# Sino-Australian Relations, 1949-1972: Influences and Undercurrents

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## Abstract


This thesis focuses on the Sino-Australian relationship following the setting up of the People's Republic of China in 1949 and Australia's eventual normalisation of diplomatic relations with the PRC in 1972 once Gough Whitlam became Prime Minister of Australia. It aims to show that there was a range of influences at play during this period and that domestic factors were more powerful than American influence. It also focuses on the way in which epistemic communities within Australia created an undercurrent in favour of granting recognition throughout the period and argues that this undercurrent allowed Whitlam to act so swiftly in establishing diplomatic relations once he came to power.

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# CHAPTER 1

## Introduction

This thesis is about Australia's refusal to normalise diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China (PRC) between 1949 and 1972. One commonly held assumption is that Australia's policy of non-recognition was the result of blindly following American policy and was based on the public perception that the new communist regime would pose a threat to Australia's security. This thesis, however, will argue that the PRC was not a threat to Australia at that time and that, in addition to American influence, domestic factors played a major part in the policy directions adopted by Australian governments during the period. It will also argue that because there were competing epistemic influences within Australia, the decision not to normalise relations with the PRC was by no means unanimous within political circles throughout the period in question. Indeed, there was an undercurrent that favoured the normalisation of relations with the PRC from the outset, and this only became more pronounced during Whitlam's leadership of the opposition Australian Labor Party (ALP).

The setting up of the PRC by Mao Tse-tung on October 1, 1949 created a dilemma for Australia. The end of the civil war in China did not mean the end of Chiang Kai-shek and the Kuomintang (KMT). Whilst the communists took control of the mainland, the KMT shifted their base to the island of Formosa (Taiwan) and proclaimed themselves to be the rightful rulers of China as the Republic of China (ROC). With two regimes claiming to be the rulers of China, this simply served to complicate Australia's position on the matter until the normalisation of relations with the PRC eventually took place in 1972.

This was also a period when tensions between many Western nations and the Soviet Union were increasing as the Cold War in Europe intensified. The USA was particularly concerned as the influence of the USSR was seen as a challenge to its influence in Europe, especially when a group of east European nations succumbed to communist control. These included, East Germany, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Romania and Bulgaria. Consequently, many in Australia would have viewed a communist nation to the north as a threat to the nation's security.

### Australian Perceptions of the Newly Formed PRC: 1949-1972

The thesis will aim to demonstrate that there were two main domestic trains of thought within Australia during this period, one of which was totally against the idea of normalising relations with the PRC, the other of which was in favour of recognition. It will be argued that the second of these two trains of thought created an undercurrent which flowed alongside the main anti-China perceptions throughout the period. The perceptions of those who were against the idea of recognition, and which emphasised the threat posed by the PRC, flowed much more strongly throughout most of the period, but the opposing undercurrent could not be totally diverted from its course and it began to gain strength towards the close of the period.

The thesis will also argue that it was this domestic undercurrent which eventually brought about changes in Australia's policy towards the PRC, and this undercurrent had nothing to do with Australia following American policy. In fact, this domestic undercurrent reduced Australia's dependence upon American policy. And whilst there is evidence that supports the

premise that those in Australia who refused to normalise relations were simply following the USA, it will be argued that even they could not turn a blind eye to Australia's domestic influences. The evidence will reveal that those who favoured the diplomatic recognition of the PRC managed to maintain and gradually build the flow of their ideas throughout the period under consideration. This will provide support for the conclusion that the changes in policy that came about in 1972 could not have been achieved if this undercurrent had not been flowing.

The perceptions and undercurrent mentioned above were often the result of discussions and output from groups known as epistemic communities whose role will be more closely examined in Chapters 2 and 3. Basically, they were networks of professionals who focussed and commented upon a particular issue or knowledge domain. As will be explained in Chapters 2 and 3, for the purposes of this thesis, epistemic communities can include political groups, public servants, news media, what might now be termed think tanks, and various community groups.

It will be argued that it was epistemic communities such as these that eventually created the conditions that allowed the change in policy and opinion towards the end of the period under examination. As such, the apparently sudden change of policy introduced by Whitlam, once he became prime minister in December 1972, will be seen to have been more the result of the aforementioned undercurrent that had been building momentum since the PRC came into existence. Without that undercurrent, I shall argue, it is unlikely that Whitlam could have been elected on a platform that supported the normalisation of relations with the PRC.

The avoidance of the normalisation of relations with the PRC for such a lengthy period is mainly indicative of the political stance of the Liberal party with regard to a new communist power and the party's willingness to maintain its ties with Chiang Kai-shek's Republic of China (ROC) on the island of Taiwan. For some commentators such a position was indicative of a failure on Australia's part, and on the part of many other countries, to accept the reality of a situation where the newly formed communist state represented 554 million people at the time when it came into existence compared to the ROC, based in Taiwan, representing just 7.5 million people. It is also indicative of Australia's apparent willingness to follow American foreign policy on this issue, as portrayed in much of the literature. However, as already indicated, this thesis will contest that viewpoint and argue that domestic factors were more important in shaping the policy of successive Liberal and Country Party coalition governments through the 1950s and 1960s.

Whilst it certainly seems that Australia's post-war foreign policy position closely mirrored that of the USA, I shall produce evidence to demonstrate that support for such a stance was not unanimous even in government circles during the Liberal/Country coalition's long period in power. On the surface, at least, and as reported in much of the literature, following American policy was the reason for Australia turning its back on the PRC. The main arguments in support of this are presented by some epistemic communities in the form of submissions, briefs and cablegrams to and from government ministers (Doran & Lee [Eds], 2002). These largely revolved around Australia's desire to feel secure in what some perceived to be an increasingly hostile and ideologically threatening region. The idea of the PRC being a threat was based very much on the images of China that were presented by the

USA (Mackerras, 1999:86) and which were adopted by Menzies and his government in Canberra as a ploy aimed at winning electoral support.

There is evidence to show that some of the domestic epistemic communities took on board these images and then used them to promote negative perceptions of China. An ongoing feature of this project, however, will be an exploration of the countervailing undercurrent which sought to present a more positive image of the PRC. That undercurrent supported the idea of establishing diplomatic relations with the PRC and also existed, to some extent, within government circles as well as in opposition ranks. The thesis will argue that Australian government politicians exploited the negative perceptions to gain electoral advantage, even though they may have harboured a desire to normalise relations. Evidence will be produced to show that such a situation existed even if, on the surface, successive governments presented a united, antagonistic front on the matter of relations with the PRC.

In the background, some domestic epistemic communities or their members were at work throughout the period and would eventually be instrumental in persuading a number of politicians, including some in the coalition government, to adopt the view that relations with the PRC should be normalised. I shall argue that it was this that allowed Whitlam very quickly to normalise relations on becoming prime minister. When Whitlam, as Opposition leader in 1971, visited the PRC, there was already a body of opinion within Australia that was in favour of taking this step.

**The Research Gap**

One research gap, which is rarely explored in the literature, is the lack of any significant support for the notion that Australia's policy on the PRC was largely the result of domestic factors. The fact that the support of the public could be gained by following an anti-PRC policy seems to have quickly swayed Menzies in adopting such a stance, but it is not explicitly stated as a reason for this policy position. By creating a sense of fear amongst the electorate and then presenting itself as the party which would stand up to the challenge, the Coalition aimed to drum up support to gain an electoral advantage. This is something that is not addressed in the literature.

On the other hand, there is no disputing the commonly held notion that the PRC, in its early years, was tied closely to the policy intentions of the Soviet Union and the tensions of the Cold War in Europe. For some commentators, this indicated that the PRC posed a threat to Australia. However, a second gap is in the fact that there is no evidence to support the notion that the PRC posed the kind of threat as depicted in "the downward thrust of communism" as presented by Menzies.

There is also a gap resulting from the dearth of literature dealing with the ways in which Australian perceptions during this period were shaped. In particular, the gap is in the failure to address the ways in which domestic epistemic influences, often in the form of epistemic communities, were instrumental in shaping perceptions which did not always conform to the government-held position and, eventually, were instrumental in shaping governmental decision-making on this issue.

The way in which there were epistemic influences which would have preferred to normalise relations with the PRC is not addressed in most of the currently available literature. This thesis will seek to close that gap by examining the part played by some of these domestic

epistemic influences and communities in creating a mood which favoured the normalisation of relations with the PRC. The evidence indicates that there appeared to be an increase in such support by the time Whitlam made his first trip to China in 1971. What appeared to be a sudden change in attitude amongst Australian politicians and the epistemic communities that influenced them will be seen to have been a gradually developing undercurrent. It will be argued that it was this undercurrent that allowed Whitlam rapidly to change governmental policy direction on the PRC once he came to power.

**Research Questions**

The countervailing perceptions, misconceptions and undercurrents mentioned above give rise to two major research questions whilst also revealing a gap in the literature. In view of the apparent contradictions in the perceptions that existed in the period 1949-72, the main questions to be addressed are, firstly, why was Australia able to make a sudden shift in its policy stance towards the PRC from one of long-standing enmity to one that swiftly brought about the normalisation of relations in 1972? The second main research question will explore the ways in which some epistemic groups sought to exert their influence.

**Outline**

Following the Literature Review and account of the Theoretical Approaches used in Chapter 2, Chapter 3 focuses on the way in which epistemic communities were influential in shaping opinion of the PRC. Whilst there were those who wanted to give recognition to the PRC from its inception, Chapter 4 will focus on the reasons why recognition was rejected by the Australian government in the period immediately following Proclamation and into the 1950s and 1960s.

Chapter 5 discusses the role played by some epistemic communities in prolonging the stand-off approach adopted by Australia up to the time of Whitlam's decision to mend the relationship. It also focuses on the way in which the undercurrent that began as a trickle in support of granting recognition to the PRC in 1949 and 1950 became a significant flow over time which, I will argue, enabled Whitlam to adopt the approach that he did.

Chapter 6 aims to develop an understanding of how Whitlam and some of his colleagues in the ALP were able to break the pattern of suspicion and fear that had come to mark Australia's perceptions of the PRC. It will go on to explore the way in which Whitlam was able to quickly grant recognition on becoming prime minister.

Chapter 7 will bring together the various strands of the project. It will also allude to the way in which negative perceptions have once again shaped the current relationship, thus providing a link with what will, hopefully, develop into a subsequent thesis.

Whilst there are no sections with the heading 'Analysis', the analysis of the events and the factors which shaped those events is an integral part of the commentary which appears on most pages of the thesis.

# CHAPTER 2

## Literature Used, and Theoretical and Methodological Approaches

### 1. Literature Review

A range of literature is available that provides a background to Australian responses to the events that form the basis of this project. However, much of the research will involve a close examination of primary sources such as contemporary news reports, parliamentary papers, and, where relevant, interviews. Those sources will be referred to in the course of the chapters that make up this thesis. Meanwhile, the literature which deals with epistemic communities will be dealt with separately in Chapter 3.

What follows is a review of secondary sources that deal with the Sino-Australia relationship and which, in doing so, reveal the research gap.

Numerous books and articles were used in obtaining information on the Sino-Australian relationship between 1949 and 1972 and these are the sources for this Literature Review. Of those items used, at least twenty comment on the perceived threat that the newly formed PRC posed. Many of the authors such as Kendall (2005), Burke (2001), Andrews (1985), Tsolidis (2018) and Clark (1967) allude to this invasion anxiety or to Australia's "Sinophobia" and being "in fear of China". As the literature demonstrates, once China became communist, there was an additional threat of an ideologically opposed power to the north which, in the eyes of some Australians, looked as if it could thrust through South-East Asia and onto Australia's doorstep. Strahan (1996: 151) explains that words such as "swarms" and "hordes" were used to create such negative images of China and refers to Australian perceptions of Chinese "bellicosity" (Ibid: 131).

These images are prevalent in much of the literature, even though there is no hard evidence to support the idea that the PRC was preparing to attack Australia. I shall argue that these negative perceptions became part of the Australian mindset regarding Asia and Asians, but that they were totally misconceived.

However, it was images such as these that created the fears of abandonment mentioned in so much of the literature. In part, this is linked to an historical anxiety about the possibility of being abandoned and invaded that Australia had displayed since 1788.

The early 'yellow peril' imagery from the 19th century Gold Rush period overlaps with the 'red menace' imagery of the 1950s and 1960s which persisted until Whitlam normalised relations with the PRC. As mentioned, many believed and promoted the idea that the PRC presented a threat to Australia and, therefore, accepted the notion of it being a 'red menace'. This image is prevalent in much of the literature, even though there is very little hard evidence to support such a notion. With images such as these being used, the threat posed by the communist PRC became a very real fear for many and it was one which was used for political purposes and electoral advantage by Menzies and many of his Liberal Country Party colleagues.

Whilst the Korean War and, later, the Vietnam War only served to fuel such images, this thesis will argue that the depictions of the PRC as a threat to Australia are misplaced.

However, it was these negative perceptions that created the fear of abandonment that is mentioned in so much of the literature.

The second major theme in much of the literature concerns repeated allusions to the way in which Australia quickly succumbed to American influence in the years following World War II, not least because the USA could assuage the fears of invasion and abandonment mentioned above. Wang refers to the "security guarantee" that America provided (2012:20), whilst Albinski, writing during the period under consideration, talks of "the pressing need to engage American support for an alliance" (1964:21) which gave rise to the formation of the ANZUS alliance in 1951 and the South-East Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO) in 1954. Referring to ANZUS, Gyngell recounts how its fear of abandonment meant that Australia joined with the USA in the alliance "as strongly as we could" (2014:382). Some also refer to Menzies' desire to seek the support of what he termed "great and powerful friends"; at one time, this would have been Britain, but by the end of World War II it was the USA. So, according to the literature, in its foreign policy, Australia began to mirror America in the years after World War II. Others who make this point include Mackerras (1996), Kendall (2005), FitzGerald (1977), Andrews (1985) and Beeson & Li (2014). These authors argue that Australia was seeking security through this relationship. Despite these voices in support of the notion that Australia simply followed American policy, this thesis will continue to argue that domestic factors exerted far greater influence in the shaping of policy. Much of the primary evidence supports such a proposition.

To promote the notion that Australia simply followed the US, there was a need for the vast majority of the secondary literature about Sino-Australian relations during this period to focus on the negative images. However "some of the talk about the 'thrust' of China sounds quite neurotic" (Andrews, 1985:45). These images were often based upon Australian perceptions of China from the 19th century, but they were images which persisted well into the 20th century.

Despite the largely negative perceptions of China between 1949-1972, as revealed in so much of the literature, both Strahan (1996) and Mackerras (1999) mention how American writer Edgar Snow (1962 & 1974) offers a distinctly contrary image of China during this period, one which Mackerras describes as tantamount to "Sinophilia". For most commentators, however, it was only after Whitlam's visit to China in 1971, that attitudes began to change. Xenophobic and racist attitudes persisted in parts of the Australian political sphere and amongst many in the media and the general populace.

Meanwhile, regardless of the positive constructions of the PRC to be found in some of the primary sources, Reilly and Yuan (2012) confirm that the negative images described in the majority of secondary sources continued through the 20th century and into the 21st century. For those politicians who, in 1949 and in the years following, wished to denigrate the PRC in order to gain political capital, the traditional negative constructions that depicted China as a threat were a useful political tool.

Writing at a time when relations between Australia and China were distinctly cold, Albinski (1965) provides a comprehensive analysis of Australian constructions of China over the fifteen years following the proclamation of the PRC and he deals with the policies adopted by Australia to reflect these constructions. As is indicated in so much of what was written about the period, the Liberal and Country opposition parties focused on the Communist threat in the

lead up to the 1949 General Election. In view of the apparent electoral advantage it bestowed, this construction became a dominant theme in Australian politics for more than two decades after that. These negative perceptions of China persisted throughout the 1950s and 1960s with the PRC being presented as "alien to Western civilisation and the human spirit itself" (Strahan, 1996:127).

The negative constructions had come into play largely because of the unwillingness of many Australians to come to terms with the 'other'. In connection with this, Griffiths describes the "ambivalent relationship" that developed, with the formation of the PRC, when both major parties had, in fact, considered granting recognition (2012:7). That ambivalence soon gave way to the hostility that was to frame Australia's constructions of China for the next twenty years. Meanwhile, Albinski asserts, "the China issue has become central, and far more than the concern of policy makers alone" (1965:467), which suggests that epistemic communities, other than those of the political elite, were instrumental in shaping opinion. Furthermore, the electoral support that Menzies managed to garner through his anti-PRC stance meant that it was not in the interests of the Liberal Country Party coalition to change its position.

In view of the Coalition government's policy stance, it was not surprising that the remote prospect of diplomatic recognition that was first considered in 1949 soon ceased to be an option. The policy of non-recognition was assumed by the government to have "widespread support" (Huck, 1970:309).

Despite the eventual change in attitude by some commentators, the prejudice that had endured for so long persisted in the ways in which China was presented by many. For example, we learn from an item edited by FitzGerald & Hewitt (1980) that Whitlam believed that many Australians had still not come to terms with the fact that the PRC had come into existence. So, there remained this combination of ignorance and fear. And whilst significant economic benefits eventually accrued after Whitlam granted recognition to the PRC, Australians' "long-standing prejudicial views of China" lingered into the 21st century (Wei, 2015:102).

A study of the literature indicates that the Australian discourse on the PRC between 1949 and 1972 was ostensibly one which offered negative constructions. When commenting upon and contrasting the ways in which state power manifests itself in China and in Australia, Kendall (2005:131) suggests that the freedoms we assume that we have in Australia are based upon an illusion and that the state here has its own ways of regulating and modifying citizens' behaviour. In other words, the freedom we supposedly possess in liberal democracies may not be as authentic as we assume. For example, when it comes to our assumptions about a state such as China, and the ways in which those assumptions are formed, Kendall posits the idea that actors in positions of power can shape the way perceptions are constructed for their own political purposes. Those who refuse to accept such constructions are no less at risk than may be the case for citizens in more autocratic regimes (somebody such as Julian Assange comes to mind in this context).

## 2. Theoretical Approach

This section will aim to define the two major theoretical elements that are used in this thesis, namely Constructivism and epistemic communities. As a precursor to the definitions, it is

worth noting that Alexander Wendt (1995), one of the leading proponents of Constructivism, points out that epistemic communities are an integral element in the Constructivist framework and have a vital role to play in shaping opinion and, thus, policy.

A key premise of this study is that the discourse in Australia regarding its relations with the PRC is fluid and has been shaped by events and by the constructions applied to these events by various agents or epistemic communities such as media commentators, academics, politicians and their advisers. As such, as Wendt suggested, these epistemic communities fit neatly into the Constructivist theoretical approach which will be at the heart of this project. Constructivism recognises the importance of agents in shaping international relations and epistemic communities can be said to operate as agents which can exert varying degrees of influence upon policy-makers and the decisions that they make. In the case of this study, the undercurrents created by epistemic communities eventually developed sufficient impact to allow a change in policy direction.

The second research question focuses directly on the ways in which epistemic communities operate and, thus, on the nature of their agency in constructing policy. The manner in which these research questions will be addressed suggests that a Constructivist approach is appropriate.

Constructivism

What follows is a brief critique of how IR theory might serve the research questions that will be addressed in this thesis. Neorealism and Neoliberalism will briefly be compared with Constructivism to assess which offers the most appropriate means of investigating the research questions.

Constructivism acknowledges the part played by a range of actors and agents in shaping the relationships between nations, and the epistemic communities that were operating in Australia at the time under consideration were instrumental in creating the undercurrents that allowed the sudden change in policy when Whitlam came to power.

Domestic actors, their ideas, their objectives, and the interests that they were pursuing, will be a key part of the analytical process used in this research project. Meanwhile, changing ideas and experiences over time can lead to players in the international field reconstructing their interests without there necessarily being any economic or military gain involved. When and if Neorealism is considered as a possible theoretical framework for this study, one needs to take into account the work of Waltz (2000) and Gilpin (1996) who see the acquisition of military power as being much more important than the Neoliberal faith in economic globalisation. Australia's membership of alliances that resulted post-1945 in its participation in the Korean, Vietnamese and Gulf Wars, might call for the use of a Neorealist theoretical approach in studying those events. Similarly, non-state terrorism has also played a part in the way in which more recent policy has been developed in Australia which would suggest a Neorealist approach for the study of events of that nature. However, the lines of enquiry used in this thesis suggest that a Constructivist approach is the most appropriate.

Adler, one of the key contributors to Constructivist theory, points out that "Constructivism occupies the middle ground between rationalist approaches (whether realist or liberal) and interpretive approaches (mainly post-modernist, post-structuralist and critical)" (1997:319). He goes on to argue that "constructivism, unlike realism or liberalism, is not a theory of

politics per se. Rather it is a social theory, upon which constructivist theories of international politics – for example, about war, cooperation and international community – are based" (Ibid:323); hence it provides a useful epistemological framework for studying and analysing international relations.

Hayes (2017) provides a particularly concise view about the nature of Constructivism when he writes that, "at its core constructivism is about incorporating the fundamentally social nature of humans into the study of international relations". Meanwhile, Wendt, another key exponent of Constructivism, argues there are many points on which Constructivists and what he terms "strong Liberals" would agree and where the theories overlap. For example, "They share a cognitive, intersubjective conception of process in which identities and interests are endogenous to interaction, rather than a rationalist-behavioral one [ie Realist] in which they are exogenous" (1992:394). Another useful, and very concise view, about the nature of Constructivism is presented by Hurd. He writes, "To be a constructivist in international relations means looking at international relations with an eye open to the social construction of actors, institutions, and events" (in Reus-Smit & Snidal, [Eds] 2008:312) which, once again is appropriate to the way in which this thesis is developed.

When dealing with the concept of national interest, Wendt talks of "four needs: physical survival, autonomy, economic well-being, and collective self-esteem" (1999:199), and these factors, amongst others, will be an important part of the conceptual framework that is used to analyse Australian discourse on the events under consideration. One commentator, Burchill, concludes, "Constructivists have sought to resuscitate the national interest as an explanatory tool for foreign policy analysis by arguing that it should be seen as a social construction… [and that national interests] vary as social conditions and national identities change" (2005:210). It is expected that the events under consideration and responses to them will reflect this point.

A Constructivist interpretation lends itself to the study of relations between Australia and the PRC between 1949 and 1972. Indeed, Chong states that Wendt's "Social Theory…sheds light on the dynamics of how states communicate, debate and crystallize their identities" (in Bliddal et al [Eds], 2013:227), and these processes are an integral part of the trans-national relations that will come under scrutiny within this study.

Whilst Wendt recognises the influence of Neoliberal theory upon a Constructivist approach, Neoliberalism does not provide the focus on the ways in which epistemic communities and other influence groups can shape and change the relationships between nations. Constructivism, on the other hand, recognises the ways in which these groups can use their agency to construct perceptions which, in turn, can have a significant impact on the way in which policies are constructed. Indeed, Constructivism offers a range of ways of exploring international relations which means that it lends itself to an exploration of the ways in which Australian constructions of the PRC were formed between 1949 and 1972. A range of factors were instrumental in shaping reactions and influencing the Sino-Australian relationship which further suggests that Constructivist theory is the most appropriate conceptual framework to explore the relationship during the period in question. In view of this, a Constructivist approach will be adopted to assess the ways in which various agents and epistemic communities influenced Australian opinion and foreign policy in relation to the period under consideration.

Nevertheless, there is significant debate surrounding the place of Constructivism as a theoretical foundation which aids the analysis of international relations. The fact that it recognises that the study of international relations is subject to a range of interpretations and that opinion can be shaped by a range of agents lends itself to this particular project which will include a focus on Australian perceptions of the PRC. As Wendt points out, "Constructivists argue that material resources only acquire meaning for human action through the structure of shared knowledge…For example 500 British nuclear weapons are less threatening to the United States than 5 North Korean nuclear weapons, because the British are friends and the North Koreans are not, and amity or enmity is a function of shared understandings" (1995:73). In other words, perceptions are all-important in shaping one's interpretation of shared knowledge or reality. Constructivists also acknowledge that the shared knowledge can be influenced by the ways in which politicians, the media and various other groups choose to present it, which means that the perceptions that go to make up shared knowledge are very much subject to change. The areas investigated as part of this project were very definitely shaped by changing perceptions over the period in question and in the years since, so a Constructivist approach is ideally suited to this study.

Epistemic Communities

As already mentioned, when exploring the appropriateness of the use of Constructivism as the theoretical base for this project, it is important to recognise that various agents, in the form of different epistemic communities, engage at a domestic level and at an international level. Amongst other things, this range of groups can strongly influence the construction of a state's identity and the policies it adopts. The identity that is constructed and the associated policies that are followed shape national interests. The research, therefore, will aim to investigate the impact of these epistemic communities upon the policy dialogue linked to the events and, more broadly, in connection with Australian constructions of China.

Peter Haas is often seen as the person who, in 1992 and in various publications since, first developed the idea of using the epistemic community as an instrument for the development of international relations (IR) policy. It is his original definition which is frequently referred to by later IR commentators as an entrée into the field of epistemic communities within the IR sphere. Even though the notion of using epistemic communities as a tool for the development of government policies related to IR has evolved since its inception thirty years ago, it is still worth using Haas' quite lengthy definition as an opener to this section:

> An epistemic community is a network of professionals with recognized expertise and competence in a particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy-relevant knowledge... Although an epistemic community may consist of professionals from a variety of disciplines and backgrounds, they have (1) a shared set of normative and principled beliefs, which provide a value-based rationale for the social action of community members; (2) shared causal beliefs, which are derived from their analysis of practices leading or contributing to a central set of problems in their domain and which then serve as the basis for elucidating the multiple linkages between possible policy actions and desired outcomes; (3) shared notions of validity – that is, intersubjective, internally defined criteria for weighing and validating knowledge in the domain of their expertise; and (4) a common policy enterprise – that is, a set of common practices associated with a set of problems to which their

> professional competence is directed, presumably out of the conviction that human welfare will be enhanced as a consequence (Haas, 1992:3).

Chapter 3 explores some of the ways in which various epistemic communities have operated in shaping perceptions of the PRC. However, before considering those matters, it is necessary also to consider other definitions of what epistemic communities are. In addition to the comprehensive definition provided above, Haas at one point offers a more straightforward definition: an epistemic community is "a collection of individuals who share the same worldview (or episteme)"; he continues with the view "that epistemic communities are channels through which new ideas circulate from societies to governments as well as from country to country" (1992:27). This seems straightforward enough, but different commentators proffer different definitions and even Haas's apparently straightforward view of these groups is not so inclusive as it at first appears.

The notion of epistemic communities or something similar was first mooted in the 1960s when it was used to describe communities focused on scientific thought. However, it was only in the 1980s and 1990s that it became a feature of IR theory (Antoniades, 2003:33). Moreover, by the early years of the 21st century the use of epistemic communities within IR theory was seen as a viable approach.

Epistemic communities can influence policy and the processes leading to policy decisions at all levels: local, national, international and transnational (Antoniades, 2003:30). Indeed, they have an important role to play beyond the domestic stage and often operate "on an international scale" and in doing so "they help policy actors to learn" (Dunlop, 2016:1). Basically, these groups of experts will often shine a light on issues or on possible solutions to problems that are being considered by politicians but about which the politicians may have only limited knowledge or expertise (Cross, 2013).

In terms of the composition of epistemic communities, Haas excluded politicians because of "their partisan and policy advocacy". However, politicians are the main actors in bringing any policy to fruition and they understand the political and programmatic complexities that need to be overcome in order to achieve this (Marier, 2008). Similarly, civil servants play a vital role in formulating policy, usually as members of parliamentary committees which, in themselves, are often the kinds of epistemic community that are directly involved in the decision-making process. Their importance lies in their ability to outline possible policy problems and their solutions.

Vitally important is the fact that epistemic communities engage in problem-solving and, in some instances, policy formulation. Politicians are experts in these fields and will, therefore, often be members of the epistemic communities that are engaged in such activities (Grødem & Hippe, 2019). It is therefore argued that politicians can operate as epistemic community members and that epistemic communities are very much involved in the political process (Ibid). The actual analyses and suggested solutions offered by epistemic communities can be prone to uncertainty when alternative views come into play, especially when politicians outside the epistemic community allow themselves to become embroiled in a battleground of opposing ideas. However, any solutions offered should not be too disruptive and will, ideally, present a clear idea of the best way forward (Cross, 2013).

The role of politicians as members of epistemic communities and communities of practice that influence policy-making will be demonstrated in a range of primary sources from Doran and Lee's 850-page book of primary governmental sources (2002) focussing on Sino-Australian relations in the period in question. It goes without saying that politicians, and especially those within the ruling party, will exert influence on the policy-making process, as will governmental advisers, but an exploration of sources from the period included in Doran and Lee's volume indicate that there was often disagreement within these communities.

Expertise and a problem-solving role are vital elements of epistemic communities (Clunan, 2016). As such, they have a role in framing an issue and addressing problems in a manner that is accessible to politicians. Once policy makers have recognised the problem, the epistemic community can then assist in suggesting ways to address the problem, drawing attention to the magnitude of the problem, and setting the agenda to deal with the problem. It is the uncertainty surrounding an issue that makes the epistemic community an important, sometimes vital, contributor on how best to tackle a particular problem. By suggesting ways in which policy-makers can address the issues, epistemic communities provide options for decision-makers to follow and, in doing so, they shape the actual decisions that are taken by the policy-makers.

Antoniades confers upon epistemic communities a much wider constitutive base than that envisaged by Haas. For Antoniades, an epistemic community's members "may engage in the policy process either directly (ie as members or representatives of governments or international organisations, or otherwise as decision-makers themselves) or indirectly (ie as consultants, members of think- tanks, journalists or any other position that allows them to influence the policy process)" (2003:31). Meanwhile, Haas sees epistemic communities as being more formal in nature "occupying niches in advisory and regulatory bodies" (1992:31). However, at one point he uses the term "epistemic-like communities" (Ibid:5) and it seems likely, therefore, that he would use that description to refer to some of the less formal groups as described by Antoniades.

When assessing the commentary on epistemic communities, it can be said that they often present politicians with knowledge that helps the politicians to make informed decisions, sometimes on an international level (Dunlop, 2016). Basically, therefore, an epistemic community possesses the skills and stature to consider and set policy (Dunlop in Araral, et al, 2012) and the term can be used "to describe any group of experts giving policy advice" (Ibid:231). What is apparent is that epistemic communities will often interact with a range of other actors in the process of building a body of knowledge.

## Methodology

The methodology is qualitative in nature and will adopt a heuristic approach whereby an interpretive focus will inform much of the content. It is assumed that as readers process what follows in later chapters, they will be able to arrive at possible answers to the research questions that were posed earlier in Chapter 1.

In what follows, it should become apparent that the undercurrent mentioned in earlier sections led to the significant policy change that Whitlam was rapidly able to introduce on becoming prime minister. In arriving at such a conclusion, it should be equally apparent that

whilst the influence of the USA on Australia's policy towards the PRC carried some weight, as surmised in so much of the literature, it was not so powerful as has been suggested.

Much of the literature used for the analysis is primary material in the form of some previously confidential government documents; newspapers and other primary documents will also be used, as will secondary sources when appropriate.

The methods used for accessing data and for collecting evidence are outlined below.

Primary Sources

The research questions will largely be addressed through the use of primary sources from the period. These will mainly comprise government documents, but will also include, where relevant, newspaper reports and the reports of other groups. These primary sources will reveal the undercurrent alluded to in this chapter. They will show that the apparently sudden change in policy that Whitlam adopted once he became Prime Minister was made possible by the long-lasting support for such a shift that had been an ongoing feature of the view held by some epistemic communities. A second type of primary evidence came from interviews from a small group of experts in the field of Sino-Australian relations.

A wide range of primary written sources from the period 1949-1972 has been used. These sources include previously confidential government documents which provide an insight into how different branches of government were viewing the whole idea of the possibility of normalisation of relations with the PRC. In particular, the tome edited by Doran and Lee (2002) has been an invaluable resource as it contains, in one volume, a vast range of documents from the period in question on the topic which is the focus of this study.

As editors of a fascinating volume, Doran and Lee have compiled a range of departmental documents from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade during the period 1949-72. The vast majority of these sources exhibit a close accord with the policies adopted by the government of the day, even if there are occasions when some officials are either critical of those policies or call for greater flexibility. The documents range from submissions to cabinet, to letters between diplomats, and all relate to Sino-Australian relations during the period in question. There are almost 400 documents covering about 850 pages with only a small number of pages of commentary from the editors and occasional detailed footnotes. The book provides valuable insights into the thinking of that epistemic community that can be described as political advisers and their political masters; it also includes a number of references as to how matters might be interpreted by the media and public opinion. Revealingly, the first 310 pages contain 134 documents covering the period 1949-1969, so a little more than one third of the documents are from that twenty year period; however, the final 525 pages of the volume contain 251 documents covering a period of only three years. This is indicative, it would seem, of the increased departmental activity and a flurry of communications over the "China Issue" in the few years leading up to normalisation of relations and diplomatic recognition. As such, it is also indicative of the way in which the undercurrent in favour of normalisation of relations became a point of increasing discussion and relevance in the few years prior to it actually happening.

An analysis of the discourse presented in these government documents and other documents from the period will, inevitably, be a feature of the following chapters. In Chapters 4-6, documents that reveal the countervailing undercurrent which allowed Whitlam to alter policy

so rapidly will feature and will be used to present evidence that the undercurrent was an ongoing and, eventually, significant force. The evidence will include government documents containing details of politicians' opinions and those of advisers and others in government service such as diplomatic staff. Whilst many government documents will contain extensive evidence on the government's publicly-expressed negative opinion of China, others will reveal that, contrary to these publicly expressed views, there were those within government circles who were pressing for the normalisation of relations with the PRC throughout the period. Many of these government documents, therefore, were the source of the undercurrent that challenged the direction of government policy throughout the period of non-recognition.

One of the interviewees mentioned in the next section, Stephen FitzGerald, suggested that the Women's Liberation Movement of the 1960s was influential in shaping public opinion, as were organisations such as the Country Women's Association, Rotary and Apex. So, it was epistemic communities such as these whose position on the PRC made a contribution to the more positive undercurrents that were flowing.

A second form of primary evidence was made available through interviews that were conducted in connection with this thesis. These were semi-structured interviews with a group of experts in Sino-Australian relations. In April 2021, during the week I travelled to Canberra to visit the National Library, I also travelled to Sydney. In these two cities, I was able to gain access to and interview six people who are renowned, for one reason or another, for their expertise or experience or both in the field of Sino-Australian relations. The views of these experts and others I interviewed in Adelaide or via Zoom will appear at various stages throughout this thesis.

The main purpose of this approach was to seek the opinions of a group of academics, authors or one-time government operatives on what they perceived to be key elements of the relationship between Australia and the PRC in the years 1949 to 1972 and later. Details of the interviews will be provided at appropriate points throughout the thesis. Biographical details of the interviewees are included in Appendix 1, whilst Appendix 2 is a copy of the semi-structured interview schedule. Appendix 3, meanwhile, is a copy of the Information Sheet that was sent to each of the interviewees when they were first approached.

Although the interviewees were few in number, conducting semi-structured interviews with this expert group allowed a flexible exploratory dimension that can never be available when extracting evidence from print data. As such, the interviews allowed subsidiary questions on what could be considered to be elements of the undercurrent of support for the recognition of the PRC. Where relevant, the interviewees' views on this matter will be revealed in the chapters that follow.

Secondary Sources

Secondary sources played an important part when the background for this project was being explored. As such, many of those secondary sources featured in the Literature Review.

As explained in the Literature Review, many of the secondary sources provide extensive evidence of the existence of negative perceptions of China between 1949 and 1972, and indeed prior to and, in some cases, following those dates. Along with similar evidence in some of the primary documents, it is very apparent that anti-China sentiment was a major

perception held by the many Australians between 1949 and 1972 and that it was a sentiment that was promoted by successive governments.

Nevertheless, any hint of support in secondary sources for the views carried in the undercurrent will be presented as further evidence that there was, by no means, universal agreement in Australia on the question of relations with the PRC.

Meanwhile, those secondary sources dealing with epistemic communities have not been included in the Literature Review but, instead, feature in Chapter 3. That chapter is devoted to epistemic communities and the ways in which they may shape the political agenda and government policy.

# CHAPTER 3

## The Role of Epistemic Communities in Shaping Perceptions of the PRC

### Introduction

A major premise of this thesis is that epistemic communities can be influential groups which often have a part to play in decision-making. For the purposes of this study, the impact of a number of epistemic communities will be examined whose impact during the period 1949-72 was apparent.

The chapter will explore the role of a range of epistemic communities, including politicians, public servants, the media, and other commentators including groups such as non-government organisations (NGOs), think tanks and those from academia.

There is a range of versions of epistemic communities (Meyer and Molyneux-Hodgson, 2010:1) and it is true to say that they "produce knowledge as much as they set out to influence politics" (Ibid). It is also true that "the boundaries of epistemic communities are crossed, open to debate and dynamic" (Ibid:4); this is indicative of the fluidity which can be used to identify these groups. Meanwhile, it can be argued that a narrow view of epistemic communities has led to "an otherwise promising approach to transnational networks in a globalising world" becoming marginalised (Cross, 2013:138). It is also true to say that the influence of epistemic communities can be quite varied (Ibid). Even though Cross is writing about the role of epistemic communities in recent times, it can be argued that the premise which she presents could apply to an earlier time such as that which forms the basis of this study. The fact that the concept of epistemic communities in IR had not been formulated at that time does not rule out its retrospective use to describe the various influence groups that were operating in Australia and, indeed, transnationally, between 1949 and 1972. The fact is that they can influence both state and non-state actors in a very powerful way. That would have been just as pertinent in an earlier age as it is now. Such actors could include rule-makers and a range of governmental and non-governmental organisations. However, these non-state actors may not always be viewed as epistemic communities. Nevertheless, it is my view that epistemic communities are more numerous and influential than they are often given credit for.

Where relevant, in what follows, there will be an analysis of the ways in which they shaped Australian perceptions of the PRC.

One argument in this chapter is that the media, including journalism, are a type of epistemic community that can influence public debate and government policy-making. Whilst some theorists might not consider the press to be an epistemic community, I am of the opinion that the editorial boards of newspapers are groups that comprise experts in the field of journalism and decide upon the range of topics that are reported in newspapers. As such, these boards will set the policy directions of individual newspapers and, in doing so, operate as epistemic communities. One clear impact of the media is its influence on public opinion. In turn, public opinion can exert influence upon political decision-making.

Meanwhile, whilst it is true that many of these expert groups fail to influence policy, even when they have been specially consigned to a role (Dunlop in Araral [Eds], et al, 2012), it can still be argued that epistemic communities often aim to involve local communities and the

media in a process of learning and discussion about the issues that they are considering. This can then lead to action. So, in regard to actual policy-making, the importance of the media and, indeed, public opinion, almost as the executors of epistemic community learning, is recognised. A similar point is made by Marier, even though he does not actually mention the media, when he says, "A good policy idea or proposal without a good messenger is guaranteed a rapid death" (2008:529). As Marshall McLuhan said in a chapter heading many years ago, "The Medium is the Message" (1964), and it is my contention that, without positive media coverage, in many instances, a pertinent policy idea could be stillborn.

For the purposes of this project, the wider constitutive base as described by Antoniades will be used. He distinguishes between two types of epistemic community: "The first has the character of an *ad hoc coalition* aiming at the solution of a particular policy problem…The second…has a more *constant and holistic character* aiming at the establishment and perpetuation of beliefs and visions as dominant social discourses" (2003:28). In addition, other groups that may not be classed as epistemic communities, but which exert influence upon policy-makers will feature in what follows. Using this broad-based approach will allow the inclusion of a much wider range of influence groups than would be the case if a narrow focus was used. I believe it is important to include as many of these groups as seems relevant in order to assess the impact of the different groups that seek to exert their influence upon government decision-making. Some of these groups might fall under the banner of communities of practice; indeed, there are clear similarities between communities of practice and epistemic communities. Usher & Ng (2020: 2) describe journalism as "multiple CoPs [Communities of Practice] tied together by distinct types of shared knowledge practices, norms and routines" which, as a definition, is very similar to some of those relating to epistemic communities. Meanwhile, when comparing epistemic communities and communities of practice, communities of practice "may not even be aware that they are engaged in a set of practices, and they may not even have a shared motivation, let alone specific policy goals" (Cross, 2013:146). This may well be a fitting description of those from the media, but it fails to take account of the significant influence of that particular group which is a prime reason for including it in this chapter. In the same way, if agenda-setting is seen as a characteristic of epistemic communities, it would certainly seem to be a reason to include journalists and other elements of the media as possessing a huge measure of influence. Indeed, members of the media certainly have a huge role to play in exerting influence, even if they still may not qualify strictly as epistemic communities.

With regard to this kind of influence, Cross presents a very clear assertion when she states, "a strong epistemic community that has a greater potential for influence is one that not only possesses a high degree of recognised expertise, but is also internally cohesive" (2013:148). Whilst such an assertion would seem to rule out the media as an influential community since, on the surface at least, its various branches lack internal cohesion, it is my contention that when parts of the media mount a campaign they can wield huge amounts of influence. Meanwhile, there is no reason why journalists who are specialists in a particular field should not be invited to participate in epistemic communities.

It is also worth noting what Cross has to say about Constructivism. She asserts that Constructivism provides a "valuable insight into both the external role and internal cohesion of epistemic communities" since it seeks to analyse the roles and behaviours displayed by

various actors (Ibid:149). Here is further evidence that it is the most appropriate approach to use.

It is important to recognise the influence that epistemic communities can exert and the ways in which they can generate and transmit knowledge. As such, they have a vital role to play in shaping national and international politics and in formulating policy. They can also be instrumental in shaping public opinion when the media are used to inform the public on a particular finding of an epistemic community. As such, they can shape policy decisions as influenced by public opinion.

**The Role Played by Different Epistemic Communities and Other Influence Groups**

It is now appropriate to examine the part played by different epistemic communities and influence groups and to make a brief assessment of the impact, if any, of each of these groups in the period up to Australian recognition of the PRC.

It is worth noting that with regard to the groups that are included below, there is always the possibility that some of them could fall under more than one category. For example, some think tanks may also be categorised as non-government organisations and vice versa. Indeed, such is the nature of epistemic communities, and these other influence groups, the definitions are fluid and their roles and major foci appear to evolve and change according to the needs of a particular period.

Antoniades mentions that "the organisation of conferences, seminars, press conferences, public discussions, lectures, publications, and so on" are just some of "the methods and practices" used by epistemic communities to achieve their aims (2003:33). So, there is a wide range of activities that can be seen as being typical of the modus operandi of epistemic communities. In each of the cases listed above, the public will often be made aware of these activities after their exposure in media reports. Exactly how even-handed or unbiased such media reports will be is open to question and will, no doubt, depend upon the organisation with which the journalist or other commentator is associated.

<u>Politicians</u>

When considering the epistemic communities or influence groups which can sway the direction of government policy, the most obvious are those that comprise politicians themselves. Much of what follows in later chapters will, indeed, be devoted to the position taken by Australian politicians and political parties with regard to matters pertaining to the state of Sino-Australian relations during the period 1949-72. In Chapters 5 and 6, an attempt will be made to discern policy differences between the main political parties of the period, namely the Liberal and Country Parties (known as the Liberal Country Party Coalition until later going under the name of the Coalition) and the Australian Labor Party (ALP).

There are two ways in which politicians can become members of epistemic communities: the first is when they are recruited as experts; the second is when they create their own epistemic communities (Grødem and Hippe 2019). By the time that Grødem and Hippe were writing their article, the influence of politicians who take on such a role had often become vital to the acceptance or otherwise of a proposed policy or piece of legislation since these members could exert influence in the parliament or within political parties. Meanwhile, the authors describe politicians who are also academics as having even greater potential influence when

they participate in an epistemic community because of the higher level of expertise they add to such a group. Since such politicians are themselves the experts in the field, they can overcome the influence of others who claim to be experts, especially during the latter stages of an epistemic community's deliberations.

Various authors challenge Haas' original notion that epistemic communities do not include politicians. Furthermore, editors Doran and Lee (2002) in the sources they use, demonstrate the obvious and crucial importance of politicians in decision-making groups. Whilst these may not be labelled as epistemic communities, they have many of the characteristics of epistemic communities and, often as parliamentary committees, will include civil servants and recruit other experts to inform the deliberations of the committee or working party.

In measuring the importance of these groups and other external forces in shaping policy towards the PRC in its early days, Menzies had no fixed idea about recognition of communist China and he was subjected to conflicting pressures. So, in the first instance, there was no clear policy stance by Canberra (Doran and Lee, 2002:xxi).

It was in this kind of uncertain atmosphere that Australian politicians operated during the years following the setting up of the PRC. They often operated in working groups or parliamentary committees that would, in some instances, later be termed epistemic communities. In addition to, and often in collaboration with the politicians, one of the key groups that influenced policy formation was Australia's public service.

Public Servants

The opinions and considerations of government officers regarding Australian policy towards the PRC between 1949 and 1972 can be assessed from an examination of primary sources contained in the volume by Doran and Lee (2002). As will be seen in later chapters, the opinions stated, inevitably and overwhelmingly, reflect the position of the governments these officers represented. However, total unanimity towards the stated policies was not always obvious.

The term public servants is used to describe office-holders employed by the government in a range of roles. For this study, these officers will be mainly those connected to one of the departments dealing with foreign affairs and could comprise officers of those departments based in Canberra, those with a roving brief, and personnel such as consuls and ambassadors. Whilst some would see diplomats as not having a role as epistemic communities, others suggest that such public servants can function as epistemic communities (eg, Cross, 2013). This fits with her view that an epistemic community is shaped by "the parameters of shared professional expertise" (Ibid:158). It is my opinion that including a wide range of public servants is an appropriate approach to use in the recognition of epistemic communities from this particular group.

As advisors to their political masters, public servants will invariably 'have the ear' of both government ministers and backbench politicians. There will be an expectation that they are competent and convincing communicators in their field of expertise and that they are able to devote their time to the development of government policy or in determining the direction of the political agenda. They will be required to provide regular feedback to the politicians so that the epistemic knowledge and possible solutions that they present can then be used in parliamentary debate or in committee deliberations. It will often be these people, as

representatives of government, who issue press releases or government reports for media use and public consumption. As such, public servants can play a very significant role in the way the messages a government wishes to convey are presented. "The public servants provide the sinews and the muscle that make the body politic work. The public service brings expertise to the consideration of issues….It can shape the often vague aspirations of ministers into practical propositions that are economically and administratively feasible…Government without a supporting bureaucracy is not possible" (Weller, 2001:3-4), This is testament to the significant role played by public servants in influencing policy and in operating as an epistemic community.

Think Tanks

Gyngell says there are twelve think tanks, but states, "that definitions are fluid and the number is always in flux" (in Leahy & Marston [Eds], 2016: 268). A quick perusal of a *Wikipedia* item, however, lists more than forty Australian think tanks currently operating and it also mentions that they were traditionally called "policy institutes" and have been around in one form or another since the nineteenth century. Meanwhile, in a chapter entitled 'Non-State Actors in World Politics: a Framework' think tanks are bracketed with epistemic communities as "experts motivated by professional values and commitment to rational analysis" (Josselin & Wallace [Eds], 2001: 4). In addition, whilst the author of this chapter appears to differentiate between the two groups, it is apparent that many commentators consider think tanks to be clear examples of epistemic communities.

For example, Marier is very clear in his view of the role of think tanks when he calls them "a key location for epistemic communities" (2008:520). Meanwhile, commenting on a chapter he has written, Gyngell states, "This chapter looks at one comparatively recent dimension of that non-government involvement in Australian public policy, the role of think tanks in Australian defence and foreign policy. It examines the reason for their emergence on a significant scale around the turn of the twenty-first century against the background of earlier efforts to shape public policy, assesses the contribution they have made, and explores their future" (in Leahy & Marston [Eds], 2016:265). However, think tanks actually blossomed in the years following World War II when the term came to be used more widely and it took on its current meaning in the 1970s (Ibid:269). The point is that think tanks, or something of the sort, have been around for many years, and whilst they may not have been known as think tanks, earlier epistemic groupings along similar lines will have contributed to policy debates and policy development.

The main subject of Leahy & Marston's book was Robert O'Neill, a major contributor to the setting up of think tanks in Australia, who had made the following comments about their purpose:

> [We] need good ideas, dialogue with government and a relationship which tolerates free expression of views, especially on differences with existing policies. None of these essentials comes easily. We, the analysts, need experience in practical work — diplomacy, war, business and politics — as well as intellectual quality before we have any notion as to what is a good idea. Once we develop some ideas we need to be able to discuss them with senior people in government so that our views are taken into account in the mix that goes into decision-making. Our colleagues in government will

> not bother to listen to us if they do not respect the relevance and quality of our work. It is up to us to win their attention and hold it (O'Neill, 2006).

Basically, think tanks exist for the purpose of carrying out research in the public domain. They are different from non-government organisations (NGOs), and a range of other research organisations which often seek to exert influence and shape policy. Instead, "think tanks exist for the primary purpose of undertaking applied research [and]… they conduct their principal work in the public realm" (in Leahy & Marston [Eds], 2016:267).

It is important to note that the ways in which epistemic communities and other influence groups can manipulate public opinion is also a major means whereby political decision-making is influenced. One important think tank that aims to contribute to the debate on international relations, and thus Sino-Australian relations, is the Lowy Institute. Other important think tanks which produce data and reports that are sometimes designed to influence policy relating to international relations include the Australian Institute of International Affairs (AIIA), the Centre for Independent Studies (CIS), and more recently, a number with a specific focus on China have emerged such as the ANU Centre for China in the World, the Australia–China Relations Institute (ACRI), and China Matters.

Whilst these groups currently play an increasingly important informative role with regard to public awareness on the PRC, and, thus, can often be seen to exert influence upon the policy agenda, such organisations were not so easy to identify at an earlier time. Exactly what role think tank-like organisations played in shaping Australian policy on the PRC in the 1950s and 1960s is difficult to discern.

Despite the assertions in this chapter and elsewhere in this thesis about the power of public opinion, a report published by a group calling itself *Next25*, which appears to be a newly-formed think tank, indicates that the general public do not hold much faith in the power of their own influence. Claiming to be "independent, non-partisan, and non-profit" (2021:2), with a mission to create "a clear picture of what the public believes is in the public interest, [and] of the future Australia wants" (Ibid:4), its sample of 3,000 respondents questioned in late 2020 and early 2021 revealed that: "Only 1/4 of Australians believe politicians and the public service act on the needs and desires of the public" (Ibid:18). However, I would contend that politicians and public servants who choose to ignore repeatedly what the populace sees as being in the public interest do so at their own peril as the tide of public opinion, once it starts to roll against the incumbent political group, can be very effective when it comes to shifting the power structure at election times.

Before the appearance of most of the think tanks named above, and whilst going under a different name, the earliest think tanks in Australia may well have been the type of organisation described below under the heading of NGOs or as non-state organisations.

Non-Government Organisations (NGOs)

There was a huge growth in the number of NGOs in the years post-1945, and especially in the 1960s; this was partly connected to the period of reconstruction following World War II. Furthermore, the uncertainty surrounding global issues during that period "made the information held by some non-state actors a highly valued commodity, propelling epistemic communities of scientific and other experts to the fore" (Josselin & Wallace [Eds], 2001:9). No doubt, some of these NGOs could have qualified as think tanks and would have had a

focus on international relations or foreign policy matters in addition to those that focussed on scientific matters.

In an assessment of the role of non-state actors in the IR field, the question of the sources of influence that are "available for these different actors or networks" are raised (Ibid: 13). The author talks of "direct links into domestic politics below the state level, influence over national policy-making…, ability to 'set the agenda' by influencing the language and discourse of national debates…" (Ibid) and ponders whether influence is dependent upon mass support, on the quality of those in the network, or upon the financial capacity of the group. Whilst these elements may increase the influence of any network or epistemic community, this thesis argues that this does not explain how the mass support or financial capacity are generated per se. The quality of network membership is inevitably important in producing analyses and reports which might garner support, but it would seem that much more is at play when one explores the reasons why the work of some epistemic communities and influence groups gain traction whilst that of others is rejected.

The importance of NGOs in the role of epistemic or influence groups is that, in the main, and certainly in theory, they operate independently of government interference. One would assume, therefore, that any new ideas or solutions to problems that they bring to the table of public or parliamentary debate will be viewed by many as being absent of bias. However, as with any of the groups that operate independently of government funding or government direction, there is a need to evaluate the sources of any funding that finances their operations since those sources can often have a policy agenda of their own which they wish to pursue.

Transnational Groups and their Role in IR

Interestingly, Haas points out that "the decision makers in one state may, in turn, influence the interests and behavior of other states, thereby increasing the likelihood of convergent state behavior and international policy coordination, informed by the causal beliefs and policy preferences of the epistemic community" (1992:4). Even though in this thesis I argue against this proposition, it is indicative of the way in which Australian policy regarding the PRC is, according to many commentators, influenced by the USA and the policies adopted by that hegemon. Nevertheless, epistemic communities can play a major role in world politics. As Antoniades explains, they "play a significant role in the day-to-day policy process, through which agents of world politics deal with uncertainty and define problems and interests" (2003: 34).

One only need look back on history, both recent and distant, to see that it is and always has been the case that transnational groups such as alliances will often play a vital role in influencing policy-making amongst member-states. Despite this, in the years immediately following the setting up of the PRC, the transnational groups with which Australia was involved appeared to exert little or no influence. For example, early on, the UK had decided to grant recognition but, according to Doran and Lee, there was a lack of unanimity amongst Commonwealth countries. No doubt geography played a role in this, with the UK having a focus on Europe. Meanwhile, many commentators focus on the fact that the USA then, as now, was much more focussed on the Pacific and on Asia.

Having said above that the transnational groups with which Australia was involved exerted little or no influence, it is interesting to note that none of the ANZUS signatories (ie

Australia, New Zealand and the USA) were willing to normalise relations with the PRC until after 1970: the first was Australia on 21 December 1972, followed by New Zealand on 22 December 1972, with the USA only normalising relations on 1 January 1979. It would appear that all three nations acted independently of each other despite the proximity of the timing of Australia's and New Zealand's decisions to normalise relations with the PRC

For most of this period, according to the commentators, in Australia, the opinions of politicians and their public servants appeared to reflect closely the policy stance adopted by the United States towards the PRC and the ROC; indeed, with few exceptions, the commentators would argue that the policy directions from Canberra were very similar to those emanating from Washington. So, for as long as the USA was against granting recognition, it was suggested that Menzies and his government decided to wait: "Australia could afford to stand by the declaration that it would recognise China when the 'timing' was right." (Doran & Lee, 2002:xxi). For many observers, this meant it would wait and see how American policy would play out. Whilst it was inevitable that the USA as an ally would have some influence over Australian decision-making, a major and repeated premise of this thesis is that domestic factors were more influential than American policy in deciding Australia's position on the PRC.

With regard to Australia falling under the influence of the USA at that time, in the immediate post-war period, and now, in the third decade of the 21st century, former ambassador to the PRC, Geoff Raby, made some interesting comments when, in March 2021, he appeared at the Adelaide Writers' Week to promote his recently published book *China's Grand Strategy and Australia's Future in the New Global Order.* Referring to tensions that existed between the PRC and Australia both past and present, Raby chided Australian governments for allowing American policy to dictate Australian policy. In his view, Australia has needed to distance itself from the USA and present an independent and authentic voice if the Sino-Australian relationship is to be managed effectively. And he says the same in the book (2020:3) when he talks of Canberra along with the USA pushing back against China's rise, especially with the shift from Obama's Pivot to Asia to Trump's 2017 National Security Strategy (NSS) which had a focus on competing with China on the geostrategic stage. Raby goes on to state the case quite bluntly when he writes, "Australia has had a fundamental contradiction at the heart of its foreign policy. It talks the talk of engagement…but walks the walk of competition and containment as stated so baldly in the NSS" (Ibid:4). So, it would seem that little has changed in the views of the commentariat since Australia appeared to be riding on America's coat-tails in its China policy during the 1950s and into the 1970s. Indeed, it was only when it became evident Kissinger and Nixon had been courting the PRC that Australian media commentators began to look more favourably on Whitlam's overtures towards China when he became Prime Minister in 1972; prior to that he had been demonised by most commentators for suggesting that Australia might give diplomatic recognition to the PRC. Despite these appearances and media pressure to follow American policy, it will be argued that Australian policy was slowly being manipulated by the domestic undercurrent in favour of the normalisation of relations with the PRC.

The Media

It is the contention of this paper that both the media and public opinion, interacting with other influence groups, can exert immense influence upon politicians and, therefore, the political

process. It will be argued that the media, often responding to the reports of think tanks or other epistemic communities or influence groups, play a major role in shaping opinion. In this day and age, that will include the whole range of contemporary media, including the increasingly pervasive social media. In the 1950s and, to a lesser extent in the 1960s when television became widely available, the traditional print media in the form of newspapers, magazines and journals would inevitably have been a very powerful force for influencing the political agenda of the day, along with radio.

The role of news media in shaping opinion is alluded to in a submission to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nigel Bowen, dated August 1972. Departmental official Harold Anderson, at that time the First Assistant Secretary to the Asia Division, was commenting on 'The China Dialogue' which had been quite intense. Attempts had been made through diplomatic channels in Paris to explore the possibility of normalisation of Sino-Australian relations and Anderson's submission gives a summary of the current state of the dialogue as at that time, including the following observation: "Another consideration is that Australian editors and commentators are becoming increasingly sceptical…about the value of the dialogue and that it is still alive" (in Doran & Lee [Eds], 2002:749). Then as now, Government officials are shown to be mindful of the ways in which policy is being perceived by the media. This is a sure indication of the levels of influence wielded by the media in its various forms. The reason it is so influential is that it can shape public opinion that, in turn, can be pivotal in its impact upon the responses of politicians when they are making policy decisions. These decisions, especially when made close to election times, can impact upon whether or not a political party is successful in winning an election.

"The media that we consume influences our opinions on many issues both in Australia and throughout the world, limiting the range of debate within acceptable bounds. If the media shapes our opinions so much, then we should be asking: who shapes the media's opinion?" This very pertinent point is made by Tim Cornwall in the online *Independent Australia* (2020) in a piece that focuses on the ways in which think tanks and the media shape foreign policy. If, through the 1950s to the 1970s, the average consumer of the news was repeatedly reading or hearing of items which presented an anti-China bias, it was surely inevitable that the opinion of the average consumer would be influenced by that reportage. Politicians and public servants are and always have been acutely aware of the importance of public opinion, to such an extent that it can very often influence the policy agenda that a government chooses to adopt. A closer examination in Chapters 4 and 5 of some of the items included in Doran and Lee (2002) will provide evidence of this in the context of the period when Australian governments were unwilling to normalise relations with the PRC.

The manner in which government policy and proposed policy is transmitted to the public will, inevitably, have a major impact on the way in which the public responds to the policy discussions. The fact that the transmission of such policy ideas is almost exclusively handled by the media ensures the influence of the media. This means that there is, and always has been, a very real risk of the bias of one person or a small group of executives shaping the news and the ways in which the Australian public receives its news.

With this in mind, the following point about the influence of political journalists in Washington is pertinent, "The outsized power, status, and influence in shaping what the public knows about politics", and the ways in which "national media and political elites

engage in a process of mutual influence and dependence …and drive each other's agendas as well" (Usher & Ng, 2020:3). The authors also make the point that "political journalists are high-ego actors whose loose connections to each other are facilitated by instant communication" and as such most political journalists are operating within an epistemic culture and linked as communities of practice (ibid). There is no reason to assume that journalists and journalistic networks in Australia should be any different.

Whilst the points made in the previous two paragraphs relate to recent times, the points made about the influence of the news media in shaping public opinion would be just as relevant 50 to 70 years ago when debate about recognition of the PRC would have been a recurring issue. It seems very likely that the kind of mutual engagement described by Usher and Ng will have been a major element in the way in which politicians and journalists in Australia interacted during the 1950s and 1960s, thus combining to exert significant influence upon both public opinion and political decision-making in connection with Australian government policy on the PRC.

In recent times, any examination of the ways in which people in the media present and shape public opinion will include those associated with print, radio, television, and digital media. In 1949, however, when the PRC was set up, apart from cinema newsreels, radio and print media were the most widely used means of presenting and influencing opinion. It was September 1956 before mainstream television was first broadcast in Australia, so there was negligible influence on Australian opinion from that medium in the years immediately following the communist victory in China up until the late 1950s.

Public Opinion

With regard to the ways in which public opinion can be shaped, it is interesting to note a point made by Woodard. Referring to Menzies and his senior ministers, Woodard mentions what he terms "politically advantageous anticommunism" in connection with foreign policies relating to "the two Chinas" (2018:164). As Woodard explains, "Australian foreign policy cannot be separated from domestic politics. Menzies had a nose for public opinion and…Australian public opinion was affected by racism ('the yellow peril') and fear shaped by Cold War rhetoric" (Ibid). Meanwhile, the impact of the White Australia Policy must surely have created a popular conception about outsiders and Asians and Chinese which would have made a rejection of the PRC an easy policy line for the governments of the day.

Despite the point made above, the following report indicates that by the early 1970s public opinion was shifting towards a more tolerant stance which, in turn, was beginning to see the political mood gradually changing.

In New York in September 1972, there was a conversation between Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Nigel Bowen, and Huang Hua, China's Chief Delegate to the UN Security Council. In the record of that conversation, it was revealed by the Minister that public opinion in Australia has a powerful influence on the way in which policy is developed. When asked by Huang about the likelihood of the Australian government shifting its position on the China situation, "The minister said that the majority of Australians wanted the establishment of relations with the People's Republic of China. This had been evident in recent polls. At the same time…very many Australians did not want the Government, as they put it, to abandon Taiwan. Ambassador Huang commented that he thought the Australian people wanted good

relations with China and wondered whether their views were properly reflected by politicians. The Minister replied that on the contrary politicians in Australia were very aware of and closely reflected public opinion" (in Doran & Lee [Eds], 2002:751). So, that influence sector that can best be described as 'the public' evidently exerts significant sway when it comes to policy formulation. However, the question remains, which of the epistemic communities are most influential in shaping the opinions that the public holds which in turn have a significant impact upon policy directions?

Whatever the answer to that question, as demonstrated in this thesis, the role of various epistemic communities in shaping government policy and in influencing public opinion is a vital element in understanding the way in which relations between Beijing and Canberra played out during the period under examination.

# CHAPTER 4

## Australia Turns its Back on the New Regime

The historical images of Asia and Asians as presented in a range of Australian literature provide a clue as to why Australia decided not to normalise relations with the new regime. Basically, there was a history of Australian hostility towards Asia and Asians, going back to the time of the nineteenth century Gold Rushes; this was partly due to xenophobia and partly due to what Laurenceson in his interview termed "plain old racism". He was not alone in pointing out that the Chinese suffered from discrimination during the Gold Rush period and throughout the years of the White Australia policy.

At the time of the setting up of the PRC, apart from the uncertainty sparked by ideological differences the new regime presented, it became a useful ploy to employ the historical antagonism for political purposes. The Australian discourse on the PRC between 1949 and 1972 was ostensibly one that offered negative constructions and such constructions, according to the literature, were influenced by American policy. This chapter will explore in greater detail the already stated notion that domestic factors were of greater, importance than American influence.

This chapter will also examine the ways in which domestic forces within Australia ensured that the period of non-recognition would stretch to 23 years and the ways in which there were those who, throughout this period, would have preferred to normalise relations. The chapter will also explore the way in which the undercurrent, mentioned in previous chapters, was given added force over the years of non-recognition. Essentially, this chapter will challenge the notion that Australia blindly followed American policy between 1949 and 1972.

What follows, therefore, is an assessment of the reasons for Australia adopting this policy in the long-term with an accompanying appraisal of the forces, often in the form of epistemic communities, that would have preferred to follow a different policy path and which fed into the undercurrent in support of the normalisation of relations with the PRC.

### Proclamation and Australia's Response

With the ending of the civil war in China and the proclamation by Mao Tse-tung of the founding of the People's Republic of China on October 1, 1949, Australia had been faced with a dilemma. The end of the civil war did not mean the end of the Kuomintang regime led by Chiang Kai-shek. Instead, he and his followers shifted their base to the island of Formosa (Taiwan) and from there proclaimed themselves to be the rightful rulers of China under the mantle of the Republic of China (ROC).

Here were two governments with two leaders, each claiming to represent China and the Chinese. From the outset, there were variations in the way the nations of the world reacted to this situation. In the case of Australia, the traditional fear of the 'Yellow Peril' was replaced for some by a fear of the 'Red Menace' as represented by the communist PRC.

At the time of the proclamation of the PRC, Ben Chifley was still Prime Minister of an ALP government in Australia. When the PRC came into existence, it was at a time when the Cold War in Europe had begun with its consequent communist vs anti-communist voices. Despite this, it was by no means certain that the Chifley government would turn its back on the new

communist regime. Basically, Chifley's government had a choice between retaining links with Nationalists on Taiwan or giving recognition to the new communist government on the mainland. Based on the following observation, the evidence suggests that the government was ready to recognise the PRC: "The Department of External Affairs soon called a meeting in Canberra at which participants unanimously recommended that China be recognized". Despite this, "the Labor government remained ambiguous in its public statements on China, and refrained from committing itself to the recognition of new China" (Wang, 2012:9).

Maybe the government was willing to 'sit on its hands' because it was wary of the negative responses that recognition might evoke amongst the Australian public. "The Australian public had long been disappointed by the performance of the Kuomintang …government which fled to Taiwan…[but] opinion in Australia was no less sceptical about the communist government in Beijing…As events unfolded, such scepticism was to turn into fear and hostility, which continued unabated for the next two decades" (Ibid). Fear and hostility are powerful emotions and Menzies used them to bolster his eventual decision not to recognise the PRC, and to generate popular support at election times.

It is evident that there was fear and hostility towards the PRC amongst some sectors of the Australian community, including some politicians and their advisers. However, many of the government documents in Doran & Lee's volume make it clear that non-recognition of the new regime was by no means a unanimous view in government circles.

With the election of the Menzies government towards the end of 1949, some of those who had considered granting recognition at the time of the proclamation of the PRC continued to favour such a position even if political expedient meant that they could not openly express such a view. Certainly some of the primary evidence indicates that even some senior members of the new government were keen to grant recognition and attempted to persuade others that such a course would have been to Australia's advantage.

However, fear took the upper hand: the developing Cold War in Europe only led to the fear of invasion by the PRC. Connected to this, so effective had the government's policy been in generating a fear of communism that, in September 1951, the Menzies government had ordered a referendum which was designed to give the federal government "the powers to deal with communism" (Cottle, 2015). Much to the surprise and disgust of the Cabinet, the 'No' vote outnumbered the 'Yes' vote. This indicated that despite the apparent and publicly proclaimed hostility towards the PRC and communism, not everyone was sufficiently hostile to ban the Communist Party of Australia. Nevertheless, the discourse that evolved in the 1950s and 1960s meant that those who defended the PRC were often publicly criticised and so the anti-PRC stance prevailed.

**The Anti-PRC Stance**

It should be pointed out that once Menzies realised he could carry the populace with him when he denigrated the PRC, there would be little opportunity for the undercurrent in favour of recognition to sway popular opinion in the years immediately following the setting up of the PRC. However, there were those in government who would have preferred a softer line towards the PRC and these would have contributed as an epistemic community to the undercurrent.

Despite the factors that may have contributed to the undercurrent, I agree with those who claim that, once the Korean War broke out in June 1950, and once Australian troops became involved, Australia had little option but to turn its back on the new regime in Beijing. It seems certain that, during the Korean War, those in government in favour of the softer line would have felt compelled to renege on their earlier positions.

The fact that the Korean War could be considered an element of the Cold War that turned into hot war made it unlikely that any of the major political parties would recommend recognition during this period. In connection with this, Andrews (1985) presents some interesting data on the position of the ALP prior to and after the proclamation of the PRC. In particular, he comments on the equivocation of Chifley's Labor Government as an Australian general election approached and the fact that, by the time of the election, no government apart from those in other communist countries had recognised the PRC. As he points out, for Chifley to have done so "would have been tantamount to committing political suicide" (Ibid:35). It is highly likely that the ALP was heavily defeated by the LCP (Liberal Country Party) on 10 December 1949 as a result of the prevarication it had displayed in the months leading up to the election.

Menzies and the LCP, meanwhile, won that election by running on a clearly anti-communist platform. It would not have been feasible, therefore, for Menzies to grant recognition immediately to the newly formed PRC. Indeed, on 20 December 1949, the Cabinet, an epistemic community at the forefront of making decisions, met and decided against granting recognition to the new regime at that time. Instead, the Cabinet decided to wait and see how events transpired and stated that it would only reconsider this stance if other Commonwealth countries decided to grant recognition. This stipulation was not met, so Menzies was able to develop the kind of anti-PRC stance that suited the domestic political situation at that juncture. As time passed, he recognised that maintaining such a stance brought considerable popular support, so there was little reason for him to abandon it. As has previously been stated, this was the motive for the anti-PRC policy stance much more than the influence of American policy. Having seen the success that it brought in electoral terms, there was no good reason to abandon such a policy in the years that followed, and the continuing success at succeeding elections only served to reinforce such an attitude.

Despite the contention posed by this thesis that domestic factors were the main driver of Australian policy on the PRC, most of those who, at the time or since, have written about these events preferred to present the notion that Australia was simply following American policy throughout the twenty-three years of non-recognition. Wang (2012), Albinski (1964), Gyngell (2014), Mackerras (1996), Kendall (2005), FitzGerald (1977), Beeson & Li (2014), and Andrews (1985) are just some of the authors who ascribed to the view that Australia, because of its alliance with the USA, and because of a long-standing fear of being isolated and vulnerable, was willing to follow the American lead in its policy towards the PRC. Some of these authors and others are cited later in this chapter.

In what follows in this and later chapters, I shall argue against the notion of American influence being the major determinant of Australian policy. This is not to discount American influence entirely. As an ally, the USA was bound to exert some influence in the policy directions followed by Australia. That influence, however, took second place to domestic factors in terms of its significance.

At the time of the 1949 election, a Country Party pamphlet contained the words: "Domination of China by the Reds makes possible a swift military thrust down South-East Asia" (Australian Country Party, 1949:15-16). This fuelled renewed fears of the type of modus operandi adopted by the Japanese eight years earlier during World War II, and, it would seem, led to the phrase used by Menzies – "the downward thrust of communism" – to evoke fear in the populace.

More to the point, in terms of any political posture adopted, "Chinese actions during these early days…provided a rationale for Liberal fears" (Andrews, 1985:35). In particular, with regard to the PRC's recognition of rebel groups in Vietnam, it seemed that the PRC government was supporting the spread of communism. Other incidents in which the Chinese were either directly or indirectly involved included two crises over Taiwan in 1954 and 1958, the Malayan emergency which lasted 12 years from 1948 onwards, and confrontation with Indonesia. These incidents in South-East Asia only served to add to the notion of the "downward thrust of communism" which became a catch-call that Menzies used to enlist support for his policies within the Australian community. However, the fact that Australia soon forged an alliance with the USA would inevitably have made any threat to Australia minimal; the PRC would surely have not wished to provoke the USA by any such action.

Whilst it is understandable that when the PRC was engaged in hostilities in South-East Asia it could have made it seem like a possible threat to Australia, there is no evidence to suggest that the PRC had any designs on attacking Australia. However, the PRC's belligerence in those South-East Asian countries would have been a key element in Australia signing up to a series of military pacts and defence treaties with the USA. As a result, many commentators assumed that Australia would blindly follow American policy.

However, prior to the PRC's hostilities in South-East Asia, there were many in the Liberal-Country Party (LCP) who remained in favour of normalising relations in the months after Mao came to power. Similarly, by 1951, one-time Minister for External Affairs and later ambassador to the USA, Percy Spender, and Menzies privately accepted that recognition of the PRC would eventually happen (Andrews, 1985:40). Nevertheless, there continued within the political community a fear of the threat of communism and this proved to be a stronger motivation than the private views of Menzies and any of his Cabinet colleagues who may have favoured the granting of recognition to the PRC. The fact that there was a rapid turnover of staff within the Pacific Section of External Affairs around this time meant that the forceful arguments put by this section in favour of granting recognition evaporated and the department instead followed government policy.

Crucially, this meant that there were few in Australia in 1949 and, indeed, over the following 20 years, who had a good knowledge or understanding of China. Once it was decided not to establish diplomatic relations with the PRC, there was little chance that this situation would change. This lack of knowledge and understanding meant that policy regarding the PRC was being developed based upon ignorance and prejudice (Mackerras, 1996). It seems, therefore, that Australian policy was based on "an ignorance much more massive than that of either their American counterparts or their European colleagues" (C.P. FitzGerald, 1969:10) which is obviously not the way in which foreign policy should be formed.

At the same time, Australia's desire to forge an alliance with the USA and focus more on Asia and the Pacific became a greater priority than creating a relationship with the great

unknown that was the PRC. As a result, the government soon adopted a policy on the PRC that was similar to that of the USA. This, I would argue, was coincidental rather than a considered policy option and, by the early 1950s, domestic electoral factors were driving Australia's policy decisions regarding the PRC. However, as already indicated, commentators at the time and since, did assume that Australia was deliberately following US policy.

Once the Korean War ended, some media commentators, especially in some sections of the press, were putting a case for recognition of the PRC. Here was an epistemic community – sections of the press – making an early contribution to the undercurrent in favour of granting recognition. The then Minister for External Affairs, Casey, saw the armistice in Korea as an opportunity to pursue new policy directions regarding the PRC, but he lacked the drive to convince his government colleagues of the benefits of such a change and it was apparent that by this stage Menzies was hostile to any such move.

This position adopted by Menzies indicated a confused and contradictory government policy stance at this time since Menzies had also hinted that recognition might come. Despite this apparent contradiction, the argument that the stance taken by Menzies was driven mainly by domestic political expedient rather than by American influence remains a key element of this thesis.

The Australian government was not as keen as the USA on denouncing the Chinese Communist Party and there were still those in government who believed that the PRC should be recognised (FitzGerald, 1972:4). Despite these voices that fed into the undercurrent in support of normalising relations with the PRC, the Chinese threat came to dominate policy and led to policy positions aimed at the isolation and containment of the PRC, continued support for Chiang Kai-shek and the ROC, and the exclusion of the PRC from the United Nations. Whilst maintaining its own voice, this indicates that there was a growing closeness to the USA by the Australian government which led to Australia becoming "one of the most ardent and vocal advocates of the 'hard line' on China" by the early 1960s (Ibid). It seemed to many that that the Australian government's behaviour was largely designed to keep the USA in Asia as a security measure. Whilst this may have been one motive for the government's position, it seems unlikely that there were many who believed that the anti-recognition policy could continue for more than twenty years.

It is interesting to note that in contrast to the LCP government's stance, as early as 1957, the ALP sent a delegation to China and the ALP leader at the time, Herbert Evatt, called for recognition and increased trade with the PRC. This followed the split within the ALP, in 1955, that had led to the formation of the anti-PRC Democratic Labor Party (DLP). The revised stance by the ALP marked another contribution to the undercurrent in favour of a move towards recognition. However, the government of the day was not going to be moved by those epistemic communities in favour of granting recognition. Meanwhile, the even harder line adopted towards the PRC in the 1960s was symbolised during the 1966 election campaign when "pictures of red arrows leaping out of south China towards Australia" (FitzGerald, 1972:5) were used to generate a fear of invasion. Again, I would contend it was a domestic factor, the upcoming election, that was the motivation for such alarmist imagery.

**Alternative Views**

Whilst most commentators adopt a similar line on Australia's policy towards the PRC, and particularly Australia being willing to adopt American policy, there are a small number who challenge the commonly held views. One of these is Sandra Penrose (1998) who, in an item that reviews the first Menzies ministry of 1950-51, takes issue with three of the commonly held views. First, she challenges the view that the Menzies regime was implacably opposed to Chinese communism; secondly, she challenges the view that the Korean War was an obstacle to the granting of recognition; and thirdly, and most significantly in connection with this thesis, she challenges the view that Australia simply succumbed to American pressure in the policies it adopted.

Penrose presents a contrary argument to that offered by the majority of commentators and in doing so coincides with the views expressed in this thesis. For example, she refers to the preconceptions of many commentators when they write about the foreign policy of the Menzies era. Her argument is that, during Menzies' first ministry, both Menzies and his minister for External Affairs, Percy Spender, were in favour of normalising relations and that it was more a matter of when to do so rather than whether to do so. She conceded that they were opposed to communism, but does not view ideological considerations as being a significant reason for failing to offer recognition. Penrose goes on to outline a series of domestic circumstances that prevented early recognition by the Australian government. Not the least of these circumstances was the fact that Menzies and the LCP had only recently taken over the reins of government from Chifley and the ALP. Menzies took office on 19 December 1949 and, as early as 20 December, the new Cabinet met to consider its position on the PRC. After careful consideration, the Cabinet decided not to extend recognition at that time; it could see no advantages to be gained by doing so. Moreover, there was the added incentive of not wishing to abandon Nationalist China (the ROC) which had been an ally throughout World War II.

Whilst Penrose mounts a very convincing argument on the fallacy of American influence being the main influence on Australian policy, her views on the Korean War are not totally convincing; she cites these as another fallacy in the explanation of Australian policy. However, it seems certain that the outbreak of the Korean War, six months after the election of the Menzies government, and Australia's involvement in that war, would have made the matter of recognition a very difficult policy to sell to the Australian public. This, along with the increasingly hostile commentary from Menzies regarding communism and the ideological differences that existed, would have added to the difficulty in convincing the electorate that recognition was feasible.

On the point about Australia bowing to American pressure, Penrose argues correctly that it was a factor whose importance was exaggerated by most other commentators. She concedes, however, that there were growing concerns about Australia's security in connection with a perceived threat from a resurgent Japan. This caused Spender to promote the idea of a Pacific Pact that eventually led to the formation of ANZUS. As Penrose points out, many commentators assumed that Australia was pushed into a position of non-recognition by the USA in return for the security offered by the ANZUS Treaty. This, she asserts, was a mistaken assumption.

According to Penrose, the Australian government realised that the granting of recognition could not be delayed indefinitely, but it would be important to get the timing right (Ibid:212). One possible opportunity for recognition was following a meeting of Commonwealth governments at the Colombo Conference in January 1950. If all other Commonwealth countries had decided to grant recognition at that time, the matter would have come under fresh scrutiny by Australia. However, the Australian government was reluctant to act before the USA had decided upon its stance.

Here was definite evidence of American influence but, as mentioned earlier, it was by no means the sole factor in the equation on whether or not to normalise relations with the PRC. The fact that Australia was seeking some kind of Pacific security pact with the USA was seen by many commentators as proof that the USA was the main influence on Australia on the question of recognition of the PRC. This was a mistaken interpretation of the actual situation. As is commented by Penrose, the "United States policy was only one factor in the matter" (Ibid:213).

Penrose is critical of those commentators who assert that the government had no intention of recognising the PRC. The evidence suggests otherwise despite a growing reluctance to grant recognition at this time. This was partly due to the likely domestic and international response to such a move and, overwhelmingly, because of the actions of the Chinese communists. There is no evidence to suggest that either Spender or Menzies abandoned the idea of recognition during this period, even though the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950 would certainly have complicated matters (Ibid:216).

When the ANZUS Treaty was being considered and was eventually established, it was true to say that, "Many of the authors…see the ANZUS pact as a means for the United States to exert pressure on Australia over the recognition question" (Ibid:218). However, the evidence does not support such a supposition and, to the contrary, an examination of the documentation relating to the pact shows that it was the result of Australia pressuring the USA. There was no pressure from the USA for Australia not to recognise the PRC and, in February 1951, Menzies was still strongly in favour of granting recognition at some point in the future (Ibid:219). In the same month, Spender presented a document to Cabinet in favour of withdrawing recognition of the ROC (Ibid:221). This would have been a precursor for finally normalising relations with the PRC.

The delay in normalising relations had more to do with the fact that the Menzies government was new to power and was in the process of processing all the necessary detail. Meanwhile, in her closing paragraph, Penrose refers to "the misunderstanding and misrepresentation of the attitude of this Menzies ministry on the recognition question in so much of the literature" (Ibid: 223). The Penrose paper is one that argues comprehensively against the conventional wisdom that Australia succumbed from the start to American pressure and is a viewpoint that is strongly supported by this thesis.

The Chifley ALP Government's hesitation on the question of recognition seems to have been a key factor that led to the Menzies victory in the December 1949 election. This supports the Penrose argument that Australia did not succumb to American pressure and is indicative of the fact that domestic factors were of vital importance. Consequently, the decision was taken out of the hands of the Chifley government when the Menzies Liberal/Country Party Coalition won the election. Menzies won the election "on an anti-communist platform", and

for the next two decades each of Menzies' foreign ministers "shared a belief in the threat of Chinese communism and publicly supported a policy of containment of 'Red China'" (Wang, 2012:10). Consequently, for the next twenty years, Australia's official policy towards the PRC remained the same under successive Coalition governments and was clearly driven by a publicly stated hostility towards the communist government rather than any decision simply to follow American policy.

Even though Menzies' foreign ministers might all have been wary of Chinese communism, the evidence suggests they were not so fearful as Wang suggests and that the alarmist attitude presented to the public was more to do with garnering votes than a genuine fear of the PRC. Indeed, Australia's first foreign minister in the government elected in 1949, Percy Spender, might have been opposed to the ideological stance of Chinese communism influence, but he was definitely in favour of granting recognition.

Whilst there were obviously ideological differences between Australia and the PRC, the notion that these led to paranoia in Australian government circles is an exaggeration of the actual situation. However, it does seem that the government used the differences to invoke the fear of communism and what the PRC might do, hence the use by Menzies of the notion of "the downward thrust of communism" to engender that sense of fear in the minds of the Australian public.

Although the hostility towards any idea of recognition is writ large in much of the literature, as already indicated it was certainly not as clear-cut as it is often portrayed. Whilst the ideological differences would have been one element in the tendency not to grant recognition, some of the extreme descriptions of the situation as provided in the literature defy the actual evidence.

Most of what follows in this chapter is an analysis of Australia's policy position towards the PRC in the 1950s and 1960s as described in the literature and during interviews.

**The Extent of US Influence on Australia's Decision to Turn its Back**

Prior to exploring the secondary evidence that ascribes Australia's policy stance as being largely dependent upon the policy adopted by the USA, it needs to be pointed out that, in addition to Penrose, there was a very small number of other commentators who recognised the importance of domestic factors. For example, "Australian policy towards the new China was unfortunately not dictated by careful calculation of the future…, but by internal politics" (in Greenwood & Harper [Eds], 1957:206).

Meanwhile, the comments made about the lack of training and experience in foreign policy of most of those in the Menzies government are echoed by Andrews (1985). Thus, what government members really cared about were internal issues such as Australia's economic future and "links with major allies to provide markets and investment" (Ibid: 43) as a means to retaining office.

As already itemised, Penrose is one of a small number of commentators who casts doubt on the influence of the USA as being a major factor. As Penrose mentions, both Menzies and his Minister for External Affairs, Spender, "were favourable to extending recognition during 1950-51" (1998:209).

Meanwhile, the similarity of Australian policy to that of the USA was more to do with a "coincidence of interests" rather than Australia blindly following American leadership on the issue (Wang, 2012:22/23). In other words, as already stated, coincidence rather than considered policy options was what led to the similarities in American and Australian policy.

This thesis argues that the policy stance adopted by Australia was because of what became a government-fabricated fear of China amongst the public, and public opinion polls throughout the non-recognition era reflected this popular fear (Hudson, 1980). The fact that this fear was generated, to a large degree, by government pronouncements in order to gain an advantage with the electorate is usually overlooked by commentators.

It is certainly true to say that the Australian government's behaviour regarding the PRC was made up of "half-truths, and hair-raising verbal gymnastics by which the government sought to suggest what the facts did not support" (FitzGerald, 1971:197). The modus operandi of Liberal governments at the time seemed to revolve around three inter-connected positions: the threat of communism, a focus on keeping the ALP out of office, and a desire to seek American capital for development purposes. Whilst the final point indicates that American influence could be a feature of any policy direction adopted by a Coalition government, the other points show that this was not the only nor, by any means, the main factor influencing policy.

Despite these indications to the contrary, the vast majority of commentators point to American influence as the key factor in shaping anti-PRC Australian policy following the establishment of the PRC.

As mentioned in the Literature Review in Chapter 2, at least fourteen of the books or articles consulted considered this to be a matter of significant importance in shaping Australian policy. The list included some commentators who also recognised other factors as being of importance such as Wang, but in some instances, Australia's decision to follow the American lead was deemed to be the sole factor in influencing the policies adopted by the LCP governments that led Australia between 1949 and 1972.

By way of an illustration, the citations which are given below are indicative of the trend by so many of the authors to follow the theme of Australia's dependence upon the USA for its foreign policy decisions, a theme which this thesis discounts in view of the contention that domestic issues were of greater importance.

Whilst some of the authors mentioned below cited more than American influence as a key to Australian policy, they all claim that Australia did become dependent upon the USA for security and, therefore, was heavily influenced by the USA in its policy towards the PRC. More could be added to the list, but the important point is that all of those cited or listed refer to the fact that Australia turned to the USA for security following the end of World War II at a time when British power and influence was diminishing, especially east of Suez. In return for a security guarantee, the USA, they explain, expected that Australia would mirror its policies regarding the PR:-

> Australia was committed "to a Far Eastern policy which is devised to meet American commitments and views in the first place, and only secondarily to secure Australian objectives" (in Greenwood & Harper [Eds], 1957:207).

> The question of recognition was never seriously entertained and "respect for United States' views on these issues precluded any policy change…Australia supported the US in branding China as an aggressor state…" and the opening of the Australian embassy in Taipei in 1966 only "served to reinforce the impression that Australia was firmly locked into the US policy towards China" (in Hudson [Ed], 1980:271-272).
>
> In condemning China in a UN resolution as the aggressor in Korea, "Australia…voted out of deference to the wishes of the United States" (FitzGerald, 1972:2-3).
>
> Beeson and Hamieri (Eds. 2017) include a comment on the way in which the USA was cultivated as a new security patron and on "a hub and spokes" hierarchical alliance system that developed, underpinned by America's hegemony in the Pacific.
>
> "The Menzies government wanted to develop close ties with the United States" which became a key element of its foreign policy (Kendall, 2005:30).
>
> Wang, meanwhile, comments on the way in which, as a result of the Cold War, the world had divided into two camps, East versus West, and this "set the perimeter within which Australian foreign policy was conducted" with the inevitable assumption that the USA would be leading the West in such matters (2012:18/19). He also comments on the way in which ANZUS became the "cornerstone of Australian foreign and defence policies" and the way in which Australia fell further "into the US orbit" (Ibid:20/21). He did add, however, that Australia did not follow US policy blindly.
>
> Doran and Lee in their introduction (2002:xxv) make the point that, "When boiled down, the enduring Liberal-Country Party view was that a relationship with China could be managed as long as Australia did not become isolated from the United States over the issue…".
>
> Commenting on Australia's post-war foreign policy Ferrall et al (2005:112) focus on three essential aims, one of which was "to develop closer ties with the United States".
>
> "For the United States…a negative image of China was not only an ideological necessity but a weapon in international policy rivalry…Given the status of the United States as the dominant Western superpower…it is not surprising that it was so successful in maintaining the negative images of China, which were part of the Cold War climate of the 1950s and 1960s" (Mackerras, 1999:94).
>
> "Successive Australian Governments believed that China was an intransigent, aggressive, power and that, through ANZUS, Australia needed to support a US-led containment posture against that country" (Tow, 2012:80).

In addition to the comments from the literature, comments from the experts interviewed for this project reflect similar views to those given above. Without any prompting, every one of the ten interviewees made some mention of the influence that the USA had exerted in connection to Australia's stance on the PRC after 1949.

Stephen FitzGerald made the point that Australia "has followed US foreign policy very closely" and that "our politicians tend to be dependent on anything that comes out from the US". Meanwhile, during her interview, in a brief comment on the relationship, Chey made the point that Australia has followed American policy too closely.

Watson explained that because the USA had "become the major security backbone for Australia" following World War II, then Australia would automatically fall in line with American policy decisions and this was a key to Australia's policy stance on the PRC.

Similarly, Gyngell commented that Australia saw the USA as a security buffer at a time when international relations would have been in a state of flux following the war years. Nevertheless, he also had reservations about the tendency to follow too closely American policy and expressed the view that there had been times when Australia had followed the USA unnecessarily in some of the decisions it had taken.

Mackerras also had reservations and made the point that during the Cold War period of the 1950s and 1960s, Australia had followed blindly when it would have benefitted more from establishing a diplomatic relationship with the PRC at a much earlier stage. Jose also expressed the view that Australia did not need to necessarily fall in line with the American position and he cited Douglas Copland, a Consul-General in Chongqing during World War II and the founding vice-chancellor of the ANU, as being a very influential supporter of the idea of normalising relations.

Despite these reservations, White expressed the view that Australia's reliance on the USA post-World War II worked well for Australia for many years. This was especially the case because Australia wished to retain America's presence in the Asia-Pacific at a time when China "was determined to push America out of Asia". As he added, the pro-American approach was generally well accepted by the public and "it looked like it was a prudent thing to do from a strategic point of view".

A number of the interviewees mentioned that Menzies had a tendency to follow "great and powerful friends" and that there was a strong desire to ensure that the Americans remained involved in the region following World War II. When elaborating on this point, Laurenceson felt that Australia's "national psyche" caused it to adopt such a position and "to cling to such a power".

The matter of American approval and a determination by Australia not to disappoint the USA also featured in some of the experts' comments. Only with such approval would the USA be likely to guarantee Australia's security and, hence, as Carr maintained, it was "the biggest single influence on Australian foreign policy". Carr also talked of Canberra's deference to Washington and a reluctance to offend the USA.

FitzGerald, White, Laurenceson and Mackerras mentioned the setting up of the ANZUS Treaty as a factor in strengthening the ties with the USA and, thus, a tendency to adopt a similar foreign policy stance. However, there were a number of the interviewees who commented on the fact that it was not a foregone conclusion that Australia would automatically follow American policy. This was especially the case since Menzies and some of his colleagues were somewhat circumspect about the idea of not normalising relations with the PRC.

Rigby made the point that it was quite possible that Menzies could have been swayed by the UK's decision to grant recognition. However, as he and other interviewees added, the outbreak of the Korean War only six months after Menzies' election victory more or less ensured that there would be no move towards the granting of recognition so long as Australian troops were involved in the war. As Mackerras commented, the decision to become involved in the Korean War was linked to the idea that, "whether in our interests or not, we just follow America into wars".

Rigby mentioned that as British influence was waning, American influence on Australia's foreign policy was becoming stronger and that "in terms of realpolitik the American influence was so much stronger especially when Britain withdrew all forces east of Suez".

Commenting on the emergence of the PRC as a power in Asia, White said, "It's hard to imagine what it was like for people living through the beginnings of the Cold War. To people of that time, communism was a very real threat".

The main theme that emerged from the interviews was that the USA did influence Australia's policy towards the PRC during this period and, in the view of some of the interviewees but not all of them, this was the major influence. However, some of the respondents made the point that Menzies and others within the government were not convinced that this was the best policy to adopt and could quite easily have followed the British position rather than that of the USA. As this thesis contends, it seems that it was only when Menzies recognised the political capital he could gain domestically that he decided to pursue the anti-PRC policy in a manner that suggested that he was convinced that it was the best course of action. Despite this, a range of primary documents and statements by commentators reveal that he was not, in fact, convinced that it was the best course of action. It could be argued, therefore, that his decision to adopt a similar policy positon to that of the USA was by no means a decision based upon American pressure, or even based upon a careful consideration of strategic factors related to the Asia-Pacific. Instead, it was a decision based upon domestic political expedient. In short, Menzies weighed up which policy stance would benefit him most electorally and concluded that by dwelling on the historical negative imagery regarding China, he could carry his countrymen with him and win elections if he continued to demonise the PRC.

As with the literature, the interviewees tended to support the notion that Australia was heavily influenced by the USA. However, despite the similarities in American and Australian policy, it can be described as coincidental. Indeed, there is sufficient primary evidence to indicate that it was electoral expedient that dictated the policy decisions taken by Menzies and his colleagues. As such, as already postulated, it was domestic considerations that most influenced policy.

# CHAPTER 5

## The Growing Undercurrent

Whilst the 23 years of Australia's refusal to grant recognition to the PRC was the result of a variety of factors, the main focus of this chapter will be the way in which the undercurrent in favour of recognition was steadily growing and how it came to have an impact.

In tracing the growth in the undercurrent and its influence, the chapter will be divided into four main sections. In the first section, "The Role of Epistemic Communities", there will be a focus on the way in which epistemic communities were instrumental in shaping opinion against and in favour of establishing relations with the PRC. The second and main section of the chapter, "The Growth and Impact of the Undercurrent", will analyse the way in which an undercurrent in favour of recognition developed from the time of the setting up of the PRC and grew in force through the 1950s and 1960s. Much of this section will be based upon an analysis of the views expressed by the interviewees. The final section, entitled "Evidence in Favour of Recognition", will explore ways in which evidence that favoured recognition fed into the undercurrent, thus adding to its force. There will be a focus on primary sources from the period, particularly those which show how the governments of the period were reacting to changing circumstance.

### The Role of Epistemic Communities

When considering the stance taken by various epistemic communities, the Catholic Church and its organs such as the *Advocate* and the *Catholic Weekly* were totally against any move to normalise relations (Albinski 1964:15; Andrews 1985:45). Meanwhile, the ALP leader Evatt, when he first became leader of the ALP in 1951, was in support of the Catholic Church in its right-wing opinion regarding the PRC. In effect, therefore, for a time, the ALP followed a policy that was more conservative than that adopted by the Coalition. However, that stance by the ALP ended following the internal split and the formation of the DLP in 1955. At that point, the DLP, as a new epistemic community, became a staunch advocate in favour of resisting any moves to grant recognition to the PRC and, once the split from the ALP was made, the DLP was quick to accuse the ALP of communist sympathies.

There were other groups that were opposed to the granting of recognition. These included the Returned and Services League of Australia (RSL), the Australian Association for Cultural Freedom which "was established to expose communist totalitarianism" (Strahan, 1996:136), and the Australia-free China Association which was totally against the granting of recognition of the PRC.

In contrast to these voices against any notion of recognition, there is evidence to suggest that there were other voices that fed into an undercurrent in favour of recognition. The primary sources in Doran and Lee's book provide numerous examples of this and it is interesting to note that many of the documents in this volume were marked secret or top secret at the time they were created. This would seem to indicate that whilst the government may have aimed to present a united image on the matter for public consumption, behind the scenes there were myriad views on the best course of action.

Whilst there were those within the government who gave anti-recognition advice during the days and weeks following the Liberals' election success in December 1949, there were also those within the new government and amongst government officials who were in favour of normalising relations. As already indicated in earlier chapters, I would argue that the main reason for the government adopting an anti-recognition stance was in order to gain domestic political capital. However, once the Korean War broke out in June 1950, any likelihood of granting recognition was rapidly and, I would argue, inevitably extinguished. Australian troops fighting a communist opponent would have made the question of recognition totally implausible.

Apart from the Catholic Church, most other churches were in favour of normalising relations. These, along with the unions, the Communist Party of Australia (CPA), and various peace groups presented "more balanced or positive images of China" during the Cold War (Strahan, 1996:293). Other epistemic communities that were more open to establishing relations with the PRC included the Australian Institute for International Affairs and, as part of its policy position from the mid-1950s, the ALP. Apart from anything else, this gave the ALP a major point of difference from the LCP government which was something that Whitlam focussed on once he became leader of the ALP in 1967.

An additional factor that would have influenced the thinking of epistemic communities during this period was the social revolution of the 1960s. This, I believe, empowered the younger generation into thinking afresh and, indeed, thinking more for themselves rather than being dictated to by an older generation. By the late 1960s a radical New Left had been formed which was aiming for social and political change. Once introduced, these changes will have had a fundamental impact upon the way in which people, especially younger people, viewed the world and what was going on in the world.

The appearance of a movement such as this will have encouraged somebody like Whitlam to 'go out on a limb' and take the huge risk that his 1971 trip to the PRC amounted to. Almost eighteen months later, in December 1972, Whitlam was proven right in taking that risk when the Labor Party defeated the LCP after 23 years in the electoral wilderness.

It is difficult to provide direct evidence that the epistemic communities in favour of recognition and which fed into the undercurrent were influenced by the social revolution mentioned above, but I would suggest that they could not have been immune to the changes that were taking place.

Linked to the comments above, one point that was apparent from election results was that the conservatism of the electorate through the 1950s and most of the 1960s had begun to shift as the social revolution of the 1960s began to take shape. This shift, I contend, was one of a number of factors that benefitted Whitlam.

**The Growth and Impact of the Undercurrent**

Exactly how and why the Australian undercurrent in favour of recognition gradually grew from its small beginnings until it became a powerful force which was used by Whitlam for electoral advantage is open to question and will be analysed in this section. The changing atmosphere as generated by the social revolution of the 1960s would have been one factor that stimulated the growth of the undercurrent, but that alone would not have been enough to bring about the change in voting patterns that eventually brought about Whitlam's electoral

victory in 1972. What follows is an attempt to explain how 23 years of LCP government of Australia was brought to an end and how this links with the ALP's decision to grant recognition to the PRC if Whitlam became prime minster.

However, it needs to be stressed that it was not only the political parties that were influential on the matter of normalising relations with the PRC. Various epistemic communities would have added to the undercurrent in favour of normalising relations and their voices would have grown stronger as time passed so that, by the time that Whitlam made his trip to Beijing in 1971, there was a significant body of support for a change in policy. I maintain that the social revolution already alluded to which led to anti-Vietnam War protests (see p45) would have added force to this body of support as the notion of "the downward thrust of communism" receded.

As a point of information, where a person's name is cited without a date or page number in what follows, it is indicative of that person's views being presented based upon interview data; the interviews all took place in 2021.

From the outset, and contrary to what might have been expected, the Communist Party of Australia (CPA) was an influential epistemic community (Chey). In particular, it had a significant influence with many thinkers and writers of the period who would have fed their views into the aforementioned social revolution and, thus, generated fresh ways of thinking about the world. This would have stimulated debate and encouraged the notion that there was more than one way to view the world and the social structures which dominated at the time

It is apparent that links between the CPA and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) were promoted during this period. For example, during the 1950s, "six groups of Australian Communist cadres, totalling sixty-seven people, received instruction from the Communist Party of China in Peking" (McIntyre, 1978:410). The fact that Australians, albeit Australian communists, had travelled to Beijing for such an enterprise was indicative of the changing mood that was already beginning to show itself in the 1950s, ahead of the more obvious social revolution of the 1960s. Such visits indicate that the hostility towards closer ties with the PRC was by no means universal. In addition to the CPA, there were groups such as one from Sydney University in the late 1960s and early 1970s that promoted the idea of closer relations with the PRC regardless of whether or not recognition was granted. Meanwhile, the Country Party was very keen to promote trade with the PRC and lobbied for such a move in the rural newspaper, *The Land* (Chey).

What is apparent is that there were a number of epistemic communities outside of the main political parties which were influential in pushing for a normalisation of relations with the PRC. One of these was the Women's Liberation movement which also fed into the social revolution of the 1960s. This was just one of a number of groups that contributed to a new set of ideas and it is quite likely that groups such as this could well have influenced the ALP's decision to send Whitlam's delegation to the PRC in 1971. Similarly, the print media were influential during this period as were groups such as the Country Women's Association, Apex and Rotary each of which would have played a part in shaping opinion (FitzGerald).

Groups that were important in shaping the opinions of politicians were the Australian intelligence agencies and public service. Despite the point made in an earlier chapter about a level of ignorance within government service about the PRC, these agencies were respected by the politicians whom they served and would definitely have played a part in influencing

the opinion of politicians. It needs to be mentioned that public servants were not unanimous in their antipathy towards the PRC and, indeed, as is apparent from a number of documents in Doran & Lee (2002), there were some who, throughout the period, advocated the normalisation of relations.

Contrary to my own view, FitzGerald, along with most of the other interviewees, also made the point that the USA was especially influential in shaping Australian policy towards the PRC. Whilst I would concede that the USA exerted some influence, I still maintain that, in the two decades following the setting up of the PRC, the major influence was the electoral advantage that opposition to the normalisation of relations conferred upon the Liberal Country Party. Menzies, in particular, recognised this during his tenure as prime minister between 1949 and 1966. However, by the end of that tenure, the movement in favour of normalising relations was growing in strength, as was made obvious when Whitlam made his trip to Beijing a few years later.

Throughout the period of non-recognition, the Australian press, with only a few exceptions, supported official government policy and tended to be pro-American in the way in which it presented the news (Carr). Whilst there were some journalists who were willing to challenge the accepted wisdom of the government, they were few in number and the commentariat remained largely conservative in the message that it propounded throughout most of this period (Laurenceson). This simply served to reinforce the view that the media invariably followed the LCP government line. However, in presenting a viewpoint that was contrary to that presented by most journalists, the contrarians kept alive the notion that the normalisation of relations with the PRC would be a positive step. The columns that these journalists put out will have added to the undercurrent in favour of recognition and kept alive the idea that, at some point, it was quite feasible that it would happen.

Public opinion was inevitably an important factor in the way that the government presented its policies and the fact that there was a "raw racial element" concerning China was used to gain political advantage in the early years of the PRC (Laurenceson). However, the social changes of the 1960 will, no doubt, have led to a gradual reduction in some quarters in the ways in which such negative images were used. It is likely that blatant racism would no longer have been so acceptable as a political ploy aimed at winning electoral support. This meant that the social revolution of the 1960s was, to a certain extent, instrumental in changing the way in which public opinion was formed.

One of the consequences of this social revolution was the way in which attitudes to the Vietnam War, and to the unknown that was Asia, began to change. Australian troops had been actively involved in the Vietnam War from 1965 onwards. However, as time progressed there was a growing reluctance amongst many members of the public for Australian troops to be involved. By 1970, a significant swathe of Australian public opinion had shifted to an anti-war position and this was reflected in a protest movement that called for the withdrawal of Australian troops. Allied to this was the reduction in the fear of the unknown that the PRC represented and this, I contend, would have had an impact upon the way in which the public viewed Whitlam's visit to the PRC in 1971. Instead of being opposed to such a visit, the social revolution and the changing attitudes it generated created a more positive approach towards Whitlam's decision to visit the PRC.

In the present day and age, we are bombarded by a plethora of information that comes from a wide range of information sources. That was not the case fifty or sixty years ago when public opinion was shaped by a much narrower "stream of influence". Despite the significant reduction in British influence in the years following World War II, there was still "a very strong sense of Australia as British" as presented in the press, on radio and in the new medium of television (Gyngell). However, it appears that this traditional influence was on the wane which became even more pronounced during the 1960s.

Whilst some of the interviewees mentioned the social revolution of the 1960s directly, others alluded to it when pointing out that the epistemic communities such as the public service, the press and members of the ruling party had becoming much less influential by the time of the 1972 election. Until that time, these epistemic communities had been deeply committed to the policies they had been promoting since the 1950s which tended to focus on "the communist world versus the free world". Furthermore, public opinion during that period "was almost entirely dependent upon the media and there was very little media" (Rigby). This meant that the information that the general public consumed in this narrow media space was, inevitably, influential. However, the 1960s saw the emergence of social revolutionaries who were willing to challenge the status quo and encourage people, especially younger people, to challenge the influence of the traditional information organs. The 1972 election result suggests that they were successful in this venture.

Whilst one of the main arguments of this thesis is that Australia was not beholden to American policy, as already conceded, it cannot be denied that America exerted some influence over Australia in different measure at different points in time between 1949 and 1973. The coincidence of Kissinger arriving in the PRC when Whitlam was there is one such point in time. Another is the way in which the USA shifted its rigid anti-PRC position from 1969 during Nixon's presidency. Despite this, a significant number of Australian journalists continued to play "the anti-China card" (White). However, with Nixon's visit to China in 1972 even those newspapers that had been stridently anti-PRC began to adopt a different stance. For example, *The Sydney Morning Herald* began to moderate its position and follow the revised American line. Moreover, during that period, it became increasingly apparent that the media influences not only public opinion. When asked if the media can also influence politicians the response was a resounding "You bet", and that once influenced in this way, politicians can further influence public opinion (White). However, the process can also be reversed, especially at election time when public opinion can have a major impact upon policy decisions. It is these policy decisions that the electorate tends to vote on. Also, especially powerful at election time is any convergence in what the media and the one of the political parties are saying. For 23 years, the message of successive LCP governments was in accord with the message being propounded by the media and such a convergence means that it becomes easier to sway the public. However, by 1972, it seems that it was not the government and the media saying the same thing, but the ALP and much of the media. As a result, Whitlam was elected following the ALP's 23 years in the wilderness.

In many instances, the interviewees were of the opinion that the pro-American sympathies of successive Coalition governments was a very significant factor in shaping public opinion. Furthermore, as has already been indicated, the media commentary of the period up to the late 1960s and early 1970s was "solidly anti-China" (Mackerras) and, as mentioned above, the position taken by the media can have a major impact upon voter intentions.

The notion of the 1960s being a period of change cannot be emphasised enough. It was a time when Australian perceptions of the PRC and of Asia as a whole began to change. The fact that these countries to the north offered a massive potential market for Australian goods was a perception that began to take hold in Australia. The economic benefits provided by such a market were enormous and the farming sector, presumably aided by its supporters in the Country Party, seem to have awoken to this notion during the 1960s (Watson). Similarly, the epistemic community that can best be described as the business sector must also have been attracted to the economic benefits that might accrue from a closer relationship with the PRC. The impact of such an epistemic community gradually shifting its opinion in favour of normalising relations cannot be overlooked

Whilst the Country Party seems to have recognised the benefits of trade with the PRC, the Australian union movement, which may have shown some sympathy towards communist ideas, seems to have adopted a more conservative stance. As such, it was protective of the Australian way of life and, thus, did not pursue the idea of building a relationship with the PRC (Jose). However, there was a growing sense of multilateralism by the 1960s and this would have been a part of the undercurrent that would have embraced a more open approach to the PRC (ibid). Here was a new way of seeing the world that would have appealed to many voters. A part of that multilateralism involved a desire to learn about other cultures and accept differences. It was such an atmosphere, it would seem, that allowed Whitlam to bring in his radically different policies with regard to the PRC.

That notion of multilateralism was evident in the Australian Department of External Affairs during the 1960s, where some officials were convinced that the PRC did not have aggressive intentions. In view of this, these officials favoured recognition. Here was an epistemic community that dared to contradict its own government and was proposing a more open approach to the PRC. However, the advice of these officers, and their assertions that the imagery was misguided, was not heeded by their political masters. The Coalition government was determined not to soften its position on the PRC.

In addition to the officials mentioned above, "by the mid- to late 1960s a growing band of critics…attacked conventional China policy, demanding rapprochement and recognition. Many observers …called for a rethinking of Australian defence and foreign policies" (Strahan, 1996:291-2). Attitudes in some quarters certainly seem to have been changing and this indicated a further surge in the undercurrent in favour of recognition.

Despite these shifts in attitude, the LCP government continued to resist any suggestions of a change in policy towards the PRC. Nevertheless, the evidence suggests that amongst the range of epistemic communities which adopted an opinion on recognition of the PRC there was a reasonable balance. In view of this, the two major political parties, when promoting their own position, could cite support from other epistemic communities in order to bolster their own case. This would have been an important element in any attempts to sway the electorate. In view of the election results through the 1950s and 1960, the LCP, and the epistemic communities that supported its position, had considerably more success in swaying the electorate to its way of thinking. However, as the 1960s progressed, a new mood was afoot which heralded the afore-mentioned social revolution in most countries in the Western World. Australia, no less than any other Western nation, would have been influenced by this new mood. A number of commentators note that the LCP, on coming to power in 1949, had

been contemplating the idea of granting recognition. However, the importance of securing an alliance with the USA forestalled such a move (FitzGerald, 1972). Nevertheless, the existence of such views at a high level within government would have been instrumental in initiating an undercurrent in support of recognition of the PRC. Contrary to some other commentators, FitzGerald believed that, through most of the 1950s, the Australian government felt that the PRC should be recognised (Ibid). Here was a constant source that would have added to the undercurrent. Once that undercurrent was flowing, it would have been very difficult to stem its flow.

However, an example of the thinking within government circles is evident in a Brief sent to External Affairs Minister Spender in January 1950. This stressed that a Communist government in China amounted to a danger to the rule of law. Nevertheless, the document repeated the words that "we will not be able to postpone recognition indefinitely" (in Doran & Lee [Eds], 2002:11). Despite the main tone of the Brief being opposed to the granting of recognition, those final words can only have encouraged those who favoured recognition and would have marked a very early flow to the undercurrent seeking normalisation of relations.

It is apparent, therefore, that during these early days of Coalition government, Canberra was willing to consider the granting of recognition (*North China Daily News*, 10 March 1950). In a speech to Parliament, Spender provided a significant boost to the early flow of the undercurrent when he said, "There is no logical reason why Democracy and Communism, as distinct from Communist imperialism, should not be able to live together in the world" (Ibid). If they could live together, there would be no reason to rule out the normalisation of relations with the PRC.

Despite these early indications that recognition might be possible, there was a variety of factors which militated against any moves towards the normalisation of relations. As this thesis argues, it was domestic factors and the manner in which they were presented to the public by successive LCP governments that ensured a long-standing antipathy towards granting recognition. Despite the antipathy encouraged by successive governments, the undercurrent that began more as a ripple than a strongly flowing stream would grow from the time the PRC was established with the support of some of the groups mentioned above.

By the 1960s, it became apparent that the kind of conservatism that would have shaped policy decisions in 1949 was much less obvious in some sections of the community.

As already mentioned, variety of the epistemic communities were instrumental in influencing opinion one way or the other. For example, the Women's Liberation Movement was an important element within the undercurrent in favour of recognition and Germaine Greer's *The Female Eunuch* (1970) was one of a number of books that was indicative of the attitudinal changes that were occurring at the time (FitzGerald).

Other groups such as a range of religious groups, the Australian Institute for International Affairs, the Country Women's Association, Apex, Rotary and, increasingly as the 1960s neared their end, various sections of the Media and even agricultural and business interests, for one reason or another, displayed an interest in normalising relations with the PRC. With such an array of voices expressing support for change, there was an increasing spur for the younger generation who would have been more amenable to the notion of normalising relations with the PRC.

When considering the groups mentioned above, it seems that the women's movement, in conjunction with the so-called student revolution of the 1960s, contributed to a "snowballing of a new set of ideas" (FitzGerald). These attitudinal changes and the support of the epistemic communities mentioned would have been a vitally important ingredient in the ALP's eventual decision to send the Whitlam delegation to China in 1971.

That visit by Whitlam was instrumental in contributing to the undercurrent insofar as the journalists who accompanied the delegation in many instances sent back positive stories of their experiences in the PRC and of Zhou Enlai. For example, the *Sydney Morning Herald* of 6 July 1971 contained a positive Editorial about the visit, despite the fact that there were also negative reports in some editions of that newspaper. Meanwhile, a Whitlam Institute report sums up the impact of Whitlam's visit by one who accompanied him, Stephen FitzGerald. "In one fell swoop, his [Whitlam's] 1971 visit to China not only paved the way for diplomatic relations and a resumption of important trade, it changed how Australians understood China in our foreign policy and opened the way to public support for engagement with Asia on a new basis of equality and mutual respect" (FitzGerald, 2021). This represented a huge change in the way the PRC and, especially recognition of the PRC, were viewed.

It should be noted that Whitlam's visit was at a time when the Communist Party of Australia was growing in size and, as such, it would have grown in influence and encouraged those who were seeking new approaches to political issues. This would have been an additional contribution to the undercurrent.

Another part of the undercurrent, it could be argued, is the fact that, throughout his leadership, Menzies always had an open mind towards making the change if and when the time was right (Rigby). Whilst he may never have revealed this to the general public, it is inevitable that there will have been those within government who shared the view and their voices, even if muted, will have added to the undercurrent. Furthermore, during the closing stages of the Vietnam War and by the end of Australia's involvement in that war, in December 1972, there was an increasing interest in Asia and the need to learn about Asia, including Asian languages. Part of the undercurrent at this time argued that Australia should no longer be so beholden to either the UK or, especially, the USA; the flow in favour of change was growing. By this time, the notion of the Asian peril and even of the threat of communism was very much diminished, and the Australian people were aware that "we were not fighting the Chinese" (Rigby). This will have marked a significant change in the way in which the PRC was perceived and will have made any move to mend the relationship a more acceptable proposition.

As already indicated, there was a generational shift within Australia, with the younger generation holding very different attitudes compared to their elders. Part of this shift in attitude was the result of the anti-Vietnam War movement which attracted "a radical chic element" (Jose). Added to a new, more curious attitude amongst the younger generation, there was a willingness to try to find out more about China and an increased anti-racist theme that was linked to the anti-apartheid movement. These factors led to a disposition for people to think more positively of China. It was also a period when various delegations were visiting China, such as union and friendship groups which would, again, have fed into the undercurrent when they returned with a tendency to present positive images of the PRC.

Through the 1950s and 1960s, an increasing number of Australians travelled to China "to act as eyewitnesses to the progresses made by its Communist regime… These travellers …came from all walks of life." and spread "enthusiastic reports of Communist China" on their return to Australia (Sobocinska, 2008:323). Here was yet another contribution to the undercurrent.

Whilst Menzies did consider granting recognition, he remained unsure of the best position to adopt for a long time and certainly would have preferred a more open relationship with the PRC (Mackerras). It seems very likely, therefore, that the undercurrent would have received ongoing trickles of support from those in Cabinet and in the public service who held similar views to Menzies. Meanwhile, Whitlam had supported the idea of normalising relations with the PRC since the mid-1950s (Ibid). In one of his first speeches in Parliament on international affairs in 1954, Whitlam had advocated the recognition of the PRC (ACRI, 2014) and he was ahead of his party in advocating such a move: that position became ALP policy in 1955.

From the late 1960s there was an increase in discussion in Australia about a need to recognise the PRC. The groups mentioned earlier in this chapter would have been instrumental in leading such discussion. This was especially the case in the lead up to Whitlam being elected, but it was not confined to supporters of the ALP or to the epistemic communities listed earlier as there were also increasing numbers within Liberal ranks who were moving towards granting recognition (Chey). Whilst these elected members indicated continuing support for the notion of the recognition of both the PRC and the ROC, there was a growing realisation, by February 1971, that the PRC was likely to replace the ROC and become the representative of China at the United Nations. This would, surely, have led to a reappraisal of the notion of a two-Chinas policy amongst many who had advocated the desirability of such a position.

This need for a reappraisal is born out in a swathe of documents that provide evidence of a likely shift in policy in light of international moves to have the PRC replace the ROC as China's representative at the United Nations. As early as October 1970, a letter to Australia's ambassador in Washington, from the ambassador to France, A.P Renouf, suggests that Australia should reconsider its position "as the pace of recognition increases" (in Doran & Lee [Eds], 2002:326). It was this shift in thinking in international circles which prompted a shift in Australian thinking. Nevertheless, the documents reveal that the Australian government was still in no hurry to make a shift in policy.

This reluctance to make any hasty change in policy is apparent in a lengthy Submission to Cabinet dated February 1971. The submission is from McMahon, as Minister for Foreign Affairs (Ibid:375-391) and outlines Australia's policy towards China. Whilst the Cabinet decision based on that document acknowledged the likelihood that the PRC would soon be admitted to the UN, it also expressed the view that the ROC should remain as a separate entity at the UN (Ibid:395). Another Submission to Cabinet, dated March 1971, further recognises the inevitability of the PRC being admitted to the UN but, again, argues the case for allowing the ROC to retain its seat (Ibid:396-402). By 9 March 1971, an internal minute from one member of the Department of Foreign Affairs to another mentions the inevitability of the PRC's admission to the Security Council and the great likelihood that the ROC will be expelled from the UN (Ibid:403-405). The Australian government, however, seemed unwilling to accept the reality of this situation. Despite this, it is suggested that the international manoeuvring regarding Chinese representation at the UN will have further fed into the Australian undercurrent.

By April 1971, in a Submission to the Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs, Sir Reginald Swartz, First Assistant Secretary in the Asian Division, H.D. Anderson calls for the need to "make known publicly the Government's long-term interest in normalisation of bilateral relations with the PRC" (Ibid:425). Whilst this may not have been government policy, here was a senior official of the government advocating recognition. It is highly likely that there will also have been an increasing number of elected LCP members who recognised the need for a significant change in China policy.

Each one of these factors will have given additional impetus to the undercurrent and by this time, academia was also becoming increasingly interested in the PRC. In 1971, a delegation of 20 people from the University of Sydney visited China for about six months prior to Whitlam's election victory. The group-members were "all very enthusiastic about improved relations regardless of recognition", and negativity towards the PRC was by no means universal and, by this time, seems to have been very much in decline (Chey). Here was another example of the decrease in hostility towards the PRC and the willingness of various groups to be more open-minded. Indeed, by the late 1960s, many in Canberra no longer viewed the PRC as a threat, but there were still some in the press who continued to play the anti-China card (White).

There were many in the ALP who had shared Whitlam's view since the mid-1950s, when it became ALP policy to grant recognition. The adoption of such a policy would have added additional force to the undercurrent over a substantial period. And once a major party such as the ALP had endorsed this as a policy in 1955, there would, undoubtedly, have been many in a range of epistemic communities and within the general public who began to see the wisdom of such a move. However, in the mid-1950s and, indeed, through the 1960s, the undercurrent did not yet have sufficient force to sway the electorate in its voting patterns.

The change in ALP policy during the mid-1950s would have been quite unpopular in some quarters and would have been seen as a sign that "Labor was being soft on communism during the Cold War era" (Carr). Nevertheless, Whitlam's decision to go to China, "brilliantly and bravely" gave life to the notion of a normalisation of relations (Ibid). For those seeking an indication that there could be a change in policy if the ALP came to power, this move must have provided significant hope.

Trade was another developing feature of the Sino-Australian relationship. "Australia had…traded with China ever since the communist government came to power in 1949" (in Greenwood & Harper [Eds], 1975:335). As such, trade was increasingly important, especially the sale of agricultural produce to the PRC. Many Australian farmers would have been members of or aligned to the LCP which meant that their support of the trading partnership will have fed into the undercurrent in favour of maintaining good relations with the PRC in order to ensure that the purchase of their produce continued at a high level. The positive attitude of these farmers would inevitably have influenced attitudes within the LCP, thus leading to a desire to maintain good working relations with the PRC. In all likelihood, any deterioration in the Sino-Australian relationship would have led to a reduction in trade such as has happened in recent years.

The trading relationship was essentially one which entailed "pragmatic contact". For example when the Australian Wheat Board began to negotiate the selling of wheat to China in the early 1960s, there was economically no urgent need for Australia to engage with China at that time

(Watson). However, as indicated in the previous paragraph, there were those who wished to establish commercial contact which indicates how another branch of the undercurrent was beginning to flow. Furthermore, during the 1960s Australia began to engage with Asia as its key economic focus at a time when Britain was becoming more focussed on its membership of the EEC for trade purposes (Watson). It seems very likely that changes such as this would have led to changing attitudes within Australia and, in particular, a more favourable view of Asia generally and China in particular.

In terms of Cabinet support for recognition, Gyngell, in his interview, mentioned that Richard Casey, Spender's successor as Minister for External Affairs, was a proponent of the idea of granting recognition to the PRC even though he was antagonistic towards the idea of totalitarian communism. Casey, and others who felt the same way about the need to recognise the PRC, would have fed yet another stream of the undercurrent.

Between March and June 1950, various documents show that Australia and Canada were exploring the idea of acting simultaneously, but representatives from both countries make the point that there is no need to act urgently. However, a letter from the Canadian High Commissioner in Canberra indicates that the Canadians were of the opinion that recognition would need to finalised "before long" (in Doran & Lee [Eds], 2002:20).

With the outbreak of war in Korea in June 1950, the nature of the documents take on a different tone and the security of Taiwan, in the face of a possible attack by the PRC, features prominently in some of the documents. It is this which, in effect, forces the hand of Australia insofar as it is adamant that Taiwan not be handed over to the PRC at this time. This is abundantly clear in a cablegram from Spender to Menzies in September 1950 (Ibid:24), and it becomes a policy to which successive Australian governments would adhere for the next twenty years, and which, thus, became the matter of greatest contention whenever the notion of normalising relations with the PRC arose during that twenty year period.

On the question of Taiwan, there was a similarity in American and Australian policy. However, it seems that this was coincidental rather than a formally adopted stance as becomes apparent in the same cablegram from Spender to Menzies. In it, Spender, who it seems was frequently seeking a way to normalise relations with the PRC, goes on to suggest that Taiwan should eventually be placed "under a Commission of the United Nations pending determination of its future" which included the option of union with the PRC (Ibid:25). Such a move would certainly have been contrary to all that the USA desired since it remained implacably resistant to any suggestion that Taiwan should be reunited with Communist China.

In December 1950, in a cablegram to the then ambassador to France, Sir Keith Officer (who was temporarily seconded to work at the UN), Spender raises the idea that if a settlement with the PRC over Korea could be reached it might open the door for negotiations on the matter of recognition. In this message, Spender itemises three stages that might lead to the normalisation of relations, namely de-recognition of the ROC, followed by recognition of the PRC, which he suggests might lead to the settlement of the Taiwan issue through the UN (Ibid:32).

Here, once more, is evidence that Australia, in its attempts to find ways of normalising relations with the PRC, was not simply following US policy initiatives. Indeed, Australia and

particularly Spender in his position as Minister for External Affairs, was willing to seek its own solutions on the matter. This is a very different picture to that presented in much of the commentary in secondary sources. As Spender comments in yet another cablegram addressed to Officer, dated December 1950, if not for the Korean War, the matter of recognition might have been resolved much earlier. In the same message, he makes derogatory comments about the Chiang Kai Shek government, to the effect that it would be unfit to rule mainland China. Once again, he raises the question of de-recognition of the ROC as a necessary forerunner to recognition of the PRC (Ibid:38).

Whilst most, if not all, of these communications are marked as secret, it is unrealistic to assume that Spender's hopes for a move towards recognition of the PRC would not have been known by other Cabinet members, some of whom, one would assume, would also have been in support of such a move. Consequently, from these very early stages, it seems very likely that the undercurrent would have been receiving a healthy flow in favour of recognition. It is also abundantly clear that there was no inclination to follow American policy.

A further example of Spender's position is a cablegram to Menzies, dated January 1951 (Ibid:43-45) in which he expresses support for the idea that the PRC must eventually be recognised in preference to the ROC. So already, during the midst of the Korean War, Spender provides a clear indication of his views on the matter. The only caveats he includes in the message are regarding when to adopt such a policy and the possible reaction of the USA to such a change in policy. However, he advises Menzies of the need to move towards recognition in the stages he had already suggested in his earlier message to Officer. Here is yet more evidence that Australia was not slavishly following US policy and that within government circles there was a definite undercurrent in favour of granting recognition.

A few days later, in a cablegram from Menzies to Spender and Arthur Fadden, the leader of the Country Party, the Prime Minister includes the statement that Australia should "as quickly as possible discard the role of being Chiang's advocate" (Ibid:47). In view of the fact that the USA was determined to back the ROC, this is further proof that the leadership of Australia was not willing to ride on America's coat tails and is a further indication that, at the time, it seemed likely that Australia would have much preferred to seek a rapprochement with the PRC. He ended his message with mention of the delicate position regarding negotiations with the USA, by which he presumably meant that here was a difference of opinion between Washington and Canberra. As a result, he added that there was a need to take precautions "to prevent the line of our discussions becoming known publicly" (Ibid).

In addition to the undercurrent in government circles, it seems that the Korean War gave rise to a publicly expressed re-think amongst some sections of the epistemic community that was the press: there were "press stories favouring recognition" during and after the Korean War (Doran & Lee, 2002:xxiii). Similarly, soon after the end of the Korean War, there were commentators and sections of the press that "were beginning to argue that Peking should be recognised" (Andrews, 1985:41). It certainly shows that some sections of the press were not hostile to the notion of recognition. Here was an epistemic community feeding into the undercurrent quite publicly which, no doubt, would have encouraged other epistemic communities and individuals to do the same. In doing so, it seems likely that they would have begun to influence public opinion. Whilst it would be the 1960s before opinion polls began

to reflect support for recognition of the PRC, the beginnings of such sentiments adding to the undercurrent were evident in the early to mid-1950s.

A key indication of the sensitive state of relations between Australia and the USA is given by Spender in a Submission to Cabinet dated February 1951. In it, he mentions discussions relating to moves to create ANZUS and the need, where possible, to "maintain a common front" with the USA. However, it is clear that Spender is promoting an independent line in connection to support for the Chiang Kai-shek regime. Whilst he urges caution with regard to timing so as not to prejudice the "friendly relationships which exist between the United States and ourselves", he is in no doubt of the need for Australia to adopt an independent approach towards the ROC if it is unable to persuade the USA to alter its policies on the matter (in Doran & Lee [Eds], 2002:52). Here is further very clear evidence that the Menzies government was not blindly following US policy.

Spender's successor as Minister for External Affairs, Richard Casey, was keen to talk with the PRC. As he explains in a Submission to Cabinet, dated August 1953, "It is very difficult to have any negotiations or reach any understandings with China unless we are prepared to talk to Peking" (Ibid:70). This is further proof of Canberra's willingness to feed the undercurrent despite the reluctance of the USA to adopt any such approach.

The documents mentioned above from the early 1950s indicate that, from the time of the setting up of the PRC, Australia was determined to adopt an independent policy with regard to the whole China question. The fact that Australia did not wish to blatantly offend or embarrass its major ally, the USA, is in no way an indication that it was following US policy.

Further documents contained in Doran & Lee (2002) from throughout the 1950s and the 1960s are indicative of the same approach, but also show that the timing of any move towards recognition was considered crucial. Any move to do so during the Korean War might be seen as rewarding the PRC for its role as an aggressor; the same would have been true during Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War. Also, by 1954, any move towards negotiations with Beijing were officially considered to be dependent upon the continued recognition of Taiwan as independent of the mainland, a condition that would never be accepted by the PRC so, effectively, a block towards any such negotiations. So, even though the undercurrent in favour of recognition continued to flow, the events mentioned above served to hinder any straightforward moves towards recognition.

What is evident from the data is that there were individuals within the government and there were epistemic communities that were in favour of normalising relations with the PRC. As such, these individuals and groups and the sentiments they expressed, both privately and publicly, will have kept alive the notion that recognition of the PRC was a distinct possibility. In doing so, the undercurrent will have continued to grow throughout the 1950s and 1960s. As a result, Whitlam would have been well aware that he was not without significant support when he decided to visit the PRC and when, on becoming Prime Minister, he decided to pursue a policy in favour of the normalisation of relations. Even though conservative elements within politics and within the press castigated him, it would have been apparent that the force of their arguments were declining in the face of the undercurrent in support of his stance.

As the above illustrates, there were various epistemic communities that gradually came to favour normalising relations with the PRC. Inevitably, the role of politicians would be crucial to any final decision. However, it seems likely that a major factor in shifting opinion must have been the media. Without a significant volume of support from the various media sectors it seems very unlikely that public opinion would have altered significantly; and without that shift in public opinion, it is very unlikely that the political will to make such a drastic change to policy would have eventuated.

**Evidence in Favour of Recognition**

In this section, in view of the sheer volume of documents and the similarity of evidence from the end of the Korean War in 1953 through to the early 1970s, a selection of just some of the primary documents favouring recognition of the PRC will be used.

The first item selected is a lengthy Submission to Cabinet by Minister for External Affairs, R.G. Casey, dated 16 June 1955 (in Doran & Lee [Eds], 2002:110-124). This document indicates that the government is considering ways in which recognition might occur, even allowing for difficulties regarding Taiwan. For example, at one point, the document talks of the possibility of recognition within the following context: "If we can decide that there is no overwhelming reason why we should not do so [grant recognition]" we should aim "to extract some quid pro quo" regarding Taiwan (Ibid:120). The document also talks of the "unreality of our present policy" and ends with the words, "Australia should not consider recognition by itself but only in coordination with recognition by a number of other countries" (Ibid:124). However, it does not specifically mention the USA, which is an indication that Australia did not feel that its policy should mirror that of the USA. Meanwhile, the fact that the minister responsible for foreign affairs is, at this time, willing to look at recognition as a distinct possibility would, inevitably, have fed into the undercurrent.

In August 1955, in a letter to Menzies, Casey cites Australian newspapers that "are pressing for a more forthcoming and responsive attitude from us towards the Communist Governments". He goes on to suggest that Australia should support the PRC's entry to the UN and that Australia should adopt "in our own interests, a more sympathetic attitude towards both Peking's recognition and its entry into the United Nations" (Ibid:125). Again, further evidence that Casey was willing to add to the undercurrent in the views he was promoting as a senior government minister. On the matter of representation at the UN, many of the documents in Doran and Lee from the mid-1950s to the eventual acceptance of the PRC as China's representative in 1971 indicate that huge amounts of time were spent discussing this issue in Australian government circles over a period of more than fifteen years.

In a paper prepared in July 1956 by the East Asia Section for Assistant Secretary at the UN Division, Sir James Plimsoll, and Assistant Secretary Pacific and Americas Branch, A.H. Loomes, mention is made that China's participation in the Korean War "cannot…be used indefinitely to justify non-recognition". The paper continues, "Australian public opinion as reflected in the press would seem to favour recognition" (Ibid:133). Here was a paper prepared by an unnamed bureaucrat which includes a very clear stance in favour of granting recognition. However, the same document goes on to mention that the USA would be strongly opposed to any of its allies granting recognition. Despite that, here is further evidence of the undercurrent flowing through governmental circles by the mid-1950s and

evidence, once again, that Australia is prepared to act independently of the USA. This is despite the acknowledged American opposition to any move towards recognition.

There are certainly indications that by the late 1950s there was a change in mood. In 1957, the ALP had sent a delegation to China (Strahan, 1996:137), and by the same time, "occasionally conservatives and foreign policy mandarins conceded that communism entailed some improvements in China" (Ibid:182). Also in 1957, an opinion poll found that 60% of Australian respondents favoured trade with China whilst only 28% were opposed (Ibid:286). This suggests that the undercurrent was having some impact and such an opinion poll would, in itself, have further added to the undercurrent.

The mid-1960s is referred to as a period of "cultural revolution" within Australia by journalist Bernard Salt in an item in *The Weekend Australian* magazine in 2022. He talks of "the rise of the counterculture…and opposition to the Vietnam War" creating "a case for change" which led to the election of Whitlam in December 1972. As such, the student revolution of the 1960s would have questioned traditional values and viewpoints at a time when many within the Australian and United States governments would have seen the war as necessary to halt the spread of communism. Instead, it is likely that the student protests would have advocated a more open approach to international relations and, in doing so, would have added to the flow of the undercurrent.

China's Cultural Revolution began in 1966 which suggests that any moves in favour of recognition as a result of the student movement would have been countered by the unfavourable response to the Cultural Revolution by many outside the PRC. However, the Cultural Revolution continued for ten years until 1976, by which time the ALP's delegation led by Whitlam had visited Beijing and Australia had normalised relations. This suggests that what many outsiders considered to be the excesses of the Cultural Revolution were not an impediment to an opening up to foreigners in the 1970s. Furthermore, the most intense period of the Cultural Revolution was during the first three and a half years (footnote in Doran & Lee,2002:261). The footnote also explains that as he re-emerged "as the pre-eminent figure in the Party, Mao gave full vent to his antipathy toward the Soviet Union and this, in turn, was to lead to Sino American détente" (Ibid). Along with the undercurrent that had been flowing since 1949, that Sino-American détente would make easier a Sino-Australian détente following Whitlam's visit and his election victory in December 1972. Indeed, the Sino-American détente will have given the undercurrent added force. Australia was not totally immune to American influence even if it preferred to take account of domestic factors first and foremost.

The point made earlier in this chapter about the agricultural and business communities in Australia gradually moving towards the notion that relations should be normalised is born our in what follows in this and the next paragraph. A Cabinet Decision, dated March 1966 (in Doran and Lee [Eds], 2002:262), allowed a Chinese delegation to visit Australia with a view to negotiating a deal over the sale of wheat to the PRC. No doubt, the Country Party would have welcomed such a move and the fact that a Chinese delegation was visiting Australia would have provided a definite boost to the undercurrent.

In July 1966, the Cabinet came to a decision to allow the export of large quantities of steel to the PRC. Government Ministers "recognized that it is part of the Government's policy…that improvements in communications and relations with China are nationally and internationally important, and that trade is one of the more ready and more likely means of securing

improvement" (Ibid:268). On the trade front, if not yet on the diplomatic front, here is further evidence that the Australian government was seeking an improvement in relations with the PRC. This was public knowledge, and as such, it would have provided an additional stream to the undercurrent and would have been a positive move regarding relations between the two countries.

Whilst there was a gradual shift in the late 1960s in the LCP government's position regarding the PRC, there remained a lack of any significant change in policy. This is reinforced in a document from November 1968 which mentions the minimal "cultural contacts with Mainland China" (in Doran & Lee [Eds], 2002:283). The same document talks of the need to learn to live with China and the fact that this can never be achieved "so long as we cling…to a two China policy" (Ibid:284). Written by the then ambassador to the ROC, Frank Cooper, and sent to the Minister for External Affairs, Sir Paul Hasluck, this is indicative of a growing realism within the diplomatic service.

In a letter dated March 1969 from Ambassador Cooper to Deputy Secretary in the Department of External Affairs, Laurence McIntyre, there is reference to the fact "that the status quo cannot be maintained much longer" and that Australia's diplomatic support for the ROC as the government of China "is a fiction that we may have to abandon sooner than we think" (Ibid:299). Cooper also refers to the fact that Australian policy is often defined as doing what the Americans do. This he asserts is not true and he goes on to describe American policy on China as a major blunder and suggests that Australia needed to develop its own policies (Ibid).

People with views such as those expressed by Cooper would have been adding to the undercurrent, but it seems that government ministers were still reluctant to admit the need for change. As such, they were not willing to acknowledge that the undercurrent existed as a gradually swelling tide in favour of normalising relations with the PRC. The continuing adoption of such a position by government ministers ensured that there were no moves to bridge the divide that still existed between Australia and the PRC.

In another letter from Cooper to McIntyre, dated July 1969, the most telling sentence is when he makes the point that it was "no more conceivable that Peking would abandon its claim to Taiwan than it would give up its rights in Hong Kong" (Ibid:304). In making this point, Cooper is aiming to eradicate what it seems were preconceived ideas in government circles that the issue of Taiwan could be easily settled.

In concluding his letter, Cooper calls on the Australian government to maintain its current policy, which "is more flexible than American policy", and that "we should refrain from appearing actively to champion the ROC's cause, either in the United Nations or elsewhere" (Ibid:306). Here was a realistic approach to the China question by Cooper and one that provided further evidence of Australia's reluctance simply to adopt American policy.

The final paragraph of Cooper's letter focuses on Canada's move towards the granting of recognition and how this might impact upon Australia's trade with the PRC. He ponders the possibility of Australia's continued support for the ROC if Australia were to lose its trading position "with our fifth largest customer", the PRC (Ibid:304). Trade would have a major influence upon the undercurrent, especially insofar as farmers who expected to benefit from selling produce to the PRC would, in all likelihood, have comprised more conservative elements of the LCP, but would also have favoured a more open relationship with the PRC.

In connection with this, as early as 1962, the leader of the farming lobby, George Hoy was urging Canberra to recognise Beijing in order to enhance trade (Strahan,1996:288). On a similar theme, despite the fact that the USA imposed a trade embargo on the PRC and at a time when Australian dependence upon the USA was supposedly at its peak during the 1950s and 1960s, Australia chose to continue trading with the PRC (Wang, 2012). Decisions such as these would have kept those in favour of recognition hopeful that the day would arrive when the government would seriously consider a change in policy. It is also further evidence that Australia decided its policy on the PRC independently of the USA even if it would, inevitably, have been aware of the policy of its American ally.

Any increase in trading relations between Australia and the PRC would have been another source that fed into the undercurrent. There was government involvement in the promotion of such a relationship, including visits by the Australian Trade Commissioner to Hong Kong and by the Governor of the Reserve Bank of Australia during the 1950s and 1960s (Wang, 2012). There were also return visits by a Chinese banking delegation. Contacts of this nature would, in all likelihood, have led to some improvement in the Sino-Australian relationship.

By October 1970, in a minute from H.D Anderson, first Acting Secretary at the Department of External Affairs, to Sir Keith Waller, Secretary of the Department, there is mention of future action that "could facilitate disengagement from our present rigid position" (in Doran & Lee [Eds], 2002:317). This document indicates a move in favour of the eventual recognition of the PRC, subject to a number of conditions. However, it also mentions the "need to maintain the closest possible contact with the United States on new or projected developments in their China policy" (Ibid:318). Whilst this does not amount to a need to follow American policy in its totality, it does amount to a need to work in consultation with the USA. It also indicates a willingness on the part of the Australian governmental bureaucracy to consider recognition which, in itself, could only add to the undercurrent even if it was not yet public policy.

Evidence that the undercurrent was growing in intensity comes in the form of increasing criticism of government policy during the mid- to late 1960s (Strahan, 1996). The critics included Stephen FitzGerald and Gregory Clark and, in making their views public and calling for a rethink on Australian foreign policy, they would have ensured that what had once been a trickle was growing into a steady flow in favour of a change in policy. These views that were contrary to official government policy coincided with "a rising tide in Australia against the White Australia policy and racism" (Strahan, 1996:292). That rising tide would have contributed further to the undercurrent and would have ensured that more people became aware of its existence and began to show support for the changes being mooted. Eventually, it was these changes, as outlined by Whitlam in the lead-up to the 1972 election, which would have convinced such people of the need to vote for the ALP if there was to be any meaningful shift in policy.

Despite the fact that the undercurrent was growing in intensity and the fact that some sections of the press were sympathetic towards the idea of recognising the PRC, "the newspapers generally accepted its [the government's] policy" (Andrews, 1985:45). So, the main elements of the epistemic community that constituted the press was in sympathy with the government's official position which would, presumably, have influenced a large body of public opinion during this period. However, at a time when the press was mainly hostile to the idea of

recognition, it says much for the impact of the undercurrent in favour of recognition that it was eventually able to exert influence upon the electorate.

A further document, dated October 1970 (in Doran & Lee [Eds], 2002:326) indicates that Canada had recognised the PRC and there was an expectation that other countries would soon follow Canada's lead. This growing movement towards recognition by other countries must surely have added to the undercurrent within Australia; it was a sign of the growing acceptability of the PRC by the international community. A Minute from Head of Policy Planning in the Department of Foreign Affairs, J.R.Holdich, to Acting First Assistant Secretary, H.D.Anderson, dated December 1970 serves to confirm this point when it urges a need to review China policy because of, amongst other things, "the growing acceptability of the PRC" (Ibid:347). The same document mentions how President Nixon had called for a review of US policy and the risk of Australia being left behind if it, too, did not review its own policy (Ibid:348). Once more, here was an indication that Australia was cognisant of US policy, but not necessarily following an identical policy.

By this time, McMahon was Minister for Foreign Affairs, and his response to Holdich's very lengthy Minute, is to not "ram the Department's view down the Cabinet's neck" as there was no urgency to deal with the points made (Ibid:356). Once again, the government minister responsible for relations with China is unwilling to heed the reasoned advice of his bureaucratic team.

In October 1970, a Minute from Assistant Secretary in the Department of External Affairs, A.J Eastman, to Minister for External Affairs McMahon (Ibid:331-336), reveals that a recent opinion poll had indicated that more people were in favour of granting recognition than those against (49% to 35%). Whilst accepting that there were still a number of problems to overcome if recognition were to be granted, Eastman urges the need for a review of Australian policy. Here was yet another contribution to the undercurrent, once more from the government bureaucracy.

From these documents, it is evident that governmental advisers were urging a re-think of policy on China prior to Whitlam making his visit to Beijing in July 1971. This reflected the gradual movement of other countries to grant recognition, and the increasing push for the PRC to be seen as China's representative in the UN. In short, the PRC was coming to be accepted as a respectable member of the international community. Meanwhile, the ROC was seen by many as a corrupt regime that could never represent the whole of China. Despite this, the official position of the Coalition Government in Australia remained one which supported the continuing existence of the ROC and the two-Chinas approach.

Questions posed by Gallup Pollsters in 1970, reveal that one asked, "In your opinion are there any countries that are a threat to Australia's security?" Of those polled, only 30% named China (Kendall, 2005:44-45). This suggested that attitudes towards China were not as hostile as the government may have wished. Despite concerted attempts by the government's propaganda machine, there were many who no longer saw China as a threat. The notion of "the downward thrust of communism" seemed to have lost its force.

Another issue that is likely to have influenced the view of some and, thus, fed into the undercurrent, would have been the position taken by other countries. By the mid-1950s, Britain, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Switzerland, the Netherlands and Yugoslavia had normalised relations with the PRC (Strahan, 1996); France joined the list in 1964. This

would have added to the pressure to follow suit amongst countries such as Australia which had been holding out against such a move. It seems that "an entangled mixture of pragmatic electoral advantage and engrained anti-communist convictions ossified the foreign policy of Australian conservatives in Cold War patterns" (Ibid:291-2). It was unlikely, therefore, that the undercurrent would at that stage succeed in having any impact upon bringing about a change to a Coalition government's China policy. However, "electoral advantage" and "anti-communist convictions" highlight the way in which domestic factors were paramount in determining the government's position (Ibid). In short, the government continued to ignore the growing undercurrent and this eventually led to its downfall after more than two decades in power.

Regardless of the conservative forces within government and in Australia, it is apparent that the pro-recognition undercurrent had begun to flow from the time the PRC came into existence. Once the ALP adopted a policy of granting recognition in the mid-1950s there would have been yet another stream contributing to the ever-increasing flow which was generated by the epistemic communities in favour of normalising relations.

Even though the Menzies and later Coalition governments refused to have anything to do with the communist regime in China, except for a few trade missions, it did not prevent the government from allowing unofficial contacts to flourish which might further promote trade between the PRC and Australia. Despite the almost total lack of formal contact, two-way trade between the two countries saw a massive increase in the years following 1949: from a relatively tiny A$3.9 million in 1949/50 to A$41 million ten years later. Then, during the 1960s, the PRC became Australia's sixth largest market and "the total volume of bi-lateral trade reached A$160 million" (Wang, 2012:12).

Whilst wool and wheat formed the bulk of the exports to the PRC, mineral and metals exports saw a significant increase from the mid-1960s onwards, feeding the PRC's fast developing industrial base. The trade surplus in Australia's favour reached "well over A$100 million" in the 1960s (Ibid:13), an advantage that could not be ignored by any Australian government, especially a Coalition Government which was significantly supported by Australian producers of raw materials. Hence, also, the changing view of the business and agricultural lobbies.

One can only assume that the relationships forged in connection with these trade deals would have added more positive flows to the undercurrent even if diplomatic recognition by a Coalition government remained unlikely. Meanwhile, as the evidence in this chapter indicates, the official government position on the PRC between 1949 and 1972 was not wholeheartedly supported by a number of government members nor by members of the government bureaucracy, including those in the diplomatic corps.

Some of those who had considered granting recognition at the time of the proclamation of the PRC continued to favour such a position even if political expedient meant that they could not openly express such a view. As the primary evidence shows, some senior members of the Menzies government that came to power towards the end of 1949 were keen to grant recognition and attempted to persuade others that such a course would have been to Australia's advantage.

However, the developing Cold War in Europe only led to fears that the PRC would become aggressive. The Korean War served to confirm such a view. Connected to this, so effective had the government's policy been in generating a fear of communism that, in September 1951, the Menzies government had ordered a referendum which was designed to give the federal government "the powers to deal with communism" (Cottle, 2015). Much to the surprise and disgust of the Cabinet, the 'No' vote outnumbered the 'Yes' vote. This indicated that despite the apparent and publicly proclaimed hostility towards the PRC and communism, not everyone was sufficiently hostile to ban the Communist Party of Australia. Nevertheless, the discourse that evolved in the 1950s and 1960s meant that those who defended the PRC were frequently criticised publicly (Strahan, 1996:139). Whilst this would have led to some containment of the undercurrent, it does serve to highlight the political courage of Whitlam in challenging such a position.

# CHAPTER 6

## A New Beginning

### External Events

It is important to recognise that, apart from domestic epistemic communities, there is, of course, a range of international factors that can have agency and influence the way in which Australia has behaved and continues to behave. In view of this, before going into the Australian-based events of the period 1971 to 1973, it is important to focus on a few external events which could be seen as influencing Australia in the actions it took during this period. However, these external events and Australia's behaviour during this period were, I contend, totally coincidental and, as in previous years, Australia's decisions were made independently.

The first such example could be misconstrued as Australia apparently following the lead of the USA when Whitlam made his visit to the PRC and, later, on becoming prime minister, granted recognition to the PRC. The fact that Henry Kissinger arrived in the PRC to arrange a visit for Richard Nixon whilst Whitlam was still there may have been seen by some as a pre-arranged set of circumstances. However, there is no evidence to suggest that Whitlam was aware that Kissinger would be visiting China whilst he himself was there. Whilst this marked a softening in Sino-American relations, it was of no consequence to Sino-Australian relations. Indeed, when commenting on Whitlam's meeting with Zhou Enlai in 1971, one observer later made the following point, "We see his belief that Australia had its own national interests and could act independently on that basis" (Griffiths, 2014). Moreover, on becoming prime minister in December 1972, Whitlam granted recognition to the PRC based upon the rapport he himself had established during his visit to the PRC.

The other example was in connection with the PRC's admission to the United Nations and the expulsion of the ROC in October 1971. On 5 December 1972, Gough Whitlam became Prime Minister of Australia. On 22 December, he officially acknowledged the legitimacy of the PRC as the sole ruler of China when he said:

> We have recognised the Government of the People's Republic of China as the sole legal government of China. It follows that we can give no recognition to others claiming to be the Government of China. Chinese policies on both sides of the Taiwan Straits required us, as they have required other governments in a similar position, to make a choice in this matter. We have made the choice which we believe will best serve the interests of Australia. It is also the choice that has been made by the United Nations.

The Coalition governments of Menzies, McEwan, Gorton and McMahon had been unwilling to budge on this matter, even when the United Nations had expelled the ROC in 1971. However, by his actions, the evidence suggests that Whitlam was quick to recognise the importance of a One-China policy if relations with the PRC were to be normalised. Indeed, without the declaration he made on 22 December 1972, the normalisation of relations could not have gone ahead. Again, it is clear that US policy was not a factor in Australia's decision on this matter.

Another key element for Whitlam when he made his visit to the PRC in 1971 was to win the support of the farmers' lobby and forestall the likely criticism that would come from the

Coalition who, he realised, would be quite happy to paint him as a traitor for consorting with the enemy. By championing the case of Australian wheat farmers, Whitlam was able to divert some of the criticism he faced for his visit. The early 1960s had seen spectacular sales of Australian wheat to the PRC (Andrews, 1985); this was despite the displeasure of the USA to such sales. As a result, Australian wheat production doubled, with half the increase going to China (Ibid). However, when Canada recognised the PRC in 1970, the Chinese granted a huge wheat contract to Canada which put pressure on Australian growers. On becoming leader of the ALP in 1969, Whitlam recognised the reality of this situation and "began to press for recognition of the People's Republic of China in order to facilitate the trade in wheat" (Andrews, 1985:199). The invitation to visit the PRC proved to be a happy coincidence for Whitlam who had "gone to China in 1971 partly in response to the decline in the wheat trade" (Ibid:227). Once in government, Whitlam was keen to develop the trading partnership with the PRC (Ibid).

**Domestic Politics**

The remainder of this chapter mainly covers a short period: 1971 until early 1973. Whilst Whitlam's trip to Beijing in 1971 marked the onset of a new beginning in the Sino-Australian relationship, Whitlam had advocated recognition of the PRC as early as 1954. He was the first Australian MP to do so (Wilson, Keys & Fischer, 2012) and soon after that, in 1955, the ALP adopted a policy of recognising the PRC. Whilst it was another 17 years before the ALP was elected into government and could take action on the recognition of the PRC, the policy was by no means a new idea. However, Whitlam's accession as Prime Minister marked a fresh approach to Australian policy on the PRC which, I believe, would have been delayed by many years if the Coalition had retained power. .

A key theme of this thesis is that the normalisation of relations that Whitlam swiftly enacted once he became Prime Minister could only have happened if there had been an undercurrent of support flowing in favour of such a move over a period of time. As has been demonstrated in previous chapters, that undercurrent had been flowing since 1949. Over the intervening years, it grew ever-stronger until Whitlam was able to tap into it in order to gain the support needed to bring about such a significant change in policy after such a long time.

Even though the undercurrent was gradually being added to, it seems that the epistemic community that was the ALP had remained faint-hearted in its approach to the question of recognition throughout the late 1950s and the early 1960s. Despite this, from 1955 onwards when it became ALP policy to grant recognition on its return to office, there were some ALP members, including Whitlam, whose ideas and positions on the matter would have maintained the momentum of the undercurrent and would, I believe, have encouraged others to support similar views. However, it was 1969 before the ALP, under the leadership of Whitlam, demonstrated a willingness to adopt a policy of total support for recognition of the PRC.

Whitlam became opposition leader in February 1967. On taking on the leadership mantle, he appointed himself opposition spokesperson for foreign affairs, which indicated his desire to focus on international affairs, including the question of China.

Two years after Whitlam had become ALP leader, there was a 6.5% swing against the Coalition government. Even though the Coalition retained power, this was an indication of a

desire for change within the electorate. It was in such an atmosphere that Whitlam began to explore the idea of visiting China. In doing so, Whitlam was ahead of any other Western leader, but this was still the Cold War era and he was taking an enormous risk simply by exploring the idea (Griffiths, 2014). By taking this step, Whitlam had much to lose and little to gain, but he was prepared to take the risk in an attempt to improve relations between Australia and the PRC. In doing so, he contributed hugely to the undercurrent in favour of granting recognition.

Despite the undercurrent, some in Australia continued to view the PRC as a threat, hence Australia's "asymmetric alliance" with the USA based upon Australia's insecurity (Tow, 2018). This was the route that successive LNP governments chose to tread from 1949 onwards. In the early 1960s, when Whitlam was Deputy Leader of the ALP, he adopted a different way of thinking compared to the mainstream at the time. In his view, China was more likely to adopt an aggressive stance if it was not able to access "normal diplomatic channels" (Ibid:80). It was on such a premise that Whitlam developed a different approach which favoured recognition of the PRC so that it would become an accepted part of the regional and world community.

With Whitlam's accession to the leadership of the ALP in 1967, the belief within the party that the normalisation of relations could actually happen began to develop a fresh momentum at a time when the Coalition Government maintained its long-standing position of not making any hasty decisions on the matter.

An added factor was touched on during an interview with White. He made the point that by the late 1960s it had already become apparent to many in Canberra that China was no longer a threat and that the American position had changed following an article by Richard Nixon in 1967. In the article, Nixon said that the USA needed to look past Vietnam and think about a new kind of Asia where America had decent relations with China. Even though it would be two years before Nixon became president of the USA, this marked a significant change in the position adopted by senior American politicians. Such a comment would, no doubt, have struck a chord with many in Australia who had long advocated such a policy.

By the 1970s, the PRC was "one of Asia's rising powers" (Tow, 2018:80). Whitlam and his colleagues "predicted that China could emerge as one of the world's advanced industrialized countries by the end of the century" (Ibid:81). His foresight ensured that Australia would be able to tap into China's growing prosperity.

Fortuitously for Whitlam, there was a shift in public opinion by the early 1970s. A Gallup Opinion Poll held in October 1970 had revealed that a majority of those Australians polled were in favour of recognition of the PRC. The opinion poll result served to indicate that the undercurrent within Australia was flowing with increasing force, and Whitlam would surely have seen this as an opportune time to make his trip to the PRC.

At the same time as Whitlam was preparing for his trip, the ruling LCP government retained its official reluctance to adopt any fresh approach in its China policy. However, an unofficial change was evident in February 1971. At that time, McMahon as Minister for Foreign Affairs, sent a letter to Prime Minister Gorton in which he acknowledged the need for flexibility in China policy so that change could be adopted as and when needed, especially with regard to trade relations (in Doran & Lee [Eds], 2002:369-375). In the same month, in a

lengthy submission to Cabinet, McMahon accepted that there was now an urgent need to review policy towards China (Ibid:375-391).

In March 1971, McMahon became Prime Minister. Despite the earlier willingness to change policy, when news broke of Whitlam's intention to accept the invitation to visit Beijing, McMahon expressed his opposition very publicly and became hostile to the notion of changing policy on the PRC. It seems that McMahon perceived a need to follow a contrary position to that of the ALP. Amongst other reasons, this was presumably caused by McMahon's need to retain the electoral support of the DLP at a time when support for the LCP coalition was waning.

In adopting the negative stance, however, McMahon seems to have miscalculated the change in the mood of the nation. Whitlam, meanwhile, sensed that change in mood and, on receiving the invitation to visit the PRC, he was happy to accept. The PRC's motivation in extending the invite was based on a calculation that the ALP stood a reasonable chance of electoral success (FitzGerald, 1972:17). If the ALP did form government, it was in the PRC's interests to woo the then opposition party in the hope that a future ALP Australian government, in addition to granting recognition itself, would influence other nations to do the same. This, it seems, would have been an important part of the motive for issuing the invite.

Meanwhile, in April 1971, McMahon gave a speech in which he stated that whilst Australia wished to cooperate with the USA on China policy, it would not be dictated to by the USA (in Doran & Lee [Eds], 2002:422). Although this gave no indication as to when the Coalition might grant recognition, here was yet another indication of the Coalition's determination to follow a path that, whilst recognising American policy, was independent of American policy.

**Whitlam Risks his Reputation**

Although Whitlam had no previous knowledge of the fact that Henry Kissinger would be visiting the PRC to arrange a trip for President Nixon, Whitlam's preparations for his own trip coincided with a time when Nixon was showing a willingness to change American policy towards the PRC. As such, here was evidence that the world's geopolitical relations at that time were entering a period of change and that Whitlam was somebody who recognised this. As the 1970 Gallup Poll had indicated, there was a growing mood in Australia towards the notion of normalising relations with the PRC. The undercurrent that favoured positive constructions of the PRC was flowing with increasing strength as time passed.

In such an atmosphere, Whitlam's readiness to accept an invitation to visit Beijing was a refreshing piece of diplomacy on his part. Nevertheless, it was also one that represented a huge risk to his reputation. The visit was condemned by many who saw it as "somehow negotiating with 'the enemy'…[and] to agree with the Chinese Prime Minister, even on the basis of well-publicised Labor policies, was a betrayal, almost an act of treason" (FitzGerald, 1972:3). It was an immensely brave move, therefore, to make the trip in the face of considerable opposition from the LCP government and many in the media.

Basically, "Whitlam hoped his 1971 visit would mark the end of Australian thinking about China in terms of red and yellow perils" (Griffiths, 2014). It seems he was mainly successful in achieving that aim despite the fact that some continued to harbour such views and still do until this day. For Whitlam, however, "It simply did not make sense…that Australia would

ignore the political existence of a quarter of the world's population" (Ibid)). With such an outlook, Whitlam possessed the qualities that would lead to a fresh approach with the PRC.

Apart from the swelling undercurrent which Whitlam will have recognised and sought to benefit from, another factor in him accepting the invitation from Beijing will have been the possibility of restoring the Sino-Australian trade balance. There had been a significant decline in wheat contracts as a result of Australia's failure to normalise relations with the PRC and this was seen as an issue of national concern (FitzGerald, 1972:10). The Whitlam delegation, during its visit to Beijing, could exploit this matter to its advantage. Again, it was a domestic factor, the loss of these wheat contracts, that could have an influence upon policy and which was used by Whitlam as such.

Prior to the visit, Whitlam seized the opportunity to contact Zhou Enlai, the PRC's Premier. In a telegram, he stated that the ALP delegation would be keen "to discuss the terms on which your country is interested in having diplomatic and trade relations with Australia" (Ibid). In this way, trade and politics were linked by the Chinese Government's invitation. Consequently, when the ALP announced its plans to send a delegation, "The decision emerged publicly…as a response to the wheat problem" (Ibid:11). Such an approach would be seen as a vitally important way of working with the PRC which would benefit Australian interests.

Stephen FitzGerald, who was to become Australia's first ambassador to the PRC, was a member of the party that accompanied Whitlam to the PRC. He summed up Whitlam as having "a breadth of vision on international geopolitics unmatched by any Australian leader. He also understood it was critical to any new direction in foreign policy to have widespread public understanding and support". He added that Whitlam's visit "paved the way for diplomatic relations and…it changed how Australians understood China in our foreign policy and opened the way to public support for engagement with Asia on a new basis of equality and mutual respect," (Whitlam Institute, 2021). As such, the visit would have been a major contributor to the undercurrent insofar as it would have been commented on widely by the media. Much of the commentary, in the first instance, was critical of Whitlam, including accusations from the DLP that he had communist sympathies. Nevertheless, it can be assumed that many who read the reports will have welcomed such a move since it opened up the idea of engagement with the PRC.

With hindsight, McMahon's criticism of Whitlam can be seen as a serious miscalculation of the national and international mood. This became particularly apparent when, as already mentioned, it transpired that, whilst Whitlam was in China, Henry Kissinger arrived to make plans for President Nixon to meet with the Chinese leadership. When this later became known, McMahon's criticism of Whitlam lost credibility. Indeed, the upcoming visit of President Nixon must surely have given Whitlam's visit added kudos and it was surely good fortune for Whitlam that, by the time he became Prime Minister in December 1972, the Nixon visit had totally altered the international climate. This change in the international climate will inevitably have influenced the way in which some domestic groups reacted to Whitlam's moves to grant recognition to the PRC.

Whitlam had been willing to be proactive in his dealings with the PRC. It might take more than eighteen months for such an approach to be translated into fresh policy, but the undercurrent would have encouraged Whitlam in the view that he had a significant level of

support if he ever had the opportunity to pursue new policy directions. Despite this, it would have taken considerable courage to have undertaken such a trip in the face of staunch opposition from many commentators after so many years of governmental unwillingness to seriously consider any gesture of friendliness towards the PRC.

Once he had settled on accepting the invitation to visit Beijing, it signified Whitlam's foreign policy vision, and his willingness to prioritise the region and international relations over ties with the USA. At the time, it seemed that Whitlam was unwilling to take any heed of Australian government policy or that of its ally, the USA, neither of which had been willing to extend the hand of friendship to the PRC.

On arrival in Beijing and meeting with Zhou Enlai, the Chinese premier "surprised the travelling pressmen by inviting them to stay and 'bear witness to the fact that the people of China want to be friends with the people of Australia.' His words transformed the supposedly 'private' meeting into a public performance, staged in front of Australian and Chinese press and a dozen television cameras" (Griffiths, 2014).

The discussion between Zhou and Whitlam was described by one of the Australian journalists who witnessed it as "one of those unexpected dramatic events that make or break political reputations because they capture the public imagination. It will become a part of Australian political folklore and Mr Whitlam is the beneficiary…There was a general sense that Mr Whitlam [had] held his ground well in a testing situation with a brilliant political debater and negotiator" (Ibid).

The fact that the Whitlam-Zhou meeting was held in public and televised meant that Whitlam could not be accused by his detractors of engaging in backroom negotiations with the Chinese premier. Indeed, the meeting "unexpectedly afforded him the extraordinary opportunity to display his credentials, as an opposition leader, on the world stage…with one of the world's most formidable statesmen… Here was a leader who gave Australia international presence" (Ibid).

When meeting with Zhou, Whitlam also "repeated that the ALP had a one-China policy, that it would not support 'two Chinas' in the UN or elsewhere, and added that the logic of this position further dictated that an ALP government would…withdraw the embassy from Taiwan" (FitzGerald, 1972:19). Here was Whitlam displaying a determination for Australia to tread its own path rather than being seen to follow America's two-China policy.

This was "the first really significant political contact between China and Australia since 1949" (Ibid:41) yet, in response to such an initiative, McMahon attempted to portray Whitlam as having been played by Zhou in the same way "as a fisherman plays a trout". However, such comments only backfired on McMahon when, a few days later, Kissinger's visit became public knowledge. McMahon heard of the American "policy shift only a few hours in advance. The lack of consultation made a mockery of Australia and America's supposedly 'candid' relations" (Ibid) and left McMahon deeply embarrassed. He had tried to ridicule Whitlam for making the trip, but in the eyes of many Australians and much of the media, the trip was a resounding success and would have grown in relevance once Kissinger's visit became public knowledge.

**Outcomes**

The change in public perceptions following Whitlam's visit to Beijing was reflected in a Gallup Poll in August 1971. This showed that 56% of those polled were in favour of granting

recognition. It would seem that despite the bad publicity he received from government commentators and from some quarters of the press, Whitlam's visit to the PRC in July was seen as a positive by the majority of those who voted in that poll.

Nevertheless, even after the acclaim that Whitlam's trip to Beijing created in some quarters, the official stance of the McMahon Government remained the same. This was despite the fact that there were some within Government, and especially their advisers, who were pushing for recognition. One assumes that Whitlam's visit to Beijing only served to stimulate discussion on the question of recognition and to encourage government officials who were in favour of such a move to raise the matter amongst themselves and with the government's elected representatives.

Epistemic communities that could influence policy and public opinion on this matter must surely have been the diplomatic corps and members of the Asia Secretariat. An example of the likelihood of this being the case appears in a letter from Australian Ambassador to the ROC, Hugh Dunn, to the First Assistant Secretary to the Asia Division, Harold Anderson, dated 16 June 1972. In the letter, Dunn is quite open about the way in which he has influenced Government policy towards China. He writes, "There has been considerable satisfaction for me in participating in a process of policy adjustment towards what I have long believed should be Australia's position in regard to China – acceptance of present realities" (in Doran & Lee [Eds], 2002:735). In effect, Dunn was calling for recognition of the PRC and for the establishment of a normalised relationship with Beijing.

The fact that, by this time, the PRC had been admitted to the UN and taken its seat on the Security Council added weight to the notion that the time had come for the normalisation of the relationship. Furthermore, an increasing number of countries were in the process of normalising relations with the PRC and curtailing diplomatic ties with the ROC. Significantly, it was earlier in 1972 that President Richard Nixon had visited Beijing and the fractured Sino-American relations of previous times were in the process of being repaired.

Despite such change in the international sphere, and despite Dunn's promptings in his letter to Anderson, a reply from Anderson, on 28 July 1972, indicates that Dunn's ideas had fallen upon stony ground. No doubt reflecting the view of Minister for Foreign Affairs, Nigel Bowen, Anderson pointed out that any likelihood of the Coalition Government moving closer to the PRC's conditions concerning normalisation, especially in regard to cutting ties with the ROC, was highly unlikely (Ibid:748).

It seems that Dunn's promptings were, on this occasion, not accepted by his departmental colleagues or the minister. A similar statement issued by Bowen fully reflects the Government's position when he indicates that the government would be unwilling to alter its policy in view of its long-time friendship with the ROC (Ibid).

Even though Dunn's entreaties were not being heeded on this occasion, here was a very clear indication by a senior member of Australia's diplomatic service that he viewed his role as one which could, indeed, shape government policy**.**

Despite the Coalition government's position as indicated above, by the early 1970s, and certainly following his trip to Beijing in June 1971, Whitlam was not alone in his desire to normalise relations with the PRC. Without that growing mood, I contend that Whitlam could not have been elected in 1972 on a platform of the normalisation of relations. Moreover, if

Whitlam had not been elected at that time, it seems likely that Australia's normalisation of relations with the PRC would have taken place much later.

Whilst the Australian press maintained a divided position on the matter of recognition and, indeed, on the matter of Whitlam's visit, two Gallup Polls had indicated that public opinion had swung in support of recognition. This shift would have been influenced to some degree by those sections of the press that were in favour of recognition and which supported Whitlam's visit to China. The fact that the visit coincided with Kissinger's visit and plans for Nixon to visit would have been another major influence for those who were looking for reasons to support recognition.

Despite the significance of Whitlam's visit to the PRC, it would appear that, the level of hostility towards recognition that had existed at the time of the setting up of the PRC was no less in some quarters of the Coalition government following Whitlam's trip. This is reflected in the fact that in October 1971, the General Assembly of the UN voted in favour of the PRC becoming the sole legal representative of China, and so ended 22 years of contention over which of the two Chinas should sit at the UN. However, Australia did not support the resolution.

Seven months after Whitlam had made his trip to Beijing, the conditions that Australia would need to meet in order to restore diplomatic relations with the PRC were itemised in a cablegram dated March 1972. During a meeting with the PRC's ambassador to France, Alan Renouf, Australia's ambassador to France, had been given a number of points that could lead to the PRC accepting any moves to normalise relations. These included the following: "Australia must recognize the PRC as the sole legal government representing all Chinese people, sever her so-called diplomatic relations with the Chiang-Kai-shek clique and promise neither to support nor take part in the fallacies of the two Chinas, one China-one Taiwan, and independent Taiwan and the fallacy that the status of Taiwan remains to be determined" (in Doran & Lee [Eds], 2002:718-9). It was obvious that the PRC remained determined not to shift in its position of recognition being dependent upon the acceptance of a one-China stance by any nations seeking to establish diplomatic relations.

Confirmation of the need for Australia to cancel recognition of the ROC is given by the Foreign Minister, Nigel Bowen. In a submission to Cabinet in April 1972, Bowen states: "Peking's present attitude is that normalisation involves first and foremost Australian recognition of Peking as the only lawful government of China, and the severance of our diplomatic relations with the ROC; and that any other aspects of normalisation can be developed beyond present levels only when that is done" (in Doran & Lee [Eds], 2002:729). The Australian government, however, retained its long-standing policy of continued support for the ROC.

Nevertheless, in May 1972, soon after Bowen made his submission to Cabinet, there are indications that the Australian Coalition government was beginning to become more accommodating in its position on the PRC. At that time, the Department of Foreign Affairs sent a confidential cablegram to the Australian Ambassador in Washington (Department of Foreign Affairs, 1972). This document is a forerunner to a statement to be made in the Australian Parliament by Bowen. This statement gives a clear indication of the changes in the Coalition's position since the visits to the PRC by Whitlam, by Kissinger, and by Nixon. Instead of outright resistance to any notion of establishing diplomatic relations with the PRC,

these documents indicate a definite shift in the way that such a notion might play out. In particular, the admission of the PRC to the United Nations in November 1971, replacing the ROC in the process, seems to have influenced the way in which the Australian government and the governments of other countries began to re-assess their relationship with the PRC. It needs to be added that the documents mentioned above indicate that the Australian government was, once more, setting policy directions that were independent of American influence.

A Cablegram to Washington acknowledges and welcomes the PRC's admission to the UN and President Nixon's visit to the PRC, but reserves the right to support the ROC in its bid to remain in the UN (Department of Foreign Affairs, 1972). With reference to the PRC, the document continues in a positive manner. It also mentions the fact that the PRC has been active in supporting national liberation fronts in countries within the region, by which it presumably means Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, and the fact that this kind of activity would need to be taken into account before Australia would grant recognition to the PRC.

Towards the end of the document, a margin note is included next to a comment that Australia would be "reluctant to submit to Peking's stipulation that it should abandon its friend [the ROC]". The margin note replaces the word "reluctant" with "indeed unwilling" which is a clear indication of the Coalition government's position on the issue.

In his speech to Parliament on 9 May 1972, Bowen says, "We believe this is an era characterised…as one of 'negotiation, not confrontation'. In that spirit, we have…pursued policies directed towards the increase of exchanges of all types between the Australian people and the peoples of…China. We have sought to normalise relations between our countries" (Bowen, 1972). He goes on to express the Australian government's pleasure at the PRC taking its seat at the United Nations (UN) and as a member of the Security Council. However, he also re-states the core issue with regard to recognition, that the government supported the idea that the ROC should also retain its seat at the UN, meaning that the Australian government remained supportive of a two Chinas policy.

Bowen next goes on to talk about the Sino-Australian relationship and describes ways in which contact with the PRC had been made "through diplomatic channels" and this contact had enabled a clarification as to the position of each country in diplomatic terms. Most importantly, Bowen states that the intention is to "pursue our objectives in a continuing dialogue". He also talks of ways in which trade can be promoted, "visits can take place [and] working relationships can be established in international bodies" (Ibid). In other words, Australia was seeking a direct relationship with the PRC which would be established on its own terms and would not depend upon the USA's dealings with the PRC.

Recognising the importance of a trade relationship with a country with the population of the PRC, Bowen expresses hope that "trade could well increase substantially beyond its present modest level", even though it could take some time for the increase to eventuate (Ibid).

Bowen then expresses a desire to develop formal relations with the PRC which, he says, should be "in accordance with normal international practice… [whereby] neither party is required…to approve or disapprove the policies of the other". At that point, he returns to the sticking point in the development of the relationship – the fact that Australia would need to accept that the PRC had sovereignty over Taiwan. Whilst both documents (Department of

Foreign Affairs, 1972 & Bowen, 1972) demonstrate Australia's close relationship with the USA, there is also a clear indication that, given a change in the situation pertaining to the ROC sovereignty issue, the Coalition government would go ahead and, independently of the USA, build normal diplomatic relations with the PRC. Along with documents from as early as 1949, this reveals a desire on the part of many in government to normalise the relationship.

In September 1972, Bowen expressed the view that, with an election soon to be held in Australia, he believed that whichever party won, "it was likely that the government would wish to open negotiations with China" (in Doran & Lee [Eds], 2002:751).

Meanwhile, Renouf was used by Canberra as a conduit for exploring possibilities with his PRC counterpart in Paris and he was actively seeking ways of moving matters forward whilst repeatedly mentioning in communiques that no real progress could be made until Australia changed its position on the question of the ROC.

Even allowing for these indications that the government was exploring possibilities of a change in policy, "eventual change, given Peking's attitude, would have to be revolutionary, either through a Labor victory or through a change in Coalition policy after the election [in December 1972]." (in Doran & Lee [Eds], 2002:743). Regardless of statements that it was aiming to improve relations with the PRC, there is still no indication that the Coalition was willing to make any major change to its PRC policies.

Whilst the Coalition government might have remained mainly unwilling to shift its stance on this matter, Whitlam's position was very clear. He was committed to a One China policy and in adopting such a position, he publicly opened up the divide between the ALP and the Coalition. Despite the occasional hints by the Coalition of a possible change in policy, by the time Whitlam visited the PRC, the differences between the two major parties were quite clearly irreconcilable.

When Whitlam broke the mould by leading his delegation to Beijing in July 1971 and then won an election in December 1972 that led to the normalisation of relations with the PRC, he fully understood the need for concessions to be made. In taking the risk to visit the PRC, Whitlam will also, surely, have recognised the existence and the importance of the domestic Australian undercurrent. When he became prime minister, he will have relied upon the now powerful undercurrent washing away many of the remaining negative images of the PRC so that a fresh set of public images could emerge. With those new images, came a new beginning in the relationship between Australia and the PRC: "The advent of the Whitlam government in 1972 marked a historic turning point in Australian policy towards China and ushered in a new era in Sino-Australian relations." (Wang, 2012:37).

As Chey pointed out in interview, the ALP's slogan for the 1972 election was, "It's Time", meaning it was time for a change. Another interviewee, Laurenceson, commented on the length of time it had taken Australia to grant recognition. He made the point that Australia should have had "the diplomatic smarts" to recognise the reality of what was going on in the PRC and the ROC. For Laurenceson, the fact that it took until 1972 for this to occur reflected Australia's conservatism. Whitlam's granting of recognition was acclaimed as a masterstroke by Laurenceson, and was evidence of courageous leadership. Another interviewee, White, expressed a similar sentiment when he claimed that Whitlam was willing to push against the anti-China lobby. White expressed the view that by deciding to visit Beijing Whitlam was

"highly courageous". He even commented that many in the ALP thought Whitlam had taken leave of his senses when he risked everything to make the visit.

**A New Relationship**

Whitlam became Prime Minister on 5 December 1972. By 19 December 1972, only two weeks after Whitlam's appointment, and following a flurry of diplomatic activity in Paris between Alan Renouf, Australia's ambassador to France, and the Chinese ambassador to France, Huang Chen, the wording of a joint communiqué had been agreed upon. On 21 December, less than three weeks after Whitlam became Prime Minister, Australia and China signed the joint communiqué establishing diplomatic relations. A cablegram was sent to a number of Australian embassies notifying them of this and that Whitlam would issue a press release, including the joint communiqué on 22 December (in Doran & Lee [Eds], 2002:827).

Whitlam had brought with him a new beginning in Sino-Australian relations. "After 23 years in which Australian governments had refused to recognise that primary fact of diplomatic life in Asia…most observers very reasonably applauded the speed and vigour of the decision to recognise Peking" (Bell, 1993:106).

The communiqué read, in part, as follows:-

> The two governments agreed to develop diplomatic relations, friendship and cooperation between the two countries on the basis of the principles of mutual recognition of sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit and peaceful co-existence.
>
> The Australian Government recognises the Government of the People's Republic of China as the sole legal government of China, acknowledges the position of the Chinese Government that Taiwan is a province of the People's Republic of China, and has decided to remove its official representation from Taiwan.
>
> …The two countries have agreed to exchange ambassadors as soon as the administrative formalities have been completed, and to provide each other with all the necessary assistance for the establishment and the performance of the functions of diplomatic missions in their respective capitals on the basis of equality and mutual benefit and in accordance with international law and practice" (in Doran & Lee [Eds], 2002: 819).

An indication of the Chinese response to this communiqué was reported in an editorial by Xinhua which commented on how these developments were warmly welcomed. It went on to report that the setting up of diplomatic relations added "a new chapter in the relations between China and Oceania" and how the normalisation of relations between China and Australia was much appreciated (in Doran & Lee [Eds], 2002:832). The report also mentioned the withdrawal of Australian troops from Vietnam which was seen as "the will and desire…to pursue an independent foreign policy" (Ibid:832-3). Additionally, the granting of recognition "has opened up bright prospects to friendly cooperation and interflow of personnel in trade, culture, science and technology and other spheres. We are convinced that the friendship… will certainly grow and deepen" (Ibid:833).

Here was an acknowledgement of the fact that Australia had acted independently of the USA and this had earned recognition in the Xinhua editorial.

Following Whitlam's move to grant recognition, the earlier feelings of betrayal were "replaced by national pride and an unreserved enthusiasm for engagement with China" (Kendall, 2005:16). The negative constructions prior to 1972, as portrayed in so much of the literature, take no account of the way in which there had been a steady increase in the amount of support for recognition of the PRC which had been generated by the position taken by some epistemic communities, particularly some sections of the media. The undercurrent had been steadily increasing and definitely validated Whitlam's decision to act so swiftly.

Without a doubt, despite the prejudices that persisted in some quarters, the granting of recognition in 1972 had fundamental and beneficial outcomes on the relationship between the two countries. Firstly, and perhaps most importantly, was the fact that Australian governments now sought friendship with the PRC. The second example of a change in policy direction was in the way Australia "started to relate to China directly". Thirdly, the economic reforms introduced in the late 1970s by Deng Xiaoping brought advantages to Australia. Fourthly, Australia began to recognise the growing power of China and the influence it would exert in the Asia region and beyond. And finally, there was an increasing acceptance that "Australia's security and regional stability would gain from our helping in China's economic reform and in bringing China more fully into a rules-based global society" (Mackerras, 1996:8).

Whilst Whitlam should be congratulated for his decisiveness, there are those who believed that even under a Coalition Government recognition would possibly have happened soon afterwards. If the Coalition had retained power, there is the possibility it, also, would have recognised the PRC within months in a manner that would have been totally independent of American influence. However, whilst the tide was turning prior to Whitlam's election victory, there were many within Coalition ranks who had, only a short time previously, been willing to label Whitlam a traitor for his visit to the PRC in 1971. It seems unlikely, therefore, that the Coalition would have adopted such an abrupt change in policy if it had retained power. There always had been those within the Coalition who had fed into the undercurrent, but for 23 years their voices had been ignored in preference to adopting an anti-recognition policy as distinct from the ALP's position.

Whilst we shall never know, and whilst the swing in public opinion might have influenced the Coalition leadership, I contend that any change by the Coalition would have taken considerably longer than a few months, and would quite likely have taken a number of years. The Coalition's long-standing reluctance to change policy on this issue was so deep-seated that that an early change would seem to have been very unlikely.

By February 1973, in addition to the recent election result, there are other indications that the mood had changed in Australia when the Sydney Morning Herald "celebrated Australia's recognition of China as the crowning feature of the new government's foreign policy". In an editorial two and a half years earlier, the same newspaper, when Whitlam had led his delegation to the PRC, presented a totally different view when it reported that Whitlam was "selling out friends [Japan and the United States] to gain a despot's smile". As a result, he "was dubbed 'the Manchurian candidate' and criticised for betraying the national interest." (Kendall, 2005:14-16).

Whitlam and his colleagues had recognized China's ambitions to overcome its economic weakness and emerge as an important player in world affairs. Although China was not an immediate contender for leadership of the Asia-Pacific, Whitlam and his colleagues were conscious of longer term changes in the distribution of economic power and China's growing international prestige that could affect power relativities in future.

Australia and the PRC could now embark on the 'normalisation' of their relationship. Within a month of Whitlam granting recognition, the Australian Embassy in Beijing was opened on 12 January 1973. Later in the year, Whitlam became the first Australian Prime Minister to visit the PRC. In the same year, Australia and the PRC signed a Trade Agreement which formalised a bilateral trade and economic relationship.

After twenty-three years of non-recognition, the speed at which the two nations established a rapprochement was amazing and was only made possible, I contend, by Whitlam's foresight in making his trip to China in July 1971. Furthermore, "Recognition took place against a background of rapid changes in the international environment…but was due in greater part to a change of government in Canberra in 1972" (Hudson, 1980:271).

So ended more than two decades filled mainly by hostility between the PRC and Australian governments. In Australia's case, this had followed more than two decades of intransigence in its attitude towards normalisation of relations. Whitlam had achieved what many had considered impossible.

# CHAPTER 7

## Conclusion

National interests are vital in shaping policy and, eventually, Gough Whitlam was the one who decided that Australia's national interests would be best served by ending the antagonism towards the PRC that had existed from the time when it came into existence in 1949. Linked to this premise, there are two main thrusts to this thesis. The first is that there were epistemic influences at play throughout this period which created an undercurrent in favour of normalising relations with the PRC. The second is that Australia's policies towards the PRC were driven mainly by domestic factors whilst most of the literature indicates that Australian policy on this matter tended to mirror American policy. Whilst the USA, as a major ally, inevitably exerted some influence on Australian policy, there is sufficient evidence to indicate that domestic factors were of much greater import in the policy directions that Australia took regarding the PRC.

Perceptions are all-important in shaping policy, and in Australia the perceptions of China and the Chinese were very much influenced by imagery that stemmed from the time of the Gold Rushes in the 19th century. The notion of the 'yellow peril' was born at that time and became transformed into the 'red menace' with the setting up of the communist regime in China. The fact that this was at a time when the Soviet Union was engaged in expansionist activity in the spreading of communism in eastern Europe only served to increase this perception of the PRC being a 'red menace'. From a political perspective in Australia, the aim was the same: to present Asians, and in particular the Chinese, as a threat to the Australian way of life. When this imagery was further added to with the notion of "the downward thrust of communism", one can see how many in Australia came to fear the possible ramifications that might ensue as a result of the establishment of a new communist regime to the north of Australia. Whilst the PRC did become involved in ideological disputes in countries such as Korea and Vietnam, there is absolutely no evidence to suggest that Australia was ever at risk of being attacked by the 'communist hordes'.

The fact that the imagery was used by Menzies and others in the government to create such fear is indicative of the way in which politicians of the period were cognisant of the political advantage that could be generated by the use of tactics aimed at creating fear amongst the electorate. In the process, creating a perception that it would be best not to grant recognition to the PRC became a ploy that Menzies and his associates used to attract votes. Having used such a tactic and gained victory at the election of 1951, at a time when Australian troops were fighting in the Korean War, Menzies continued to present a similar policy position in later elections even though he and some of his ministers were not totally convinced of the need to deny the PRC recognition. Nevertheless, having won the 1951 election on such a foreign policy platform, Menzies saw he had a vote-winner and decided there was no reason to alter his position on the PRC in the five following elections up until 1963. By the time of the 1966 election, Menzies had retired and was replaced by Harold Holt who was replaced by John Gorton at the 1969 election who, in turn, was replaced by William McMahon. Despite these changes and the changing social environment of the 1960s, the Coalition maintained its policy of non-recognition of the PRC. It was the domestic electoral success that the policy of non-recognition appeared to create that, in my opinion, was greater than any influence that

the USA brought to bear upon Australia's foreign policy. Many of the primary documents referred to in earlier chapters are supportive of such a statement.

In the meantime, the undercurrent in favour of granting recognition was steadily growing and had been adopted by the ALP, especially once Whitlam became Opposition leader in 1967. In addition to being steadfast in his support of social reform, Whitlam had never wavered since the mid-1950s in his view that relations with the PRC should be normalised. In holding such a position, he was able to draw upon the steadily growing undercurrent in favour of recognition of the PRC and he, and increasingly the ALP, also contributed to that undercurrent.

Of similar importance in swelling the undercurrent were the range of epistemic communities referred to in earlier chapters. There were epistemic influences throughout the period in question which hoped to normalise relations with the PRC. These influences were significant in adding to the undercurrent, but are not addressed as such in the currently available literature. Meanwhile, the fact that Australia, as with many other Western countries, was going through a social revolution during the 1960s, served to swell the undercurrent even further. This was because a cohort of younger people began to take an interest in politics and international affairs and began to realise that their voice on such matters could have an impact.

The speed with which Whitlam was able to bring about the normalisation of relations with the PRC once he became Prime Minister is another issue dealt with in the main text of this thesis. As indicated in earlier chapters, the undercurrent had been growing from the time that the PRC was established, and a range of epistemic communities had been feeding into that undercurrent. This meant that the steps taken by Whitlam with regard to the PRC on becoming Prime Minister would not have surprised many amongst the general public and, indeed, by this time, there were many who were in favour of such a move as the opinion polls of the period indicate. Consequently, it can be said that Whitlam was simply carrying out the wishes of the electorate when he acted so swiftly to normalise relations with the PRC. Without that support, and without the long-flowing undercurrent in favour of such a move, it may have taken much more than a few weeks to alter the policy of the previous twenty-three years. Also, as alluded to in the opening paragraph of this chapter, national interests are vital in shaping policy and Whitlam was able to demonstrate that it was very much in the national interest to engage more closely with the PRC, especially from a trade point of view.

For almost a quarter of a century, successive Coalition governments had managed to create a mood that was hostile to any notion of normalising relations with the PRC. Even though it attracted hostility from some quarters, Whitlam's visit to the PRC in 1971 was a circuit-breaker in terms of shifting that mood. The fact that within eighteen months of that visit, the ALP had won its first election in almost a quarter of a century says much about the impact of the vision and courage demonstrated by Whitlam in making the visit. However, without the ever-increasing undercurrent, it is unlikely that Whitlam's visit would have received the favourable outcome of an election victory followed so swiftly by the normalisation of relations with the PRC.

Whilst the final chapters of this thesis focus on the positive turn of events following Whitlam's visit to China, there do appear to be similarities between the negative perceptions that shaped much of the period between 1949 and 1970 and those which are currently

impacting upon the Sino-Australian relationship. In view of this, I shall end with some words of caution from Stephen FitzGerald. He talked of the 'abnormalisation' of relations with China. He continued, "If the intention in 1972 was to achieve balance in our approach to the region of Asia, we have often seemed to achieve imbalance because of the obeisance we seem to make to China, alone, among Asian countries" (1990:316). He added, "In the whole of Asia, Australia has probably been the most Sino-friendly, and the closest to being single-mindedly so" (Ibid:321). And, "I think the most that can be said in justification of the undue weight and prominence we have given to China is that it was necessary to have some measure of correction after 22 years of China as the enemy" (Ibid:326).

In conducting the interviews, in addition to the focus on the 1949-1972 period, there were also a number of questions seeking comments on the more recent Sino-Australian relationship. One comment which summed up the general feelings of the interviewees was: "Our relations with China won't improve unless, and until, China stops challenging the United States in Asia, or we stop supporting the United States". In almost every case, the interviewees felt that, with regard to the PRC, Australia has become increasingly dependent upon American policy and that this is reflected in the stance taken by both the government and the media. Most of the comments reflected a relatively pessimistic view about the direction taken by the current Sino-Australian relationship compared to the way it was five or six years ago. A major element in this was the fact that Xi Jinping is taking the PRC in a more assertive direction.

It will be interesting to see what direction the current Sino-Australian relationship takes in the near future.

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| Appendix 1 – Biographical Details of Interviewees | |
|---|---|
| ***Jocelyn Chey*** | Academic and former diplomat, Jocelyn Chey is Visiting Professor at the University of Sydney and Adjunct Professor at Western Sydney University and UTS. Her diplomatic career included posts in China and in Hong Kong, where she was Australia's Consul-General between 1992 and1995. Jocelyn was the first executive director of the Australia-China Council, is a member of the Order of Australia (AM) and a Fellow of the Australian Institute of International Affairs. |
| ***Stephen FitzGerald*** | Stephen FitzGerald is the sole survivor of Whitlam's 1971 delegation to the PRC, and was Australia's first ambassador to the PRC when Australia eventually normalised relations in 1972. On returning to Australia, he worked as an academic at the ANU and, in the 1980s he was Chairperson of the Asian Studies Council, and later set up the Asia-Australia Institute at UNSW. He is currently Deputy Chair of the Museum of Chinese Australians. |
| ***Bob Carr*** | Having been Premier of New South Wales for ten years, Bob Carr later entered federal politics as a senator and served as Minister for Foreign Affairs. He has also held the position of Director of the Australia-China Relations Institute (ACRI) and is currently professor of Business and Climate at UTS. He is a regular contributor to a range of publications. |
| ***James Laurenceson*** | Having previously served as an academic at the University of Queensland with a focus on the Chinese economy, James Laurenceson was appointed Deputy-Director of the Australia-China Relations Institute (ACRI) in 2014 and became Director in 2019. He describes ACRI, which is based at UTS, as a research centre. James has visited China more than 20 times, including six-month sabbatical stints. |
| ***Allan Gyngell*** | Allan Gyngell is President of the Australian Institute of International Affairs (AIIA) and honorary Professor at the ANU. Allan was also foundation Executive Director of the Lowy Institute. His earlier experience in the Australian Government included working as Paul Keating's foreign policy adviser. He is the author of *Fear of Abandonment: Australia in the World Since 1942* (LaTrobe University Press). |
| ***Richard Rigby*** | Richard Rigby is Emeritus Professor at the ANU College of Asia and the Pacific and an advisory board member of the Australia China Relations Institute. Previous experience included working in Beijing for DFAT and, later, as Consul-General in Shanghai – lived in China for 12 years. He also worked in the Office of National Assessments as Assistant Director General, North and South Asia, before moving to the ANU as founding director of the newly established China Institute (now Centre on China in the World). |
| ***Hugh White*** | Emeritus Professor of Strategic Studies at the ANU, Hugh White was the first Director of the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI). He has served as an analyst with the Office of National Assessments, as a journalist with the Sydney Morning Herald, as a senior adviser on the staffs of Defence Minister Kim Beazley and Prime Minister Bob Hawke, and as a senior official in the Department of Defence. |
| ***Colin Mackerras*** | After completing an Asian Studies degree in Canberra, followed by a research degree at Cambridge University, Colin Mackerras spent two years teaching in China. Since then he has returned to China more than seventy times for research purposes, for teaching purposes, to attend conferences, and as a tourist. Colin was also the first director of a Confucius Institute at Griffith University. |

| | |
|---|---|
| ***Andrew Watson*** | Andrew Watson is an Emeritus Professor at the University of Adelaide. In the 1960s, he spent two years teaching English in China. He then worked briefly at the Research Department of the Foreign Office in London before being appointed to the University of Glasgow, where he was involved in developing a Chinese Studies program. He moved to the University of Adelaide in 1975 where he worked until 1999, becoming Professor of Asian Studies. From 1999 until 2008, he was the Representative of the Ford Foundation in Beijing. |
| ***Nicholas Jose*** | Nicholas Jose is professor of English and Creative Writing at the University of Adelaide and has an interest in China that goes back to his childhood. As a teacher at the ANU, in the 1970s, he began to learn Mandarin and in 1983, just as the PRC was opening up, he made his first visit to China as a member of a student-group tour. He has maintained an interest in China ever since. |

# Appendix 2

## Interview Questions for Expert Group

Preamble

Whilst the focus of this research project will be on the period 1949-1972, the tensions that are currently shaping policy and commentary are nothing new. Indeed, some would argue that it is the media and political commentary in Australia that has largely shaped opinion and policy.

The questions that follow will relate mainly to the period under investigation (1949-1972), but there are also questions that apply to more recent times and future scenarios.

1. In the period prior to 1949, indeed since the time of the 19th century gold rushes and the arrival of Chinese miners on the goldfields, the evidence suggests that Australia and Australians had negative perceptions of Asia and Asians. Why do you think that was the case?

2. What do you think caused the reluctance of the Australian government to grant diplomatic recognition at the time of the formation of the PRC in 1949?

3. Menzies was Prime Minister from 1949-1966. Why do you think he and his governments chose not to give recognition when other countries gradually showed a willingness to do so?

4. What is your opinion of Australia not giving recognition during this period?

5. What, if any, long-term benefits could have resulted from giving recognition earlier?

6. What influence, if any, do you think the Korean and Vietnam Wars had on Australia's unwillingness to give recognition?

7. Throughout most of this period, the ALP showed little or no willingness to develop a policy that would have supported recognition. However, when Whitlam became ALP leader in 1967 it was clear he was in favour of granting recognition. In 1971, he led an ALP delegation to China despite widespread hostility to this move. Why do you think Australian commentators remained hostile to Whitlam's visit?

8. Can you suggest reasons for public opinion becoming more supportive of recognition of the PRC once Whitlam became Prime Minister a year later?

9. What, in your view, would have been the main influences in shaping public opinion in Australia 50-60 years ago?

10. What, in your view, are the main influences that currently shape public opinion in Australia?

11. What, in your view, were the main influences that might have shaped government policy in Australia 50-60 years ago?

12. What, in your view, are the main influences that currently shape government policy in Australia, particularly with regard to the PRC?

13. Now, in 2021, from what sources do you believe most Australians gain their perceptions of the PRC?

14. What is your opinion of the current state of the Sino-Australian relationship?

15. Do you share the view of commentators such as Peter Jennings of the Australian Strategic Policy Institute and Clive Hamilton, academic and author of “Silent Invasion: China’s Influence in Australia” both of whom, amongst an increasing number of others, claim that the PRC is aiming to “infiltrate, influence and control the most important institutions in Australia”?

16. Positive Sino-Australian relations were apparent five or six years ago, with mutually beneficial agreements such the Abbott-Xi Jinping agreement in 2014 to upgrade the China-Australia relationship to a "comprehensive strategic partnership", and the establishment of a free trade zone. Apart from the strains caused as a result of the coronavirus, what do you think has led to an increase in tensions since that time?

17. In recent months, from all accounts, attempts by Australian government ministers to make contact with their counterparts in Beijing have been ignored. Is there any way, in your view, that this impasse can be overcome?

18. Do you think the current tensions can be reduced? If so, how can that be achieved?

19. Where do you see the relationship five years from now?

20. Do you believe that relations between the USA and the PRC impact upon Sino-Australian relations? If so why, to what extent, and since when?

21. If the ALP were to win power at the next election do you think that Sino-Australian relations would change? If so, in what ways?

22. There are reports in the Australian media that the PRC is displaying a much more aggressive foreign policy and that there could be a clash between the PRC and USA in the South China Sea, East China Sea or Taiwan Strait. What are your views on this apparent increase in tensions?

23. Do you think Australia should support the USA militarily if there is a clash in one of the hot spots mentioned?

24. Do you think that the current trade embargos imposed by the PRC against Australia are in any way justified, and do you think they will continue into the foreseeable future?

# Appendix 3

## PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET FOR INTERVIEW

**PROJECT TITLE: "Sino-Australian Relations, 1949-1972: Influences and Undercurrents"**
**HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL NUMBER: H-2020-243**
**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Professor Mobo Gao**
**STUDENT RESEARCHER: David Hankinson**
**STUDENT'S DEGREE: MPhil**

Dear Participant

You are invited to participate in the research project described below.

**What is the project about?**
This research project will explore Australia's constructions of China with a major focus on the relations between the countries in the years between the founding of the PRC in October 1949 and the Whitlam government's granting of diplomatic recognition to the PRC in December 1972. The main focus of the research will be to answer the question:
Why was Australia slow in giving diplomatic recognition to the People's Republic of China after the setting up of the new regime in 1949, and how did a range of Australian commentators influence this policy stance? There will also be an attempt to link that question and any answers that the research uncovers with the current strained relationship between the two countries.

**Who is undertaking the project?**
This project is being conducted by David Hankinson and the research will form the basis for the degree by research of Master of Philosophy (MPhil) at the University of Adelaide under the supervision of Professor Mobo Gao and Dr Baohui Xie of the Asian Studies Department.

**Why am I being invited to participate?**
You are being invited to participate in this research because of your knowledge of Sino-Australian affairs as a politician, political advisor, academic or media commentator.

**What am I being invited to do?**
You are asked to participate in an Interview about Sino-Australian relations present and past. This will include a focus on the current tensions between the two countries and the state of affairs during the period 1949-1972. An attempt will be made to assess if there are any similarities in the ways in which these tensions were generated.
Please feel free to ask questions about anything in the research that you wish to explore further. You may choose to attend the interview either at your home, at your office, or any

other venue that best suits the purpose. During the interview, with your consent, your responses will be audio-recorded.

**How much time will my involvement in the project take?**
The interview is expected to take 45-75 minutes to complete.

**Are there any risks associated with participating in this project?**
We do not anticipate any risk to you for participating in this research. However, you may be reluctant to express an opinion on some of the questions. Any information that you provide for this project will not be released to a third party, and the results of this research will not reveal your personal identity unless you express a wish for your identity to be revealed in the final thesis. If you still feel uncomfortable about giving your opinion, you are able to skip questions or you can choose to immediately withdraw your involvement in the project. If that occurs, the interview will be terminated and the data will not be used for the thesis. However, if you later decide to come back to continue the study, your data will be maintained.

**What are the potential benefits of the research project?**
Any research into how public opinion is shaped and how it is used in the political sphere is worthy of study. It is also important in an open society that there is an understanding of the ways in which various groups can influence the decision-making process. The purpose of this research will be to explore these themes.

**Can I withdraw from the project?**
Participation in this project is completely voluntary. If you agree to participate, you can withdraw from the study at any time. If you decide to withdraw, your responses will not be included in the research. Withdrawal can be made by informing the researcher at any point during the interview or by contacting the researchers through a phone call or email.

**What will happen to my information?**
Your response and consent form will be linked through de-identifying codes. This means personal identifiers will be removed and replaced with a code. The information will be stored on the password protected personal laptop of the researcher and will be transferred to a university drive for a minimum of five years, after which your information will be discarded. Only the researchers on this project will have access to the information. The research findings will be published as a Master's thesis and may also appear in journal articles and conference papers. Your information will only be used as described in this participant information sheet and it will only be disclosed according to the consent provided, except as required by law. The data will only be used for future research by the same researchers and the use of your data in future research projects that are an extension of, or closely related to, the original project.

**Who do I contact if I have questions about the project?**
For any questions or enquiries, you can contact Professor Mobo Gao, Dr Baohui Xie or David Hankinson through the following:

Professor Mobo Gao,
Room 640a, Kenneth Wills Building, School of Social Sciences, University of Adelaide, Adelaide, SA 5005.
Phone number: (08) 8313 5803
Email: mobo.gao@adelaide.edu.au

Dr Baohui Xie.
Room 639a, Kenneth Wills Building, School of Social Sciences, University of Adelaide, Adelaide, SA 5005.
Phone number: (08) 8313 4282
Email: baohui.xie@adelaide.edu.au

David Hankinson,
Room 656, Kenneth Wills Building, School of Social Sciences, University of Adelaide, Adelaide, SA 5005.
Phone number: 0418 623 641
Email: david.hankinson@adelaide.edu.au

**What if I have a complaint or any concerns?**

The study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at the University of Adelaide (approval number H-2020-243).

This research project will be conducted according to the NHMRC National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2007 (updated 2018). If you have questions or problems associated with the practical aspects of your participation in the project or wish to raise a concern or complaint about the project, then you should consult researchers in this team. If you wish to speak with an independent person regarding concerns or a complaint, the University's policy on research involving human participants, or your rights as a participant, please contact the Human Research Ethics Committee's Secretariat on:
Phone: (08) 8313 6028 or Email: hrec@adelaide.edu.au
Post: Level 4, Rundle Mall Plaza, 50 Rundle Mall, Adelaide, South Australia 5000, Australia.
Any complaint or concern will be treated in confidence and fully investigated. You will be informed of the outcome.

**If I want to participate, what do I do?**

We sincerely hope you will agree to be available for an interview in connection with the project. Your return of the accompanying consent form indicates your willingness to participate in the study and that you have read and understood the above information. Your participation also indicates that you accept that your responses may be aggregated for analysis and publications.

Yours sincerely,

Mobo Gao, Professor
Baohui Xie, PhD
David Hankinson, MPhil Candidate

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