Denis Altman, 'Too broad an accent', *The Age*, March 24 2012, p. 27.
[36] David Ritter and Jessica Panegyres, 'Best of times, worst of times and end times: eight books about Australia's past present and future', *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, Sept, 2013, vol.59, no. 3, p. 461.
[37] Paul Brown, 'The Australian Moment', *Policy*, Summer2012/2013, vol. 28, no. 4, p. 64.

his previous works, it is hardly surprising. Indeed, his regard for Keating as the outstanding reform leader in the past forty years was made emphatically in a long article published a few months prior to *The Australian Moment*.

The title of this article makes the author's admiration clear. In `The Book of Paul: Lessons in Leadership and Paul Keating', Megalogenis categorizes Keating's achievements and leadership qualities. The former includes, `in order of importance,' superannuation, enterprise bargaining, native title, engagement with Asia and national competition policy.[38] These were achieved without the `luxury of a positive approval rating' which is why Keating's leadership model is needed `to carry Australians beyond the insecurities of the present day.'[39] After `the meanness of spirit and the excess of middle-class welfare' of the Howard years, Rudd and Gillard disappointed because neither believed sufficiently `in markets and multiculturalism' and both `fell for the trap of thinking on behalf of voters who wanted to stop things.'[40] Although with regard to the Gillard government, its legislative record would ultimately suggest these assertions were contestable.

In 2014, Megalogenis followed the precedent Kelly established with *100 Years* by writing and presenting an ABC television adaption of one of his books. *Making Australia Great* was a three part television series based on *The Australian Moment.* Highly acclaimed by a range of critics, it is an example of how economic history may be made accessible to a broad audience. The praise from critics within academe was more qualified. Remy Davidson notes `the program doesn't mention the UK's entry into the EU in 1973 that blew Australia's export markets into the weeds, halving the country's share of world trade inside a decade.'[41]

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[38] George Megalogenis, 'The Book of Paul: Lessons in Leadership and Paul Keating', *Monthly: Australian Politics, Society and Culture*, Issue 73, November 1 2011, p. 30.
[39] Ibid., p. 34.
[40] Ibid., p. 33.
[41] Remy Davidson, 'Making Australia Great despite themselves: PMs stake rival claims', *The Conversation*, 18 March 2015, viewed 30 May 2015,< https://theconversation.com/making-australia-great-despite-themselves-pms-stake-rival-claims-38900>.

Moreover, he thinks 'Megalogenis also misses the critical link between the US, Chinese and Australian economies. It was US outward foreign direct investment and debt-financed credit expansion that drove much of the China boom.'[42] Davidson disliked the program's emphasis on the role of individual prime ministers and opines that `Politicians are merely over-remunerated cheerleaders standing on the side lines as the real heavy lifting is done by the overburdened, hard-working Australian labour force' and quotes P. J. O'Rourke, that "they have never done anything worth a shit. They've merely gotten themselves elected."[43] This is directly opposed to Megalogenis's view of the role of the importance of political leadership in achieving change, and the hyperbole of Davidson's statements tend to undermine his critique.

More thoughtfully, the cultural effect of the television series was noted by Christopher Waters who regarded it as `engaging and important TV' and `a fine work of contemporary history'.[44] Waters cites Megalogenis and Kelly as the two authors outside academe whose works of 'economic history' have had the `most impact in recent decades'.[45] Waters, nonetheless, has some criticisms. He finds the parallel of contemporary Australia with the colonies of the 1880s, where there was a turn away from open immigration which led, eventually to the White Australia policy as `arguably inaccurate' and the view of the long boom post-war boom `as a period of economic and cultural stagnation with little invention or innovation in Australian society and the economy' as highly contentious.[46] Yet, he concludes – as has been discussed in this thesis – that: `So persuasive has been his (Megalogenis's) narrative and analysis that it has become the definitive version of history for

[42] Remy Davidson, 'Making Australia Great despite themselves: PMs stake rival claims'.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Christopher Waters and Corinne Manning, 'Journalists making contemporary Australian history', *History Australia*, vol. 12, no. 3, 2015, p. 222 and p. 223.
[45] Ibid., p. 222.
[46] Ibid., p. 223 and p. 224.

the Australian political class.'[47] Waters urges historians to challenge this view of history in order to `open up alternative understandings of our recent past, and point to the possibilities of a future shaped by different economic and social ideas.'[48]

Similarly, Judith Brett also admired the series but thought Megalogenis was quite wrong to infer that `the depression of the 1890s was caused by the restriction of Chinese immigration.'[49] In his defence Megalogenis, in a series of tweets, said that Brett misinterpreted his use of a particular example – the incidence of growing anti-Chinese sentiment in 1888 – as the cause of the depression when its intent was metaphorical. [50] The critiques by Davidson, Waters and Brett are generally representative of much of the academic reception to the historical works of Megalogenis and Kelly – they feature admiration of the narrative construction and the research which underpins it, but disagreement with some of the conclusions. Waters's call to his fellow historians to challenge the dominance of the Kelly-Megalogenis view of political history has been taken up by other academic specialists rather than historians. These include, scientist Ian Lowe's *The Lucky Country?: Reinventing Australia* and academic economist William Coleman's edited collection *Only In Australia: The History, Politics, and Economics of Australian Exceptionalism* which features work of both journalists and specialists from a range of disciplines. Why such works have not received the degree of attention and level of salience in public debate as Kelly and Megalogenis's books will be discussed further in chapter five. But Edwards, in his review of the latter book, makes a key point that has general application to similar texts: `A sensible public policy argument is difficult unless participants recognise

[47] Waters and Manning, 'Journalists making contemporary Australian history', p. 224.
[48] Ibid., p. 224.
[49] Judith Brett, 'TV series wrong to blame woes on anti-Chinese policy', *The Age*, April 3, 2015, p. 19.
[50] See, for example, George Megalogenis,@GMegalogenis, 'She makes a claim about the Afghan which I didn't make, *Twitter*, 2 April 2015, viewed 20 July 2016, https://twitter.com/GMegalogenis.

that Australia has done quite well, and in recent decades very well indeed, compared to other advanced economies. Once recognised, this changes the debate.'[51]

The tendency of academic reviewers to accept Megalogenis's central argument whilst challenging aspects of methodology or some secondary interpretations was seen again when Megalogenis released his fourth book, *Australia's Second Chance: What our history tells us about our future* in 2015. In this history of immigration to Australia, the author demonstrated how high levels of high immigration were a key feature of the most prosperous periods in Australian history. As usual, the book was launched by the current prime minister, this time Malcolm Turnbull, and a series of media and other promotional appearances followed. In his review, Altman heralded the author as `arguably the most - important Australian political commentator of his generation' and described the new book as `a highly readable, if partial, survey of the history of white settlement' from an author who `is a captivating writer' yet `is also prone to single explanations.' [52]

Altman tends to focus on the secondary aspects of the text, particularly the author's commentary on `national character'. Altman, surprisingly, criticises Megalogenis for his widely regarded use of statistics, saying Megalogenis should rely `less on statistics and more on imaginative renderings of Australian history' in his commentary on national identity as this is a subject that `needs to take more heed of art and literature'.[53] In addition, Altman chides Megalogenis for his too positive portrayal of the American experience of immigration which, for example, does not refer to the anti-immigration rhetoric of Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump. But then acknowledges `Megalogenis stresses that both countries have experienced major movements to restrict immigration by people

[51] John Edwards, 'The Plight of the Right', *Inside Story*, 5 December, 2016, viewed <http://insidestory.org.au/the-plight-of-the-right>.
[52] Denis Altman, 'Stirring the melting pot', *The Australian*, 17 October 2015, p. 22.
[53] Ibid.

perceived as “other”, indeed inferior.’[54] Further, Megalogenis does not sufficiently `integrate his empathy for the dispossessed indigenous inhabitants into the reassessment of Australian national identity.’[55] Despite such criticisms Altman seems to endorse the author’s primary argument that large-scale, non-discriminatory immigration has been an essential element in periods of Australian prosperity but does not address this issue in any detail in his review. The author’s assumptions were also challenged by another reviewer who argued that the highly protected economy post-war economy, may have been necessary for the acceptance of large-scale immigration: `Would immigration have been received so peaceably if it had driven down wages and driven up house prices so steeply? The ’50s, ’60s and ’70s were, after all, a time of 50 per cent unionisation, centralised wage fixing and the steady release of public land for housing.’[56]

This is in contrast to Fitzgerald who, apart from his concern about overpopulation as both a national and global problem, uncritically summarises the key arguments of a `weighty book’ that is `fact –studded and fascinating’.[57] (Altman also implies concerns about overpopulation when he posits whether `continued economic growth is neither possible nor desirable.’)[58] Mark Triffitt, in a wholly enthusiastic review, also summarises the author’s central arguments to conclude it is `a prescient and provocative addition to the national debate about Australia's future.’[59] Unlike *The Longest Decade* and *The Australian Moment*, this book was not reviewed in any academic journals. This is perhaps because it’s central argument is, as Fitzgerald pointed out, accepted by the majority of the political class.

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[54] Altman, ‘Stirring the melting pot’, p.22.
[55] Ibid.
[56] PT, ‘Australia’s Second Chance’, *The Saturday Paper*, October 3 2015, viewed 20 June 2016, < https://www.thesaturdaypaper.com.au/2015/10/31/australias-second-chance/14437944002448>.
[57] Ross. Fitzgerald, ‘Why openness is the key to our greater prosperity’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 January 2016, p. 27.
[58] Altman, ‘Stirring the melting pot’, p. 22.
[59] Mark Triffitt, “Mark Triffitt reviews 'Australia's Second Chance: What our history tells us about our future' and 'Balancing Act: Australia between recession and renewal (Quarterly Essay 61) by George Megalogenis”, *Australian Book Review*, May 2016, no. 381, viewed October 10 2016, https://www.australianbookreview.com.au/abr-online/archive/2016/3247-mark-triffitt-reviews-australia-s-second-chance-what-our-history-tells-us-about-our-future-and-balancing-act-australia-between-recession-and-renewal-quarterly-essay-61-by-george-megalogenis.

Some of the ideas in this book – principally the need for a more active role for the state, with a particular focus on public investment in infrastructure renewal – were further developed in *Balancing Act: Australia Between Recession and Renewal*, Megalogenis's second quarterly essay. This text marked a significant evolution in his political thought. Hitherto a key chronicler of the role `pragmatic deregulation' in creating `the Australian miracle', Megalogenis now argued the effectiveness of this policy approach was exhausted and called for a new policy paradigm which required a more active role for government. A key indication of this was an unemployment rate of hovering at six percent, despite 25 years of continuous economic growth.

In his review in *The Australian* journalist Adam Creighton concurred with much of Megalogenis's analysis but, reflecting his newspaper's commitment to free markets and deregulation disagreed on the fundamental point concerning the role of free-market policies as the source of Australia's contemporary economic problems. For Creighton it was: `The insidious nexus between big banks, government and regulators that has so undermined respect for the economic system in advanced countries…with government and cronyism pervading most industries to varying degrees.'[60] This view, however, is arguably less applicable in the Australian context and does not refute Megalogenis's analysis. Creighton adds that the author's prescription for more infrastructure spending is one that has been made by the RBA and the International Monetary Fund (IMF); the problem is `choosing projects based on their objective merit.'[61] Indeed, Creighton would not concede the need for a greater role for the state. For him, there appeared to be no need to abolish negative gearing, and weekend penalty rates should be maintained. The increasing share of national

[60] Adam Creighton, 'How to halt the decline', *The Australian*, 26 March 2016, p. 18.
[61] Ibid.

income going to profits created by deregulation was not necessarily a problem as 'wages may have been lower in real terms without such reforms.'[62]

Other detailed responses came from within the political class and included, inter alia, politicians – including Labor MP's Claire O'Neil and Jim Chalmers and independent Bob Katter, economists Andrew Charlton and Saul Eslake, and academics Paul Strangio and Elizabeth Humphrys. All of these correspondents largely agreed with his analysis but a number offered further prescriptions, while others thought the policy-making process may seriously inhibit the possibility of fundamental change. Nonetheless these detailed responses were indicative of how Megalogenis functions as public intellectual to influence debate in the public sphere. As will be discussed in the conclusion, *Balancing Act*, was a significant contribution to what was seen by a number of commentators as a shift in political thinking regarding the role of the state in the economy. It is part of a debate prompted by the end of the mining boom and the apparent exhaustion of what Megalogenis calls `the open economy'. It was a position, that was, in many ways directly opposed to that of Paul Kelly.

The Journalism

Megalogenis, like Kelly, worked as a reporter in the Canberra press gallery from 1988 before eventually becoming a Melbourne-based feature writer for the *Australian* in 1999 where he commented on (mainly) federal and Victorian state politics. And like Kelly he operated in the analytical-advisory mode, providing `considered and in-depth exploration of current issues.'[63] During his decade with the press gallery Megalogenis applied both his expertise in economics and facility with data analysis to major federal government policies. Fiscal policy in particular was consistently analysed in detail. Most prominent was the GST which was the

[62] Creighton, 'How to halt the decline', p.18.
[63] Tim Holmes, 'Creating identities, Building Communities: why comment?' in Richard Keeble, (ed.), *Print Journalism: a critical introduction*, Routledge, London, 2005, p. 165.

subject of hundreds of articles between 1996 and 2012. Although he came to regard the GST as the last example of significant economic reform in Australia he had, in one of his last columns for *The Australian*, used the example of Queensland's declining revenue growth, to highlight that the GST was earning less after 2008 than in the period prior to its introduction and was, therefore no better than the taxes it replaced.[64] His conclusion that the GST would need to be reviewed and adapted puts him among the first of a growing number calling for tax reform.

Like Paul Kelly, and as his own books indicate, Megalogenis has an uncritical acceptance of globalisation and nowhere, in his books or journalism, offers an explication of his understanding of this term. References to globalisation in various columns infer its inevitability and take for granted that it brings more benefits than costs. For example, the 1990s was the period `when globalisation finally began improving the living standards of people in many poor nations.'[65] Or a central problem with Western governments' post-GFC interventions `is the danger that globalisation is wound back.'[66]

Nonetheless, Megalogenis has given more attention to of issues of poverty and rising inequality during Australia's long boom than Kelly but this does not lead him to propose policy solutions necessarily inconsistent with the older journalist's policy positions. A column on widening income gaps written in 1999 is representative of his approach.[67] Megalogenis demonstrates how the middle class has shrunk since 1982 when `51.2 per cent, of all men working full time were middle-income earners. They took home between 75 per cent and 125 per cent of median, or middle, earnings.' These numbers decreased `to 44.4 per cent by 1996-97 as lower tariffs forced manufacturers to slash their workforce. Half of these men

[64] George Megalogenis, 'After a decade it's official: the GST is no better than its forebears', 27 September, 2012, *The Australian*, p. 12.
[65] George Megalogenis, 'Poor Logic Deepens the Divide', *The Australian*, 25 February, 2008, p. 8.
[66] George Megalogenis, 'Why Australia is the last economy still standing', *The Australian*, 27 December, 2008, p. 18.
[67] The following quotes are taken from George Megalogenis, 'Death of the dream - Death of the nation's great middle-class dream - Advance Australia Where', *The Australian*, June 17 2000, p.22.

went backwards, to battler status, on less than 75 per cent of the median; the other half were catapulted to high incomes, on more than 150 per cent of the median.' In addition, `the female middle class slipped from 58.3 per cent to 51.7 per cent during the same period, almost all moved up one or more rungs on the income ladder.' He goes on to show how the two income family had replaced the single income family in this period and the accompanying feminisation of the workforce left the middle aged male most hostile to the pace of change. This convincing deployment of statistics was further illustrated by using the trope of the Howard/Costello, youth versus experience rivalry. Megalogenis says that single income households fell from 30.9 percent of all households in 1982 to 20.5 per cent in 1996-97. John and Janette Howard, the single wage earner with a partner at home were representative of the norm but they had been supplanted by the two income household (33.6 per cent) by 1996-97. Thus Costello and his part-time working wife were the new `Mr and Mrs Average.'

The compelling analysis, however, is not followed by detailed solutions. Megalogenis says the top tax rate should be cut then merely asks if Australia is prepared to allow a `US-style underclass to develop or does it want to recover its sense of fair play by better looking after the losers?' He suggests, somewhat vaguely, that this `can be answered only when individuals and politicians break free from their rut of introspection.' But it is an example of how the elite columnist `provides information' to suggest `a change in policy focus.'[68] In doing so he is both addressing political elites to possibly influence the policy debate `but the primary mode of address is to a public of general citizens' for whom he is elucidating a complex issue.[69]

[68] Jacobs and Townsley, p. 145.
[69] Ibid., p.145.

Two years later Megalogenis suggested the national debate about poverty was distorted by the dogmatic approach of the key interest groups. In order to bring more clarity to public discussion Megalogenis did propose more concrete initiatives. First, arguments about the definition of poverty were `distracting the intelligentsia from the main game' of solving long term unemployment.[70] He suggests the ABS should issue `regular poverty tables' – but does not make it clear how this would resolve the debate. He then quotes figures from the National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling which show how the `top end of town enjoyed a bigger rise in government handouts than those at the bottom of the ladder – 47 per cent versus 37 per cent between 1989 and 1999.'[71] He suggests some of this largesse could be redirected to the poor' and, most surprisingly, `some good old-fashioned socialism may be in order.'[72] This was the only time he has made such a suggestion – perhaps unique in the pages of *The Australian* – but his specific proposals were far less radical. It meant in effect that `Governments must spell out the basic health and education standards that every Australian should have access to' which `would force politicians to confront the catastrophe in Aboriginal communities.'[73] He concludes with a conventional statement – that government has a responsibility `to look after those who cannot be accommodated' in the effort to end `passive welfare.'[74] Again, how this should be achieved is left unexplained.

The articles Megalogenis wrote concerning, poverty, inequality and the emergence of an Australian underclass, were marked by his use of statistical analysis to clearly outline the groups who are most affected with regard to gender, age and ethnicity. But alternative policy prescriptions were not always proposed and when particular policy solutions were proposed they were not delineated in detail. An example of Megalogenis at his most

[70] George Megalogenis, 'Poor logic deepens the divide', *The Australian*, 25 February, 2002, p. 8.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Ibid.

convincing was when he recommended the use of fiscal policy to avoid `poverty traps.' In 2004 he pointed out that as `744,000 people confront effective marginal tax rates of 50 per cent-plus across the bottom five rungs' [of the income `ladder'] a tax cut or a pay rise would be ineffective, `because neither would reduce the real source of the pain – the penalty of withdrawn benefits.'[75] He goes on to cite figures showing how low wage couples and single parent families are disadvantaged by the system but reform is made difficult by the dominance of middle and high income earners in the majority of the government's key electorates. This is Megalogenis at his most deft – highlighting the problem of income inequality and the obstacles to the policy solution.

Megalogenis's financial expertise is reflected in the majority of his columns. These were dominated by lucid economic analysis, which made the ramifications of taxation, superannuation, housing, immigration and budgetary matters intelligible to the general reader. With tax and super, in particular, Megalogenis's analyses consistently highlighted the inefficiencies and inequities in the respective systems. The possible political, economic and social consequences were highlighted through unpacking data showed the composition of individual electorates and how the distribution of affected groups in and across electorates correspond with voting patterns. It was a method of analysis that differentiated Megalogenis from Kelly and other Australian columnists. The marshalling of statistics and quantitative data is also a form of critical discourse that helps establish the authority of the elite columnist as it is compatible with `the normative understanding of public sphere theory, in the sense that support for an argument is detached from considerations of status, power of personal characteristics.'[76]

[75] George Megalogenis, 'A creeping feeling', *The Australian*, 21 February, 2004, p. 17.
[76] Jacobs and Townsley, p. 156.

Another point of difference with Paul Kelly was the older journalist's attention to a range of Australia's foreign policy matters and his sporadic writing on international political developments. Megalogenis rarely wrote on foreign policy. For example, he wrote few articles on Iraq and these were largely concerned with the divisive electoral impact of the decision. Nor did he, as Kelly did, explicitly criticise President Bush's leadership; but Megalogenis's was, in any case, primarily focused on domestic politic where he had established a reputation for expertise in economic policy.

Megalogenis, however, shared Kelly's views on reconciliation. In 2000, he wrote, `Perhaps he [John Howard) could start by saying sorry for what this generation does share responsibility for: we are the only developed nation in the world to allow a section of the population to face a diminished life expectancy.'[77] Three years later: `The worry is that he [Howard], like most white Australians, still can't grasp the idea that we should treat black Australia as an equal as a first step to improving the national dialogue. One simple way of showing his commitment would be to go on a listening tour of indigenous Australians at every level, from the remote communities to the cities.'[78] Megalogenis wrote thoughtfully but very irregularly on indigenous policy. He did not, for example, comment at all on the federal government intervention in the Northern Territory.

Megalogenis was also similar to Kelly in preferring a minimal response to climate change. As he did with the GST, Megalogenis extensively analysed the carbon tax in a number of articles, which he described as `the most disruptive government-imposed change to the national economy since the GST 12 years ago,' but it was `neither the community wrecking ball of Tony Abbott's nightmare nor the environmental silver bullet of Julia Gillard's

[77] George Megalogenis, 'Triumph of selective tolerance', *The Australian*, 30 December, 2000, p. 17.
[78] George Megalogenis, 'No more mistakes on reconciliation', *The Australian*, 24 December, 2004, p.18.

dreams.'[79] However, he acknowledged that it `tells us that higher energy prices do help reduce emissions' and as `both sides are committed to reducing emissions, this may be the evidence a future government needs to persist with, or reintroduce some form of carbon pricing.'[80] He also thought it was a mistake for the Coalition `to rescind two taxes when the national interest would be better served by their recalibration'[81]. Megalogenis was consistent in his defence of the carbon tax as it was a market-based solutions to reducing greenhouse emissions; conversely, `direct action' was `uneconomic' as it aimed `to buy off polluters rather than a price signal to change their behaviour.'[82] He did not, however, see it as among `the most important issues for Australia...' – changing demography, federal state relations and coping with global instability were, for Megalogenis – and his newspaper – the most pressing issues.[83]

This even-handed analysis and moderation of tone also characterised his analysis of the Howard government's Work Choices legislation. Megalogenis used labour force survey figures to show that under Work Choices the number of employees who stayed in month to month work remained at a near-record levels and the number of workers moving to part hours had barely changed while the number going from part time to full-time hours increased slightly.[84] He later noted that Rudd's proposed changes to the legislation actually retained much of the original law. It still, for example, effectively banned workers from striking and still allowed business a degree of exemption from unfair dismissal laws.[85] These facts did not lead Megalogenis to become a defender, yet alone an advocate of this

[79] George Megalogenis, 'Gillard's stab in the dark', *The Australian*, 30 June 2012, p.15.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Ibid.
[82] George Megalogenis, 'Abbott needs to adjust campaign clock and give voters a reason to believe', *The Australian*, 25 August, 2012, p. 22.
[83] George Megalogenis, 'Paradoxes of Prosperity', *The Australian*, 1 November, 2012, p. 13.
[84] Ewin Hannan and George Megalogenis, 'How to fight fear with fear', 27 March, 2007, viewed October 1 2015, < https://global-factiva-com.proxy.library.adelaide.edu.au/ha/default.aspx#./!?&_suid =151382103082203212952685947986>.
[85] George Megalogenis, 'The old sneaky me-too', *The Australian*, 21 April 2007, viewed October 1 2015, <https://global-factiva-com.proxy.library.adelaide.edu.au/ha/default.aspx#./!?&_suid=151382062655609119071752304295>.

particular reform – one that, conversely, Paul Kelly condemned Tony Abbott for abandoning. Rather he thought that as `Howard's bargain with the electorate during the past five years has been to turn down the volume on reform and concentrate on values' but now he was `gambling his career on a reform that doesn't allow for compromise.'[86] In this instance refraining from moral judgments can be seen as another way the `media intellectual address a citizen audience as a way of clarifying issues...that can be taken up in discussions about matters of common concern.'[87]

Megalogenis is, however, as his books suggest, a strong defender and advocate of multiculturalism and immigration. He was an early critic of Pauline Hanson, dubbing her `the Great White Whinger' and pointing out that her very popularity among established (European) migrant communities was, paradoxically, one indication of the success of the immigration program.[88] He frequently touted the success of Australia as an immigrant nation. In response to media-fuelled fears about the link between Australian born Muslims and terrorism he pointed that each new wave of migrants suffered slurs (`The southern Europeans had their turn in the '50s and '60s. The Asians replaced them in the '70s and '80s. Each group carried the put-down of organised crime.), but this `lasts a generation at worse' and no other country can claim this. Indeed, it is the Australian-born children of non-English speaking immigrants who have better incomes and educational qualifications. [89] `The test,' he says, `is whether the local born of Muslim immigrants are encouraged to join the ranks of the over-achievers. History suggests they will.'[90] In promoting what Schudson refers to as `social empathy', Megalogenis's work in this instance is an example of how political

[86] George Megalogenis, 'Making ALP the safer bet - Industrial Relations', *The Australian*, 31 March 2007, viewed October 1 2015, <https://global-factiva-com.proxy.library.adelaide.edu.au/ha/default.aspx#./!?&_suid=151382078036404389240346355341 4>.
[87] Jacobs and Townsley, p. 18.
[88] George Megalogenis, 'Next stop – the little green men', *The Australian,* 15 July 1998, p. 14.
[89] George Megalogenis, 'Suicide bombers a temporary setback', 12 November, 2005, p. 24.
[90] Ibid., p. 24.

journalism serves `a vital democratic function' by encouraging a deeper empathy with – and understanding of – minority groups.[91]

While Paul Kelly wrote on wrote on a broader range of issues, the younger journalist focussed on key domestic issues in more depth. Megalogenis did not, for example, enter – as the older journalist did – into the debate on the bill of rights. He did, however, differ from Kelly on the issue of gay marriage and accused both Gillard and Abbott of deferring `to what they think is the electorate's worst instinct' in their opposition to same sex marriage.[92] This, typically, followed his analysis of data which showed `opposition to gay marriage is more likely to come from the baby boomer couple whose children have long since left the nest' which implied that both leaders assume 'generations X and Y – from which the present pool of working families is drawn – are as conservative as their parents.'[93] Kelly and Megalogenis's respective attitudes conform precisely with the latter's generational analysis.

In addition to chronicling the changes wrought by migration, Megalogenis's journalism was also notable for providing an ongoing analysis of the social transformation resulting from the feminisation of the workforce. In an article written after leaving News Ltd. he pointed out that women in all full and part-time work now outnumber work full-time male workers. Moreover, the number of working married women participating in the labour market was close to overtaking the number of unmarried men, `yet the blokes still hold the levers of the economy, despite being the less qualified sex in the brain economy' – woman made up 52 per cent of professional positions but men held 65 per cent of managerial positions.[94]

Megalogenis, however, was pessimistic that greater diversity would solve the problem of the disconnection `of politics, media and business…from the society they serve because they

[91] Michael Schudson, *Why Democracies Need an Unlovable Press*, Polity Press, Cambridge, UK, 2008, p. 20.
[92] George Megalogenis, 'Gillard and Abbott's bipartisanship on gay nuptials is based on a fallacy', *The Australian*, 17 December, 2011, p. 24.
[93] Ibid.
[94] George Megalogenis, 'Blue Collar hardly in the pink', *The Australian*, 20 July, 2013, p.24.

carry excess white male baggage.'[95] He cited the example of Julia Gillard's failure to implement an effective mining tax and asylum-seeker policy, and her `strike rate of just one in three' with `disability insurance, education reform and budget repair.'[96] Megalogenis admitted he did not have the answer either but `the stridency of the male brain, from the CEO to the partisan commentator, isn't it. When women finally claim their fair share of the decision-making, they have to be prepared to change the model.'[97] Again Megalogenis is more comfortable in the role of columnist as analyst rather than as policy advisor. Although, at this stage, no longer employed by News Ltd. Megalogenis's essential moderation constrains him from proposing radical solutions.

Given the frequency of his writing on immigration it is surprising that border protection did not feature more prominently as a topic in his journalism. Certainly Megalogenis lamented the lack of bipartisanship in foreign affairs and immigration, saying political debate had `regressed over the past two decades because both sides have at one point or another questioned the suitability of Asian immigrants, demonised refugees, blamed Indian students for getting bashed and enlisted our friends, trading partners and even critics for point-scoring purposes.'[98] He condemned Gillard and Abbott for both competing on border protection and on cutting the regular immigration intake. A year earlier he suggested that Australia should build and help run `five-star' refugee camps in Malaysia and Indonesia as a possible solution to the problem.[99] Given Megalogenis's extensive commentary and analysis of immigration issues across a range of media platforms, it is surprising that he has not addressed the controversies of off-shore asylum-seeker processing in more detail. While he would later write, in his first article for the *New York Times*, that `Australia's… treatment of

[95] George Megalogenis, 'Blue Collar hardly in the pink', p.24.
[96] Ibid.
[97] Ibid.
[98] George Megalogenis, 'The regional stage is no place for our leaders' petty politicking', *the Australian,* July 7 2012, p. 24.
[99] George Megalogenis, 'Diplomacy is lost amid our leaders' backyard squabbling', *The Australian*, 24 September, 2011, p. 5.

asylum seekers, who are either turned back at sea or intercepted and transported to an offshore detention center…has been ruthlessly effective at stopping the boats, but it is also undeniably cruel',[100] Megalogenis was not a significant voice in this debate which stretched over several prime ministerships.

Another example of this pragmatism is seen in a 2006 column on education which began with his stating that John Howard ran government `like a frequent-flyer program, with handouts based on loyalty, not need.'[101] Citing the growth in numbers of private school students Megalogenis argued that both state and federal governments' funding policies were responsible for the declining numbers of students in state schools. It was a problem which exacerbated inequality by contributing to the lower Year 12 completion rate of students in low-income suburbs. In addition, Megalogenis urged an expansion of the role of government in pre-school education rather than relying on the private sector. He concluded that state and federal political leaders saw `the triumph of the open economy as an excuse to privatise society.'[102] He even finished by quoting Engels (surely a rarity in the pages of *The Australian*): `The state is not "abolished". It withers away.' This raises a persistent question about how clearly and precisely Megalogenis envisions the balance between the role of the state and market forces in the ongoing project of national prosperity. It was a question he would come to explore in more depth after he left *The Australian*.

When writing on his specialist areas Megalogenis is at his most persuasive. His articles and columns on housing were a way of evaluating the impact of federal government policies in both economic and electoral terms. In 2009, for example, Megalogenis pointed out that the property market is a useful indicator that can illuminate broader trends. He acknowledged

[100] George Megalogenis, 'Australia's Economic Surge', *The New York Times*, 2 November, 2016, viewed on 11 January, 2017,< https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/02/opinion/powering-australias-economic-surge.html?_r=0>.
[101] George Megalogenis, 'Government by default', *the Australian,* 4 February, 2006, p. 18.
[102] Ibid.

that the Rudd government's first-home buyer grant was the cheapest of its stimulus interventions against the GFC and, consequently, the record number of first time borrowers but it was ultimately poor policy because it would make housing more expensive. This leads him to highlight the relationship between taxation and housing where he specifies the tax revenues foregone due to the tax-exempt status of owner-occupied homes and the tax concessions on negative gearing and the sale of investment properties.[103] He uses this argument as a way to address the bigger issue of the role of the state. Foreshadowing the debate about entitlement which was given its greatest impetus with the election of the Abbott government four years later he says, `The mindset of subsidy must give way to self-reliance because we can't assume the world will give us another pass when the next crisis hits.'[104] It will mean, in another echo of that government's rhetoric `that everyone – individuals, businesses, politicians, public servants – will be forced to let go of something in the next recovery to ensure Australia continues to prosper.'[105]

This is an example of how the elite columnist uses reframing as a way `to alter the already established terms of conversation, to refocus attention, or to change the fundamental ways we think about' issues of the day.[106] In this article Megalogenis uses a particular policy (the first home owners grant) to highlight broader issues about the nature of state intervention. This column also sees Megalogenis employ intertextual references which may be defined as `references to other media texts' such as specific media events or other aspects of media culture. Here he refers to controversies concerning the ABC's television's satirical `Chaser' series and the television journalist, Tracy Grimshaw. Other columns often feature references to popular music, AFL football and television, in particular. Several columns use singer/songwriter Bob Dylan as a point of reference in a dozen articles after a 1997 radio

[103] George Megalogenis, 'Rebuilding our Economy', *The Australian,* 13 June, 2009, p.17.
[104] Ibid.
[105] Ibid.
[106] Jacobs and Townsley, p. 149.

interview where John Howard said he admired Dylan's music. Hence, for example, in an article on the privatisation of Telstra he writes: `The PM's favourite performer, Bob Dylan, once boasted in song how he had won all the wars after losing every battle. Howard can only claim this line as his political anthem by breaking the Senate deadlock on Telstra.'[107] In most cases the Dylan reference was used as an ironic device to highlight Howard's conservative persona. Or headlining an article on the ALP's voting patterns with `Pru and Trude have their say' where characters from the Australian television comedy series `Kath and Kim' are used to exemplify a class of voters dubbed `doctor's wives'.[108] The use of this rhetorical strategy, it is claimed, draws `on some presumably shared human experience both as a way to connect to an audience and as a way to invoke that audience as a public whose interests must be represented to elites.'[109] Unlike Kelly, Megalogenis, in his use of intertextual pop culture references, regularly called `on the media content that large publics have in common' to make his case more persuasive by drawing on frames of reference of what his politically (and presumably culturally) engaged readers will know.[110]

Conclusion

Paul Kelly and George Megalogenis differ on some social issues – Megalogenis is, for example, more progressive on the legalisation of same-sex marriage. They also often employ different rhetorical strategies – Megalogenis was particularly noted for his facility with statistical evidence and use of popular culture references. Nonetheless, they have both `acted as media intellectuals who have triaged issues for wider voting publics' through 'their critical analysis of competing policy arguments and in their broad historical and social framing of current events.'[111] They also demonstrate how the elite media 'provide sites where ideas and policy proposals are tested and negotiated and where interpretations of

[107] George Megalogenis, 'Howard's great telco catch-22', *The Australian*, 1 March 1999, p. 37.
[108] George Megalogenis, 'Pru and Trude have their say', *The Australian*, 11 March 2006, p. 25.
[109] Jacobs and Townsley, p. 165.
[110] Ibid.
[111] Jacobs and Townsley, p. 245.

political strategy are formed.'[112] More precisely, they are both boosters of economic reform that preserves and promotes inclusive economic growth in terms of both the economy and population. When, for example, in 2010 Julia Gillard rejected the idea of a `Big Australia', Kelly called it `a poll-driven position as distinct from being a justified policy.'[113] While Megalogenis, satirically referred to her as 'the Adelaide Pom, wanting to freeze-frame the nation' because `focus groups tell her to slow population growth, which is code for talking down the immigration intake.'[114]

Both men acknowledge that the emphasis on policies that maintain and build national prosperity also create serious problems with regard to rising income inequality and increasing pressures on major urban centres and natural resources. Megalogenis has addressed these problems in more detail but, similar to Kelly, argues that a combination of market signals and human innovation can successfully overcome these challenges. Indeed, the pace of reform needs to be maintained to ensure Australia's future prosperity. But is this adequate in an era where the increasing salience of inequality within and between nations is an issue of global significance?[115] In the journalists' advocacy of an Australian model of `pragmatic deregulation' it is their very pragmatism – as seen, for example, in their willingness to endorse regulation which protects the mechanisms of economic growth – that, paradoxically, makes the neoliberal aspects of their policy analysis more persuasive. In addition, they share the elite columnist's traditional `commitment to the value of facts and…thoughtful, detached, non-partisan analysis of major alternative policy choice alternatives' which is central to some influential theories of mediated democratic

[112] Sally Young, *How Australia Decides: Election Reporting & the Media*, Cambridge University Press, Port Melbourne, Victoria, 2011, *p*. 171.
[113] Paul Kelly, 'Small thinking in great leap backwards', *The Australian*, 24 July, 2010, p. 11**.**
[114] George Megalogenis, 'Our future is as Asia's nation of immigration', *The Australian*, 15 September 2012, p. 21.
[115] This is particularly evident with the 2014 publication of Thomas Piketty's best-selling *Capital in the 21st Century*, and the subsequent widespread debate it provoked about inequality.

deliberation.[116] This is also a major factor underpinning in effectiveness of their arguments with their politically engaged readers. So while it is difficult to determine any direct influence on policy-makers their work does provide `discursive frames for legitimising [some] neo-liberal policy agendas and delegitimising opponents.'[117] This also supports an argument that they are representative of how `the media-ization of politics has been associated with the bland-izing of mainstream politics and a narrowing of policy options' in Western democracies since the collapse of communism.[118] That is elite columnists are simply supporting `a middle-ground position adhered to by all mainstream political parties' where 'competence at economic management' is the supreme criterion for judging political performance and the implementation of "`liberalism'" is "a virtually uncontested ideological `given'".[119] It is claimed that this `great consensus' even subsumes other discourses such as feminism and multiculturalism into serving `the economic interests of a `global networking elite' because they both expand the labour pool and therefore reduce the cost of labour.[120] The accuracy of such claims and their implications for the state of public discourse in recent Australian history as well as the relationship between elite journalists and the function of public intellectuals will be discussed in chapter five.

[116] Jacobs and Townsley, p. 245.
[117] Damien Cahill, 'Ideas-Centred Explanations of the Rise of Neoliberalism: A Critique'.
[118] P. Eric Louw, *The Media and Political Process*, Sage, London, 2005, p. 201.
[119] Ibid.
[120] Ibid.

CHAPTER FOUR

JOURNALISTS, PUNDITS AND DEMOCRACY

Journalists are regarded as a vital element in a liberal democracy. It is argued they are necessary to fulfil three fundamental functions: `a watchdog role, the provision of information and the facilitation of the public sphere.'[1] Therefore an analysis of how successfully Kelly and Megalogenis – as two of the most prominent and respected members of their profession – fulfil these functions is needed in order to assess their effectiveness as journalists. Such an analysis may also be suggestive about the extent to which the largely contemporary negative public perceptions of the media are justified.

The first of these, the watchdog role, in Australian political life, is largely the province of press gallery journalists; but columnists who have left the gallery still scrutinise the government through evaluating their policies and, where necessary, directly questioning government ministers. The second role of information provider is regularly evidenced in their columns which focus on policies and political leadership – the information most needed for citizens to be able to make informed voting decisions. The delivery of reliable information is closely associated with the third function of enhancing the public sphere and it is this that is, perhaps, most relevant to the journalist turned columnist. The concept of `the public sphere' was developed by Jurgen Habermas and has been widely critiqued but remains highly influential and is useful for understanding the relationship between the media and democracy.[2] It is a term which encompasses 'the emergence of laws, places and

[1] Wayne Errington and Narelle Miragliotta, *Media & Politics: An Introduction*, Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, 2007, p. 8.

[2] As Benson points out, 'Jürgen Habermas brought his considerable symbolic capital to the Anglo-American sociology of media' with the 1989 English translation of his book *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. Benson critiques the Habermasian model of the public sphere while acknowledging it normative significance. See Rodney Benson, 'Shaping the Public Sphere: Habermas and Beyond', *The American Sociologist*', vol. 40, no. 3, 2009, p. 176.

media that facilitate public debate.'[3] It also acts 'as a normative ideal of the role of the media in a democracy.'[4] It is generally understood to be `that part of civil society where private individuals gather as a public to discuss matters of common concern.'[5] Such discussions constitute `public deliberation' which, ideally, involves individuals discussing issues of public significance with the intention that rational debate produces better public policies.

But in large, complex democracies *direct* deliberation is not possible so *mediated* deliberation is required. In these democracies the media `act as a conveyor belt that disseminates ideas and information and, in the process, enables the public, notwithstanding their geographical location, to engage in a dialogue with their elected officials, fellow citizens and increasingly governments and people living on the other side of the globe.'[6] But do all forms of mediated deliberation enhance the public sphere? Specifically, does the particular form of mediated deliberation produced by Kelly and Megalogenis facilitate the public sphere or does it, in fact, as some critics have argued, damage democracy? Tiffen, for example, claimed *The Australian* had, since the mid-1990s (interestingly, the point at which Kelly ceased to be Editor-in-Chief) `gone into a professional decline' and `Many of its columnists [Tiffen does not name individuals] parade a tiresome and hollow militancy as they embrace what they like to call the culture wars, and an empirical sloppiness verging on invention in the way they write about elites, political correctness, extremists, and so forth.'[7] The answer to these questions needs to be approached first through a consideration of the arguments concerning the role of those who are categorised as `political pundits' and, secondly, in relation to key theories of democracy.

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[3] Errington and Miragliotta, p. 9

[4] Sally Young, *How Australia Decides: Election Reporting and the Media*, Cambridge University Press, Port Melbourne, Victoria, 2011, p. 257.

[5] Jacobs and Townsley, p. 6.

[6] Errington and Miragliotta, p. 9.

[7] Rodney Tiffen, *The Australian at forty-five*, 'Inside Story', 14 July 2009, viewed 10 January 2017, <http://insidestory.org.au/the-australian-at-forty-five>.

Paul Kelly and George Megalogenis may be classified as leading members of an Australian punditocracy. Prior to Alterman's definition of pundits as `a tiny group of highly visible political pontificators who make their living offering "inside political opinions and forecasts" in the national media' there were other definitions with a similarly pejorative edge.[8] These include Nimmo and Coombs', `cadre of purported political knowledgeables who appear and reappear in, but seemingly never disappear from, all manner of forums and venues of public political discussion,'[9] and Tunstall's 'cantankerous males of fairly mature years' (although this is hardly accurate with regard to the relatively youthful Megalogenis and the growing number of female pundits).[10]

This tone is maintained under the model developed by Nimmo and Coombs where pundits are classified as `Priests, Bards, and Oracles'.[11] Their description of the priestly pundit is sufficiently broad to encompass both Kelly and Megalogenis. The priestly pundit is one who has `no formal or informal position of authority within the elite circle, [but] still moves within it. The priest has access to elite members and is at ease among them. The priest not only speaks to them and with them, but has permission to speak of and for them to those elite circles. Moreover, members of political elite trust the priest's word for what is happening within and outside the elite circle.'[12] `The activity they tacitly control is that of interpreting what is occurring for political elites and non-elites. In so doing, they seek to preserve control over their own reputations for being among those "who know."'[13]

Kelly's status also fits with the role of sage who is `often a former priest…exalted to the rank of sage by virtue of possessing among members of the elite (and more rarely, the populace)

[8] Alterman, p. 3.
[9] Nimmo and Coombs, *The Political Pundits*, Praeger, New York, 1992, p. xx.
[10] Jeremy Tunstall, *Newspaper Power: the new national press in Britain*, Oxford Clarendon Press, New York, Oxford University Press, 1995, p. 177 cited in Alistair Duff, `Powers in the Land?: British political columnist in the information era', *Journalism* Practice, vol.2, no. 2, 2008, p. 232.
[11] Nimmo and Coombs, p. 13.
[12] Ibid., p. 24.
[13] Ibid., p. 25.

a reputation for demonstrated sagacity, discernment, prudence, and acumen over a long period of time.'[14] Indeed, sages like Kelly `are respected mature pundits whose utterances command deference' and are considered distinguished by elderly peers and by a youthful following.'[15] These definitions imply that punditry is an elite activity which has little to offer the wider civil society.

Indeed, Alterman has argued that the American punditocracy is responsible for `the amplification of…"the tawdry ferocity" of American debate' and `the increasing paralysis' of the American political system.[16] Similar complaints are made in the Australian context. Rundle, for example, claims civility in Australian public discourse has been damaged by "groups and individuals on the right of politics" who `demonise one strand of thought –`left liberalism' – as inherently traitorous and `un-Australian.'"[17] He identifies a number of conservative columnists and suggests that their prominence is part of a process which has destroyed pluralism in the Australian media and marks an effort `to shift the entire public sphere rightwards, so that debates all occur on that side of the line.'[18] Former ALP leader turned political columnist, Mark Latham agreed that there is a `right-wing hunting pack' but says `the so-called progressive left' is also affected by abstract thinking `not conducive to empiricism.[19] `This results in `both left and right…adopting a predetermined position on issues and then rationalising away evidence that might contradict their views.'[20]

Such critiques, however, may also somewhat counter-intuitively suggest the importance of elite columnists such as Kelly and Megalogenis who, generally operate at the centre of public debate and maintain moderation in their discourse and are committed to evidence-based

[14] Nimmo and Coombs, p. 76.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Alterman, p. 4.
[17] Guy Rundle, 'The Rise of the Right' in Robert Manne, (ed.), *Do Not Disturb: Is the Media Failing Australia?*, Black Inc., 2005, p. 29.
[18] Ibid., p. 46.
[19] Mark Latham, *The Political Bubble: Why Australians Don't Trust Politics*, Macmillan, Sydney, 2014, pp. 207 -208.
[20] Ibid., p. 208.

argument. Indeed, in the case of *The Australian*, Rundle, a virulent critic of the paper, acknowledges that once Kelly was removed as Editor-in-Chief in 1996 his `roster of distinguished…regular columnists was replaced by a brace of writers earnestly committed to the traditional side of the culture wars.'[21] While in a later article, Rundle refers to Megalogenis as a `reality-tester' among *The Australian's* journalists, in order to condemn by comparison, the paper's conservative columnists.[22]

Another common criticism of the Australian media (and the media of comparable countries) is that it has degraded democracy by adopting an `entertainment frame that has little tolerance for complex social and economic issues.'[23] Entertainment values have infused political reporting resulting in the increasing trivialization of public discourse which is characterised by focus on personalities and the treatment of politics as a game. The result is the `dumbing down' of democracy and the debasement of political culture.

Yet such an analysis also implies that elite columnists like Kelly and Megalogenis, who have `the ability to describe complex realities' but can `simplify when necessary with a minimum of distortion' are perhaps something of an (albeit weakening) bulwark against this process.[24] As the previous chapters indicate, Megalogenis and Kelly are among the small group of political journalists in the Australian media who can manage complexity in their policy analysis.

More broadly the function and value of the elite columnist needs to be unpacked through an analysis of their relationship with democracy for, as Jones points out: `It is an article of faith among journalists that what they do is essential to democracy.'[25] He adds that this

[21] Rundle, 'The Rise of the Right', p.43.
[22] Guy Rundle, 'The Oz has been sipping Abbott's kool-aid', *Crikey*, 7 December, 2009, viewed December 2, 2015, <https://www.crikey.com.au/2009/12/07/rundle-for-the-oz-its-time-to-restart-the-script/>.
[23] Lindsay Tanner, *Sideshow: dumbing down democracy*, Scribe, Melbourne, 2011, p. 1.
[24] Jeffrey Scheuer, *The Big Picture: Why Democracies Need Journalistic Excellence*, Routledge, New York, 2008, p. 97.
[25] Alex S. Jones, *Losing the News:The Future of the News that Feeds Democracy*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2009, p. 32.

contention is also widely held outside journalism. Ettema, for example, states `journalism ought to be a means of democratic empowerment is a truism for both journalists and their critics.'[26]

Yet in Australia, as in other western democracies, there has never been 'a golden age of press virtue' as the historical record of the press has always been marked by `political patronage, official subservience and expedient compromises.'[27] Nonetheless it is patently clear that journalists `remain an indispensable element of Australia's liberal democratic media.'[28] But does this nostrum apply to those journalists who become pundits – and the majority of Australian political columnists – Kelly and Megalogenis are prime examples – are, in fact, former political journalists. In western democracies political journalists often have the highest status in their profession because they are `most likely to cover front-page news, and most likely to associate with the most powerful and respected news sources.'[29] As such they `enjoy an elevated position in the pantheon of newspaper journalism, somewhere between senior correspondents and the editorship'.[30] How does the journalism of Kelly and Megalogenis contribute to the functioning of a healthy democracy? Or are perceptions of the quality of their discourse tainted by their association with *The Australian*? A newspaper which, says Manne, `has become a powerful vehicle for the propagation of the fundamental Murdoch world view – free and unregulated markets, small government, American global leadership, anti–political correctness' since Chris Mitchell's accession to the editorship in 2002.[31]

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[26] James Ettema, 'Journalism as Reason-Giving: Deliberative Democracy, Institutional Accountability, and the News Media's Mission', *Political Communication*, vol. 24, no. 2, 2007, p. 143.
[27] Rodney Tiffen, 'The news media and Australian politics' in Paul Boreham, Geoffrey Stokes and Richard Hall, (eds.), *The Politics of Australian Society: Political Issues for the New Century*, Pearson Education Australia, Frenchs Forest, NSW, 2004, p. 203.
[28] Errington and Miragliotta, p. 78.
[29] Schudson, p. 63.
[30] Duff, p. 232.
[31] Robert Manne, 'The power of one: Why Rupert Murdoch can't be stopped' in *The Monthly*, Issue 95, November 2013, p. 26.

Despite the derogatory labels often applied to pundits – Kelly has been accused of pomposity and pontification and subject to invective such as, inter alia, being called a `bloviator',[32] there are several ways these elite columnists serve representative democracy. To be sure, the forum of opinionated news media where elite columnists operate is, by no means, the only site for mediated deliberation but it is `one (albeit important) part of a wide range of formats where deliberation occurs.'[33] As the previous chapters attest, Kelly and Megalogenis, in many of their columns, do provide their politically engaged readership `with an interpretative framework for understanding the events of the day; writing on behalf of the public interest, while advocating specific policy opinions in the space of opinion.'[34] Through this process they are producing mediated deliberation which, according to particular theories of deliberative democracy, enhances the public sphere. That is, in their journalism, Kelly and Megalogenis usually satisfy `the fundamental mandate' of democratic deliberation which is `to seek and give reasons'.[35]

Nonetheless, the work of Kelly and Megalogenis, does fit with some normative theories of the public sphere in contemporary democracy. Most applicable are representative liberal theories which `accept the desirability of the public sphere but one in which general participation is limited and largely indirect.'[36] An essential criterion is `transparency' which `should reveal what citizens need to know about the workings of their government, the parties that aggregate and represent their interests, and the office holders they have elected

[32] The last is from Guy Rundle, **'**Rundle: on Bolt, it's Marcia Langton v Marcia Langton', *Crikey*, 3 October, 2011, viewed January 11, 2013, < http://www.crikey.com.au/2011/10/03/rundle-on-bolt-its-marcia-langton-v-marcia-langton/>. In other articles Rundle has also called Kelly 'the sage of Surrey Hills' and 'the News Ltd. Nostradamus.'
[33] Jacobs and Townsley, p. 57.
[34] Ibid., p. 18.
[35] Ettema, p. 145.
[36] Myra Marx Ferree, William A. Gamson, Jurgen Gerhards and Dieter Rucht, 'Four models of the public sphere in modern democracies', *Theory and* Society, vol. 31, no.3, 2002, p. 290.

to make policies on their behalf.'[37] Transparency defined this way is a defining feature of both columnists work as many of the examples in the previous chapters attest.

A second element of representative liberal theory is known as `*elite dominance*' where the public's representatives should be proportionately reflected in the public sphere.[38] Therefore the larger and more representative the party, the more media coverage it should be given. Again the representatives and policies of the two major Australian political parties are the usual subject of Kelly's and Megalogenis's columns.

The third point, that journalists `should encourage a dialogue among the informed' privileges those `citizens defined as "experts,"' either on the political process or the issues being discussed.[39] The role of dispassionate expert should include columnists who use `their inside knowledge of the political process and their research on the substantive issues to share with decision-makers and attentive publics.'[40] In style and substance, Kelly and Megalogenis are exemplars of this approach as they `take a position on the issues at stake and' [supposedly] `guide officials toward more knowledgeable choices.'[41]

The next criterion, that public discourse should be seen as `a free market of ideas' is one both journalists, and the organisation that employs them, claim as a fundamental principle. Kelly, for example, drew on the concept to defend *The Australian* when it was criticised by Robert Manne for, inter alia, the attention it drew to Keith Windshuttle's controversial books on Aboriginal history and the space it gave to climate change scepticism. Kelly argued that Manne was advocating `intellectual censorship' and supported 'the idea that certain beliefs cannot be debated and contested.'[42]

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[37] Ferree, Gamson, Gerhards and Rucht, p. 291.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Ibid., p. 292.
[40] Ibid., p.293.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Kelly, 'Manne throws truth overboard', *The Australian,* September 14, 2011, p. 13.

The concept of a free market of ideas is not, however, accompanied by a free market of expression. This theory requires `*detachment* – a rejection of the expression of emotion' as `the prescribed form of communication.'[43] This, in turn, `endorses a normative standard of `*civility*' in journalism which does not permit inflammatory language and *ad hominem* attacks. As the numerous prior examples demonstrate, a typical column by Kelly or Megalogenis employs both the measured language and reasoned argument that characterises this form of discourse.

The final criterion of *closure* refers to the idea that once democratically elected representatives have made a decision, after appropriate discussion and debate, all parties can agree a matter is decided and there is no further debate is needed.[44] The event-driven nature of political commentary means that issues are generally treated in this way. According to this theory once a policy has been legislated the debate is ended, but in the cases of, for example, Work Choices, placing a price on carbon and the Mineral Resources Rent Tax, columnists again participate in debate only when these issues were put directly before voters in election campaigns.

The journalism of Kelly and Megalogenis clearly fits well with the representative liberal theory of democracy. But to what extent is it compatible with three other major models: participatory liberal theory, discursive theory and constructionist theory?

The first of these, as its title implies, is concerned with `maximising the participation of citizens that affect their lives.'[45] This seems compatible with representative theories of democracy but its emphasis on encouraging widespread public participation across a range of media sites involves dismissing the value of recognised qualifications as a criterion for participation. That is `participatory liberal tradition rejects the norm of *expertise* that

[43] Ferree, Gamson, Gerhards and Rucht, p. 293.
[44] Ibid., p. 294.
[45] Ibid., p. 293.

representative liberals endorse,'[46] and which Kelly and Megalogenis place great value, whether it be the former's support of, inter alia, the Productivity Commission or Ross Garnaut, or the latter's use official data.

A second area of incompatibility is with regard to discourse. Some theorists of participatory democracy prefer more polemical or emotive discourse which conveys `the emotional loading of public issues' and thus 'extend the criterion of empowerment to reject the norm of *civility*, at least as representative liberal theory interprets it.'[47] As this theory accepts a wide range of communication styles it does not value the detached, disinterested style of the elite columnist more than other style. A third area of conflict is its concern to avoid `imposed closure by the powerful that serves to silence the closure of the less powerful.'[48] For the elite columnist closure in a representative liberal democracy is ultimately determined by the electorate.

Discursive theory has more in common with representative liberal theory and is therefore somewhat more compatible with the commentary of Kelly and Megalogenis. There is, however, a key value it shares with participatory liberalism which is the inclusion of a wide range of opinion as possible but with a much greater emphasis on democratic deliberation which `involves recognizing, incorporating and rebutting the arguments of others – *dialogue* and *mutual respect* – as well as justifying one's own.'[49] These are values exemplified in the journalism and public utterances of Kelly and Megalogenis. Kelly, for example, on a television program, responded to a question from an advocate of euthanasia (an issue to which, as demonstrated earlier, he is clearly opposed), with, `I respect your view but I don't

[46] Ferree, Gamson, Gerhards and Rucht, p. 297.
[47] Ibid., p. 298
[48] Ibid., p. 318.
[49] Ibid., p. 306.

agree with you and I'd say that it cannot be just seen as an individual decision…'[50] Whilst Megalogenis was, for example, notable, as one of the more prominent political journalists to establish himself in the blogosphere, for the high standards of public commentary he maintained on his blog.[51]

The idea of closure is more loosely interpreted in this theory as it `assumes that an ideally conducted public discourse should produce gradual consensus overtime.'[52] But the elite columnist is more likely to recognise that there are irreconcilable positions, and compromise rather than consensus is the solution for a more effective public sphere. Indeed, Kelly wrote that `Australia's political tradition is a search for what works best. It is based on pragmatism and compromise.'[53] Or more precisely: `Political leaders are called upon to make decisions about war, tax, deportation, public finance, law and order that involve trade-offs between the public interest and the interest of individuals. Such decisions frequently inflict hurt upon individuals (higher taxes, lower benefits) that would be unacceptable in moral relations between two individuals. Decisions by governments cannot necessarily be fair or just for everyone.'[54]

Kelly and Megalogenis's journalistic output fits least well with constructionist democratic theory which

> begins by questioning the separateness of the public sphere at all. Public discourse should question the boundaries of "the political" by a strong norm of *popular inclusion*, which in turn serves the goals of *empowerment* of the marginalized and *recognition* of differences. Incorporating the standpoints of socially marginalized individuals and social movements can both name and exemplify the linkages between public action and private life. The norm of *expertise* is rejected explicitly, and the standards of *deliberativeness* and *civility* are qualified by subjecting them to critique based on a higher value of *popular inclusion*. Rather than *dialogue* and formal

[50] Paul Kelly, 'Team Australia, Terror and Tinderboxes, *Q and A*, television program, ABC TV, 25 August 2014, viewed 25 August 2014. <http://www.abc.net.au/tv/qanda/txt/s4055706.htm>.
[51] Tim Dunlop, *The New Front Page: New Media and the Rise of the Audience*, Scribe, Brunswick, Victoria, 2013, p. 158.
[52] Ferree, Gamson, Gerhards and Rucht, p. 305.
[53] Paul Kelly, 'Voice of a nation – The Australian – 35th Anniversary Special Liftout', *The Australian*, 15 July 1999, p. 13.
[54] Kelly, 'Time for a rethink', p. 14.

> argumentation, constructionists particularly value *narrative* as a characteristic of content and style that challenges both the diffuse power relations of daily life and the concentrated power of disembodied formal political institutions by revealing the connections between them. Legitimating the language of the life world in discourse privileges the experiential knowledge of ordinary citizens and contributes to their empowerment. Finally, *closure* after a decision is deeply suspect since it can so easily suppress the diversity of expression that vitalizes democracy.[55]

On all criteria for effective democratic public discourse there is the most significant contrast between representative liberal theory and the constructionist theory. Neither columnist is explicitly opposed to popular inclusion and empowerment but their columns generally give priority to expert voices. To be sure, Kelly's journalism on reconciliation, multiculturalism and immigration recognises differences but gives little attention to `socially marginalized individuals and social movements.' Megalogenis has an even greater focus on multiculturalism and, also, gender but does not include individual voices in his columns. Both men's professed acceptance of the diversity of voices enabled by the new media platforms is qualified by, in Kelly's case, a distrust of what he sees as the subjectivity, unprofessionalism and partisanship of many of these voices.[56] While Megalogenis, as seen in the previous chapter, was sceptical that more diverse participation would resolve contemporary political and social problems. The two journalists' privileging of both expertise (including their own) and civility in debate is plainly at odds with the constructionist theory. Nor would they be necessarily opposed to closure once an elected government has legislated decisions for which it is perceived they have a mandate.

Therefore, although the journalism of Kelly and Megalogenis is compatible with elements of discursive theory (dialogue and mutual respect), it fits most comfortably with the elite theory of representative democracy. Further, Australian democracy empirically functions

[55] Ferree, Gamson, Gerhards and Rucht, p. 315.
[56] Paul Kelly, 'Politicians and Journalists: Adversaries or Bedfellows', Video, University of Melbourne, August 11, 2009, viewed August 1, 2014, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CupEl5xa0qQ>.

most closely to a representative liberal democratic model which, like its American counterpart

> is not about maximizing popular involvement in decision-making. It is about assuring a role for popular participation and for popular review of governmental performance within a system of competitive elections, due process, the protection of individual rights, the protection of freedoms of speech, press, petition, and association and the preservation of a pluralistic culture.[57]

Under this system the elite columnists are among those journalists who are `stewards of vital democratic values' either as `potentially progressive, equalising forces in society' or `conservative…forces for stability and memory, stewards of tradition and arbiters of merit, decency and expression.'[58] In addition, the proliferation of opinion formats in Western liberal democracies brought about by the developments in digital media has created an era of `media abundance' characterised by an `onslaught of misinformation and infotainment.'[59] In this milieu of political columns are spaces `in our crowded and hyperactive media environment where the chaos can be given some order; where the citizen can draw breath and let herself be guided around and through an issue.'[60]

The ways in which journalism specifically aids democracy can be categorised more precisely (and some have been referred to in previous chapters). These include: `providing citizens information –centred political news, offering political analysis, undertaking investigative reporting, presenting "social empathy" stories that …inform citizens about neighbours and groups they may not know or understand, providing a location for public conversation, attending to how representative democracies work, and mobilizing citizens for political life by advocating candidates, policies, and viewpoints.'[61] With regard to these criteria Kelly and Megalogenis, as elite columnists, primarily serve democracy by fulfilling the second criteria

[57] Schudson, *Why Democracies Need An Unlovable Press***,** pp. 7-8.
[58] Scheuer, p. 118
[59] Patterson, p. 135 and p. 137.
[60] McNair, *Journalism and Democracy: Evaluation of Political Public Sphere*, p. 69.
[61] Michael Schudson, 'Reluctant Stewards: Journalism in a Democratic Society' in *Daedalus*, vol. 142, no. 2, 2013, p. 167.

by offering context, analysis and reasoned interpretation of the key political issues of the day. Megalogenis, in his writings on the migrant experience does produce social empathy stories and, while both men do not directly advocate particular candidates, they may mobilize citizens for political life through their advocacy of particular policies.

But this raises the question of who, exactly, are the citizens who read Kelly and Megalogenis and how many of them are there? How representative of the voting populace is this readership? If it is, in fact, a minority readership does this diminish the utility and value of their journalism? To answer these questions some analysis of T*he Australian* newspaper and its relationship with the corporation which owns it is required. This also raises questions about whose interests they represent and the value of a columnist's autonomy in the public sphere.

Rupert Murdoch*, News Ltd and The Australian*

As Young has observed, `media audiences and "the public" are not the same thing – even if they do overlap at some points.'[62] There is now broader acceptance `that there is no unitary public sphere but multiple publics organised around different needs and audiences.'[63] The evidence of circulation figures and revenue indicates that the `audience' for *The Australian* is one of the smallest of all the mainstream media institutions in Australia. In 2013 the paper's weekly circulation had fallen to 112,269 (down from 122,428 in 2012) while the weekend edition had declined to 242, 158 (from 266, 696 in 2012).[64] By 2014 the numbers were, respectively, 109, 902 and 232, 243.[65]

[62] Young, *How Australia Decides: Election Reporting & the Media,* p. 255.
[63] Ibid., p. 256.
[64] Nic Christensen, *Mumbrella*, 'ABCs double digit declines for newspapers', 14 February 2012, viewed 11 September 2014, <http://www.abc.net.au/mediawatch/transcripts/1403_mumbrella.pdf>.
[65] Nic Christensen, *Mumbrella*, 'ABCs: Sunday Tele falls below 500,000 as print sales decline and digital levels off', 14 August, 2014, viewed 11 September, 2014, <http://mumbrella.com.au/abcs-sunday-telegraph-falls-half-million-copies-print-sales-declines-digital-levels-244843>.

This decline in newspaper circulation is a world-wide phenomenon and the other three newspapers which provide, along with elements of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, what is widely called `quality journalism' or `public trust journalism' have also seen steep declines in their circulation numbers and revenues.[66] Along with *The Australian*, the *Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Age* and the *Australian Financial Review* are the `four mastheads' which `provide most of Australia's coverage of politics, justice, economics business, science, health, welfare, public policy, international affairs, arts, culture and ideas.'[67]

Of the four, the `*Oz*', as it is nicknamed, has perhaps generated the most controversy. Since its founding in 1964 *The Australian* has been a paper which has at various times been liberal, occasionally radical and often conservative. Throughout these various phases it has `remained an ideologically-driven publication with a long history of campaigning behind it.'[68] In the year of its fiftieth anniversary one of the paper's critics wrote that during Kelly's five year editorship `observers on all sides of politics willingly conceded it was the best newspaper in Australia…It wasn't partisan, but …was socially liberal (it made Eddie Mabo its Australian of the Year for 1992) and economically dry.'[69] Rothwell described it in this period as `both insider and outsider: its importance lay not in the size of its distribution but in the identity of its readership.'[70]

It remains the case that it is the nature of its readership which gives the paper, and some of its journalists, a significant role in the field of national politics. Manne's observation that `*The Australian* is… the only newspaper… read by virtually all members of the political class, a group that includes politicians, leading public servants, business people and the most

[66] Eric Beecher, 'End of the print run: When no news is bad news', *The Monthly*, Issue 91, July, 2013, p. 34.
[67] Ibid., p. 35.
[68] Denis Cryle, 'Advocacy or analysis? A retrospective on 'The Australian', *On-line Opinion*, 20 February 2008, viewed 11 September, 2014, <http://www.onlineopinion.com.au/author.asp?id=5359>.
[69] Margaret Simons, 'The daily narcissist', *The Monthly*, Issue 102, July, 2014, p. 10.
[70] Nicolas Rothwell, 'Engaged participant: how a mission has been fulfilled', *The Australian*, 17 May, 2014, p. 2.

politically engaged citizens',[71] is supported by a journalistic investigation of its influence, specifically, in Canberra in 2014. It found the paper is indeed widely read by bureaucrats, politicians and their staffers and concluded that it is `the most influential newspaper in Canberra, but now as ever, it cannot affect change alone.'[72] In the same year David Marr pointed out that although it was `actually risible' that a newspaper in `which so much money and talent has been invested for so long' had such small sales figures, it was, nonetheless, `an amazing operation and governments do tremble at what *The Australian* publishes.'[73] The paper's influence relies on it setting an agenda by convincing other media outlets, particularly television stations to take up its stories. That is, it acts as an `intermedia agenda setter' by exerting `influence on the agenda of other news media.'[74]

Kelly and Megalogenis, as prominent columnists, contribute to this and can set news agendas through their own individual contributions. In 2012, for example, Kelly interviewed then Prime Minister Julia Gillard on *Australian Agenda*, *The Australian's* own television program on Sky News, the cable and satellite news channel. When questioned about allegations surrounding her resignation in 1995 from the law firm Slater and Gordon, Gillard challenged Kelly and suggested he had been `asked to ask questions' on this matter.[75] The Prime Minister's response and her implied criticism of Kelly's independence immediately became a leading story in the Australian media and resulted in criticism `from other journalists…for having the temerity to confront the Oracle'.[76] It was a demonstration of how such opinions are `widely commented on and criticised by other journalists, pundits and

[71] Manne, *Bad News: Murdoch's* Australian *and the shaping of the nation*, p. 5.
[72] Myriam Robin, "'A lost cause': is *The Australian* really Canberra's most influential paper?", *Crikey*, 17 July 2014, viewed 11 September, 2014, < http://www.crikey.com.au/2014/07/17/a-lost-cause-is-the-australian-really-canberras-most-influential-paper/?wpmp_switcher=mobile&wpmp_tp=1>.
[73] 'Power, Influence and Deep Pockets: The Rise and Fall of media Empire', *Big Ideas*, television program, ABC TV, 28 August 2014, viewed 30 August 2014, <http://www.abc.net.au/tv/bigideas/stories/2014/08/28/4076336.htm>.
[74] Maxwell McCombs, *Setting the Agenda: The Mass Media and Public Opinion*, Second edition, Polity Press, Cambridge, UK, 2014, p.128.
[75] 'Interview with Prime Minister Julia Gillard', *Australian Agenda*, television program, Sky News, August 20 2012, viewed September 1, 2014, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N456VbijM4c>.
[76] Kerry-Anne Walsh, *The Stalking of Julia Gillard*, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, NSW, 2013, p. 251. Earlier in the text Walsh referred to Kelly as 'the Oracle of News Ltd.'

citizens. In this way, their texts become the jumping-off points for new opinions and arguments in wider…circles of discussion and debate, all of which are built on a foundation of …dense intertextual discourse that is circulating on the internet as well as on more traditional media platforms.'[77]

In addition to setting news agendas, the newspaper's elite columnists function more broadly to make the intellectual case for several of 'the core values `of *The Australian*. On the newspaper's fiftieth anniversary  Kelly identified these as `a competitive market-based economy; the belief that a strong economy and healthy society go together; faith in a Big Australia; a global outlook shaped by engagement with Asia and the US alliance; a greater emphasis on personal responsibility; the belief that culturally progressive policies in education and indigenous affairs have failed the nation; backing for a republic and genuine Aboriginal reconciliation; and ensuring the full scope of the nation – its rural, regional and resource potential – is recognised.'[78] Kelly followed this list by making the problematic claim that these `values do not fit any political party or ideological slot' is more problematic.[79]

Most of these values have become, over time, mainstream `centrist' values that are broadly shared by the policy direction of both major political parties. But some are probably more acceptable to a majority on the right in Australian political life than on the left where the environmental impact of `a Big Australia', and the social problems and economic inequity created by a market-based economy have greater salience.

Further, this list of values does not reveal the contradictions that arise from maintaining the growth required for `a strong economy' and the problems this creates for `a healthy society'. This, as examples in the preceding chapters indicate, is an ongoing dilemma for both journalists but one that has not caused them to doubt these tenets. This was embodied in a

[77] Jacobs and Townsley, p. 245.
[78] Kelly, 'Conspiracy Debunked', *The Australian*, 9 July, 2014, p. 12.
[79] Ibid.

2014 column where Kelly asserted the Australian political system was in crisis which was, in turn, preventing the sort of economic reform he regarded as essential for ongoing prosperity. In response Dunlop, a pioneer blogger-turned-ABC commentator, argued – continuing the objections made by earlier critics referred to in the second chapter – that Kelly was, in effect, urging `a continuation of the neoliberal dogma that has dominated the thinking of the political class – here and around world – for the last several decades. In other words, he is arguing in favour of an economic system that by its nature creates the very social fragmentation that he is lamenting.'[80] Yet Kelly said nothing about social fragmentation, he did not discuss this as a problem. In addition, Dunlop broadly accepted that there was much in Kelly's analysis that was correct including the existence of a political crisis and a major budgetary problem; but went on to argue that imposition of more stringent conditions for the receipt of unemployment benefits and disability payments along with a broader redefinition of 'social services as "entitlements" and thus demands lower taxes be paid for by cuts to health care and education' were causing social fragmentation.[81] Although these specific issues were not, in fact, addressed by Kelly in this column (or others) on the 2014 budget, their omission does again at least suggest an unwillingness to deal in depth with the harsher outcomes of policies which are clearly compatible with his paper's core beliefs.

Kelly, nonetheless, did broadly address such criticisms by acknowledging the unfairness of the budget and argued that its `collective impact' was more important than `individual measures'.[82] His key point was that `Australia re-distributes more to the bottom 25 per cent than virtually any other industrialised nation' and `the bottom 60 per cent of households are net winners from the welfare state with the top 40 per cent of households the net

[80] Tim Dunlop, 'The right hates the society it has created', *The Drum*, July 4, 2014, viewed September 11, 2014, < http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-07-04/dunlop-the-right-hates-the-society-it-has-created/5568928>.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Kelly, 'Abbott: pragmatic but don't expect to see a U-turn', *The Australian*, 16 August 2014, p. 15.

contributors.'[83] He further argued that this point had `been hardly mentioned' in, what he viewed as, overwrought criticisms of the budget that falsely claimed `the nation's social compact is being destroyed.'[84] This is a typical example of Kelly's effectiveness when writing advocacy journalism: conceding a key point to the opposing argument but focussing on `the big picture' over specific outcomes and deploying authoritative evidence to make a cogent – if still contestable – case for reform which is broadly in line with his newspaper's core values.

Dunlop, an advocate of the new digital media, also raises the central issue of elite political journalism's relationship to democracy when he writes, `the sort of social solidarity that Kelly is longing for is not the bottom-up, grassroots sort …indicative of a healthy democracy, but rather a Platonic, top-down rule by experts. The "national interest" he envisions is one enforced by an elite of business leaders, politicians and media types who know what is good for us and who have the power (soft and strong) to enforce their vision. It is fundamentally antidemocratic.'[85]

This is a distorted portrayal of the representative theory of liberal democracy. Dunlop invokes a form of participatory democracy which he implies is healthier than representative liberal democracy. But as the earlier discussion of democratic theory suggests, the strengths of one theory over another are by no means clear. Certainly elite columnists do privilege the work of experts (but not, necessarily, their rule) and the expertise of columnists such as Kelly and Megalogenis is central to how they serve democracy according to the elitist model where `the primary duties for the press are to examine the character and behaviour of elected officials…to critically analyse policy proposals, and to provide reliable in-depth information about social problems.'[86]

[83] Kelly, 'Abbott: pragmatic but don't expect to see a U-turn', p. 15.
[84] Ibid.
[85] Dunlop, 'The right hates the society it has created'.
[86] Rodney Benson, 'Shaping the Public Sphere: Habermas and Beyond, *The American* Sociologist, vol. 40, no. 3 2009, p.177.

Since 2003, under Chris Mitchell's editorship, Megalogenis (until his departure in 2013) and Kelly have worked for a newspaper which according to Cryle, one of its closest observers, damaged public discourse by `broadening its attacks to include science writers and publicists, and airing the dubious claims of climate sceptics… at a time when public information about science is urgently required rather than repetitive and lopsided commentary.'[87] While other criticisms leveled at the paper in this period – `jingoism and distortion in its war reportage, historical and cultural polemics over the nature of indigenous dispossession, the accuracy or otherwise of the ABC and the limitations of Labor leadership' had `precedents in the newspaper's earlier files.'[88] As the preceding surveys of their journalism indicates both Kelly and Megalogenis did not enter into some of these debates and, when they did, their columns demonstrated considerably more nuance than the editorial line. Certainly both writers accepted the science of climate change and were, in principle, supportive of a market based solution. Kelly was opposed to Australia's entry into the Iraq war on strategic grounds, while Megalogenis focused largely on domestic issues and neither engaged in polemics regarding indigenous dispossession or the ABC (both were, in fact, periodically, employed by the national broadcaster). Both were highly critical of Labor leadership and this was, characteristically, reasoned and evidence-based.

In this period, *The Australian*, which had previously paid little attention to minor parties, campaigned strongly against the Greens. Both journalists were critical of the Greens policies as they were clearly antithetical to their, and the paper's, primary emphasis on economic growth. But their commentary, in contrast to the editorial line, was marked by balance and restraint. For example, on the retirement of party leader Bob Brown, Kelly penned a column acknowledging his achievements. Brown's `genius', he wrote, `was to conceal Green

[87] Denis Cryle, 'Murdoch's flagship: the Australian newspaper two decades on', *Pacific Journalism Review*, vol.18, no. 2, 2012, p. 44.
[88] Ibid.

vulnerability, market their distinctive idealism and outsmart Gillard Labor in office. It is an impressive political feat.'[89] Brown was, Kelly wrote, `an authentic, an idealist and an ideologue whose values have generated schisms across Australia. He inspired a new generation of political activists, gave fresh traction to the anti-development cause and fashioned the Greens as an ideological party transcending just environmental issues and located to the left of the Labor Party.'[90] Although Kelly was opposed to many of the Greens social and economic policies the preceding quotes are examples of how Kelly brings the historian's perspective to his daily journalism to arrive at a balanced assessment of the person, his achievements and their impact on Australian politics.

As the newspaper's critics admit, it does employ some of the best Australian journalists.[91] Kelly and Megalogenis, through their newspaper columns, articles in other publications, books and appearances in other media, mark them as `super-achievers' or `outliers' not just among the journalists on *The Australian* but among Australian journalists in general.[92] As the instances above indicate, both journalists within the broad parameters of the paper's core values exercised a degree of intellectual autonomy which is required by `normative theories of public deliberation' and is as at the core of professional journalistic ethics.[93] Kelly's commitment to the principle of autonomy was most clearly articulated in his statement to the Parliamentary Select Committee on the Print Media in 1991 where as Editor-in-Chief he stated his aim was to `strive to maintain the highest possible standards in line with the AJA code of ethics' and `to run an aggressive newspaper based on accuracy, disclosure and

[89] Kelly, 'Enigma who will never be replaced', *The Australian*, 14 April 2012, p. 1.
[90] Ibid.
[91] See, for example, Manne, *Bad News*, p.4 and Marr, 'Power, Influence and Deep Pockets: The Rise and Fall of media Empire', *Big Ideas*.
[92] Matthew Nisbert, *Nature's Prophet*, Discussion Paper D-78, Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Cambridge MA, March 2013, viewed 10 September 2014, p 2.
[93] Jacobs and Townsley, p. 79.

fairness' which would also `cover the activities of our own company in the same way in which we cover those other companies.' [94]

A more emphatic example of his independence was seen early in his career when, in 1975, his criticisms of Fraser and Kerr's actions during the constitutional crisis were in conflict with the paper's editorial line which openly opposed the Whitlam government. Kelly was not permitted to cover the election campaign that year and was then told he would not be returning to the newspaper's Canberra bureau. Kelly said, `There was no discussion about me changing my views to suit editorial policy. I was committed to political journalism and I wanted to stay in Canberra. So I left.'[95] Kelly then spent the next nine years working for Fairfax newspapers, including becoming deputy-editor of the *Sydney Morning Herald* in 1983, before returning as national affairs editor for *The Australian*.

Megalogenis has explained his accommodation with the aggressive editorial approach of his employer by emphasising his support for many of his newspaper's editorial positions, saying that `about half were actually formed in conversations that involve me.'[96] He cited attacks on middle-class welfare, pushing `rational market-based solutions to the water crisis' and unsparing criticisms of politicians of both major parties as key examples.[97] This last factor is an example of how `those commentators who are closer to the field of power can mobilise the rhetorics of autonomy that…emphasise a more adversarial and critical posture toward politician and other powerful actors.'[98] It should, however, be noted that with regard to `other powerful actors' Megalogenis has never entered into any of the specific debates about the power and influence of Rupert Murdoch.

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[94] Paul Kelly, 'Bound for Disappointment on the Highway from Heaven to Hell' in Julianne Schultz, (ed.), *Not Just Another Business: Journalists, Citizens and the Media*, Pluto Press Australia Limited, 1994, p. 86.
[95] Paul Kelly quoted in Mark Day, '1985: Older, wiser, and no longer out of pocket', *The Australian*, 11 June, 2014, p. 12.
[96] George Megalogenis, 'George Megalogenis: The Australian Moment', Video, The Wheeler Centre, filmed 27 March 2012, viewed 20 September, 2014, <http://wheelercentre.com/videos/video/george-megalogenis-the-australian-moment/>.
[97] Ibid.
[98] Jacobs and Townsley, p. 90.

In summary, both journalists share with their organisation's proprietor a fundamental conviction that growth has not only positive economic consequences but, also, positive moral consequences. This view is summarised by Benjamin Friedman, (whose work is, surprisingly, not cited by either journalist) – who argues that economic growth creates `greater opportunity, tolerance of diversity, social mobility, commitment to fairness and dedication to democracy.'[99] Through broad alignment with their employer on economic fundamentals the output of both journalists demonstrates that `insulation from outside influences and competing agendas, is never absolute' and `always relative to some impeding interest' but varying degrees of independence can be demonstrated through the analysis of the details of specific policies as well in commentary on particular areas of social policy.

To be sure, Kelly and Megalogenis have, over a long period of time, attained a reputation for expertise in a range of policy areas and can be regarded as Australian examples of the `knowledge journalist' which is `a unique class of journalist and public intellectual' who `specialize in the translation of complex subjects, often championing specific policy positions or causes.'[100] As `knowledge journalists' they are far less `vulnerable to the experts from whom they seek information, quotes and story leads', and they can deal with politicians, bureaucrats and policy specialists on an equal – and often superior – footing.[101] Such `knowledge-based journalism' may not be the panacea for the corruption of information that can occur in an increasingly complex society, but if it were more widely practised it `would provide the steady supply of trustworthy and relevant information' needed for successful democratic deliberation to occur.[102]

[99] Benjamin Friedman, *The Moral Consequences of Growth*, Vintage books, New York, 2006, p. 4.
[100] Nisbert, p. 2.
[101] Patterson, p. 76.
[102] Patterson, p. 8.

Similarly, the rise of digital technologies means so much news and commentary `now appears fast and free' on hundreds of different websites both `journalistic and not obviously journalistic' and this has rendered many of the functions of traditional journalism – the `stenographic recording of great, public events' – less important.[103] Journalistic practice, it is contended, needs to develop '"wisdom journalism" – an amalgam of the more rarefied forms of reporting – exclusive, investigative – with more informed, more interpretative, more explanatory, even more impressionistic or opinionated takes on current events.'[104] Kelly and Megalogenis may be models of the sort of `idea-oriented specialists who know as much as the expert sources' and who attempt to bring `wisdom' to the massive and growing supply of information. But whether their approach should be expanded from the `walled off' opinion pages to the reporting of news throughout a newspaper is a question beyond the scope of this study.

Twilight of the Elite Columnists?

As prime exemplars of the craft of the political columnist Megalogenis and Kelly have offered informed, reasoned analysis that fulfils the normative criteria for elite theories of the democratic, public sphere. They can be categorised as knowledge journalists who offer the kind of high quality journalism which may be seen as `a basic democratic value.'[105] Kelly and Megalogenis offer 'a vision of the media intellectual…shared by many others who aspire to participate in the opinion space, particularly those who come from academia, literature and other relatively autonomous cultural fields.'[106]

[103] Mitchell Stephens, *Beyond News: The Case for Wisdom Journalism*, Discussion Paper D-53, Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Cambridge MA, 2009, p. 2.
[104] Ibid., p. 4.
[105] Scheuer, *The Big Picture*, p. xi.
[106] Jacobs and Townsley, p .245.

And yet this vision is increasingly under threat on two fronts. First, the emergence of new formats wrought by new technology is undermining the business model which has supported the elite columnist. Second there are others, particularly those who have established themselves through the new formats, who are unimpressed with the journalism of elite commentators and believe they can be easily replaced.

Consider the first of these threats. *The Australian*, with its relatively small circulation and on-going struggle to make profits since its inception, has been most challenged by the global collapse in newspaper advertising revenue brought about by technological change. In 2013, *The Australian* and the three other Fairfax papers which constitute the 'quality press' in Australia gained less than 10 cents in online advertising for every dollar lost in print advertising.[107] In the 2012-13 financial year, advertising revenue at *The Australian* fell 33%, in the newspaper's overall operating loss of $30 million — an increase of more than three times the loss targeted in that year's budget, of $11 million.[108] This followed the previous year's $26 million loss.[109]

Such a trend is one of the clear indications `that the business model that has supported journalism since the profession first emerged in the 1600s is broken.'[110] How, then, will public interest journalism, which, in Australia, is mainly produced by journalists, such as Kelly and Megalogenis who work for the quality press survive? As Beecher observes public interest journalism was (and is) expensive to produce, appealed to relatively small audiences and so attracted little advertising revenue of its own' and so has `always lost money.'[111]

[107] Beecher, 'End of the print run: When no news is bad news', p. 35.
[108] Paddy Manning and Myriam Robin, 'How *The Australian* was protected from the cuts', *Crikey*, 20 August 2014, viewed 20 September, 2014, <http://www.crikey.com.au/2014/08/20/how-the-australian-was-protected-from-the-cuts/?wpmp_switcher=mobile&wpmp_tp=0>.
[109] Ibid.
[110] Margaret Simons, *Journalism at the Crossroads: crisis and opportunity for the press*, Scribe Publications, Melbourne, 2012, p. 10.
[111] Beecher, 'End of the print run: When no news is bad news', p. 34.

If this trend continues would Rupert Murdoch continue to subsidise *The Australian*? Or would Murdoch's successors be willing to continue supporting it? As even its critics admit, the loss of *The Australian* `would be a very bad thing; it would mean that Australia would not have a quality general-interest national daily newspaper' as well as the loss of `hundreds of journalists' jobs.'[112] There is the possibility that all newspapers may continue to exist in digital form. *The Australian* was the first major Australian masthead to establish a paywall and by 2014 had 57, 282 digital subscribers.[113] But it remains very uncertain whether `the transition from newsprint to online journalism' will provide the approximately $150 million dollars spent annually on public interest journalism by the four newspapers which constitute the quality press in Australia.[114]

The declines in circulations and revenue have been accompanied by cost-cutting which has seen the loss of hundreds of journalists jobs. The fact that Megalogenis was offered redundancy and chose to leave *The Australian* is a reflection of the financial pressures on newspapers. Megalogenis appeared to be a `god correspondent' in the making, in some ways the heir-apparent to Paul Kelly. He combined the skills of the latter with the qualities it has been claimed are necessary for the digital age. He had specialist political knowledge, access to political leaders and an established public persona but also a high degree of `data literacy.' [115] His ability `to write stories and… extract meaning' from `large-scale data sets' is an increasingly important skill needed for journalists `to maintain relevance' in the digital age.[116] And yet Megalogenis was, seemingly, allowed to take redundancy to concentrate on writing books when he appeared to be the most likely candidate to succeed Paul Kelly upon

[112] Simons, *Journalism at the Crossroads: crisis and opportunity for the press*, p.20.
[113] Tim Burrowes, 'Digital sales growth slowing for Australian newspapers', *Mumbrella*, 14 February 2014, viewed 21 September, 2014, < http://mumbrella.com.au/digital-sales-growth-slowing-australian-newspapers-206511.
[114] Beecher, 'End of the print run: When no news is bad news' p. 34.
[115] C. W. Anderson, Emily Bell and Clay Shirkey, *Post-Industrial Journalism: Adapting to the Present*, Tow Centre for Digital Journalism, Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, New York, 2012, p. 36.
[116] Anderson, Bell and Shirkey, p. 36.

his retirement. Did he see the life of the public intellectual as no less precarious than continued employment as a journalist at *The Australian*?

But the internet is not only undermining the business model that has supported the growth in the number and status of elite columnists but it is also argued, that it is providing formats which are a viable alternative to traditional political journalism. Simons, for example, believes that` 'when it comes to analysis of the news, we don't need journalists (although they can be useful) because citizens are already doing it for themselves.'[117] Many of those citizens, mainly established bloggers, concurred with this statement.

One of these, Greg Jericho, who is also one of the first Australian political bloggers, argues the growth in the size of the political blogosphere has been accompanied by corresponding growth in its `stature and importance.'[118] He argues that the hundreds of political blogs have broadened political commentary and `provided more coverage of policy.' Technological change allows `amateurs' to contest the place of political journalists of the `msm' (mainstream media):

> The introduction of 24-hour news channels and the live coverage of parliament, news conferences, and media events means that someone sitting a home can view politicians' speeches, and the questions asked and answers given. They can find relevant information from official websites, and can collate and discover data, and analyse them, as well as any journalist can – indeed, if that person has been trained in analysing such data, they might analyse it better than the journalist who has not.[119]

This implies that the function of the elite columnist can be replaced from rivals emerging from the new electronic media. Some sites have effectively utilised contributions from academic specialists to provide analysis on both politics and policy. The most prominent Australian examples, *Inside Story*, published by the Swinburne Institute of Social Research

[117] Simons, *Journalism at the Crossroads: crisis and opportunity for the press*, p.93.
[118] Greg Jericho, *The Rise of the Fifth Estate: social media and blogging in Australian politics*, Scribe, Melbourne, 2012, p. 286.
[119] Ibid., p. 285.

and *The Conversation*, produced largely by a number of universities and featuring work written by scholars and edited by journalists, have gained substantial followings. Nobel-laureate, Paul Krugman, perhaps the most conspicuous example of the scholar who is also a blogger and an elite columnist, says his own `experience has been that careful analysis of publicly available information almost always trumps the insider approach.'[120] Yet much of Megalogenis's and Kelly's journalism combines elements of both approaches. They do have access to high level officials but they also use a range of information sources in their analyses. Indeed, Kelly says his `methodology to political writing' is `essentially a combination of inside and outsider analysis.'[121] The former was needed to `penetrate to the heart of government decision-making, understand its processes, document its merits and flaws and, above all, capture the unique role of the prime minister..', whilst the latter was needed `to locate politics in the bigger constellation of historical, economic social and cultural change.'[122]

Another pioneer political blogger, Tim Dunlop, implicitly criticises the sort of traditional political journalism purveyed by the likes of Kelly and Megalogenis as being written for insiders (politicians, `staffers, public servants, lobbyists, consultants') but then goes on to say that the main difference between bloggers and journalist is that the former are `readers' and the latter are `callers.'[123] This distinction may be generally true with regard to political journalism as `the culture of 'use the phone'[124] still pervades journalism but Kelly and Megalogenis, as elite columnists, are both callers and readers.

Dunlop, in turn, also acknowledges the validity of the criticism that bloggers do not question their subject enough but suggests the criticism is unfair as `journalists are licensed by

[120] Paul Krugman cited in Tim Dunlop, *The New Front Page: New Media and the Rise of the Audience*, Scribe Publications, Brunswick, Victoria, 2013, p. 79.
[121] Paul Kelly, Personal Communication, December 29, 2017.
[122] Ibid.
[123] Tim Dunlop, *The New Front Page: New Media and the Rise of the Audience*, p. 81.
[124] Tim Dunlop, *The New Front Page: New Media and the Rise of the Audience*, p. 81.

democratic societies to confront people in way that "a person with a blog" is not.'[125] The latter point highlights a fundamental strength of the elite columnist has over the `citizen journalist' – journalists backed by large, well-resourced, news organisations are better able to seek and obtain information from high government officials. Kelly puts it more bluntly when he says that the `political journalist [who] does not have this access to the inner workings and mindsets of the senior figures then he or she is useless.'[126]

In any case, there has been a convergence between the mainstream media and blogosphere as journalists utilise the new technologies and bloggers work as journalists. Since leaving *The Australian*, where he had established a successful blog, Megalogenis has been a prolific user of twitter and had, in 2014 over 30,000 followers. Kelly, in a reflection of generational difference, has not taken up the new technologies. There are, no doubt, a number of individuals in both the mainstream media and the blogosphere, who can, and do, produce the standard of journalism that Kelly and Megalogenis have done but the sheer quantity and quality of pair's work remains a bench mark for others who seek to participate in the public sphere.

Conclusion

In 2017 Paul Kelly was in his 46th year as a practising journalist and most those as a leading member of the Australian `punditocracy.' George Megalogenis spent 21 years at *The Australian* where he too established himself as a prominent pundit. More precisely they have both acted as elite political columnists who have offered commentary and analysis of major political issues of the day. Their discourse fulfils the key criteria for representative liberal democratic theories of the public sphere viz: elite dominance, expertise, a free market place of ideas, transparency, detachment civility and closure. Empirically, their work serves representative democracy largely by offering a type of or analysis and commentary

[125] Ibid., p. 82.
[126] Kelly, Personal communication.

that has come to be called `knowledge journalism' and even has elements of `wisdom journalism' (`informed, interpretative, explanatory even opinionated takes on current events') which is also seen by some scholars as a possible solution to the crises in journalism brought about by technological disruption.[127]

This is not to deny that their journalistic discourse also contributes to creating a dominant orthodoxy regarding market liberal reform which fundamentally privileges economic growth as the solution to all social ills. While this tenet is also central their employer's core values, there is evidence in their writings and actions to demonstrate that their conclusions are based on intellectual conviction rather than tacit conformity to proprietorial ideology. This emphasis is also an illustration of how columnist's effectiveness may be `a function of his or her *themativity* [author's italics], the willingness to remain focused on a theme.'[128] For Habermas `those who would make a difference in the political public sphere must "not only detect and identify problems but also convincingly and *influentially* thematize them, furnish them with possible solutions, and dramatize them in such a way that they are taken up and dealt with by parliamentary complexes."'[129]

As the previous chapters attest, much of their journalism provides a discursive framework to justify what many describe as neoliberal reform – although, as the previous chapters also attest, they will endorse policies that are not neo-liberal so long as they protect and enhance economic growth (inter alia, the first stimulus by the Rudd government in response to the GFC and the four pillars bank policy). A fuller treatment of their role in conveying ideas as an explanatory factor for policy transformation will be elaborated in the following chapter

[127] Mitchell Stephens, *Beyond News: The Future of Journalism*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2014, p. xxvi.
[128] Duff, p. 242.
[129] Jurgen Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms: contributions to a discourse theory of law and democracy*, Cambridge Polity Review, 1996, p. 359 cited in ibid., p.242

which examines the links between the journalism, their presence in other media and their books. That is, it assesses their work using the trope of the public intellectual.

Despite reaching the highest levels of their profession and recognition through prestigious journalism awards, the professional and financial status of elite columnist is clearly under increasing threat from technological changes which have undermined the business model supporting political journalism and thrown up competing visions about the civic role of elite columnists. Indeed, Megalogenis is perhaps a casualty of these trends. Will the reduced status or, possible absence, of elite columnists be symptomatic of a `nightmare scenario' of `bankrupt newspapers, news by press release that is thinly disguised advocacy, scattered and ineffectual bands of former journalists and sincere amateurs whose work is left in obscurity, and a small cadre of high-priced newsletters that serve as an intelligence service for the rich and powerful'?[130] Or will they continue to have an important role in `an "ecosystem" in which many players interact to create something greater than the parts' where they `will exist in intimate connection with the citizens they serve' as `community workers.'[131] In whatever model emerges, expert political commentary and analysis will remain a vital element for public deliberation in a fully functioning democracy.

[130] Jones, p. 221.
[131] Simons, *Journalism at the Crossroads: crisis and opportunity for the press*, pp. 122 -123.

CHAPTER FIVE

KELLY AND MEGALOGENIS: JOURNALISTS AS PUBLIC INTELLECTUALS

In 2007 Paul Kelly ignited controversy with an essay in which he attacked 'Australia's intellectual class' for its `moral vanity.'[1] He acknowledged that although it was difficult to `categorise Australia's intellectual class' there was a `distinct group of prominent public intellectuals' who `aspire to shape public opinion.'[2] For Kelly their criticisms of John Howard were excessive and marked by inadequate analysis which ignored the Howard government's role in Australia's stability and prosperity. Indeed, in the `intellectual class's disillusionment `with the old Australia, they find they dislike much of the new Australia created by the political class' – which also included Hawke and Keating.[3] It is the period which Kelly, in his books and journalism, had portrayed as one of great eras of achievement in Australian history. To Kelly, their critiques suggested that the role of the public intellectual was that of a `passionate moralist as opposed to enlightened analyst.'[4] These intellectuals cannot acknowledge that it was, in fact, a period `of first-rate national leaders and second-rate public intellectuals.'[5]

Besides defending his own interpretation of the post-1983 era of Australian politics, Kelly was contributing to a debate, in the Australian context, that occurred more often in England and the United States. There have been several books in both countries lamenting the decline of public intellectuals since Russel Jacoby coined the term.[6] Kelly's criticism

[1] Kelly, *Time for a rethink*, p. 3.
[2] Ibid., p. 14.
[3] Ibid., p. 15.
[4] Ibid., p. 14.
[5] Ibid., p. 16.
[6] Russell Jacoby, *The Last Intellectuals: American culture in the age of academe*, Basic Books, New York, 1987. Although he popularised the term, Jacoby points out in a later article – 'Last Thoughts on The Last Intellectuals', *Society*, 2009, vol.46, no.1, p.38 - that the term first appeared in C. Wright Mills, *The Causes of World War Three*, Ballantine Books, New York. 1960, p. 155, 'which (says Jacoby) I had not known or had forgotten.'

prompted a debate with Robert Manne, who has been described as `perhaps the best-known figure of the public intellectual' in contemporary Australia. [7] Yet Kelly himself has also been described as one of Australia's leading public intellectuals, although `he is uncomfortable with the label…seeing it as alien to the traditions of Australian egalitarianism and journalistic realism.'[8] Indeed both he and Manne (who received the most votes overall) were voted in a newspaper poll as among Australia's top 100 public intellectuals.[9] So how should Kelly and Megalogenis be classified in this debate, and what is their function as bearers of ideas?

The term itself has been widely contested in Australia and elsewhere. Under earlier definitions Kelly and Megalogenis would not be considered as intellectuals, given the French origins of the term in the 1890s, dating from the trial of Alfred Dreyfus. From this period, grew the subsequent understanding that intellectuals should not only be `willing to abandon the familiar and relatively safe terrain of professional expertise for the sake of addressing issues of public importance outside of their given field of technical competence' but they also `sought to occupy the moral high ground to redress instances of grave social injustice.'[10] By the time Jacoby added `public' to the term he simply defined them as 'writers and thinkers who address a general and educated audience.'[11] Posner later elaborated on this saying, `the intellectual writes for the general public, or at least for a broader than merely academic or specialist audience, on "public affairs"– on *political* matters in the broadest sense of the word' and `is more "applied," contemporary and "result-oriented"

[7] David Carter, 'Introduction: Intellectuals and their publics' in David Carter, (ed.), *The Ideas Market: an alternative take on Australia's intellectual Life*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, Victoria, 2004, p. 2.
[8] Pat Buckridge, 'Kelly, Paul' in Bridget Griffen-Foley, (ed.), *A Companion to the Australian Media*, Australian Scholarly Publishing Pty. Ltd., North Melbourne, Victoria, 2014, p. 231.
[9] Michael Visontay, 'Australia's top 100 public intellectuals', *Sydney Morning Herald*, March 12, 2005, p. 9.
[10] Richard Wolin, 'The Twilight of the Intellectuals', *The Hedgehog Review*, vol.9, no. 1, 2007, p. 9.
[11] Jacoby, *The Last Intellectuals: American culture in the age of academe*, p. 5.

than the scholar but broader than the theoretician.'[12] This applies equally to Kelly and Megalogenis as an essential job description.

So to with Collini's far more detailed definition where the role of intellectual requires four elements:

1. The attainment of a level of achievement in an activity which is esteemed for the non-instrumental, creative, analytical or scholarly capacity it involves.
2. The availability of media or channels of expression which reach publics other than that at which the initial `qualifying' activity itself is aimed.
3. The expression of views, themes, or topics which successfully articulate or engage with some of the general concerns of those publics.
4. The establishment of a reputation for being likely to have important and interesting things of this type to say and for having the willingness and capacities to say them effectively through the appropriate media.[13]

Again these criteria comfortably apply to Kelly and Megalogenis, and they also demonstrate the limitations of the popular association of the term 'intellectual' in Australia, and elsewhere, with `a commitment to left-wing values' where `intellectuals are those who think in public *from a left-wing perspective* (author's italics).'[14] This is linked to the idea that the intellectual is characterised by `adversarial attributes in such activities as speaking the truth to power, being a witness to persecution and suffering, supplying a dissenting voice in conflicts with authority.'[15] But as Collini points out, such descriptions are historically determined and demonstrate 'the distorting power of the assumption that intellectuals must

[12] Richard A. Posner, *Public Intellectuals: A Study of Decline*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2001, 2003, pp. 23-24.
[13] Stefan Collini, *Absent Minds: Intellectuals in Britain*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2006, p. 52.
[14] Alan McKee, 'Who gets to be an intellectual?' in David Carter, p. 99.
[15] Edward Said, 'The Public Role of Writers and Intellectuals' in Helen Small, (ed.), *The Public Intellectual*, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, 2002, p. 25.

be understood in terms of the polarity between criticism and conformity.'[16] So public intellectuals may be conservative and may even be anti-intellectual.

Clearly, Kelly and Megalogenis are public intellectuals according to most definitions of the term but what, precisely, is their function and how effective have they been? Can they continue to have an impact in what has been described as `a revolutionary age of communicative abundance'? An age that has fuelled predictions `of the transcendence of television, the disappearance of printed newspapers, the withering of the printed book, even the end of literacy…'[17] What, also does their presence in the media over a long period of time suggest about the quality of intellectual life? Does their prominence reflect the ongoing arguments, by figures such as Jacoby and Posner, about the failure of academics to contribute to public debate which has resulted in the alleged decline of public intellectuals? Does the quality of their work indicate, as Posner claims, `that public intellectuals are for the most part neither very prescient nor very influential'?[18] What does adapting Posner's methodology of academic citations, media mentions and web hits suggest about the extent of their influence?

In arguing against the declinist thesis, Carter pointed out that there was a `spectacular rise' in public intellectual activity in Australia since the mid-1990s centring on `questions of history and sovereignty'.[19] He listed Robert Dessaix, Drusilla Modjeska, Robert Manne, Andrew Riemer, David Malouf, Raymond Gaita, Henry Reynolds, Tim Flannery, Inga Clendinnen, Peter Read, Mark McKenna, Dennis Altman and Cassandra Pybus as `some of the better known and more "traditionally" located public intellectuals who `have joined old stagers such as Donald Horne and Phillip Adams.'[20] Megalogenis's omission is

[16] Collini, p.61.
[17] John Keane, *Democracy and Media Decadence*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, United Kingdom, 2013, p. 1.
[18] Posner, p. 21.
[19] Carter, 'Introduction: Intellectuals and their publics', p. 22.
[20] Ibid., p.25.

understandable as he had not yet published his first book at the time of writing. Kelly's absence is perhaps due to the author intending it as a representative, rather than a comprehensive, list. Adams (a fellow columnist at *The Australian*) and Horne were the only journalists included on the list even though Kelly's twice weekly column arguably gives him the power to express his opinion much more frequently, and often to a larger audience, than any of the other listed individuals.

In the same book, Mark Davis suggested that post war reformers such as Hugh Stretton, Donald Horne and H. C. Coombs would `be derided as a "cultural elite"' in twenty-first century Australia.[21] He suggests this stems from a `great cultural divide in Australia…between cleverly deployed political stereo types and the realities of growing inequality and widespread dissatisfaction with economic "reform ".'[22] Davis then goes on to assert that: `Race is the key to today's struggles over intellectual ascendancy in the context of the shift from old consensus to new.'[23] He criticizes, as Manne did in his *Bad News* Quarterly essay, the attention *The Australian* gave to Keith Windshuttle's *The Fabrication of Aboriginal History* but then does not mention that paper's strong focus on Indigenous issues.

Davis also ignores *The Australian's* role in making Indigenous issues a central focus of its coverage. As Noel Pearson said, `*The Australian* brought indigenous affairs into the mainstream of national reporting and policy debate.'[24] He points out that from when the paper made `Eddie Mabo its Australian of the Year in 1992, [Kelly's first year as Editor-in-Chief] the paper's coverage of native title, reconciliation and the fundamental reassessments

[21] Mark Davis, 'Great White Noise', p. 184.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Ibid., p. 189.
[24] Noel Pearson, 'Noel Pearson Praises The Australian's Coverage Of Indigenous Issues In 50th Anniversary Speech', *Transcript of Noel Pearson's Speech at the Gala Dinner celebrating the 50th anniversary of The Australian newspaper,* July 14, 2015, viewed 2 April, 2015, <http://australianpolitics.com/2014/07/15/noel-pearson-the-australian-50th-speech.html>.

of indigenous policy of the past dozen years was newspaper campaigning at its relentless best.'[25]

Davis also dismisses Kelly as an `ex-Whitlamite' who 'rabbits on about the free market and the evils of anti-globalisation protesters.'[26] He ignores Kelly's support for reconciliation and the space he gave to the views of Pearson in dozens of columns since 1997, which were, probably, a significant factor in making Pearson perhaps the most well-known and influential Indigenous intellectual in Australia. Such criticism of Kelly preceded Kelly's 2007 article on those intellectuals who failed to acknowledge the economic prosperity achieved during the Howard years. Three years prior to this Kelly had responded to philosopher, Raimond Gaita's claim that he was `silly' to imply – in the 2004 column that Maddox also critiqued (see chapter four) – that those who attacked Howard for seemingly lying about what came to be known as the `children overboard' affair are moral absolutists; and that Kelly `cheapens' the truth by saying `that politics is a not a morality contest.'[27]

Kelly's defence was typically pragmatic and emphasised his empirical approach to governance, in contrast to Gaita's moral and philosophical analysis. He, for example, argued policy outcomes are more important than assessments about whether a government had been deceptive (`…how should one judge the morality of a government that never lied but whose economic failures were directly responsible for a recession that left a million people unemployed or whose national security ineptitude resulted in the death and injury of a number of its citizens?').[28] Further, Gaita's moral test that `evil (presumably killing) cannot

[25] Noel Pearson, 'Noel Pearson Praises The Australian's Coverage of Indigenous Issues In 50th Anniversary Speech'.
[26] Mark Davis, 'Great White Noise', p. 194.
[27] Raimond Gaita, 'Breach of Trust: Truth, Morality and Politics', *Quarterly Essay*, Issue 16, Black Inc., Melbourne, 2004, p. 22 and p.25.
[28] Paul Kelly, 'Breach of Trust: Correspondence', *Quarterly Essay,* Issue 17, 2005, pp. 87-88.

be justified for a good end' is 'excellent in the abstract' but may be untenable in the face of Islamic extremism which 'seeks a weapons of mass destruction capability.'[29]

This debate continued with the publication of Kelly's 2007 article where Gaita, along with lawyer, Julian Burnside and journalist, David Marr, were cited as examples of `second-rate intellectuals.' Gaita's response built on his earlier critique of Kelly by highlighting Kelly's pragmatic downplaying of moral issues in his columns. `Kelly's tone', he said `is consistently disdainful and condescending towards any kind of moral intensity.'[30] Kelly wrote `from the perspective of a banal form of worldliness that made him complacently assured of his good judgment, common sense and sobriety about political matters.'[31] Removing the words `banal' and `complacently' and an accurate – and less contentious – description of Kelly's style emerges. On one hand his style is the voice of the oracular `god-correspondent' but on the other it is a factor that can give his writing persuasive power.

The high level of polarisation seen in this particular debate is an example of an oft stated division between academics and journalists, viz. the latter may contest what they see as journalists simplifying complex ideas – in this case about the morality of political power – and journalists seeing this as academic abstraction that is divorced from political reality.[32] Interestingly this was mirrored in the other correspondence in response to Gaita's essay: journalists, Paul Bongiorno and Mungo MacCullum challenged Gaita's interpretation of Howard's actions while novelist, Alex Miller and academic, Natasha Circe concurred with Gaita. Nonetheless, this debate is an instance of how nuanced discussion and disputation of complex ideas can be, and are, discussed in the elite public sphere and therefore suggests the sweeping claims about the belligerence and `dumbing down' in Australian public

[29] Paul Kelly, 'Breach of Trust: Correspondence', p. 88.
[30] Raimond Gaita, 'Sorry state of affairs', *The Australian*, 7 November, 2007, p. 24.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Lumby, p. 202.

discourse (see chapter four) are reductionist and do not sufficiently account for the contribution of journalists-intellectuals.

Walter, drawing on Gramsci, offers a further useful means of understanding the role of Australian intellectuals.[33] There is a distinction `between "traditional" intellectuals – supposedly autonomous critics able to stand aside from particular interests and to speak for the social interest as whole – and "organic intellectuals" – the thinking and organising elements of a social class, an organisation or a cultural formation, who are produced within it and speak for it, giving it homogeneity and an awareness of its function, articulating its interests and its relation to broader society.' Walter cites Robert Manne and Geoffrey Blainey– `frequently in universities, often self-nominated' - as examples of traditional intellectuals. While contemporary organic intellectuals include key representatives of business lobby groups, prominent union leaders and media commentators who are not `always regarded as intellectuals, but also would usually deny the title, even though theirs too, is a domain of ideas work.' The former `profess to see the "big picture" (even to speak for humankind)' while the latter `speak for a cause, both to persuade the like-minded of their collective interests and to register a position in, and a claim upon their society.'

Walter, while a critic of much of Kelly and Megalogenis's interpretation of Australia's recent political history has, nonetheless, nominated them as the organic intellectuals most influential in shaping an understanding that Australian federal politics in the 1983 – 2001 period was an era notable for its `heroic' reforms.[34] It follows that they have also been impactful in portraying the subsequent years as the breakdown of the reform process and

[33] The quotations in this paragraph are from Walter, *What Were They Thinking?*, p.28.
[34] James Walter and Carolyn Holbrook, 'Political memory and policy achievement: Leaders in retrospect', *Political Studies Association Conference*, Sheffield, 2015, viewed 30 May, 2015, <https://www.psa.ac.uk/sites/default/files/conference/papers/2015/Political%20memory%20and%20policy%20achievement%20_final.pdf>.

the rise of a `politics' that is `American in its effect – tribal and petty, fanatical and consciously dumbed down.'[35]

In addition, the role of a political journalist and public intellectual may involve also the influencing of policy opinion outside of journalism by acting as intermediaries by bringing policy researchers to directly engage with policy practitioners. Kelly has acted as a facilitator of this process in a public and a private capacity. An example of the latter is revealed in *The Latham Diaries* where the author recounts his attendance at a function at the home of the `professor' (as Kelly is nicknamed) with economists, John Edwards and David Dale to discuss global finance.[36] With the latter, Kelly co-edited the volume *Hard Heads, Soft Hearts: A New Reform Agenda for Australia* which is a specific example of this approach as it summarised the results of a conference at the Melbourne Institute for Applied Economic and Social Research that brought together a range of social scientists from key policy areas to present their findings directly to policy-makers. Such activity is suggestive of the nature and degree of his influence on the profession of journalism. It indicates a role for the journalist to go beyond reportage and work on promoting evidence-based policy outcomes that, at least, have the intent of improving what they perceive to be the `common good'. Indeed, Kelly, argues `it is easy and shallow' to only `question, query and attack the government of the day.'[37] Journalists should `expose governments when wrong and support them when right' otherwise `there is not much distinction in the media treatments of good and bad governments.'[38]

Their influence specifically on politicians is not only seen in the access current and political leaders give them for their political histories but also in the number and nature of their

[35] George Megalogenis, 'History repeats', *The Monthly*, Issue 111, May 2015, p. 9.
[36] Mark Latham, *The Latham Diaries*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton Vic., 2005, pp. 91-92.
[37] Kelly, Personal communication, December 29, 2017.
[38] Ibid.

parliamentary mentions. Kelly has had several hundred parliamentary mentions since his first in 1973. Kelly was cited more frequently from the 1990s onwards as the publication *The End of Certainty* in 1992 was followed by his appointment as Editor-in-Chief at the *The Australian* in 1991. His reputation as a political historian was given further cachet with reprints of *The End of Certainty* and *The Unmaking of Gough* in 1994 and the publication of *November 1975* in 1995. This prodigious output, supported by Kelly's powerful role at the national broadsheet, is indicative of the degree of Kelly's recognition in Australian political culture at this time. This was noted by political columnist and historian, Gerard Henderson who dubbed *The Australian* `the Daily Kelly' for its front page cross promotion of *November 1975* and even suggested it was evidence of a `Paul Kelly cult of personality' at the paper![39]

To be sure, such prominence was a reason why politicians from different parties have referenced his journalism and books to advance or critique policy ideas and support or attack existing policies. For example, in 2011 the Labor Assistant Treasurer, Bill Shorten referenced Kelly's argument that `the best pro-science approach is the insurance principle' in support of the Gillard government's Clean Energy bill.[40] While in 2008 Liberal MP, Jamie Briggs used Kelly's critique of the Rudd government's Fair Work legislation to attack the bill in parliament.[41] Of course, Kelly's work has also been used for the purpose of political point scoring. In 2014, for example, Prime Minister Tony Abbott quoted from *Triumph and Demise* to disparage opposition leader Bill Shorten's trustworthiness.[42]

[39] Gerard Henderson, "Daily Kelly 'scoops' begin to pall", *The Age*, 7 November, 1995, p.10.
[40] House of Representatives, Hansard, 11 October 2011, viewed 6 June, 2015, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/genpdf/chamber/hansardr/e9136cb0-045a-45cd-8f9b-0b16ac82cac5/0027/hansard_frag.pdf;fileType=application%2Fpdf>.
[41] House of Representatives, Hansard, 2 December, 2008, viewed 6 June, 2015, < http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/genpdf/chamber/hansardr/2008-12-02/0075/hansard_frag.pdf;fileType=application%2Fpdf>.
[42]House of Representatives, Hansard, 4 December, 2014, viewed 6 June, 2015, < http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/genpdf/chamber/hansardr/200bef5f-bafa-4738-b150-7dbac05c37e0/0121/hansard_frag.pdf;fileType=application%2Fpdf>.

Megalogenis, with his significantly shorter career covering federal politics, has under a hundred mentions in parliament but most refer to him as an authority on economic policy matters. For example, the Labor MP, Andrew Leigh, a former economics academic and shadow assistant treasurer from 2013, cites Megalogenis as a source on six occasions on matters such as the role of the media, emissions trading and the ratio of federal government spending to GDP under different prime ministers.

The frequency of parliamentary mentions is a further measure which is suggestive of Kelly's and Megalogenis's significance as Australian public intellectuals. When considered with their academic citations, professional recognition and references in the quality media, the salience of their influence is apprehended more clearly. Moreover, in regard to the nature of these criteria both men are often deployed as authorities in their areas of expertise. But, in the aspect of their work where they have been most influential, that is their accounts of recent political history, do their analyses and conclusions stand up to the scrutiny of their critics – both from the academy and from dissenting members of the political class? How do their broad interpretations of past heroic reform and current political malaise compare with alternative accounts of Australian federal politics from Whitlam to Abbott?

Kelly, Megalogenis and Political History

Chapter one and part of chapter three of this thesis survey the subject matter, methodology and arguments of the books of contemporary political history written by Paul Kelly and George Megalogenis. These chapters also consider the response to these texts from a range of sources including other journalists, as well as academics and politicians, some of whom are the subjects of those books. These responses are then critiqued by comparing and contrasting these immediate assessments of the books and evaluating how their judgements have fared over the passage of time. The writings of Kelly and Megalogenis are still held in high regard by significant members of the political class. Bramston, for example claims

Kelly's work `is superior to history produced in the academy, which often lacks a realpolitik appreciation of public life gleaned from many years of access, observation and writing.'[43] A closer comparison with academic accounts is needed to substantiate such a claim. In order to make a fuller assessment of the value of their work as historical texts, it is necessary to compare them to other interpretations, particularly those by academic specialists that have been published both contemporaneously and subsequently.

Whitlam

Kelly's three books chronicling the dismissal of the Whitlam government constitutes the orthodox view of this event. Part of this was the fact that Kelly kept his views in print on regular basis, while the many other books written immediately after this event are out of print. The critical reaction to the third book – as discussed in the second chapter of this thesis – indicates Kelly's position as occupying the middle ground in the debate. In the year *The Dismissal: In the Queen's name* was published, Jenny Hocking, Whitlam's biographer, published *The Dismissal Dossier: Everything you were never meant to know about November 1975*, which concurs with much of the Kelly/Bramston interpretation of events but with some notable exceptions. The first being Hocking's claim that Kerr had informed the Queen and Buckingham Palace prior to the dismissal and supported his actions. Kelly and Bramston reject this, arguing that the weight of evidence did not support such a claim.[44] Henderson concurs that the evidence is lacking for such a claim and cites evidence in his possession (a note from Paul Hasluck to Martin Charteris, the Queen's secretary, in which the latter expressed his surprise at Whitlam's phone call informing Charteris of the dismal) which weighs against Hocking's claim.[45]

[43] Troy Bramston, 'The Australian crisis', *The Australian (Review)*, 20 September 2014, p. 17.
[44] Kelly and Bramston, *The Dismissal: In the Queen's name*, p. 124.
[45] Gerard Henderson, 'The Dismissal and dumb history', *The Australian online*, 13 November 2015, viewed 6 July 2016, < https://global-factiva-com.proxy.library.adelaide.edu.au/ha/default.aspx#./!?&_suid=146881575201705459466236216157>.

Kelly and Bramston also reject Hocking's view that Whitlam would have resolved the crisis with his proposal for a half-Senate election as by Whitlam informed Kerr that supply would not be available during the election campaign. This meant Kerr `could not have honoured the obligations of his office and granted Whitlam a Senate poll on November 11.'[46] Finally, Kelly and Bramston reject Hocking's argument that Kerr should have recommissioned Whitlam as prime minister after the House of Representatives voted no confidence in Fraser as caretaker prime minister. This was because as Kerr `commissioned Fraser on the basis that he would obtain supply and advise an election,' he then 'could not turn around to dismiss Fraser after he had fulfilled the terms of his commission.'[47] In this particular debate it is the journalists who have the weight of evidence supporting their interpretation. No doubt the debates around the dismissal will continue and it seems likely that Kelly's voluminous documentation of these events will continue to constitute the dominant interpretation of the 1975 constitutional crisis.

Fraser

The Hawke Ascendancy is mainly a compelling narrative of Labor in opposition and its return to office in 1983 but it was also a key text in portraying the Fraser government as a failure in terms of its economic policy. The book is far from a complete record of the Fraser government in office – this was not the author's attention – yet Kelly's general assessment of the Fraser government has not been substantially revised by more detailed accounts by Weller and Philip Ayers. Characteristically, Kelly arrives at a balanced judgement: Fraser `made many genuine achievements and much steady progress in the fields of foreign affairs, defence, the environment and national development.'[48] Kelly goes on to identify several of these, although, interestingly, he does not mention Fraser's acceptance of Vietnamese refugees – now regarded as one of his most notable achievements. Fraser, however, left

[46] Paul Kelly and Troy Bramston, 'Let us dismiss the conspiracy theories', *The Australian*, 26 December 2015, p.12.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Kelly, *The Hawke Ascendancy*, p. 425.

Australia in a serious recession (although again, interestingly, Kelly does not use this term) with a range of social and economic problems that were greater than when he first became prime minister in 1975. Fraser had made little fundamental change, `he misperceived economic problems…he avoided tackling the causes, preferring to concentrate on the symptoms', his `failures lie in most areas of major public policy.'[49] Kelly found it `difficult not to conclude that Fraser ran from the big structural issues that shaped Australian politics and society because he feared they were just too hard to handle.'[50]

Weller's detailed study of the Fraser government is largely an analysis of the functioning of cabinet government but offers more qualified conclusions which, nonetheless, do not dispel Kelly's assessment. Hence, Weller writes of `non-decisions' which were `due to caution' or `a response to ideology'.[51] Weller, acknowledges it was `argued, Fraser lacked vision' but suggests `Vision is an elusive concept' so `Vision was then reduced to solutions with which Fraser was comfortable.'[52] In the end Weller's book does not alter the view established by early critics of the Fraser years, such as Kelly, and reinforced by others such as Megalogenis who give credit to Fraser for his social progressivism but mark him `harshly for failing to connect his rhetoric of self-reliance with economic reform.'[53]

Hawke

The End of Certainty remains the most widely cited and referenced of all of Kelly's books, with its impact, in terms of academic citations, Hansard references and media mentions, outweighing all his others. As pointed out in chapter one, while the book met with widespread acclaim, it was not universal. Even though it is a key text in establishing the Hawke-Keating government in a heroic vein, Bob Hawke himself was highly critical. Soon after its publication, Hawke complained that Kelly quoted `what purport to be exact

[49] Kelly, *The Hawke Ascendancy*, p. 428.
[50] Ibid., p. 429.
[51] Patrick Weller, *Malcolm Fraser: A study in prime ministerial power*, Penguin Books, Ringwood, Victoria, 1989, p. 403.
[52] Ibid., p. 405.
[53] Megalogenis, *The Australian Moment*, p. 144.

passages of conversations in private meetings that took place between myself and Paul Keating when I was Prime Minister. This is a manifest literary absurdity and in fact in several instances constitutes a rewriting of history both in relation to what is reported and what is left unreported.'[54] Yet such comments – Gerard Henderson made a similar criticism (see chapter one) – have not affected its status as the best known and most widely cited history of the Hawke government. It is the book that all other accounts of the period have to at least acknowledge, and many use as an authoritative source.

The high status of the book was affirmed with the references to it in *The Hawke Government: A Critical Retrospective*, edited by Susan Ryan and Troy Bramston, which is the most comprehensive one volume account of the Hawke years yet published. It features a wide range of contributors including academics, interest group representatives, journalists and former Hawke government ministers and advisers. *The End of Certainty* is cited by many of these writers and is described in the bibliographical essay as a `modern classic.'[55] This description, 10 years after its publication, indicates its growing stature, even among many academics since its publication when – as outlined in chapter two – it received a lukewarm response from some academic reviewers. Another example of the book's growing reputation was seen in Judith Brett's initial response. Brett pointed out that following Kelly's identification of the groups and individuals who made up the `sentimental traditionalists', he then did `not comment, however, that this alliance reveals a deep rupture between the political values and expectations of government of a wide range of Australians, and the ideas and values of the political elites of both parties.'[56] Nonetheless, she later stated that *The End of Certainty* was: `The best book on the federal Labor governments (1983-96)…'[57]

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[54] Bob Hawke, 'Of Myth and Men – Setting the Record Straight', 15 November 1992, *Sunday Age*, p. 15.
[55] Warhurst and Chalmers, 'Studying the Hawke Government A bibliographical essay', p. 442.
[56] Judith Brett, 'Ideology' in Judith Brett, James Gillespie and Murray Goot, (eds.), *Developments in Australian Politics*, Macmillan Education Australia, South Melbourne, Victoria, 1994, p. 20.

Yet are these accolades as deserved now that over twenty years as elapsed since its publication? The subtitle of the first edition `*The Story of the 1980s*' is slightly grandiose as the book is not a general history of Australia in that period. As outlined earlier, Kelly's focus is largely on the Labor and Liberal parties in the 1980s. In the story of the former, Kelly identifies what he regards as the key achievements of the Hawke and Keating governments while the story of the latter is about how the Liberals responded to Labor's reformist policy program and electoral success. Kelly not only delineates the major economic reforms of the decade but he also describes the reforms the Hawke government made to Labor tradition to achieve its policy program. The subtitle of the second edition, *`Power, Politics and Business in Australia'* was somewhat more accurate, although the first two phenomena are very much the primary focus of the book. So in order to judge the value of Kelly's account it is necessary to compare his book with other interpretations of the Hawke government's eight years in power.

It is striking that when Ryan and Bramston published *The Hawke Government* in 2003 there had been a decade of economic growth. But Kelly's explication about the success of the Hawke-Keating reforms as a justification for the changes made to Labor's policy platform was still, at that stage, among the exceptions in `the literature on Hawke Government and Labor tradition' which was `overwhelmingly critical and often hostile.'[58] So what does Kelly's exceptionalism in this regard suggest about the value of his analysis? To answer this question it is necessary to specifically ascertain what Kelly claims as the most important achievements of the Hawke government and what he omits. How then does this compare with other book-length accounts? What conclusions can then be made about the significance and value of *The End of Certainty* as a key text in Australian political history?

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[57] Judith Brett, 'Keating, Paul John' in Graeme Davidson, John Hirst and Stuart Macintyre, (eds.), *The Oxford Companion to Australian History*, South Melbourne, Victoria, 1998, revised edition, 2001, p. 365.

[58] Warhurst and Chalmers, p. 445.

With regard to the first question the key policy achievements Kelly gave the most attention to included:

- the Accord
- the float of the Australian dollar and the deregulation of the financial system
- welfare reform (pension assets and income tests, family allowance supplement),
- superannuation (occupational superannuation, taxing lump sum superannuation)
- taxation reform (Fringe benefits tax, a reduction in the top marginal income tax rate, decreasing company tax, dividend imputation, capital gains tax)
- reducing budget deficits and moving into surplus budgets while reducing unemployment (until 1991)
- asset sales
- aviation deregulation
- tariff reduction
- a non-discriminatory migration policy
- Asia/Pacific integration. APEC
- environmental protection (World Heritage listings of several wilderness areas)
- full and partial privatisation of government enterprises
- the shift towards enterprise bargaining

This list indicates Kelly gave economic precedence over social policy. Medicare is referred to several times in *The End of Certainty* and regarded as one of the essential policies of the Hawke era but is not, unlike most of the policies above, discussed in any detail. In comparison, *The Hawke Government*, while inevitably lacking the narrative sweep of Kelly's book, provides a more comprehensive coverage of social and foreign policy, (Kelly only refers only sporadically to the latter throughout his text). There is also a detailed account of

the Button industry plans which was a phase of economic policy that Kelly did not include in his book.

The other gaps in Kelly's book highlighted in *The Hawke Government* include:

- education policy (increased retention rates to Year 12, National Strategy for the Education of Girls. HECS, CAE mergers with Universities)
- women's policy, particularly the *Sex Discrimination Act* 1984 (Cth) and the *Affirmative Action (Equal Opportunity in Employment*)Act 1986 (Cth)
- the response to AIDS, detailed account of Medicare
- primary industry policy (Landcare, Murray-Darling Basin Commission)
- indigenous affairs (blocking mining at Coronation Hill, ATSIC, Royal Commission into Aboriginal deaths in Custody, return of Uluru but lack of overall progress on land rights and treaty deemed disappointing)
- the public service reforms
- foreign affairs and defence (Cairns group, arms control initiatives, maintenance of ANZUS in period of turmoil, Dibb report)

A subsequent retrospective assessment, *The Hawke Legacy* (see below), with academics as the main contributors, also emphasises the Hawke governments' social policy achievements over its economic ones, perhaps because of the attention the latter have been given in the previous studies of the period. As the editors write in the introduction, it is in the domains of the economy, work and industrial relations where occurred 'the changes for which the Hawke government is most commonly invoked today.'[59]

[59] Gerry Bloustien, Alison Mackinnon and Barbara Comber, 'Introduction' in Gerry Bloustien, Alison Mackinnon and Barbara Comber, (eds.), *The Hawke Legacy*, Wakefield Press, Kent Town, South Australia, 2009, p. xv.

The contributions in *The Hawke Government* reaffirmed the significance of the key social policies identified above. New interpretations within these areas were also apparent. With schools policy Brennan and Reid argued `that under Hawke conditions were put in place to achieve legitimacy for a national role in education' particularly with regard to developing a national curriculum.[60] In indigenous policy, Buckskin acknowledged the failures, but contended that the Hawke government progressed the concept of indigenous `self-management and self-determination…through practical, representative bodies that were able to influence government policy more significantly than Aboriginal voices had ever done before.'[61] While Sharp, produces a detailed assessment of superannuation reforms that was lacking in the previous histories.

Yet, what is most striking is the remarkably restrained conclusions regarding the effects of the Hawke government's economic policies. In the concluding essays (by historian, David Day, former Hawke minister, Barry Jones and journalist, Geoff Kitney) little is made of the link between the economic reforms and the, by that stage, ten years of economic growth. Kitney remarks: `As loath as the Howard government is to concede it, and many economic commentators to give credit for it, much of Australia's long run of relative economic prosperity has its roots in the Hawke government's reforms.'[62] Similarly in *The Hawke Legacy* the avoidance of the East Asian recession in 1997-98 and the 2001 `tech-wreck' that had occurred by the time of the book's 2003 publication were not remarked upon – even though the three previous recessions in 1974, 1981-82 and 1990-91 all had international origins. Yet there was no mention of how the ending of this pattern of contagion was made possible by some of the key reforms of the Hawke government. It was a vindication of Kelly's conclusion,

[60] Marie Brennan and Alan Reid, 'Education, equity and the Hawke government' in Bloustien, Mackinnon and Comber, (eds.), *The Hawke Legacy*, p. 58.
[61] Peter Buckskin, 'Hawke and Ryan: an acceleration of Indigenous education policy' in Bloustien, Mackinnon and Comber, (eds.), *The Hawke Legacy*, p.83.
[62] Geoff Kitney, 'The Hawke Government: An assessment from the outside' in Ryan and Bramston, (eds.), *The Hawke Government: A Critical Retrospective*, p. 431.

(in the introduction the second, 1994, edition), that the 1980s reforms – and the corrections of mistakes made in the process – would produce an era of low inflation growth.[63] It was Kelly, and later, Megalogenis who would emphasise the importance of the Hawke-Keating reforms as the foundation of this achievement in their later books (and journalism). The omission of this central point is the most striking contrast between the journalists' account and the academics' analysis.

The critical reception and growing reputation of *The End of Certainty* has also overshadowed other contemporaneous accounts including Stephen Mills's, *The Hawke Years* and *Managing Government: Labor's Achievements & Failures* by Fred Gruen and Michelle Grattan. Mills, Hawke's speech-writer, while not uncritical, focuses on the central role of Hawke's leadership in his government's political and policy success. In a way it was a rejoinder to Kelly's depiction of Keating as the driver of policy reform and political tactics. But, at less than half the length of Kelly's book, Mills does not convey the historical context or have the same emphasis on policy achievements – although it does provide a more detailed account of Hawke's foreign policy role. Mills's conclusion, in light of the long list of achievements of the Hawke government, that `the accord stood as the clearest distinguishing feature of Australian political leadership' is highly contestable.[64] The Accord was a policy which ended with the election of the Howard government and was, prior to this, gradually seen to be less effective over time. Kelly points out it did initially achieve its objectives of job creation and economic growth but from the late 80s onwards `it became clear that Australia's real problem was poor productivity, of which the Accord may have been a cause rather than a solution.'[65] From a more radical perspective, Stilwell acknowledges that `Labor leaders continued with some justification to claim that "social wage" gains' were delivered but its

[63] Paul Kelly, *The End of Certainty: Power, politics and business in Australia*, p. xxviii.
[64] Stephen Mills, *The Hawke Years: The story from the inside*, Viking, Ringwood, 1993, p. 308.
[65] Kelly, *The End of Certainty*, p. 61.

`social reformist elements were…subordinated to the "main game" of creating faster economic growth.'[66] For Stilwell, the Accord's 'potential to be developed as a more progressive alternative economic strategy was thwarted in practice by the ascendancy of neo-liberal ideologies and policies.'[67] Further, such policies meant `social justice goals' could not be achieved hence `inequalities widened' under the Accord – a claim that will be examined in more detail below.

Stilwell's critique is at odds with Singleton's contemporaneous analysis which is closer to Kelly's assessment. 'The Accord', Singleton, said, `is evolutionary not revolutionary in concept and practice' and `it fits comfortably with the first principles of labourism that the interests of the Australian labour movement are served through the parliamentary process by a Labor government.'[68] Writing in 1990, she correctly predicted that the Accord would `remain relevant, not only as the facilitator for a viable incomes policy, but also for a successful working relationship between the unions and the Labor government.'[69] The Accord, nonetheless, was a unique achievement but Kelly – and Megalogenis – claims that other policies – such as the float or micro-economic reforms – have made, more substantial contributions to the long boom have been endorsed by several policy-makers and economists.[70]

Gruen and Grattan's *Managing Government: Labor's Achievements and Failures*, employs a very different approach to both Kelly and Mills and is constructed as a kind of text book for a general audience. The first few chapters deal with political issues, ranging from party management and cabinet processes through to the bureaucracy and pressure groups. The

[66] Frank Stilwell, *Changing Track: A new political economic direction for Australia***,** Pluto Press, Annadale NSW, 2000, p 150.
[67] Ibid. p.151.
[68] Gwynneth Singleton, 'Corporatism or Labourism? The Australian labour movement in accord', *The Journal of Commonwealth & Comparative Politics*, vol. 28, no. 2, p. 179.
[69] Ibid., p. 180.
[70] Jeff Borland, 'Microeconomic reform' in Simon. Ville and Glenn. Withers, *The Cambridge Economic History of Australia,* Cambridge University Press, Port Melbourne, Victoria, 2015, p. 425 and Ian Macfarlane, *The Search for Stability*, Boyer Lectures, 2006, ABC books, Sydney, NSW, pp. 92-93.

remaining chapters cover ten major policy domains. The authors realise the balance between political management and policy outcomes more effectively than Mills and they unpack the key political, economic and social changes more succinctly than Kelly does. However, it inevitably lacks the dramatic element of Kelly's book as he conveys the battle of ideas that resulted in the ascendancy of market liberalism in the 1980s. Gruen was in broad agreement with Kelly regarding the significance of the key economic policy changes made in this period but he was also more restrained than in his final assessment of the Hawke government's economic management, only concluding that, by 1993, the economy was 'in better shape than it was in March 1983.'[71] Like Kelly, he viewed the 1990-1991 recession as a result of the 'failure of macro-economic policy and of forecasting' and not of the economic reforms implemented after 1983.[72] But he was much less confident that the 1990s would be a decade of growth and, in this, he is closer to Kelly's own conclusion in the first, 1992, edition of *The End of Certainty* where he wrote 'Australia in the early 1990s does not have a level of competiveness and savings which will produce a growth economy without a balance of payments crisis. The fundamental problem of the 1990s remains unsolved.'[73] Another two years of growth was needed before Kelly would make the more confident prediction about the likelihood of a sustained recovery in the introduction to the second edition.

A comparison between Kelly's book and the first detailed public policy analysis of the Hawke government, Head and Patience's *From Fraser to Hawke: Public Policy in the 1980s*, is also instructive. Published in 1989, preceding *The End of Certainty* by three years, sixteen policy areas are covered, with – in common with Kelly – economic policy being espoused as the main area of innovation. Head, like Mills, thought the Accord was Labor's most innovative policy but regarded its other distinctive features – which were the ones differentiating the

[71] Fred Gruen and Michelle Grattan, *Managing Government: Labor's Achievements and Failures*, Longman Cheshire, Melbourne, 1993, p. 110.
[72] Ibid., p. 272.
[73] Kelly, *The End of Certainty*, p. 685.

Hawke government most from the Fraser government – as mainly in the realm of social policy. These included 'a more vigorous public health system; a more liberal approach to affirmative action for disadvantaged groups; a slightly more progressive/redistributive taxation policy; marginally more sympathy for environmental values; and more interest in nuclear disarmament.'[74] Some of these barely feature in the retrospective analyses mentioned above but remain valid interpretations in the context of the time. Financial deregulation and tariff policy were not imbued with the significance Kelly gave them.

With regard to the question of how Kelly's account of the Hawke government compares to these other texts it is clear that, despite its great length, it by no means constitutes a comprehensive coverage of the Hawke government's policy achievements. Although Kelly's emphasis on the major policy innovations proved prescient as the passage of time emphasised their significance. While the problematic reconstructed conversations give his account a degree of colour that, pace Mills, the other accounts lack. Despite the objections of Hawke and Henderson the verisimilitude of this device has been largely accepted – as the book's wide number of reviews and citations attest. This journalistic element enlivens the historical account of political conflict without undermining the author's analysis of policy implementation and evaluation.

Frank Castles, in his review of Head and Patience, highlights the problem with some of the books written for students and scholars of Australian political science. Hence his criticisms apply in some respects to the other books considered above. Castles says the description and analysis of a wide range of policy areas makes *From Fraser to Hawke* a useful reference book that 'will deservedly find its way onto many academic shelves', but 'as a worthy book rather than an exciting one' which 'will be referred to more as a source of useful information

[74] Brian Head, 'Parties and the Policy Agenda 1978-1988' in Brian Head and Alan Patience, (eds.), *From Fraser to Hawke: Australian Public Policy in the 1980s*, Longman Cheshire, 1989, p.505.

than consumed for its intrinsic interest.'[75] Castles makes the telling observation that 'an inherent feature of collections of this kind…is the lack of any kind of sustained debate as to the meaning of emergent policy patterns across more than one area and any kind of controversy about the character of policy development in each particular area.'[76] In contrast Kelly in this, and his other books (and Megalogenis in his) do – independently of the quality of their analysis – convey the broad debates around the key policy changes.

Castles goes on to place most of the analysis featured in *From Fraser to Hawke* as 'within the academic mainstream and much the same section of the mainstream at that – mildly left civilised values with an a priori preference for social democracy over social liberalism…'[77] The 'critical, detached, academic stance' results in 'no dichotomies', 'only tendencies, compromises and attempts to cope with common economic and structural problems.'[78] Kelly, on the other hand emphasizes dichotomies ('market reformers' versus 'sentimental traditionalists') as does Megalogenis ('Howard Mark I' and 'Howard Mark II'). Again this does not necessarily result in better analysis but nor does it necessarily devalue their commentary. Most of all it gives their writing a readability for a broader audience that differentiates it from what Castles calls 'class consensus political science, which may be useful, but is certainly dull.'[79]

Kelly's method and style are likely to be major factors in explaining the impact of *The End of Certainty* on the political class. Kelly himself believes that: 'Putting a narrative together helps the public – and sometimes the politicians – better grasp what has happened and the reasons for it.'[80] This impact may be measured – albeit imperfectly – by this book's academic and parliamentary citations, and by the references (exceeding 200) to it in the major

[75] Frank Castles, 'Reviews', *Australian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 24, no. 2, p. 164.
[76] Ibid.
[77] Ibid.
[78] Ibid., p. 164 and p. 165.
[79] Ibid., p. 165.
[80] Kelly, Personal Communication, December 29, 2017.

Australian – and some English and American – newspapers. Whilst many of the allusions to *The End of Certainty* do appear in *The Australian*, commentary in both the rival Fairfax and international publications invariably treat the book as an authoritative source. By these measures its impact far surpasses all the works mentioned above. Where Kelly's book has over 700 citations – the majority of which are uncontentious – few of the comparative texts under consideration have citations which exceed the low double digits, and they are barely referred to in the mainstream press, if it all.

Such an impact, by a book written by a journalist, does not mean that Kelly has produced superior political analysis, but it does indicate why the book is considered so influential. Given that Kelly's style and method is a major differentiating factor between his book and the other texts considered here, it is reasonable to assume that this was a contributing factor to the book's appeal to the political class. Here was a text that used interviews with the central players to introduce some drama and colour to important aspects of the public policy process. It then asserts their significance by grounding them in a historical context which reframes earlier accounts of Australian history (by Hancock et al), which has the effect of putting in context the momentous nature of the policy changes.

It is also likely that Kelly's status as a senior journalist for a national paper and an author of two successful political books were contributing factors to the book's success. Kelly's elevation to the Editor-in-Chief role in the year of the book's publication would have given added impetus to the promotional campaign. Its popularity was confirmed by the appearance of second and third editions. None of this is to detract from the quality of the analysis which, within the confines of its subject matter, remains influential and, as indicated previously, has generally been acknowledged as authoritative by a significant number of independent and academic scholars. Moreover, while *The End of Certainty* does not provide

the breadth of coverage of policy areas which other academic accounts of the era achieve, it has, so far, withstood the test of time to remain a key historical text for Australian federal politics in the 1980s.

Besides the general histories of the Hawke government there is an extensive literature on this period which offers an alternative assessment about the effects of particular aspects of the signature policies of the period which were foregrounded by Kelly and Megalogenis in their accounts. Writing in 2007, Walter acknowledged *The End of Certainty* as 'the most cogent account of the Hawke government's economic project' but he was later critical of Kelly's – and Megalogenis's – depiction of the Hawke government (and the Keating and Howard governments).[81] Walter and Holbrook considered the two journalists to be the most influential of the commentators who have interpreted the 1983-2007 reform era as a period of exceptional governance. They go on to claim that lauding the achievements of these years constitutes a 'celebratory perspective' that 'does not accord with the views of the time, or with the lived experience of substantial elements of the population.'[82] The authors do acknowledge there is much to commend this view and reiterate some of the key points – 'the decisive revision of the policy agenda, the consummate team building, the increasing prosperity…' made by Kelly and, later Megalogenis about the political leadership in these years. However, Walter and Holbrook, claim that the journalist's historical accounts do not convey the controversy created by market-orientated policies. They cite contemporary critics of the Hawke government such as H. C. Coombs and Whitlam as examples of the response from elite opinion-makers. Research by Michael Pusey, Peter Saunders and Clive Hamilton is adduced to claim there was a greater level of disquiet in the Australian

[81] James Walter, 'Hawke, Robert James Lee 'Bob' in *The Oxford Companion to Australian History*, OUP, Melbourne, 1998, revised edition, 2001, p. 306.
[82] Walter and Holbrook, p. 2.

community regarding the Hawke government's policies than, apparently, Kelly and Megalogenis would concede in their accounts.

Two case studies are then used to argue how seemingly successful policy initiatives create public unease and ongoing problems. From the Hawke era, the authors use Dawkins' higher education reforms as a model of rational, effective, innovative policy-making that was internationally recognised but, ultimately, had deleterious consequences. These include both the increasing bureaucratisation of universities and the casualization of teaching staff, low morale among academic staff and persistent tension between the economic and educational objectives of tertiary education.

From this example the authors extrapolate the conclusion that this was representative of a broader policy process which bred 'cynicism and distrust both at the time and since' because the promotion of policies fostering economic growth was accompanied by the shifting of risk from the state to the citizen.[83] Many in the Australian community did not believe 'that the market would produce a just community and felt the things that had been sacrificed in the drive to maximise economic outcomes were more highly valued at the *level of society* than the resulting increase in prosperity.'[84]

However, the problems with the argument are twofold. First, it is not correct to infer that Kelly's historical account ignored the unease felt by many sections of the electorate and elements of the political class. Indeed the conflict between the 'market-orientated reformers' and 'sentimental traditionalists' within the political class is a central thread in his narrative. Kelly also acknowledges the impact of the changes on the electorate throughout *The End of Certainty*. 'In late 1989', he writes, 'resentment towards the Hawke government ran deep, the accumulated impact of high interest rates, a grind in living standards and a

[83] Walter and Holbrook, p. 15.
[84] Ibid.

recognition of national problems, high foreign debt, poor productivity and spectacular corporate failure.'[85] Or this, in the last chapter: 'There is a disenchantment with leadership, hostility towards the excesses of the 1980s, and a confusion about the national direction.'[86] Kelly acknowledges the impact on the electorate far more than his critics allow.

Second, Walter and Holbrook, do not venture an explanation about why it was that with such widespread disenchantment in the electorate that the Hawke government was re-elected three times and then a fourth time under Keating. Kelly's detailing of the four Labor and Coalition campaigns explains the combination of factors which resulted in unprecedented success for the ALP in such a tumultuous period.

Third, it is not feasible for higher education reform to be an example accurately representing the tenor of the Hawke government's policy outcomes, particularly given Kelly's primary focus is on economic policy (neither he nor Megalogenis discuss the Dawkins' reforms). Other economic reforms such as the float and Reserve Bank independence, are generally accepted as key factors for the resilience of the economy in the post-1991 phase of unbroken economic growth.[87] Borland, for example, states: 'A major benefit from microeconomic reform is likely to have been an improved capacity for the government to manage the macroeconomy.'[88] An analysis, co-authored by the Nobel laureate, Michael Spence which explains why the economy of the United States continued to grow despite 'political polarization, congressional gridlock and irresponsible grand standing' may also be applied to Australian developments.[89] Spence and Brady argue that this post-GFC growth

[85] Kelly, *The End of Certainty*, p. 544.
[86] Ibid. p. 661.
[87] See, for example, Ross Gittins, 'Economic reforms that transformed Australia', *Sydney Morning Herald*, February 8, 2014, viewed 10 January, 2016, <http://www.rossgittins.com/2014/02/top-10-economic-reforms-that.html> and A. Charlton, *Ozonomics: Inside the myth of Australia's economic superheroes*, Random House Australia, North Sydney, pp. 55-53, 118 and 136-137.
[88] Jeff Borland, 'Microeconomic reform' in Simon Ville and Glenn Withers, (eds.), *The Cambridge Economic History of Australia*, Cambridge University Press, Port Melbourne, Victoria, 2015, p. 436.
[89] Michael Spence and David Brady, 'Politics-Proof Economics', *Project Syndicate*, May 18, 2014, viewed 26 January, 2016, <http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/michael-spence-and-david-brady-on-the-remarkably-weak-correlation-between-relative-economic-performance-and-government-effectiveness?barrier=true>.

was due to 'the American economy's underlying structural flexibility' which, in turn, suggests that countries that 'have policies that protect sectors or jobs' introduce 'structural rigidities' which incur rising costs 'with the need for structural change to sustain growth and employment (and to recover from unbalanced growth patterns and shocks).'[90] They place Australia among those countries which 'are relatively free of structural rigidities', and Australia's post-GFC growth during a period of political instability further supports their argument.[91] In addition McLean, while sceptical about the harm caused by protection in earlier periods, found that 'the orthodox view… that the reduction in protection following the 1970s improved productivity and living standards' remains 'unaffected to date'.[92]

Walter and Holbrook are on stronger ground when they conclude that 'the unintended consequences of the neoliberal project' have left 'political leaders in the most precarious of positions: torn between advocating more of the same (more austerity to combat 'economic crisis' while attempting to mollify the middle-voting public (seemingly reneging on the reform agenda).'[93] But this also neglects the role of inadequate political leadership in the period after 2007 and the legacy of policies that cannot be considered neo-liberal, such as the second Rudd government stimulus.

Nonetheless, Kelly's acknowledgement of the negative effects of Hawke government polices arguably required a much greater emphasis. In *The End of Certainty* the central focus is always political rather than social. Many contemporaneous academic interpretations offer an instructive contrast. Writing in 1988, Sharp and Broomhill – to choose one from a multitude of examples – were disappointed in the Hawke government's progress in women's policy areas. While acknowledging there were some 'limited benefits for women' other

[90] Spence and Brady, 'Politics-Proof Economics'.
[91] Ibid.
[92] McLean, *Why Australia Prospered*, p. 225.
[93] Walter and Holbrook, pp. 16 -17.

'policies…worsened women's economic position, particularly for young women, low and middle income earners and those in poverty.'[94] No expansion in full-time permanent jobs for women, a male-dominated accord process and the retreat from the concept 'of a universally available childcare system', were among the chief failures of the Hawke government.[95]

Sharp and Broomhill's emphasis on the negative outcomes of the Hawke government's policies highlights some of the major differences between the respective analysis of these academic specialists and the generalist historian. The former analyses the effect of economic policies on a particular group by first establishing a theoretical basis then, second, utilizing case studies to demonstrate the consequences of some of the major polices of the Hawke government on a specific group; the latter balances narrative with analysis while situating it in historical context. Kelly's focus on the role of executive leadership and party politics inevitably prevents the sort of detailed assessment provided by academic specialists. Sharp and Broomhill evaluate the Accord, superannuation, taxation, budgetary policy, the social wage, labour market policy and trade and industry policy. Kelly's broad–brush approach allows him to cover more policy areas in much less detail but, interestingly there are exceptions. Kelly, for example, emphasises the float as perhaps the most significant policy initiative while Sharp and Broomhill do not mention it. Kelly conveys how and why policy decisions were arrived at, while Sharp and Broomhill detail policy shortcomings.

Over and above the differences in methodology and emphasis is the fundamental ideological split regarding solutions. While Kelly refers to the social problems created by the 'consequences and excesses of the 1980s' he, nonetheless, thought it possible to achieve a 'transition by promising a sceptical public that a harmony can be found between its

[94] Rhonda Sharp and Ray Broomhill, *Short-changed: Women and economic policies*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1988, p. 95.
[95] Ibid.

aspirations for security and the global need for competiveness.'[96] There was, of course no abandoning market economics, it remained fundamental. The challenge was 'to internationalise the economy within a framework of social justice and equity thereby retaining the deepest and oldest Australian values.'[97]

For Sharp and Broomhill, any acceptance of a capitalist system, even with some degree of state intervention, is inadequate because 'the achievement of complete economic equality between women and men is incompatible with the unequal market and class systems that are the defining feature of capitalism.'[98] Progress can only be achieved 'with a socialist economic strategy.'[99] Stilwell, in a later, more comprehensive critique of market-orientated policies also concluded that although the problems of alienation, inequality and insecurity 'cannot be resolved by reference to the pages of any classical socialist text' a solution 'can be built on more explicitly socialist principles.'[100] The contrast between these academics and the journalist is representative of the very conflict Kelly outlines in *The End of Certainty* between the advocates and opponents of market-orientated reform. The latter includes 'academics' whom Kelly lists with 'Fraser-era Liberals, the Australian Democrats, the Greens, much of the ALP left, sections of manufacturing industry, a number of powerful trade unions, …intellectuals and most of the literary establishment.'[101]

This is a divide which is indicative of the rise of economic rationalism as a term of 'political categorisation, commendation and criticism' in Australian politics.[102] Indeed, Stokes cites Kelly's book as influential in making economic rationalism 'a category for organising

[96] Kelly, *The End of Certainty*, p. xxix.
[97] Ibid., p. 686.
[98] Sharp and Broomhill, p. 95.
[99] Ibid.
[100] Frank Stilwell, *Changing Track: A new political economic direction for Australia*, p. 133.
[101] Kelly, *The End of Certainty*, p.ix.
[102] Geoffrey Stokes, 'The rise and fall of economic rationalism' in John Uhr and Ryan Walter, (eds.) *Studies in Australian Political Rhetoric*, Australian National University Press, Canberra, 2014, p. 195.

subsequent historical reflection upon such debates and policies.'[103] Stokes placed Kelly among those (Ross Garnaut – the public intellectual who features most frequently in Kelly's journalism – was another) who used the term on the basis 'that government was not abandoning its central role in regulating the economy but simply opening up sectors to market forces where it would lead to greater public good.'[104] This is in contrast to those opposed to the implementation of market-orientated policies who used economic rationalism pejoratively as 'a term of historical censure that signified a dangerous break with previous Australian social and economic traditions.'[105] Stokes points out that the narrative of economic rationalism 'drew upon a reinterpretation of the history of Australia's economic performance, its rates of growth and standard of living.'[106] Stokes attributes the development of this method to journalists such as Max Walsh and 'specific reforming/rationalist authors such as Ross Garnaut' who illustrated Australia's trajectory from an open economy in the 1870s to a closed economy for most of the twentieth century with declining GDP per capita.[107] This is, of course, a central feature of Kelly's, and Megalogenis's main arguments and they too should be named as among both the most influential journalists and authors who use historical interpretation in their narratives.

Stokes contends that as economic rationalism became the orthodoxy in economic policy making, various forms of liberalism ('market', 'economic' and 'neo') began to replace the term in 'the critical discourse' after 'globalisation' became a term of 'rhetorical and analytical importance.'[108](Globalisation is not mentioned in the first edition of *The End of Certainty;* Kelly uses the term two years later in the introduction to the second edition). Stokes concludes that in its different 'forms, the language of economic rationalism enabled

[103] Stokes, 'The rise and fall of economic rationalism', p. 199.
[104] Ibid., p. 200.
[105] Ibid.
[106] Ibid., p. 204.
[107] Ibid.
[108] Ibid.

those who used it to criticise or commend those political, economic and social agendas that appeared to break with tradition.'[109] With its high number of citations and media mentions (and two reprints) *The End of Certainty* has been one of the more prominent texts in the rise of economic liberalism in late twentieth century Australia.

The contrast with academic works such as those of Sharp and Broomhill also illustrates Stokes's final point regarding the effect on academic debate of the rise economic rationalism in the public sphere. Stokes suggests that 'the rise of economic rationalism as both an ideology and a government practice', has arguably seen 'the language of Left critique' – as exemplified by Sharp and Broomhill – morph 'from that of Marxist political economy and socialism to that of mainstream economics and liberalism.'[110] Hence 'the more radical critiques from political economy that relied upon concepts such as capital and class lost rhetorical power.'[111] Stokes's contention that, ' Economic critique thus became conducted mostly in Weberian and reformist terms that generally accepted the imperatives of capitalism' is, for example, seen in Stilwell's later reflections on the nature of the challenges of political economy to economic orthodoxy over a decade after *Changing Track*. [112]

In this book he spoke about the need for '*a program of radical reform'* (author's italics) 'where a socialist alternative must embody inspirational ideals while also offering down-to-earth proposals for dealing with the problems of contemporary Australian capitalism.' A decade later the emphasis was much less ambitious. Rather there was a need to focus on comprehensively critiquing neoclassical economics. Instead of socialism, classical political economy was posited as a possible way forward to 'more progressive analysis and policy

[109] Stokes, 'The rise and fall of economic rationalism', p. 213.
[110] Ibid., p. 214.
[111] Ibid.
[112] Ibid.

positions.'[113] Marxism was only one of a number of traditions of thought that contributed to the pluralism of modern political economy. Stilwell only mentions socialism when he wonders if the GFC may 'herald the start of an era in which less restrictive political economic ideas could be used to foster and shape a more democratic, even socialist alternative?'[114] He does not proffer an answer but suggests specific policy areas – superannuation, employment and the environment – 'as examples of political economic alternatives that have particular relevance in the current context.'[115] The possible return of socialist solutions to the language of economic critique in Australian academia therefore seems to require the end of what Walter calls the current 'policy regime', either through exhaustion or 'unlooked for reversal', stemming from the regime's 'inherent flaws' which "throw all the [in a reference to Kelly] 'certainties' of the day into question."[116]

The persistence of economic rationalism as an ideology and policy practice can be partly attributed to the way its supporters, contest claims, by critics such as Stilwell, that such polices exacerbate the major flaws in the capitalist system. These flaws include: the insecurity created by 'periodic recessions, persistent unemployment and…financial instability'; rising inequality and the 'recurrent conflicts with environmental and social goals.'[117] However, while unemployment and social alienation remain seemingly intractable, progress has been made elsewhere. First, the unbroken period of growth since 1991 has muted the criticism concerning the recurrence of recession while the strength of the Australian banking system throughout the GFC, and after, has had a similar effect on the concerns about financial instability. These factors are central to the arguments of Kelly and Megalogenis.

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[113] Frank Stilwell, 'The Political Economy Challenge to Orthodoxy', *Labour & industry, a journal of the social and economic relations of work*, vol. 20, no. 3, 2010, pp. 337.
[114] Frank Stilwell, 'The Political Economy Challenge to Orthodoxy', p. 339.
[115] Ibid., p. 341.
[116] Walter and Holbrook, p. 16.
[117] Frank Stilwell, *Changing Track: A new political economic direction for Australia*, p. 3.

The most significant area of contention remains the issue of rising inequality. As Briggs points out, the severity 'of cuts to real wages for key classifications' [including, inter alia, fitters, drivers and storemen] between 1983 and 1991 ' was unprecedented since World War II'.[118] Yet this period also saw an increase 'in the incomes of the vast majority of social security recipients', although 'most families outside the social security system *whose employment status remains the same* (author's italics) recorded little or no growth in their real disposable incomes.'[119] Indeed, as Megalogenis later pointed out, 'Australia continued to lag behind the rest of the world in the Hawke and Keating years', the effects of the reforms were not apparent until the late 1990s.[120] Megalogenis compares the Hawke-Keating reforms to 'a form of economic shock therapy' in which 'the medicine they administered involved a period of pain before the patient was restored to full health.'[121]

Analyses from a range of sources confirm a general increase in incomes for all groups from this time onwards but with the greatest increases going to the very wealthiest. Between 2003-04 and 2014-15, the wealthiest 20 per cent of households increased their share of national income from 33.3 per cent to 35.1 per cent to be the only income quintile to have increased their share in this period.[122] Those in the median and second quintiles saw their share decline 0.5 and 0.7 per cent respectively. Yet their incomes did increase – just not as much as the very wealthy. While the wealthiest quintile saw their incomes increase by 72.4 per cent over that period, the bottom 20 per cent saw their income grow by 70.8 per cent. The wealthy also pay the bulk of income tax. Jericho points out that 'the richest 20 per cent pay 59 per cent of all income tax, while earning 43 per cent of all gross income' so if the rich

[118] Chris Briggs, 'Australian Exceptionalism: The Role of Trade Unions in the Emergence of Enterprise Bargaining', *The Journal of Industrial Relations*', vol. 43, no. 1, 2001, p. 32.
[119] Ann Harding and John Landt, 'Policy and Poverty: Trends in Disposable Incomes: March 1983 to September 1983', *The Australian Quarterly*, vol. 64, no. 1, 1992, p. 20.
[120] George Megalogenis, *Australia's Second Chance*: *What our history tells us about our future*, Hamish Hamilton, Melbourne, 2015, p. 253.
[121] Ibid.
[122] ABS. 2015. *Australian National Accounts: Distribution of Household Income, Consumption and Wealth, 2003-04 to 2014-15*. Cat. No. 5204.0.55.011, viewed Jan 3 2016, <http://www.abs.gov.au/>.

were to 'only pay their share of income…it would result in about a $30 billion loss in tax revenue.'[123] This trend had been apparent earlier: 'In 2003-04 households in the lowest 20 percent of equivalent disposable income gained on average $437 per week more than they paid in taxes while those in the highest quintile lost on average $628 per week net.'[124] But such redistribution has not prevented the rich increasing their share of wealth.

Such analyses are supported by a 2013 Treasury paper which found that: 'In Australia, like other OECD nations, there has been a trend towards greater income inequality since the mid-1990s, but there has also been very strong growth in incomes across the board, including the bottom decile of households.'[125] A longer term study, going back to the 1970s and thus incorporating the Hawke years, found '(1) there has been little change in the general shape of the distribution of income in Australia since the 1970s, and (2) no change in the overall distribution of wealth, but (3) there is some increased inequality occurring in the top percentile and above of both income and wealth.'[126] Another study found that while income inequality rose and fell in different sub-periods between 1981 and 2012. Overall it increased over the whole period mainly because of the greater share of wealth going to those in the top quintile; but it also notes that Australia had the most progressive social security system in the OECD.[127] As Leigh points out Australia has 'the best-targeted social safety net in the advanced world. The average advanced country gives twice as much welfare to the bottom fifth of the population as to the top fifth; Australia gives twelve times

[123] Greg Jericho, 'The rich are getting richer but how does that affect the rest of us?', *The Drum*, viewed Jan 3 2016, < http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-12-02/jericho-the-rich-are-getting-richer/6992910>.
[124] Murray Goot, 'The new millennium' in A. Bashford and S. Macintyre, (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Australia*, Cambridge University Press. Available from: Cambridge Histories Online, 2013, p. 194, viewed 25 January 2016, < http://universitypublishingonline.org/cambridge/histories/chapter.jsf?bid=CHO9781107445758&cid=CHO9781107445758A164>.
[125] Michael Fletcher and Ben Guttmann, 'Income inequality in Australia', *Economic Roundup*, Issue 2, 2013, p. 51.
[126] Alan Fenna & Alan Tappa, 'Economic inequality in Australia: A reassessment', *Australian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 50, no. 3, 2015, p. 406.
[127] Peter Whiteford, *'Australia: Inequality and prosperity in a radical welfare state'*, Crawford School of Public Policy Working Paper, Australian National University, 2013.

as much to the poor as to the rich.'[128] The range of evidence in these studies indicates that since the 1980s there has been an increase in income for all groups but the most wealthy have benefitted more than any other group – hence the post-1991 boom period has been characterised by rising wealth and rising inequality.

The extent to which the key Hawke government reforms are a source of rising inequality is difficult to determine. Just as, McLean points out, noting the 'correlation between economic reforms beginning in the 1980s and enhanced productivity in the 1990s' does not establish a causal relationship so, too, does the reverse apply – the correlation between economic reform and rising inequality does not constitute causation.[129] The Accord was a reform that certainly was a major short term factor that kept wage increases down and resulted in real wage cuts for some groups.[130] But with regard to its chief purpose of job creation, Australia did have the highest rate of employment creation of any OECD country during the 1980s.[131] Kelly, in *The End of Certainty*, did not, as stated earlier, see it as a reform of long-term significance. Leigh also, in his analysis of inequality in Australia identified quite different long term drivers of inequality. These included: Technology and globalisation (which disproportionately rewards individuals with particular skill sets); declining unionisation; cuts in the top rates of taxation; and an education system in need of reform.[132] With regard to the fall in union numbers and the cuts to the highest rates of taxation the link with Hawke government policies can be made more confidently. The shift to enterprise bargaining was one of number of factors in the decline in union membership and the top marginal tax rate was reduced after the 1985 tax summit. But, to paraphrase McLean, it is difficult to assess the significance of these reforms relative to other factors in contributing to the rise in

[128] Andrew Leigh, 'Welfare myths and the luck of life', *Inside Story*, 28 May, 2015, viewed 25 January 2016, <http://insidestory.org.au/welfare-myths-and-the-luck-of-life>.
[129] McLean, *Why Australia Prospered*, p. 238.
[130] Carol Johnson, *The Labor Legacy, Curtin, Chifley, Whitlam, Hawke*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1989, pp. 98 – 100.
[131] Frank Castles, 'The wage earners' welfare state revisited: refurbishing the established model of Australian social protection', *The Australian Journal of Social Issues*, vol. 29, no. 2, 1994, p. 138.
[132] Leigh, *Billionaires and Battlers*, pp. 66 – 81.

prosperity and inequality. Nonetheless, the various analyses cited above suggest that many of the Hawke reforms were contributing factors in the Australian economy's post-1991 run of unbroken economic growth. Moreover, it is important to note that Kelly's argument about the effectiveness of the reforms were not made in the first edition of *The End of Certainty*. Kelly was utterly convinced that they were necessary but refrained from making predictions about the probable outcomes. He, and others – ranging from Megalogenis to Treasury and RBA officials, made the arguments about their role in Australia's prosperity as the long boom unfolded.

So to return to an assessment of *The End of Certainty* as a historical text the foregoing analysis confirms its significance as a key text in Australian political history. It benefits from Kelly's skills as both a journalist and historian. The former, constructs a clear narrative from the mass of detail emerging from a period of major political change and conveys it in accessible prose. The latter brings an historical perspective, which, on the one hand, makes for a deeper understanding of those events but, on the other, leads Kelly to overstate the significance of the Hawke reforms. The breakdown of the Australian settlement – a useful but flawed concept – had begun, in some of the areas Kelly identifies prior to 1983, particularly with regard to the dismantling of white Australia and the relationship with Britain that was the foundation of 'imperial benevolence'. McLean's point that 'the policy shifts of the 1980s – and surrounding decades – represent a point of inflection in a longer historical trajectory rather than a major discontinuity' is a more plausible depiction of the period.[133] Yet Kelly's account of these changes, like McLean's work, is one of the few accounts which try and 'explain why Australian politics has developed in the way in which it has.'[134] If, as Melleuish contends, 'there are few political scientists working on the study of

[133] McLean, p. 223.
[134] Gregory Melleuish, 'Australian politics in the Australian Journal of Political Science: A review', *Australian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 50, no. 4, 2015, p. 731.

Australian politics who are interested in considering its *longue duree*'[135] then *The End of Certainty* remains – despite its weaknesses – important as a text which has 'an appreciation of the ideas and practices that have informed the conduct of politics in Australia' and addresses 'the evolution of the nature of the Australian form of polity.'[136]

Some academic accounts of the Hawke government focus in more detail on the policy failures and unintended consequences of these years. Kelly does also, as the examples above attest, critique the Hawke government but, in journalistic style, balances narrative with analysis. This is a key difference between the academic and the journalist/historian. The major retrospectives of the Hawke years, considered earlier, tend to broadly confirm Kelly's account. Rather than refute his analysis they fill in gaps or expand on areas only sketched in the book's 700 plus pages. In terms of both critical acclaim, impact on public discourse and endurance as a historical source it is Kelly's most successful book. His subsequent texts, as will be seen, also had some impact on political discourse and historical debate but seem unlikely to loom as large in the historical record.

The Keating and Howard governments

As pointed out earlier, *The March of Patriots* was Kelly's next major work of contemporary political history and the 'sequel' to *The End of Certainty*. It covered the Keating prime ministership and the first two terms of the Howard government – although there is some commentary on subsequent events such as the WorkChoices legislation and the GFC. It is a slightly shorter book than its predecessor but it canvases a greater range of policy areas. Where *The End of Certainty* was concerned with historic economic policy reforms and the struggles within the two major political parties around those reforms, *The March of Patriots* also examines foreign policy, social policy and the culture wars. Presumably, the reasons for

[135] Melleuish, 'Australian politics in the Australian Journal of Political Science: A review', p. 731.
[136] Ibid., p. 732. Melleuish refers to *The End of Certainty* several times in this article and considers the Australian settlement debate as 'demonstrably an interesting tradition of political ideas' but it 'has not excited the imagination of a new generation of scholars…'

the differences are that the significance of the Hawke government policies constituted for Kelly, a new epoch. This is a view that, as has been argued, Kelly was influential in articulating. This meant these policies – and the milieu they grew from – became the central focus of the book. After 1993, economic reform was not as significant or wide-ranging, hence economic policy was not the central focus of the book. This meant *The March of Patriots* was, therefore, a broader political history of the period.

The new book was also introduced with a theory to conceptualise the developments in the years under consideration but it did not have the impact of the Australian Settlement. Building on a key theme of the previous book, Kelly claimed the more significant divisions in Australian politics were generational rather ideological. Hence the similarities between Keating and Howard's market orientated economic policies. Kelly argued both leaders shared a fundamental patriotism, even though this led to major divisions in social and cultural policy

In economic policy under Keating, Kelly highlighted the benefits of enterprise bargaining, superannuation, competition policy and increasing Reserve Bank independence. But the budgetary process under Dawkins was flawed and the Willis budgets are not mentioned – a notable omission in a general history. In foreign policy, APEC and Asian engagement are the central achievements. The *Native Title Act* was a major policy achievement although it had divisive consequences and gave impetus to an activist High Court, which for Kelly, was inimical to democratic law-making. On border protection Kelly's judgement remained contingent: while the denial of human rights created by incarceration understandably saw a resort to the courts, such an issue must ultimately, in a democracy be decided by the executive. Kelly says this happened when the Rudd government lifted the harsher aspects of the Howard government policies. In his later books and journalism (as seen in chapter two)

Kelly would modify his views on this issue further. Kelly describes the Keating drive for a Republic without making judgements about the policy or the process, nor does he mention his editorship of *The Australian* in this period and its pro-Republican stance. With regard to the culture wars Kelly is a critic of Keating's interpretation of Australian history and the way he employed it in public debate.

Economic policy under Howard was mainly notable for the implementation of the GST, formalising Reserve Bank independence, introducing a Charter of Budget Honesty, evading two external recessions, and surplus budgeting, but the latter led to Howard's most serious failure after 2001 – 'his refusal to maximise the boom year revenues in the cause of long-run reform and productivity gains.'[137] The greater revenues in this period funded a rise in middle-class welfare which had long-term budgetary implications, as did an increase in superannuation tax concessions and the halving of capital gains tax. The *Workplace Relations Act* was the main industrial relations reform in Howard's first two terms while in his coverage of the waterfront dispute equal weight is given to the key players on both sides. With regard to social policy, Kelly endorses the establishment of the principle of mutual obligation but is critical of Howard in a range of areas including: significant failures in Indigenous policy; the failure to deal promptly with the emergence of Pauline Hanson; his distrust of Universities; his problematic use of the term 'mainstream' and his cultural populism. Kelly generally interprets the Howard government's foreign policy record favourably but reserving criticism of some aspects of the Tampa incident and much of the 'children overboard' incident.

Megalogenis's history of the Keating and Howard governments, *The Longest Decade*, preceded Kelly's book. It is a shorter book but covers a longer timeframe – the Keating years and almost all four terms of the Howard government. (The second edition encompasses the

[137] Kelly, *The March of Patriots*, p. 276.

2007 federal election). The fact that the Keating years are given roughly equal space with the Howard years – despite their shorter duration – is an indication of Megalogenis's elevation of Keating as the more significant figure. Like Kelly, Megalogenis considered labour market reform, superannuation, Asian engagement, native title and competition policy as the main Keating reforms. Howard is given credit for gun control, implementing the GST, increasing immigration, maintaining economic growth while avoiding external recessions and Asian engagement but is reproved for increasing middle-class welfare, the children overboard scandal, the Iraq war commitment, the Australian Wheat Board scandal and trying to close down debate about an open 'society because he wanted to reassert old Australian values.'[138] Megalogenis also outlines the impact of demographic changes on the broader society by discussing the feminisation of the workforce, the success of immigrant children in attaining qualifications and high-skilled jobs, the rise of the self-employed small business person and the decline of union membership. In addition, Megalogenis drew attention to the social, political and economic significance of the high rates of Australian home ownership.

From these brief summaries it is clear that in addition to agreeing on the essential economic and political achievements of both governments, the two authors share similar views on many of the failures and missteps. Such mutually reinforcing accounts, although considerably nuanced, have, as seen earlier, served to establish the view that the Keating and, to a lesser extent Howard were, overall, effective prime ministers, who led governments where their policy successes outweighed their policy deficiencies. But, again, a central question is to what extent do their analyses accord or differ with the extensive literature by academics and independent scholars on these governments? And have they had the same impact on opinion-makers in the quality media and among academic specialists?

[138] Megalogenis, *The Longest Decade*, p. 289.

Kelly and Megalogenis's accounts of the Keating prime ministership were preceded by two highly acclaimed books, one written by John Edwards, an economics adviser to Keating, and the other by historian, Don Watson who was a prime ministerial speech writer. Together Edwards's *Keating – The Inside Story* and (more so) Watson's *Recollections of a Bleeding Heart* constitute a detailed account of Keating's policy agenda. The latter, in particular has received both extensive mentions in the quality media and high number of citations, making it the most referenced book on the Keating government.

The journalists reference these books in their own histories which, along with these insider accounts constitute the major texts on the Keating prime ministerships. Indeed, there is a paucity of academic study on the Keating governments, which await the sort of critical retrospectives given to the Whitlam and Hawke governments. Megalogenis and Kelly also differentiate their analyses through jointly analysing the Keating and Howard governments in the one volume which makes their interpretations stand out further in a limited field.

They were, however, preceded in this basic approach of comparing both governments by Johnson's *Governing Change: From Keating to Howard* where the author employs a vastly different methodology – involving the use of different theoretical approaches to analyse each leader's political discourse – to reach conclusions about both Keating and Howard's framing of key social issues and policies that are not always incompatible with some of Kelly and Megalogenis's assessments. While Johnson's critique of neoliberalism is at odds with the journalists' interpretation, particularly with regard to its definition and its pervasiveness in public policy, her depiction of how the two prime ministers construct Australian values share some commonalities. Johnson was critical of the Hawke and Keating 'governments' attempts to shape social categories and identities to be compatible with its economic ones' which meant 'Labor's vision was shaped around a very limited and economistic,

compositional sketch.'[139] Yet it was preferable to 'Howard's politics of identity and his related long-term attempts to change Australia's political culture in a socially conservative and neo-liberal direction.'[140] At least 'Keating', in contrast to Howard, "encouraged empathy with the 'other'" while 'Howard denies the need for it.'[141] Howard also used 'the fear of difference' while 'Keating saw economic and social opportunity.'[142]

Kelly was also critical, in a different way, of Keating's 'big picture' policy intention to bring into being 'a new Australia' which, he says, was Keating's response to a changing political culture that was more individualistic and less reliant on state paternalism. It was characterised by 'an erosion of the old egalitarianism and a fragmentation of power with the rising influence of corporatism, markets, voluntary organisations and private initiative, along with loyalty to interest groups-from greens to gays.'[143] Kelly says Keating's vision comprised three elements – a commitment to pro-market policies, support for an egalitarian society and a vaguely romantic 'invocation of a new ethos for the cadres and True Believers of a modern ALP.'[144] With regard to the last of these, Kelly quotes two speeches. In the first, at Sydney's State Theatre, Keating states 'we have to develop a new country, a multicultural country, a new society with new resonances.'[145] In the second, an election-eve address to his staff in 1993, Keating speaks of making 'peace with the Aborigines to get the place right', of involvement in Asia 'in a way perhaps that other governments have never made it' and of his being 'always on the gays' side.'[146]

Kelly, like Johnson, is not entirely critical of such discourse but critiques it from a different perspective. Kelly describes it as 'a blend of idealism, ambition and megalomania laced with

[139] Johnson, *Governing Change*, p. 26.
[140] Ibid., p. 161.
[141] Ibid., p.182.
[142] Ibid.
[143] Kelly, *The March of Patriots*, p. 94.
[144] Ibid., p. 96.
[145] Paul Keating quoted in ibid.
[146] Ibid., p. 97.

a thread of plausibility' that 'would drive both strong policy reform and grand illusions.'[147] As does Megalogenis in saying 'Keating's support for Aborigines, women, and artists grated with traditional Labor voters' because the latter assumed Keating 'thought they weren't good enough for new Australia.'[148]

Two academic accounts of the Keating prime ministership, in the form of edited collections in the Australian Commonwealth Administration series, also preceded the journalists' histories. While the first is largely a contemporary historical account of the major developments in the federal government public service, the second offers a broader account of the key aspects of the Keating.[149] Many of the contributors anticipate the journalists' conclusions about the achievements and failures of the Keating government. On economic policy, Henderson cited Keating's success in raising the significance of APEC and Australia's role within it, his government's microeconomic reforms, particularly, improved labour productivity from enterprise bargaining, and greater efficiency in the public and private sector. With regard to macroeconomic policy, the period saw the foundation of low inflation and the increase in GDP from the September quarter of 1991 to the March quarter of 1996 'was the longest period of economic expansion on official records.'[150] But, similar to Kelly and Megalogenis, he concluded that a major reason for Keating's election loss was that many failed to see 'the benefits of disruptive microeconomic reform', but, instead they saw 'evidence that their immediate hopes of keeping their jobs and improving their living

[147] Johnson, *Governing Change*, p. 97.
[148] Megalogenis, *The Longest Decade*, p. 151.
[149] Jenny Stewart, (ed.), *From Hawke to Keating: Australian Commonwealth Government 1990 – 1993*, Centre for Research in Public Sector Management, University of Canberra, 1994 and Gwynneth Singleton, (ed.), *The Second Keating Government*, *Australian Commonwealth Administration, 1993-1996*, Centre for Research in Public Sector Management, University of Canberra, 1996.
[150] Ian Henderson, 'Economic Policy: Successes and failures of reform' in Singleton, (ed.), *The Second Keating Government*, *Australian Commonwealth Administration, 1993-1996*, p. 114.

standards was in doubt. Keating's recession was the most obvious source of those problems, and Keating's APEC was no solution.'[151]

Another contribution sees the Keating government's policy statements, particularly *One Nation*, as largely political documents in line with the Hawke government's well-established policy directions. These statements used "the language of 'innovation' while the policy content was based on incremental adjustments to existing policies and programs."[152] Kelly too agreed that its purpose was primarily political rather than economic, its main aim being to defeat the opposition's *Fightback!* statement; economic recovery was secondary. This is in contrast to Megalogenis who, while acknowledging its flaws, also saw it as a 'daring' document with its 'left wing reform' of compulsory superannuation and its 'right-wing reform' of workplace agreements which helped keep wages down during as the economy recovered from the recession.[153] Yet overall the major conclusions of the political scientists and the journalists share more similarities than differences.

More importantly, the essays in these collections cover many areas omitted, or only cursorily referred, to in the journalists' accounts. These include such subjects as the relationship between parliament and the executive, changes in the Commonwealth public service and the role of non-departmental organisations. Kelly and Megalogenis did not draw on these works for their own accounts. Yet both of these books, despite their obvious usefulness, have been overshadowed by the journalists' histories. They received no media references and the journalist's books have a greater number of academic citations.[154] The fact that academics have often cited the journalists' accounts as authoritative sources ahead of analyses by their fellow academics is perhaps, partly, an indication of the journalists'

[151] Ian Henderson, 'Economic Policy: Successes and failures of reform', p. 123.
[152] Geoff Cockfield and Scott Prasser, 'Policy Statements: Visions of Burdens' in Singleton, (ed.), *The Second Keating Government*, *Australian Commonwealth Administration, 1993-1996*, p. 100.
[153] Megalogenis, *The Longest Decade*, p. 67.
[154] As of October 2016, both of the ACA books, and their individual chapters, generally have single figure citations, compared to 58 for *The Longest Decade* and 78 for *The March of Patriots*.

extensive use of primary sources, including senior ministers, staffers and public servants – the elite members of the political class. While other citations do critique or question the journalists' work the majority reference them as authoritative sources. Hence, the claim from two scholars from the left – who, would ostensibly, disagree with much of the journalists' analyses – that Kelly and Megalogenis are 'rare journalists' whose 'writing is among the most insightful and empirically substantiated of its kind, superior to both the efforts of fellow journalists and much of the recent academic literature on Australian politics.'[155]

The Howard prime ministership, because of its longevity and the strong criticism evoked by many of Howard's policies, produced a much larger academic literature than the Keating governments. This criticism emerged from, as Kelly said, 'the Left and the Right, the social progressives and pro-market economists.'[156] These included, as Howard's biographers point out: 'Humanities academics, the arts community, public broadcasters and the Fairfax broadsheets.'[157] As demonstrated above, Kelly and Megalogenis acknowledge Howard's economic management and political skills while critiquing many of his social policies and cultural rhetoric. Again a comparison with some of the prominent academic accounts of the Howard years suggest both authors attempt a balanced assessment of Howard's achievements and failures, even if their prevailing tone was critical.

Johnson, for example, differed in some respects with Kelly's interpretation of Keating's vision and disagrees with his basic assertion regarding the end of certainty ('Rather, we are encountering attempts to institute new certainties, new narratives, new regimes of truth...'[158]) but they both view Howard's use of the term 'mainstream' as highly problematic

[155] Elizabeth Humphrys and Tad Tietze, 'Balancing Act Correspondence', *Quarterly Essay*, Issue 62, 2016, p.92.
[156] Kelly, *The March of Patriots*, p. 295.
[157] Wayne Errington and Peter van Onselen, *John Winston Howard*, Melbourne University Press, Victoria, 2007, p. 259.
[158] Johnson, *Governing Change*, p. 157.

(Megalogenis does not address this aspect of Howard's discourse). Kelly saw it as 'a populist concept' which was 'a mixture of prescience, reaction and old-fashioned vote-bribery.'[159] It involved painting 'Labor as the party defined by greens feminists, ethnics, artists, Aboriginals, gays and others, a distortion to assist his cultivation of a pro-Liberal mainstream consciousness.'[160] Megalogenis, in discussing Howard's related attack on 'political correctness' put it more starkly: 'The argument shifted from what you couldn't say under Keating to how much people could get away with under Howard.'[161] Johnson later went further to argue Howard's discourse on national identity and privileges 'British' and 'Judeo-Christian values' and therefore excludes a range of groups by constructing their identity and values as 'un-Australian.'[162] Yet, in contrast, Megalogenis concluded that, despite the riots at Cronulla and Redfern in Howard's last term, 'Australia under Howard' was 'demonstrably more unified than it had been under Keating.'[163]

Neither Kelly nor Megalogenis detail how Howard's rhetoric of the 'mainstream' versus 'special interests' was also used to justify the substantial reduction of funding of particular groups. Sawer, for example, detailed how 'conservation councils and other environmental, youth, pensioner and women's groups that engaged in policy advocacy' suffered funding cuts under the Howard government.[164] Johnson also notes a range of cuts to different women's organisations and, and argues Howard's 'heteronormative, constructions of masculinity and femininity' were also reflected in his blocking 'moves to remove tax and superannuation measures which discriminate against same-sex couples.'[165] Omissions of details such as these indicate the limitations of one volume histories but, nonetheless it

[159] Kelly, *The March of Patriots*, p. 286 and p. 289.
[160] Ibid., p. 287.
[161] Megalogenis, *The Longest Decade*, p. 217.
[162] Carol Johnson, "John Howard's 'Values' and Australian Identity", *Australian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 42, no. 2, 2007, p. 205.
[163] Megalogenis, *The Longest Decade*, p. 298.
[164] Marion Sawer and David Laycock, 'Down with Elites and Up with Inequality: Market Populism in Australia and Canada', *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics*, vol. 47, no. 2, 2009, p. 142.
[165] Johnson, *Governing Change*, p. 81.

remains the fact that both the academics and the journalists are critical of Howard's social policies. Megalogenis more so, as he concluded: 'The Howard government had explicitly rejected the nation's outsiders' and 'Howard failed to move with the times'.[166] In his chapter on Howard's social conservatism Kelly endorsed Howard's emphasis on 'the need for more individual responsibility' but saw other elements, such as Howard's rejection of paid maternity leave, as 'futile resistance to necessary change'.[167] Ultimately, however, 'the model collapsed' to leave 'a complex and complimentary edifice of social conservatism.'[168]

A prominent example of the criticism from academe published during Howard's time in office is Manne's edited collection, *The Howard Years*. Apart from Judith Brett's acknowledgment of Howard's political skills, the majority of contributors are critical of Howard's governance and policies. With regard to economic, social, higher education, environmental and foreign policy, the Howard government is, as Manne makes clear in the preface, 'the most backward looking and mean-spirited government of Australia's post-war years.'[169] Whilst sharing a number of these criticisms, Kelly and Megalogenis offered more moderate assessments. The three volumes in the Australian Commonwealth Administration series covering the Howard governments constitute the most detailed coverage of its policy program; although a produced by academic experts, the lasting impression, in the second volume at least, was in some ways consistent with Manne's volume as the 'take-home message on Howard seems to be a familiar, emotive analytically unsatisfactory one: Howard is a bastard, but a politically effective one.'[170] Howard's foreign policy was, for example, frequently affected by 'an ad hoc mix of hypocrisy, expediency and bravado' and 'Howard's worldview failed to produce an innovative and flexible agenda…in promoting Australia's

[166] Megalogenis, *The Longest Decade*, p. 362 and p. 363.
[167] Kelly, *The March of Patriots*, p. 289.
[168] Ibid., p. 302.
[169] Robert Manne, 'Preface' in Robert Manne, (ed.), *The Howard Years*, Black Inc. Agenda, Melbourne, 2004, p. vii.
[170] Bruce Stone, 'Book Reviews', *Australian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 41, no. 1, 2006, p. 119.

national interests.'[171] With immigration policy 'a litany of lies, deceptions and evasions…brought the moral integrity of the government into question on many occasions.'[172] Strong critiques were also made of the Howard government's indigenous and welfare policies.

Kelly and Megalogenis are also critical of Howard in these areas, although not always to this extent and sometimes for different reasons. With regards to social spending their focus is on what they see as the excesses of the Howard government's spending on 'middle-class welfare' and Kelly, in particular, endorses the idea of mutual obligation. While their books cannot address individual areas of policy and governance to the extent achieved in the ACA series, they have the advantage of being written at the end of the Howard government and therefore benefit from a longer view where the more salient features of the Howard years may be assessed. While it is an exaggeration to claim, as the journalist and Kelly co-writer Troy Bramston does, that Kelly's books are 'superior to history produced in the academy, which often lacks a realpolitik appreciation of public life gleaned from many years of access, observation and writing,' the journalists' work, nonetheless, does have the advantage of including the retrospective comments of the key policy actors.[173]

Errington and van Onselen offer a more sympathetic verdict of the Howard years. They reference Kelly's view that Howard's 'bond with the electorate' and his 'promotion of popular sovereignty' is 'a unique aspect of Howard's political style.'[174] The authors point out that 'John Howard's Australia with its high levels of immigration, close ties with Asia, booming wages, record workforce participation for women, record taxation and record

[171] Daniel Baldino, 'Australia and the World' in Chris Aulich and Roger Wettenhall, (eds.), *Howard's Second and Third Governments*, Australian Commonwealth Administration 1998 -2004, UNSW Press, Sydney, 2006, pp. 204-205.
[172] James Jupp, 'Immigration and Multiculturalism' in Chris Aulich and Roger Wettenhall, (eds.), *Howard's Second and Third Governments*, p.187.
[173] Troy Bramston, 'The Australian Crisis', *The Australian*, 20 September, 2014, p. 17.
[174] Errington and van Onselen, *John Winston Howard*, p. 398.

spending on health and welfare is a long way from the country imagined by its critics.'[175] Yet their conclusions concur with the journalists' assessments of Howard as a skilled politician whose political success was not matched by his public policy record: 'If we judge Howard by his own standards as a reformer, there isn't a good deal to show for his lengthy period in office'; Howard 'simply hadn't made the difference his more ideological supporters had hoped he would.[176] This assessment is based on much of the evidence cited by Kelly and Megalogenis including the expansion of the Federal government, the abandonment of taxation reform after the implementation of the GST and the dispensing of budget surpluses on tax cuts, in addition to tactically targeted spending on key constituencies.

Several other significant academic assessments of the Howard government do not necessarily contradict the journalists' broader assessments of the Howard era. Consider, for example, the special edition of the *Australian Journal of Political Science* (AJPS) published following the tenth anniversary of the Howard government's election. These articles don't necessarily confirm Lowe's dictum that historians – or, in this instance, political scientists – follow ' the contours set by journalists', as they, in fact, preceded Kelly's book – although *The Longest Decade* was published prior to this collection and is referenced in some articles, as is some of Kelly's journalism and his Cunningham lecture. The articles offer the sort of detailed analysis of a range of key public policy areas that can only be achieved by specialists. These contributors generally supplement rather than undermine the journalists' summations of the Howard era. Jane Robbins, for example, concludes that a continuation of the Howard government's 'approach to the formulation of Indigenous policy' would probably see 'Australia's reputation on human rights…suffer considerable damage' and

[175] Errington and van Onselen, *John Winston Howard*., p. 398, pp. 402 - 403.
[176] Ibid., p. 390.

'diminish rather than enhance national unity.'[177] Kelly's conclusion that Howard's indigenous policy 'was a failure of politics, morality and imagination' is similarly scathing.[178]

Robbins, however, details aspects of the policy, such as the fate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, which Kelly barely addresses. The peer-reviewed article thus fills the inevitable gaps in the one volume accounts. The other contributions to this edition of AJPS attest to the need for scholarship to provide a more complete account of a political era than can be achieved in a book-length history. In addition to Johnson's widely cited contribution on Howard's values, Parkin and Anderson's analysis of the impact of federalism on Howard's governance, Ecclestone's account of the Ralph Review and Goot and Watson's analysis of Howard's electoral support from Catholics and less educated voters, analysed aspects of the Howard years largely absent or cursorily treated in the journalists' books.[179] Aulich and O'Flynn's contribution, which details the extent of the Howard government's privatization program, is another example of a key facet of that government's policy program that was little mentioned in either journalist's accounts.[180]

The evaluations of the Howard years by journalists, independent scholars and academics is, of course, ongoing and interpretations of its achievements have been further influenced by subsequent events in the Rudd and Gillard governments. The political stability of the Howard years, in contrast to instability that followed, seemed to confirm much of Kelly and Megalogenis's emphasis on political leadership as essential criteria for successful reform.

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[177] Jane Robbins, 'The Howard Government and Indigenous Rights: An Imposed National Unity', *Australian Journal of Political Science,* vol. 42, no. 2, 2007, p. 326.
[178] Kelly, *The March of Patriots*, p. 541.
[179] Andrew Parkin and Geoff Anderson, 'The Howard Government, Regulatory Federalism and the Transformation of Commonwealth–State Relations', *Australian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 42, no. 2, 2007, pp. 295 -314, Richard Eccleston, 'The Howard Government, Capital Taxation and the Limits of Redistribution', *Australian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 42, no. 2, 2007, pp. 351-363 and Murray. Goot and Ian Watson, 'Explaining Howard's Success: Social Structure, Issue Agendas and Party Support, 1993–2004', *Australian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 42, no. 2, 2007, pp. 253-276.
[180] Chris Aulich and Janine O'Flynn, 'John Howard: The Great Privatiser', *Australian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 42, no. 2, 2007, pp. 365 – 381.

The Rudd and Gillard governments

The Rudd/Gillard years saw both journalists and academics respond so quickly to the turmoil of this period that it, again, could not be said that journalists set the contours which the academics followed. Certainly, Kelly and Megalogenis made significant contributions but they were competing with contemporary academic interpretations. The journalists' works again gained more attention in the quality media and, subsequently, a significant number of academic citations, but their accounts of these governments were prominent, rather than dominant.

Megalogenis's first Quarterly Essay contributed to the emerging consensus that the first Rudd government was largely a disappointment in terms of policy achievement. This is summed up in his comment that Rudd as Prime Minister 'was all doorstep and no delivery.'[181] Megalogenis did, in his journalism and his next book, acknowledge that Rudd had 'excelled in the financial crisis.'[182] It was, however, a government ultimately marked by 'political cowardice' for its failure to implement the carbon and mining taxes and its 'backsliding on immigration'.[183]

This text was contemporaneous with *The Rudd Government*, the tenth book in the Australian Commonwealth Administration series which offered a comprehensive coverage of the first Rudd government. Here too the editors' analysis was largely critical. Aulich stated the Rudd government's 'first failure was to promise so much and deliver so little in terms of hard outcomes.'[184] Other failures were in the areas of communication, ideas and leadership.[185] In his concluding chapter Evans quoted a number of negative assessments of Rudd's

[181] Megalogenis, 'Trivial Pursuit: Leadership and the end of the reform era', *Quarterly Essay*, Issue 40, Black Inc., Melbourne, 2011, p. 7.
[182] Megalogenis, *Australia's Second Chance*, p. 272.
[183] Ibid., p. 10.
[184] Chris. Aulich, 'It was the best of times; it was the worst of times' in Chris. Aulich and M. Evans, *The Rudd Government: Australian Commonwealth Administration*, *2007 – 2010*, ANU E Press, Canberra, 2010, p. 9.
[185] Ibid., p. 11.

leadership by political journalists (including Kelly but not Megalogenis) before emphasising that Rudd's major policy 'debacles were characterised by a common error of judgment: Rudd raised expectations of progressive change and failed to deliver.'[186] In this volume, Wanna's general assessment was, also, no less critical: Rudd 'was undone by his hubris and a lack of consultative style, by the siege mode he created inside government, by constantly believing he knew best…'[187]

Kelly's account of the Rudd years in *Triumph and Demise* followed these books four years later and did not offer a new interpretation, but rather affirmed these initial accounts. Patrick Weller's biography, *Kevin Rudd: Twice Prime Minister* was also published in the same year and offered a less critical account of the Rudd government, but, as the author made clear in his introduction, the book was an attempt to identify the characteristics that saw Rudd become Prime Minister 'and how those characteristics shaped his terms in office.'[188] Unlike these other accounts, Weller did not seek 'to explore all the opinions about each stage of his career' or 'seek to in judgement on the policies that he introduced, nor ask whether he should have adopted alternative strategies or done things differently.'[189] While Weller's account does present a more sympathetic account of the Rudd's governments, it was, in terms of media attention overshadowed by Kelly's book.

In contrast to Weller, Kelly did judge Rudd's policies, political strategy and leadership – and his assessment confirmed those given in *The Rudd Government*. Apart from his success as an opposition leader and his response to the GFC – 'his finest performance' – Rudd's flaws as

[186] Mark Evans, 'The rise and fall of the magic kingdom: understanding Kevin Rudd's domestic statecraft' in Chris Aulich and Mark Evans, (eds.), *The Rudd Government: Australian Commonwealth Administration*, *2007 – 2010*, ANU E Press, Canberra, 2010, p. 274.
[187] John Wanna, 'Issues and agendas for the term' in Chris Aulich and Mark Evans, (eds.), *The Rudd Government: Australian Commonwealth Administration*, *2007 – 2010,* p. 31.
[188] Patrick Weller, *Kevin Rudd: Twice Prime Minister*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, Vic., 2014, p. xii.
[189] Ibid., p. xii.

prime minister were numerous.[190] Rudd's 'grasp of human nature was defective' and he lacked skills in 'managing people and running a government.'[191] Indeed, the ructions of the Rudd years did mean Kelly was justified in again using one of his noted tropes when he described them as 'a truly tragic tale of a leader with the potential to become a great prime minister brought undone by his flaws.'[192] While Kelly's assessment of Rudd represents a major contribution to the orthodox depiction of the Rudd years, his interpretation of the Gillard years was, as discussed in the first chapter, more controversial.

The historical significance of Australia's first female prime minister produced several works by scholars, journalists and politicians. In her review of 10 texts reflecting on Gillard's prime ministership Jennifer Curtin's conclusion that Kelly's book offered 'a one-sided and uncritical assessment of the chain of events that underpinned Gillard's rise and demise' is not borne out in a closer reading of the text.[193] Curtin points out that Gillard's time in office is covered in only nine of the 33 chapters but does not mention that Rudd prime ministership is, in effect also covered in nine chapters, with the tenth on his removal. Curtin says, without providing evidence, that Kelly suggests that 'Rudd's aura and achievements were significant' while Gillard, in contrast, 'pandered to unions and the Greens, overspent and failed to engage with the electorate.'[194] Yet, as the quotes in the preceding paragraph indicate, Kelly strongly criticises Rudd on a number of grounds while many of his major criticisms of Gillard are shared by the other writers. Curtin claims Kelly focuses too much on the problems created by the carbon tax, failures in border protection and achieving a budget surplus, and she cites these as evidence of his 'one-sided and uncritical' analysis in what is 'a selective, rather than systematic, assessment of the Gillard government's policy failures.'[195] Yet all the

[190] Kelly, *Triumph and Demise*, p. 137.
[191] Ibid.
[192] Ibid., p. 136.
[193] Jennifer Curtin, 'The prime ministership of Julia Gillard', *Australian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 50, no. 1, p. 198.
[194] Ibid., p. 197.
[195] Ibid., p. 198.

texts under consideration are selective assessments of the Gillard government's tenure, or aspects of it. Moreover many of the criticisms made by other authors, which Curtin sometimes cites uncritically, are similar to those made by Kelly.

Curtin, for example, highlights Jacqueline Kent's argument that Gillard had difficulties in communicating with the electorate. This was evidenced by her missteps in convincingly explaining the need for, and value of, carbon pricing. This, as Curtain points out, is similar to Aulich who, in *The Gillard governments*, the 11th volume in the Australian Commonwealth Administration series, also views the Gillard government's failure to communicate 'a coherent narrative or story to convince the electorate' as a major flaw.[196]In another chapter, as Curtin recognises, Evans and McCaffrie also argue that poor communication was a component in Gillard's unsuccessful statecraft. This issue of poor communication is also one of Kelly's key points: the contrast between Gillard's private self – 'warm, authentic and engaging' and many of 'her public speeches and interviews' where 'she was bloodless and grating' was 'one of the most baffling aspects of her leadership.'[197] More tellingly, Kelly quotes Gillard's senior adviser John McTernan, who said, "'We never had a political narrative.'"[198]

Curtin goes on to point out that Evans and McCaffrie also claim Gillard was unsuccessful because the way she attained the leadership resulted in persistent questions about the legitimacy of her position. In addition, her consensus-building leadership style, 'as the antithesis to Rudd', did not result in the level of popularity Rudd had in the electorate[199]. These arguments are also consistent with those made by Kelly. Curtin's list of what the contributors to the book see as the main factors in Gillard's downfall are ones also cited by

[196] Chris Aulich, 'A Narrative, a Narrative, My Kingdom for a Narrative' in Chris Aulich, (ed.), *The Gillard Governments: Australian Commonwealth Administration*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, Vic., 2014, p. 5.
[197] Kelly, *Triumph and Demise*, p. 338.
[198] Ibid., p. 347.
[199] Mark Evans and Brendan McCaffrie, "'Rudderless' – Perceptions of Julia Gillard's Domestic Statecraft" in Chris Aulich, (ed.), *The Gillard Governments: Australian Commonwealth Administration*, p. 304.

Kelly. These include the problems with the asylum-seeker policy, the carbon-pricing scheme and clearly communicating the outcomes of education policy. Similar to her critique of Kelly, Curtin says a more systematic analysis which 'seeks to incorporate the relative weight of these explanatory factors' is needed.[200] Nonetheless, until such an analysis is written both *Triumph and Demise* and *The Gillard governments* provide coherent, well-documented accounts of the key events of the Gillard years.

Despite the commonalties with the academics' account, Curtin calls Kelly's argument 'polemical and unconvincing', even though it seeks, as Craven pointed out in his review, to be an even-handed account that includes, and then weighs, the views of the key players before passing judgment. Yet Curtin endorses Kerry-Anne Walsh's *The stalking of Julia Gillard* even though it could be described as polemical Indeed, Curtain acknowledges that 'Walsh is clearly a supporter of Gillard'.[201] Curtin summarises Walsh's arguments uncritically even though Jonathan Holmes, former host of ABC television's *Media Watch* program, was disappointed in both the book's lack of explanation about why the Press Gallery functions the way it does, and how some Murdoch newspaper editors actually instruct their journalists.[202] Gerard Henderson also corresponded with the author over a factual error.[203]

Curtin writes approvingly of several other books which have a major focus on the role of gender in the Gillard's prime ministership and discuss, in particular, how 'sexist and vitriolic excesses were, for the most part, tolerated, disseminated and promoted by mainstream media.'[204] It is apparent that, for Curtin, Kelly's does not give sufficient weight to this issue and does not, therefore, apprehend it is likely 'that the intensity and nature of Australian

[200] Curtin, p. 197.
[201] Ibid., p. 198.
[202] Jonathan Holmes, 'Stalking Julia', *The Wheeler Centre*, podcast, 15 September, 2015, viewed 10 July 2016, <http://www.wheelercentre.com/broadcasts/podcasts/the-wheeler-centre/stalking-julia>.
[203] Gerard Henderson, 'Media Watch Dog 215: Richard Ackland's angry anti-Coalition rant; and Mark Scott's revealing interview', *The Australian 28 February 2014*, viewed 11 July 2016, <www.theaustralian.com.au/opinion/...dog.../story-fnkqo7i5-1226840994243>.
[204] Curtin, p. 199.

media representations were indeed exceptional, thereby making Gillard and her governments' accomplishments remarkable.'[205]

Certainly, Kelly states that the focus on gender by many of Gillard's critics was 'a sad and contemptible feature of the time.'[206] Kelly goes on to cite some of the most egregious examples and sees this level of discourse as reflecting 'the coarsening of private space and public debates' where 'Language and images that once carried heavy sanction were either tolerated or acceptable or presented as funny.'[207] Kelly also points out that Tony Abbott was the subject of negative representations regarding his appearance, values 'and his alleged misogyny.'[208] This consideration of both sides of the debate, however, leads Kelly to the conclusion that 'Gillard's tragedy is that she defined herself as a female prime minister by accusing Abbott of misogyny. This should not have been the benchmark. There should have been a better, more celebratory way.'[209] Such a conclusion is highly contestable given the high degree of sexist and misogynist discourse that pervaded the public sphere during Gillard's time in office; and, to reiterate one of Curtin's central points, 'a systematic analysis of how and to what extent gender mattered to the fortunes of Gillard and her governments' is yet to be written.[210] Nonetheless, Kelly's account of these years, despite the contestability of some of his conclusions, remains valuable for its laying out of the opposing views of the key players in an attempt to seek a balanced historical account.

Conclusion

In the penultimate paragraph of their introduction to *The Cambridge History of Australia*, Alison Bashford and Stuart Macintyre wrote that 'in the opening years of the present

[205] Curtin, p. 203.
[206] Kelly, *The March of Patriots*, p. 404.
[207] Ibid., p. 405.
[208] Ibid.
[209] Ibid., p. 411.
[210] Curtin, p. 202.

century there were renewed claims for the Australian way'.[211] This 'was a mix of neoliberal economic policies, prudent regulation and social welfare measures, and it was seen to have secured continuous expansion with low inflation, strong employment and a cohesive resilient society.'[212] It is an indication of the journalists' status that the historians cite Paul Kelly and George Megalogenis as the sources for this analysis. Bashford and Macintyre also state that this 'claim to Australian exceptionalism appeals to the political class…who are its champions and beneficiaries.'[213] They go on to suggest that this view pays 'insufficient attention to the problems of political disengagement and constriction of public debate.'[214]

Similarly, in *The Cambridge Economic History of Australia***,** Simon Vile and Glenn Withers also acknowledge their contributions but also with some qualifications. Kelly and Megalogenis are both described as: 'Major journalistic interpreters of Australia's story' who are noteworthy for their use of 'an economic historical narrative.'[215] But, earlier, Ville and Withers refer to some recently published books – whose authors are located outside the academy (*The Australian Moment* is among them) – which use Australia's economic history as a means to chart the nation's future. These publications are described as 'good reads' but they 'mostly polarise between the triumphalist or doomsayer mentality, galvanising history to promote a cause'.[216] Nonetheless, these references in such prestigious and comprehensive text books are indicative of Kelly and Megalogenis's status as public intellectuals in the Australian public sphere. This at once testifies to the salience of their works among a politically engaged public while revealing the objections that some scholars have to different aspects of their interpretations.

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[211] Alison Bashford and Stuart Macintyre, 'Introduction' in Alison Bashford and Stuart Macintyre, (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Australia*, Cambridge University Press. Port Melbourne, Victoria, 2013, p.12.
[212] Ibid.
[213] Ibid.
[214] Ibid.
[215] Simon Ville and Glen Withers, 'Introduction: connecting past present and future' in Simon Ville and Glenn Withers, (eds.), *The Cambridge Economic History of Australia***,** Cambridge University Press. Port Melbourne, Victoria, 2015, p.4.
[216] Ibid., p. 2.

This chapter, through comparisons of their books with a range of other, primarily academic, accounts, supports the value and utility of their political histories despite the reservations and qualifications of some academic specialists. But, keeping in mind Manne's pairing of *The Lucky Country* and *The End of Certainty*, would any of the significant post-war histories of Australia produced by authors, either independent scholars or academics, emerge completely unscathed from close critical scrutiny? Kelly and Megalogenis follow in the tradition of 'more popular historians' whose books 'contained the combination of thematic breadth, chronological span and literary skill needed to bridge the divide between a more specialised historical practice and the demands of a broader audience.'[217] This chapter also identifies some of significant in lacunae their books regarding important policy areas; but neither man claimed to be producing comprehensive histories. They were providing interpretations of what they considered to be the most significant actions of particular Australian federal governments. Academics from a range of disciplines will, no doubt, continue to continue to respond to the work of journalists-historians in different ways, but both professions will, no doubt, continue – as they have done in the past – to 'provide an enlarged understanding of politics.'[218]

[217] Frank Bongiorno,'"Real Solemn History" and its Discontents: Australian Political History and the Challenge of Social History', *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, vol. 56, no.1, 2010, p. 10.
[218] Stuart Macintyre, 'The Rebirth of Political History', *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, vol. 56, no.1, 2010, p. 5.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this thesis was to examine the role of two prominent Australian media intellectuals from a number of perspectives. These include their roles as journalists, historians and public intellectuals. The first conclusion to be drawn is that in all three roles both Paul Kelly and George Megalogenis (the latter until 2016), have generally been influential proponents of the version of market-orientated economic policies which have been pursued by Australian federal governments, particularly the Hawke, Keating and, to a lesser extent, the Howard governments. In addition, this thesis supports the argument that Kelly and Megalogenis were, more precisely, particularly influential on Australia's political class in portraying the view that the reforms implemented by the Hawke-Keating, and to a lesser extent, Howard governments, were essential in the long run of national prosperity since 1991. Further, their emphasis on the need for a high standard of executive leadership to achieve such reform is generally supported by this research. In addition to supporting the argument that they have both been influential in making this assessment of national political and economic success a widespread view of Australia's political class, the thesis finds they have strong grounds for doing so. However, both their harsh assessments of post-federation protectionist policies and that a `broken' model of Australian federal government has emerged since the late 2010s is contested.

With regard to their specific role as journalists this thesis concludes that their journalism is – despite differences in style and substance – characterised by a level of discourse which serves the process of mediated democratic deliberation and enhances the Australian political public sphere. The analysis of their political commentary in chapters two and three

reveals they bring a level of contextual explanation which is characteristic of what some scholars describe as `knowledge journalism'.

The survey of their journalism in these chapters reveals an emphasis in their commentary on policy analysis over `the game of politics'. In writing on a very diverse set of policy areas, and responding to political events, it is evident that Kelly and Megalogenis are committed to the values of autonomy and the traditional ideal of professional objective journalism which emphasises the centrality of reasoned analysis in rational critical debate. But, even though a marker of their commentary is the acknowledgement of the complexity of public policy debate, it is clear that – in economic matters at least – both Kelly and, until recently, Megalogenis have been consistent advocates for market-based solutions. Hence, the appearance of even-handedness does not preclude the argument that Kelly and Megalogenis's journalism contributes to a discursive frame that legitimises some neoliberal policy agendas and delegitimises opponents.[1]

This is also reflected in their historical works which are critically examined in chapters one and three and, comparatively in chapter five. The thesis acknowledges the minority view that a limitation of their histories is that insufficient attention is given to the problems of political disengagement, insecurity, inequality and the role of the media in public debate. But it concludes, that the majority of their books, nonetheless, remain valuable in their elucidation of executive power in Australian politics and as historical accounts of federal governments from Whitlam onwards. The utility of their books stems from a number of factors including: the accessibility of their prose style; their synthesis of a wide range of primary sources while maintaining a critical distance from them; their depiction of how officials at the highest levels of power operate; and the cogency of their empirical arguments

[1] Damien Cahill, `Ideas-Centred Explanations of the Rise of Neoliberalism: A Critique', Cahill argues `that neoliberal think tanks were more successful in articulating discursive frames that legitimated neoliberal policies…than in wielding direct policy influence…'

regarding the pragmatic Australian policy model and economic prosperity. However, the comparison, in chapter five, of their historical work with other major academic articles and book-length histories of the periods they cover also reveals the constraints of their one volume histories which, inevitably, contain lacunae that will be a source of criticism from some historians and policy specialists. Comprehensive coverage of federal government policy is often best achieved through specialists in edited works. In addition, state politics is only referred to when it impinges upon the national arena. Nonetheless, in a division of intellectual labour in which academics and journalists can both be useful sources of (sometimes different forms of) information, Kelly and Mega have had a useful role to play.

Chapter four also references key texts on the history of public intellectuals to conclude that Kelly and Megalogenis should indeed be considered as major public intellectuals and surveys how their arguments and analyses have, at different times, and for different purposes, been engaged, by a range of politicians, political operatives, elite journalists and academics. The research also demonstrates that, although they have functioned largely as `organic' intellectuals who – as opposed to `traditional' intellectuals – speak for a particular class, this does not diminish the value of their journalism or their historical interpretations. Although Megalogenis – as discussed below – has, since leaving News Corp, transitioned to the role of a traditional intellectual in his advocacy of policies that urge state intervention rather than further neoliberal reform.

A related argument of this thesis is that their influence as public intellectuals on the political class is achieved in several ways. These include: their skills across a range of media platforms; peer recognition; access to the highest levels of official power and their commitment to writing contemporary political history. This thesis also reveals that their effectiveness in championing political leadership and economically liberal policies is

evidenced through specifying the extent to which they have been referenced as authorities by a range of academics, politicians, journalists and policy actors. This, in turn, indicates their status as `super achievers' among Australian political journalists.

The End of the Australian Moment?

In 2017 `the Australian moment' appeared to continue as the country entered its 26th year without a recession. This was in a global environment marked by anaemic growth, massive debt levels and a rise in populist politics in Europe and the United States. Yet the Australian political system did not mirror its apparent economic exceptionalism. There had been five prime ministers in six years, two one term state governments and a federal election result which saw the incumbent Coalition government narrowly re-elected with a one seat majority and the return, after nearly 20 years, of the right-wing populist One Nation party under the leadership of Pauline Hanson. Of the latter development Paul Kelly wrote: `If you want evidence our political system is in decline then Hanson – with her toxic social ideas and economic populism – is a prime exhibit.'[2] It was further confirmation of his view that Australian politics was in crisis.

Kelly and Megalogenis were among those commentators who believed the nation's economic strength and political stability was becoming increasingly fragile. Their analyses of 'the state of the nation' shared much in common but they diverged strongly in their prescriptions. They were among the leading chroniclers of the causes and character of the long boom but it was Megalogenis who had shown the most marked evolution in his political thought.

For Megalogenis the open economic model, ushered in by Hawke and Keating, was becoming increasingly ineffective and left the nation `unnecessarily exposed to the extended

[2] Kelly, `Turnbull's long road to stability', *The Australian*, 6 July, 2016, p. 12.

crisis in capitalism.'[3] The open economy which had been crucial in delivering the long period of prosperity and remained `the gold standard', nonetheless needed significant adjustments as Australia faced a growing number of economic problems.[4] These included rising inequality, corporate tax avoidance, wage stagnation following the end of the mining boom, unemployment reaching 6% in 2014 (which was the first time, since the 1940s, it had moved in the opposite direction to the U. S. employment rate), the growth in part-time workers to constitute a third of the work force, decreasing public investment, increasing urban congestion and rapidly rising house prices in the major capital cities.[5]

Megalogenis and Kelly saw that the potential for the economic malaise to become far more serious due to wider institutional problems. Megalogenis claimed the major political parties lacked viable policy solutions, while `trade unions divide between the ineffective and the corrupt' and business was `relentless' in its `pursuit of concessions from government.' [6] The media gave precedence to personalities, political game-playing and `covering their rivals' over analysis.[7]

Thus he shared a similarly pessimistic perspective to Kelly regarding the seemingly `broken' elements of the Australian political system. This theme, as set out in the last chapter of *Triumph and Demise*, seemed to be borne out by widespread disappointment in the Turnbull government's policy agenda and the uncertainty following the closeness of the federal election result. For Kelly, it was evidence of `a divided country… confronting the risk of policy paralysis' which, in turn, suggested `dysfunction in the political system will intensify.'[8]

[3] Megalogenis, 'Balancing Act: Australia between recession and renewal', *Quarterly Essay*, Issue 61, 2017, p. 58.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid. p. 13.
[6] Ibid., p. 3.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Kelly, `Fragmented politics endangers the PM — and the country,' *The Australian*, 4 July, 2016, p. 6.

Yet, while their diagnosis was similar, their prescriptions were vastly different regarding the role of government. Megalogenis argued that government should take advantage of record low interest rates to borrow funds to invest in productive infrastructure. In addition, negative gearing should be wound back and superannuation tax concessions reduced; indeed, `Turnbull' needed `to abandon the Liberal mantra that taxes must always be cut.'[9]

Conversely, Kelly clung largely to the old shibboleths of neoliberal reform – `budget repair, free trade, open markets, higher productivity, innovation and corporate tax relief' which were `the policies that have delivered prosperity over the past 40 years' and remained `the hope for our future.'[10] Although Kelly argued that budget repair `can only prevail when presented in a firm framework that includes morality and fairness', he was not prepared to concede the limitations of the open economic model or propose the sort of specific solutions Megalogenis put forward.[11] Kelly did acknowledge `that future necessary budget sacrifices must be based on a demonstrated and just sharing of the community burden; and redoubling efforts on an infrastructure agenda for the nation.'[12] But these are not Kelly's central concerns, nor does he put forward precise policy prescriptions. Rather he urges government `to champion with bravery the fundamental precepts of budget repair, growth and productivity essential to economic liberalism.'[13]

The shift in Megalogenis's political thinking was part of a broader trend, one described by journalist, Lenore Taylor, as `a growing wave of thought that the economic challenges of the 2010s cannot be solved by the old 1980s political consensus – the consensus that said economic growth is best achieved by market deregulation and lower taxes and lower

[9] Megalogenis, *Balancing Act*, p. 45.
[10] Kelly, `PM finally makes move on economy', *The Australian*, 20 August 2016, p.16.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Kelly, `PM must contain populists to win the battle of ideas', *The Australian*, 10 August 2016, p.12.
[13] Ibid.

spending that generate growth, and allow all boats to rise by providing the revenue for governments to pay for social programs and do something or other about poverty.'[14]

Taylor references Thomas Piketty and his arguments regarding the inimical effect of inequality on growth and, counter to prevailing neoliberal tenets, that well-targeted welfare spending is `a first-order revenue boosting exercise in itself'.[15] Taylor also quotes from IMF and OECD reports on the need to address inequality, as well as from the Centre for American Progress Inclusive Prosperity Commission which was chaired by former U.S. Secretary of the Treasury, Lawrence Summers, and British Labour MP, Ed Balls.

Taylor goes on to quote extensively from Megalogenis's quarterly essay (another example of his influence on the political class) and mentions Tom Bentley and Jonathan West's Griffin Review essay, `Time for a New Consensus' which shared much in common with *Balancing Act*. Many of these issues were also addressed in a major policy document from the ALP. Indeed, the paper, entitled `Growing Together' addressed in detail the issue of inequality in Australia but it received little attention in the subsequent election campaign.[16]

Yet the debate about the role of markets and inequality was even more wide-ranging than Taylor suggests. Nobel laureates, Paul Krugman, Michael Spence and, particularly, Joseph Stiglitz have written extensively about the effects of rising inequality and the role of the state.[17] Moreover, since the GFC, `An ideologically broad range of financiers and elite business managers' – including, inter alia, Warren Buffet, George Soros and Mohammed El-Erian – have written and spoken `about the need for a new and more inclusive type of

[14] Lenore Taylor, `A shift in political thinking is giving Labor a sense of purpose', *The Guardian*, 18 March 2016, viewed 21 August 2016, https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2016/mar/18/a-shift-in-political-thinking-is-giving-labor-a-sense-of-purpose>.
[15] Ibid.
[16] *Growing Together: Labor's Agenda for Tackling Inquality*, 2016, viewed October 16, 2016, *<cdn.australianlabor.com.au/documents/Growing-Together.pdf>.*
[17] See, for example, Joseph E Stiglitz, *The Price of Inequality: How Today's Divided Society Endangers Our Future*. W. W. Norton & Company, New York, 2012; Paul Krugman, 'Why Inequality Matters', *New York Times*, 16 December, 2013, p. 25,(one of many articles and blog posts on this subject); Michael Spence, 'How Inequality Found a Political Voice', *Project Syndicate*, viewed 2 February, 2017, <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/technology-and-mobilization-against-inequality-by-michael-spence-2016>.

capitalism…'[18] While, in the Australian context, economists such as Saul Eslake and Chris Richardson and think tanks such as the Grattan Institute and the Committee for Economic Development of Australia have made detailed policy prescriptions, often at odds with neoliberal tenets, in an attempt to address the multifarious economic and social problems faced by the political system.

Kelly was well aware of the international nature of this debate and, like Megalogenis has made his own acute analysis of the problems faced by the contemporary Australian economy and polity:

> The forces of disintegration and disruption in the US and UK are not just public anger and flawed leadership — there are profound cultural and structural shifts at work in Western democracies that are replicated to varying extents in Australia. They include public distrust in the political system, the demise of confidence in governing institutions, disenchantment with the main political parties, the problems of weak growth and rising inequality — though Australia has limited the damage from these two negatives — a fragmented media market and the moral failure of banks and Wall Street during the GFC.
>
> This has been compounded by the rise of individuality that has shattered the conformity of values that defined the democracies for most of the post-World War II. Cultural conflicts abound over core principles — same-sex marriage, climate change and the rise of Islam. The crisis of masculinity hits hard for older, less educated men troubled in the economy and in personal relations. The risk is an entrenched underclass. Beyond this, there is a decline in social mobility — the test of successful societies — that once enabled the underprivileged to rise to middle-class prosperity in one generation.[19]

Kelly identifies this as 'a crisis of the contemporary liberal society' where 'Society is being divided' between 'economic winners and stragglers from globalisation; progressives and traditionalists in the battle over cultural changes.'[20] Moreover, the failure is collective as:

> Both the Right and Left — in Australia and elsewhere — are guilty parties. The Right promoted markets and globalisation without sufficient concern for the losers (once again Australia limited the damage on this front); the Left clung to an old-fashioned

[18] Rana Foroohar, `American Capitalism's Great Crisis', *Time*, vol. 187, no. 19, 2016, viewed, 1 October 2016, < http://time.com/magazine/us/4327411/may-23rd-2016-vol-187-no-19-u-s/>.
[19] Kelly, 'Seismic Shifts Rattle the Foundations of Democracy', *The Australian*, 13 July 2016, p.12.
[20] Ibid.

> big government model, and then turned to cultural transformation from the environment to human rights to identity politics. The idea of The People is being eroded in Western politics. It is surrendering on the Left to the notion of identity — the defining influence is becoming race or religion or sexuality or gender. Identity politics is core to social fragmentation. At the same time the idea of an economically deprived underclass becomes poison to the advance of economic liberalism.[21]

Kelly goes on to point out that: 'The losers in these battles turn against the status quo. They take flight to anger, alienation or disengagement…Much of the political divide has a demographic dimension.'[22] He cites Pauline Hanson as 'a classic study in channelling multiple alienation — people at risk from economic disruption, resisting cultural changes and the over-50s on the age spectrum.'[23]

Much of this analysis is an example of Kelly's skills of summary and explication at its best but there is much that is, also, problematic. His depiction of identity politics understates the significance of the achievements of various social movements in advancing a wide-ranging equal rights agenda, and, arguably, overstates their impact on social cohesion. Megalogenis, in contrast, is more sanguine about such changes – although both men have little to say about climate change policy. Moreover, Kelly's conclusions lack the detail and depth of his analysis. Kelly falls back on familiar pronouncements: 'The lesson…is that people won't be lectured to by policy elites and told what is good for them' and 'Politicians…need to listen and be seen to listen.'[24] While 'Politicians need to sell economic and social policy together as mutual reinforcements' has been repeated by Kelly many times since the conclusion of *The End of Certainty*.[25] Kelly clearly understands, and explains, the economic and political challenges but does not, in this instance, advocate polices that go against his employer's ideological line. Any reforms that require increased revenue are not advocated or treated as

[21] Kelly, 'Seismic Shifts Rattle The Foundations of Democracy', p. 12
[22] Ibid.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid.

highly problematic. For example, he described Peter Costello's criticisms of Labor policy which sought to increase capital gains tax and limit negative gearing to new properties as `lethal.'[26] At no point in his campaign coverage did Kelly analyse the merits of these policies or acknowledge the support they received from a wide range of economists. Indeed, in his coverage of the 2016 election campaign he saw 'the progressive policy direction of Labor and the Greens ('more spending, protectionism, higher taxation, economic regulation, a more entrenched industrial relations status quo, more refugees and more cultural libertarianism) as 'misreading the economic management imperative' which involved 'economic reform to save the nation's living standards.'[27]

This suspicion, of what Kelly calls the progressive agenda, was also seen in one of his columns on American politics where a speech by Hillary Clinton which 'revealed the aggressive new norms that define the Democrats: big-spending social programs, trade protectionism, income redistribution, an inclusive, culturally progressive America' was regarded as 'a cause for grave concerns.'[28] Yet Kelly is unwilling to discuss in detail, let alone advocate, some of the redistributive polices that are likely to achieve his plea that 'future necessary budget sacrifices must be based on a demonstrated and just sharing of the community burden…'[29]

In the 2016 federal election where the coalition campaigned on a narrative 'in which spending is the only villain and tax cuts the hero', and they were supported in this 'by the editorial writers at the *Australian Financial Review* and *The Australian*' and some conservative think tanks.[30] In this debate Kelly clearly sided with his employer while

[26] Kelly, `Old glories spotlight new worries', *The Australian*, 5 March 2016, p.15.
[27] Kelly, `The chasm between populist politics and cold financial reality', *The Australian*, 21 May 2016, p. 20.
[28] Kelly, `Danger in the age of political disruption', *The Australian*, 30 July 2016, p.16.
[29] Kelly, `PM must contain populists to win the battle of ideas', *The Australian*, 10 August 2016, p.12.
[30] Lenore Taylor, `Pesky facts are spoiling Scott Morrison's economic story', *The Guardian*, 15 April 2016, viewed 27 June 2016, < https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2016/apr/15/pesky-facts-are-spoiling-scott-morrisons-economic-story>.

Megalogenis advocated reforms which reflected the wider debate about inequality and the crisis in global capitalism. How this will ultimately play out remains to be seen but this seems to be a period which may mark the end, or the beginning of the end, of a policy regime where

> a large scale problem emerges; a set of taken-for-granted ideas is thrown into question and leaders scramble for solutions (in which the ideas of critics, and often of long-dead dissenters assume a fresh valency). An alternative is hammered out and over time a new political `settlement' is arrived at. This is consolidated and becomes the consensus framework for political reasoning and political action until the energy of the regime is exhausted or its inherent flaws themselves generate an unlooked for reversal and throw all the `certainties' of the day into question – and so the consensus collapses and the cycle starts again.[31]

If this proves to be the case, then Megalogenis will be in the vanguard of recognising this transition, while Kelly remains an example of an organic intellectual who has not realised the high point of the prevailing policy regime has passed. No matter the outcome, both men will likely remain prominent voices in the Australian `space of opinion' for some time.

Kelly enters his seventh decade in 2017 but seems intent on maintaining his prominence in the political public sphere through his regular newspaper columns, his weekly television program on Sky television and, no doubt, more books. Megalogenis remains intent on commenting on politics and culture through his twitter feed, as well as occasional articles and sporadic appearances in the electronic media, but books, and possibly further television documentaries, will also continue to constitute his greatest impact in political and cultural debate.

This thesis has argued for the importance of their role as elite columnists, producing sophisticated commentary and analysis for the political class, in the Australian democracy. But it is their books which have marked their major contributions to Australian political

[31] Walter, *What Were They Thinking?*, p. 341.

culture and intellectual life. The contribution of the two journalists as contemporary political historians is unmatched by others in their field. Their major books have been supplemented, but not necessarily superseded by other book length accounts of the periods they have chronicled. Of course, the ephemeral nature of journalism and, even, political books, makes it difficult to predict how well their interpretation of political history will stand the test of time. But, as this thesis attests, the endorsement of much of their work – albeit qualified at times – by a range of journalists, politicians, several academics and intellectuals – as well as other members of the political class suggests their interpretations constitute a significant legacy for future scholars. Indeed, it is a sign of their stature that even those who disagree with their particular policy analyses or prescriptions still engage with their work. Hence the careers of Paul Kelly and George Megalogenis offer formidable models for aspiring media intellectuals in the dynamic and increasingly complex space of mass-mediated opinion in Australian politics.

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