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THE INFLUENCE OF THE ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL ELECTORATES ON THE PARLIAMENTARY RESPONSIVENESS OF MPS TO THEIR ETHNIC SUB-CONSTITUENCIES

This paper examines the parliamentary responsiveness of Australian MPs with respect to their ethnic constituents in the official arena of representation, the federal parliament. It first reviews the notion of representation and discusses the twofold influence that ethnicity may exert on the representational behaviour of elected representatives: the ethnicity of the electorate and the ethnicity of the elected representative. It then presents and discusses the results of a content analysis of the parliamentary interventions of MPs from 12 ethnic electorates and 10 non-ethnic electorates between 1983 and 1996. On the basis of this analysis, two indexes were constructed, the ethnic reference ratio and the ethnic distance ratio in order to compare the responsiveness of MPs to their ethnic constituents. The findings suggest that the ethnicity of the electorate does have an influence on ethnic responsiveness in absolute terms but less so in relative terms. In other words, MPs from ethnic electorates generally make more ethnic-related interventions than MPs from non-ethnic electorates, but not as much as the proportion of ethnic constituents in these electorates would suggest they should make. The ethnicity of the electorate also influences the types of ethnic issues MPs make, with those from ethnic seats more likely to make constituency-related issues. The marginality of the seat, especially in ethnic electorates, rather than the political party to which the representative belongs, would appear to have a bigger influence on the degree and type of responsiveness. Finally, the ethnicity of the MP does have an influence in both the degree and type of ethnic responsiveness.

Studies of political representation in Australia have been notable by their absence, with there being a 20-year gap between the first such study (Emy 1974) and more recent work (Studlar and McAllister 1994, 1996). The rise in interest can be traced to two main factors. First, the emergence of issue movements and minor parties has led to a questioning of traditional interpretations of Australia's system-wide processes of representation (Marsh and Uhr 1995). Second, and relatedly, the increasing political mobilisation of these very issue movements and interest groups has led to a focus on the representation of previously excluded groups and interests from Australian political life, such as women (Sawer and Simms 1984; McAllister and Studlar 1992; Sawer and Zetlin 1996) and indigenous peoples (Bennett 1989; Brennan 1995). The role of ethnicity in discussions of representation in Australian politics, however, is still largely ignored.[1] Although we now may have a better understanding of the voting behaviour and party identification of immigrants (McAllister 1992, 142-5; McAllister and Makkai 1991), we know little about how the ethnic composition of many electorates interacts with Australia's system of political representation.

This paper examines two key issues: (1) does the ethnicity of the electorate influence the behaviour of MPs at the parliamentary level; and (2) what other factors influence the degree of parliamentary responsiveness on the part of MPs to their ethnic constituents. The issues were explored by the construction of an ethnic reference ratio and an ethnic distance ratio based on a content analysis of the parliamentary interventions of MPs between 1983 and 1996 from 22 federal electorates. This is by no means a representative sample, comprising only 15% of all federal electorates. Nevertheless, given the paucity of research in ethnic representation in Australia, such an analysis provides a useful and original contribution to furthering understanding of the relationship between ethnicity and political representation in Australia. The remainder of the paper briefly reviews the concept of representation, examines the two ways in which ethnicity may influence representation in Australia, discusses the data and method used in further detail and presents the main findings and their implications for future research.[2]

[Studies of Political Representation in Australia](#)

Discussion of political representation has been dominated by the well-known mandate-independence dichotomy (Pitkin 1972, 144-67). In brief, this dichotomy is concerned with the question of how should elected representatives act. Should they be free to do and act in the manner they think best serves the national interest (the trustee), or should they rather act as an agent for their constituents and behave and vote according to their constituents' views (the delegate)? This dichotomy has been argued to be a false distinction in practice (Fenno 1978; Maddox 1996, 404-5). The proper role of the representative is generally believed to fall somewhere between these two poles (Pennock 1979, 325). Responses to this problem have been to add a new category, such as 'politico', argued to be a representative who acts in both ways (Wahlke et al 1962), or to accept that they are ideal types and therefore aim to quantify the finer differences between the two extremes (Converse and Pierce 1986, 497-9). Another response has been to recognise that in many parliamentary systems elected representatives often act and vote according to party discipline. In the responsible party model, the parties put forward alternative platforms to the electorate who then instruct by electing one party over another (Converse and Pierce 1986, 698-706). Australia is argued to conform most closely with the responsible party government model of representation (Studlar and McAllister 1996, 73); nevertheless, the dichotomy between pressures from the electorate as against pressures from party is still seen as one of degree rather than an either/or choice (Marsh 1995, 119-21).

In spite of these problems, Australian studies of representation have been firmly rooted in the representational roles paradigm (Emy 1974, 456-99). More recent work, based on surveys of candidates and incumbent MPs, while although addressing aspects of service and policy responsiveness, remains within the mandate-independence mould. Studlar and McAllister (1994), for instance, showed that candidates identified with three types of representational roles: locals, who focus on addressing constituency-based concerns and interests; partisans, who see their role in party political terms; and legislators, who emphasise the parliamentary and policy role of an elected representative.[3] Similarly, the same authors (1996) found that Australian MPs conformed to three main distinctions in terms of representational roles, what they termed the free mandate, responsible party and the imperative mandate. The terms may be different but the substance is the same: MPs face conflicting pressures from the rather unholy trinity of their

constituents, their party and their conscience. The issue of ethnicity, however, continues to be ignored.

A more adequate response has been to see the process of representation as a complex whole and one which should focus on the degree of responsiveness a representative may display towards their constituents on a range of matters (Eulau and Karps 1977). One can specify four main types of representational responsiveness (Jewell 1983, 304):

1. service responsiveness: the situation where an MP attempts to gain advantages for individual constituents through case work;
2. allocation responsiveness: the situation where an MP attempts to gain advantages for groups in the electorate;
3. policy responsiveness: the degree to which a representative takes into account constituent views when making policy or voting on bills in the national parliament;
4. symbolic responsiveness: defined as a 'relationship built on trust and confidence expressed in the support that the represented give to the representative and to which he [sic] responds by symbolic, significant gestures'.

Such a framework facilitates the introduction of ethnicity as a possible and important influence on the representational process. For instance, service and allocation responsiveness cannot be adequately understood in some Australian electorates without taking the role of ethnic community organisations into account (Zappala 1997a). This study can be seen as an examination of the parliamentary responsiveness of MPs in the official arena of representation with specific reference to their ethnic sub-constituency.

[The Influence of Ethnicity on Representational Behaviour](#)

A useful point of departure for examining the issue of ethnic responsiveness is the simple typology of ethnic representatives in Australia put forward by Jupp and colleagues (1989,32). They argued that ethnic representatives in Australia may be divided into four main categories:

- those who rely on a base of non-English speaking background (NESB) voters to a major extent;
- those who are sensitive and responsive to NESB voters although not NESB themselves;
- those who are of NESB but do not have a distinctively NESB electorate;
- those who are of NESB but have been chosen as part of a party ticket for a multi-member electorate (ic the Senate).

The typology suggests that ethnicity influences representation in two distinct ways: first, that the attitudes and behaviour of elected representatives are influenced by the ethnicity of their electorate (categories 1 and 2); second, that the attitudes and behaviour of elected representatives of ethnic background may differ from that of other representatives (categories 3 and 4). This paper is primarily concerned with the first of these influences. Nevertheless, it also provides evidence which casts light on the second dimension of this typology.

[The Influence of the Ethnicity of the Electorate](#)

The first manner in which the typology outlined above suggested that ethnicity influenced representational behaviour was through the ethnicity of the electorate. This is part of what the wider literature on representation terms the composition of the electorate effect. This includes such aspects as the homogeneity or heterogeneity of the electorate, its socioeconomic composition, whether it is rural or urban, and its ethnic and racial makeup (Pennock 1979; Fenno 1978; Jewell 1982, 1983). Although many Australian studies have argued that the composition of the electorate with respect to ethnicity is an important variable influencing voting behaviour (McAllister 1992, 145), its impact on a representative's attitudes and behaviour has not been fully explored. The quantitative and qualitative aspects of ethnic diversity in Australia are well known and require little elaboration.[4] Suffice to note that such diversity has important implications when it is translated to Australia's electoral system of single-member geographical constituencies. For instance, the Appendix suggests that 48 of the 148 federal electorates have at least 15% of their population born in a non-English speaking country (NESC).[5] In at least 20 federal electorates, one-quarter or more of the electors were born in NESCs.

Why has the ethnicity of electorates been ignored in studies of representation? One possible reason is that political scientists are generally more interested in marginal seats, and most marginal electorates in Australia, with one or two key exceptions, also have a low proportion of people from NESB (Jupp 1996, 9). A more important reason concerns the continuing debate over the so-called 'ethnic vote'. Several studies suggest that ethnicity may be an important variable in determining voting behaviour (see Forrest 1988; Jupp et al 1989, 15; McAllister 1988, 1992, 142-6). Those that argue against the existence of an ethnic vote base this view on the fact that 'ethnic' electorates also tend to be traditional workingclass areas. That is, the fact that many ethnic Australians vote for the ALP is not because they are ethnic or that they feel the ALP better represents ethnic interests, but because their socioeconomic position makes them natural Labor voters (Economou 1994, 1995). The divided opinion over the electoral significance of the ethnic vote may have contributed to the reticence in examining the influence of ethnicity on representational activity.

The literature also suggests that two other 'electorate' variables may influence the attitudes and behaviour of elected representatives apart from the composition of the electorate. First is what is known as the marginality of seat hypothesis (Converse and Pierce 1986, 743). In brief, the argument is that a representative who comes from a safe seat might feel more free to depart from the direct wishes of the constituents than would a representative from a marginal seat. Empirical tests of this hypothesis, however, have produced mixed results. A study of representation in France found the opposite to be the case (Converse and Pierce 1986, 745-59),[6] while a British study found that members from safe seats had a greater tendency to neglect their constituencies (Crewe 1985, 48). A recent study of Australia found that the marginality of an electorate did not influence the amount of constituency work that MPs provided but did have an effect on the amount of local party work and travel to the constituency (Studlar and McAllister 1996, 81). One observation of interest is the fact that the highly ethnic electorates in the Appendix also tend to be safe Labor seats. This is given further support by the results of the March 1996 election where only 2 of the top 20 ethnic electorates changed hands: Lowe, which went from Labor to Liberal, and Wills, which went back to Labor after a brief period of being held by an Independent.

The final variable found to influence representatives' attitudes and behaviour relates to the type of policy issue in question. Studies in the United States and France have found that on some issues (eg civil rights, religion), political representatives are more concerned to mirror the opinions of their constituents (Converse and Pierce 1986, 727-38). The issues we would expect to be of most relevance in Australia with respect to ethnicity are multiculturalism and immigration. There seems to be something of a paradox, however, regarding the likely impact of these issues on representatives' attitudes and behaviour. Many commentators have argued that the main reason why immigrant groups increasingly switched their support to the Labor Party from the mid-1970s onwards was due to that party's position on multiculturalism (Forrest 1988; Foster and Stockley 1988; McAllister and Makkai 1991). It would appear that issues such as multiculturalism were perceived by at least some elected representatives to be important enough to warrant that they show a greater degree of policy congruence with their ethnic constituents? This is rational behaviour given that several studies have shown that voters from NESB are more sensitive to multicultural issues (Jupp 1988, 175; Goot 1993).[8] In contrast to these earlier findings, however, McAllister (1993a, 71) concluded that attitudes towards multiculturalism have comparatively weak links to party political behaviour because the major political parties have not placed multiculturalism and ethnic issues on their political agendas. Furthermore, he argues that constituents' opinions on immigration play less of a role in determining their respective candidate's positions on immigration than do party affiliation and personal characteristics (McAllister 1993b, 175).

In conclusion, is there an ethnic electorate effect with respect to representation? Political scientists have in the past hinted at the importance of ethnicity of certain electorates with respect to voting behaviour. Although even this finding remains contested, it is at least clear that 'variables of ethnicity and gender do complicate a class analysis' (Bottomley 1992, 37). It would be surprising if this were the case for voting behaviour and not for the attitudes and behaviour of MPs from ethnic electorates. We know, for instance, that politicians themselves act as if an ethnic vote does exist (Jupp 1988, 171). Do MPs from ethnic electorates behave in ways that are different from MPs from non-ethnic electorates? The simple answer is that we do not know. The data presented below enable some observations to be made with respect to MPs' parliamentary behaviour.[9] Before we move on to these findings, the next section expands upon the second manner in which ethnicity may influence representation.

[The Influence of the Ethnicity of the Representative](#)

Representational behaviour may also be influenced by the individual characteristics and ethnicity of the representative. The former are what can be termed acquired traits and include variables such as age, education, parliamentary experience, party affiliation and so on. Most studies confirm, for instance, that representatives who are well educated, have more legislative experience and come from safe seats are more likely to adopt 'trustee' type attitudes and behaviour in their representational roles (Jewell 1983, 311). The latter, namely ethnicity, is what can be termed an inherent trait. The assumption here is that an elected representative who is also from a particular group, in this context, from an ethnic background, would be more responsive and empathetic to the wishes of constituents from ethnic backgrounds than a representative who is not (Birch 1971, 126). In contrast to acquired traits, it is more difficult to test whether the

inherent traits of representatives makes a difference to their attitudes and behaviour (Birch 1971, 126).

Some argue that inherent characteristics such as ethnicity do not matter--that:

... a representative is not representative of those whom he [sic] represents does not prevent him from representing them well, and that a representative is representative of those whom he represents does not guarantee that he will represent them well. There is no necessity for spaghettis [sic] to rejoice when linguines [sic] are elected. (Grofman 1982, 99)

In contrast, an implicit assumption in most discussions of ethnic representation in Australia is that a person from a particular group is better able to represent members from that same group (Jupp 1989). This explains the dominance of the 'mirror representation' approach to questions of ethnic representation in public policy (Office of Multicultural Affairs 1989, 1991, 1996; National Multicultural Advisory Council 1995). The idea behind mirror or microcosmic representation is that any representative body should reflect the different groups in society to more or less the same proportion that those groups exist in the wider population.[10] It is in this sense that many commentators (both popular and academic) argue that the political system in Australia is 'unrepresentative' with respect to ethnicity (Jupp 1988, 162). Microcosmic representation is considered to be important, first, because it is assumed that an elected representative who is also from a particular group in society will be more responsive and empathetic to the wishes of constituents from that same group than a representative who is not; and second, it is seen as bolstering the legitimacy of the political system (Rothschild 1981; Kymlicka 1995, 150).[11]

In conclusion, although there may be broader system-wide reasons to have a legislature which better reflects Australia's ethnic diversity, the jury is still out on whether MPs from ethnic backgrounds better represent ethnic constituents. Although the difficulty of testing the assumptions behind mirror representation have led some to argue that the issue will remain confined to the realms of philosophical debate (Birch 1971, 126; Wolgast 1991), the data explored below shed some light, albeit tentative, on this debate.

[Method and Data Source](#)

The four types of representational responsiveness that were outlined earlier are likely to require different methods to examine them. For instance, the dominant mode of studying representation has been through structured questionnaires of elected representatives. Studying policy responsiveness also requires a knowledge of constituent as well as their respective representative's attitudes to a similar range of issues. In contrast, studying representational 'home style' or service and allocation responsiveness is best done through more qualitative techniques, from semi-structured interviews to ethnographic case studies (Fenno 1978; Jewell 1982; Zappala 1997a).

Another way of examining the responsiveness of MPs with respect to their ethnic constituents is to observe MPs' behaviour and interventions in the Parliament. Recent research suggests that the official face of representation continues to play an important role and link in how constituents view their MPs' representational performance (Marsh 1995, 38-9, 1996). Some MPs, for

instance, distribute copies of their Hansard interventions to constituents to illustrate that they have raised issues which reflect their needs and concerns, especially as regards ethnic communities (Zappala 1997a). A recent example of the importance of parliamentary behaviour on public opinion towards ethnic-related issues was the dramatic decrease in support for the independent MP for the electorate of Oxley after a bipartisan motion condemning her views on immigration and multiculturalism was passed in Parliament.[12] In brief, constituent trust and confidence in their elected representatives is influenced by their parliamentary behaviour. Particularly in the case of conspicuously ethnic electorates, parliamentary interventions which may praise the contributions made by immigrants, or raise issues of concern to ethnic communities, are an important type of what has been termed parliamentary responsiveness.

In order to examine parliamentary responsiveness with respect to ethnic constituents, the parliamentary interventions of MPs representing 22 federal electorates were analysed for the period 1983-96.[13] The electorates were chosen in order to have two roughly equal groups of 'ethnic' and 'non-ethnic' electorates. It was thought to be more valuable for the nature of the exercise to restrict the choice of electorates to those where the MP was not a minister, shadow minister or speaker of the House, as research has shown that they are much less likely to spend time in constituency-related activities (Studlar and McAllister 1996, 81).

This criterion made the task of ensuring a sufficient number of highly 'ethnic' electorates problematic as most of the previous government's Cabinet (including the prime minister) in the period studied were from such electorates. This also made ensuring a balance between party representation difficult as most highly ethnic electorates are safe Labor seats. A random selection from the 48 'ethnic' electorates in the Appendix was therefore not appropriate. Ethnic electorates were instead chosen in rank order of ethnicity with the proviso that the incumbent/s was not or had not been a minister. In some cases this meant restricting the content analysis of some electorates to particular years within the 13-year period. Overall, 12 'ethnic' electorates were examined, the lowest in terms of ethnicity being Chifley. Eight were from NSW and four from Victoria. Seven were held by the Labor Party for the whole period studied, four predominantly by the Liberal Party, and one evenly by both parties. The 'ethnic electorates' which formed part of the study are shown in Table 1.

In contrast, the non-ethnic electorates were chosen randomly from two separate categories: non-ethnic urban and rural electorates.[14] The one exception was the deliberate inclusion of the electorate of Bowman to see the effect of having an ethnic MP in a non-ethnic electorate. Overall, 10 non-ethnic electorates were included in the analysis. As can be seen in Table 2, these electorates had a better spread across state, party and urban/rural lines.

The analysis followed five main procedures:

1. Using the on-line Historical Hansard records contained in the Parliamentary Data Base Service (PDBS) of the Parliamentary Library, the total interventions (questions and speeches) of the MPs from each of the above electorates was calculated for each year to give an annual denominator.
2. Using a key word search facility, all interventions which involved an explicit reference to an ethnic-related issue were classified according to whether they were predominantly: (a)

a general ethnic issue (eg a speech on multiculturalism or immigration); (b) a constituency ethnic issue (eg a reference to matters which directly related to the MP's ethnic constituents in his or her electorate); (c) a homeland politics issue (eg interventions which related to some aspect of an overseas country because that MP's electorate contained a significant number of people from that country). Table 3 lists some examples for each type of issue to illustrate how the coding was done.

3. Placing all the ethnic interventions in any given year (point 2) over the total number of all interventions for that same year (point 1) gave what is termed the raw ethnic reference ratio for that year. For instance, if an MP made 20 interventions in 1984 (point 1) and 5 were ethnic related (point 2), then that MP had a raw ethnic reference ratio of 25% in 1984.
4. To further refine the analysis a second ratio, the adjusted ethnic reference ratio, was computed. This involved two separate steps:

(a) subtracting any portfolio-related interventions of the MP. For instance, the member for Lowe was shadow minister for Health in 1991 and 1992; any interventions which were health related in these years were therefore subtracted from the denominator;

(b) the ethnic-related interventions were weighted according to their significance on a three-point scale: they scored a '1' where the intervention was wholly or substantially ethnic related; a '0.5' where it was partly ethnic related but relatively substantial; and '0.25' where it was a small or passing reference to an ethnic issue.

The weighted ethnic references over the portfolio adjusted total interventions gives the adjusted ethnic reference ratio. Unless otherwise stated, the discussion below always refers to the adjusted ratio.

5. The computed annual ratios were then plotted over time for each electorate in order to trace any within electorate change. A single score based on an average of the adjusted ethnic reference ratios over time was then computed for each electorate in order to allow an across electorate comparison (see Figure 1).[15]

Several limitations of the method warrant comment. First, in spite of the attempts to quantify ethnic references over time, it should be remembered that any measure remains crude and imprecise and as such is an approximation of the degree of parliamentary responsiveness to ethnic constituents. Second, the boundaries between the three categories of ethnic issues (constituency, general and homeland politics) were often blurred and a degree of researcher bias was inevitable although a consistent approach was maintained. Third, as with the categorisation of issues, the weighting process should be seen as a crude rather than precise measure. Fourth, the figures and tables do not indicate whether the MP was in fact critical of ethnic communities or ethnic-related issues. While such cases were relatively rare one might correctly argue that they indicate a lack of responsiveness to ethnic constituents.[16] In this sense, there may be some overestimation of the degree of ethnic responsiveness. Fifth, the group of electorates represents only 15% of all federal electorates and was not a truly random sample.[17] Finally, it should be remembered that the study focuses only on the official face of representation. An MP from an ethnic electorate, for instance, may perform poorly with respect to this measure of

responsiveness in the Parliament but may nevertheless play an active role in ethnic issues while in the constituency arena. The remaining section of the paper discusses the main findings of the analysis.

The Findings: The Ethnic Electorate Effect?

The aggregate results of the Hansard content analysis of the 22 electorates are presented in Figure 1. The electorates are presented from left to right in descending order of ethnicity. The percentage of people in the electorate born in NESB (vertical axis on left) is represented by the dark jagged line and shading in the background. The electorate of Fowler, for instance, is the most ethnic electorate with almost 45% of people born in NESBs. At the other extreme is the electorate of Bendigo with under 3% of people born in a NESB. The column above each electorate shows the average number of non-portfolio interventions. The line joined by the black squares is the average adjusted ethnic reference ratio for the electorate over the period analysed. For example, we can see from Figure 1 that the member for Fowler averaged just over 10 non-portfolio interventions per year (vertical axis on right) and had an average ethnic reference ratio of about 12% (vertical axis on left). Similarly, the electorate of Calwell had just under 30% of people born in NESBs, its member averaged about 25 non-portfolio interventions per annum, but had an overall ethnic reference ratio of 38% (the highest for the group).

What emerges from this aggregate picture? First, it would appear that representatives from ethnic electorates (from Fowler to Chifley in Figure 1) have higher degrees of responsiveness with respect to their ethnic constituents as measured by the ethnic reference ratio compared with representatives from the non-ethnic electorates (from Berowra to Bendigo). In other words, there appears to be an ethnic electorate effect on the parliamentary behaviour of MPs. Second, three electorates stand out as having an ethnic reference ratio higher than the proportion of ethnic constituents in their electorates: Calwell, Bowman and Riverina. Explanations for this finding are discussed below. Third, there would appear to be a greater degree of variation in the ethnic reference ratio among the group of ethnic electorates compared with the non-ethnic group (compare Fowler, Calwell and Menzies, for example).

Another way of interpreting the data in Figure 1 is to examine the number of ethnic references with respect to the actual proportion of people from NESB in the electorate. For instance, the proportion born in a NESB in Lowe was 31%. This would suggest that if there were to be a perfect congruence in terms of parliamentary responsiveness, the ethnic reference ratio would also be, or approximate, 31%. A perfect congruence between the proportion of ethnic references and the proportion of ethnic constituents would mean that dividing the former by the latter would give a score of one.

This is not to suggest that perfect ethnic representation or responsiveness involves the exact mirroring of parliamentary interventions with the ethnic composition of the electorate. This measure (the proportion of the ethnic population of the electorate divided by the adjusted ethnic reference ratio), however, provides a benchmark against which the degree of ethnic responsiveness can be compared. The further from 'one' is this measure, which is termed the ethnic distance ratio, the less responsive (in parliamentary terms), it can be argued, is the electorate's representative/s to their ethnic constituents. Put simply, the ethnic distance ratio is

the visual gap in each column in Figure I between the ethnic reference ratio square and the dark jagged line which shows the percentage of people born in NESCs in the electorate. Table 4 gives the ethnic distance ratios for the individual electorates as well as the mean for the two groups of electorates. The figures in Table 4 not only confirm the variation that exists between electorates within the ethnic and non-ethnic groups, but they also suggest a different picture with respect to the responsiveness of representatives to their ethnic constituents.

Across Group Differences

Bearing in mind the data-related caveats raised previously, representatives from the non-ethnic electorates have a mean ethnic distance ratio closer to one, suggesting a better parliamentary responsiveness to their ethnic constituents than those from ethnic electorates. Figure 2 plots the electorates in rank order of their ethnic distance ratio. Those electorates which are closer to 1 on the vertical axis are those whose members' interventions in Parliament better reflected the proportion of ethnic constituents in their electorates. Viewing the data in this manner suggests that there is less of an ethnic electorate effect on representatives' parliamentary behaviour. Two of the three most ethnically responsive seats (Riverina and Bowman), for instance, have a relatively small proportion of people born in NESCs. In contrast, seven of the twelve ethnic electorates are all to the right-hand side (lower responsiveness) of the median.

Within Group Differences

Looking at the ethnic electorates, the findings suggest that the majority of electorates perform quite badly on this measure. The electorates of Fowler, Prospect, Bruce, Chisholm, Greenway, Chifley and, in particular, Menzies, all have large distance ratios. This suggests that not all the representatives of the so-called ethnic electorates are reflecting their ethnic constituents in proportion to their numbers in the electorate. For example, if the most ethnic electorate, Fowler, were to have had the same distance ratio as the second least ethnic electorate, Dawson, the ethnic reference ratio for Fowler should have been approximately 30% rather than 12%. In absolute terms, Fowler may be considered more responsive because it had a higher ethnic reference ratio than say Dawson, but, in relative terms, Dawson is more responsive because it has a smaller ethnic distance ratio. Within the non-ethnic electorates, only four had distance ratios above the median, and, as was noted, two of the three best performers were from this group.

Discussion

In the opening section of the paper several variables other than the ethnic composition of the electorate were thought likely to influence the representational behaviour of MPs. While the method of this study does not allow us to isolate and control the relative influence of such variables, several observations are nevertheless possible.

The Marginality Hypothesis

The marginality hypothesis suggests that we may observe better responsiveness in marginal rather than safe electorates. As with other tests of this hypothesis, the findings are somewhat mixed. Several points stand out. First, the figures in Table 5, which gives the ethnic distance

ratios of those electorates classified as marginal (after the 1993 election), suggest that marginality may be of greater importance among the ethnic electorates.

The mean ethnic distance ratio of the four marginal ethnic electorates, for instance, is almost one unit lower than that for all the ethnic electorates. In contrast, that for the non-ethnic marginal electorates is higher than the mean ethnic distance ratio for all the non-ethnic electorates. This finding is consistent with the idea that in single-member geographical constituencies, the relationship of the representative to particular groups is likely to be stronger if the group is a significant force in the electorate (Jewell 1982, 116-17). Members in marginal electorates with a high proportion of ethnic constituents (especially from the same ethnic community) are therefore more likely to try to appeal to those communities in their representational activities. Second, there is some evidence of outlier effects. For instance, removing the electorate of Chisholm from the ethnic group and that of Canning from the non-ethnic group would lend greater overall support to the marginality hypothesis. Nevertheless, with the exception of some individual electorates (Dawson and Lowe), there appears to be no strong pattern between marginality and ethnic responsiveness.

The Party Effect

As was noted earlier, a problem with attempting to isolate any partisan effect is the fact that most of the highly ethnic electorates are held by the ALP. It was also noted that there has been substantial debate over whether this Labor dominance is reflective of these electorates' class or ethnic composition. As with marginality, there are no clear patterns although several observations can be made. Within the ethnic group of electorates, the two Liberal only electorates (Bruce and Wentworth) did considerably better (in terms of ethnic distance ratio) than many of the Labor only seats within the group. In contrast, two of the five electorates within this group which have had substantial representation by the Liberal Party (Menzies and Chisholm) have low levels of responsiveness. It is fair to say, however, that the poorest performer of all the electorates studied, Menzies, had a consistently low ethnic reference ratio in both its Labor and Liberal periods. It is also the case that some of the best performers (Calwell, Grayndler, Reid) were all held by Labor during the period. At the same time, however, one can point to the poor performance of Labor electorates such as Fowler, Prospect, Greenway and Chifley.

Within the non-ethnic electorates, a somewhat surprising result is the strong performance of the National Party, with two of the three most responsive electorates (Riverina and Dawson) being held by representatives from the National Party. The result of Riverina can perhaps be explained by the fact that although it has only 5% of its population born in a NESC, there is a strong and long-settled Italian community concentrated in and around the town of Griffith. The content analysis suggested that this was an important factor in the nature of the Riverina member's ethnic-related interventions. Members of the Italian community in the Riverina are substantial stakeholders in the business undertakings in the area and have developed several avenues of political participation (Kelly 1984, 126-38). The result for Riverina once again lends support to the idea that a minority group in a single-member electorate is likely to have a bigger influence on the elected representative when that group is a significant force in the electorate. This finding also suggests that it may not be the ethnicity of the electorate (in terms of absolute proportions) that is important in influencing representational behaviour, but the relative importance (both

numerical and economic) of any one particular ethnic group relative to the rest of the electorate.[18]

Once again, no clear patterns emerge with respect to the two major parties in the non-ethnic group, with Labor holding both one of the most responsive seats (Bowman), and the least responsive of the group (Canning). Similarly, the Liberals held the seat of Berowra, with a good responsiveness ratio, while also holding those of Boothby and Wakefield, with relatively poor ratios. Overall, with some key exceptions, there is no strong evidence to suggest that Labor members are more responsive to ethnic issues than their coalition counterparts. If the ALP has been more adept at wooing the ethnic vote in the past, this analysis suggests that it has more likely occurred at the constituency level than at parliamentary level.

The Ethnic MP Effect

One of the assumptions made by supporters of mirror representation is that MPs from an ethnic background are better able to represent constituents from a similar background. Bearing in mind the above-noted caveats, this proposition is supported by the findings. The representatives of two of the three most responsive electorates (Calwell and Bowman) both had been born in a NESB. Both had ethnic reference ratios higher than the proportion of NESB constituents in their electorates.

The member for Calwell, Dr Andrew Theophanous, is a well-known advocate of ethnic rights and immigration and was influential in the shaping of the previous government's policy on multiculturalism.[19] The member for Bowman between 1987 and 1995 was Con Sciacca, the first Italian-born member of the House of Representatives. Prior to his entry, the previous member's ethnic reference ratio was zero. Sciacca's adjusted ethnic reference ratio in his first year, however, was almost 37% and 25% in his penultimate year.

Both these cases suggest that the ethnicity of the MP is an important influence in their representational behaviour with respect to ethnic Australians.[20] The word 'Australians' rather than 'constituents' was used because the findings suggest that they are taking on representational roles which extend beyond the geographical confines of their immediate electorates. Such behaviour by representatives from minority groups has been found in other countries, and is generally referred to as adopting an 'areal' role, or where the member's relationship to a particular group extends beyond the boundaries of a particular district or electorate (Jewell 1983, 312-13). Such representatives usually serve as spokespeople for these interests within the Parliament and the wider political arena.

That MPs from ethnic background should adopt such attitudes and behaviour is not surprising given that there have been so few in federal Parliament. Often such a role is imposed on them by others in the party who feel a nationwide 'ethnic leader' will improve the party's image with ethnic voters, but more often than not, it is self-imposed by the MPs themselves who feel they have a duty to represent all people from ethnic backgrounds (Jewell 1982, 94). This is not to suggest that they represent only ethnic constituents to the detriment of others in their electorates. Nevertheless, it is likely that if the presence of MPs from ethnic backgrounds in the federal Parliament does not increase, especially from what have been termed ethnic electorates, then as

Jewell (1982,94) concluded: 'minority legislators are likely to continue to be perceived as representing a constituency that is broader than the district'.

The Types of Ethnic Issues

Was there any pattern with respect to the types of ethnic interventions MPs made? As was noted earlier, interventions were categorised according to whether the issue primarily related to a general ethnic issue, a constituency ethnic issue or homeland politics. Although the latter is strictly speaking also a constituency issue, the distinction was made to assess whether MPs' views on foreign affairs issues are influenced by having constituents who originate from particular areas in their electorate. It is likely, however, that the figures on homeland politics are underestimated as it was not always possible to establish whether an intervention which supported or criticised another country or event therein was motivated by constituency pressures.[21] In most 'homeland politics' cases, however, members would often refer to the constituency link, which made classification easier. Otherwise, electorate-specific data based on the 1991 census was consulted prior to the analysis in order to establish the main ethnic groups present in each electorate.

Table 6 shows the proportion of 'issue types' for the ethnic and non-ethnic group of electorates. Several interesting findings emerge. First, although general ethnic issues are the most frequent type of intervention in both groups, there is a much stronger constituency focus in the group of ethnic electorates (42% of all interventions) than in the non-ethnic group (20% of all interventions). This greater constituency focus is consistent with the high proportion of ethnic constituents in these electorates. Second, there again appears to be some support for the marginality hypothesis in that most of the marginal electorates have a higher 'constituency'-related intervention (Lowe and Dawson, for example). Third, interventions relating to homeland politics are primarily an issue in ethnic electorates. The data do reveal, however, that the degree to which homeland politics issues are raised varies considerably across electorates within the ethnic group, suggesting that this issue may require further research.[22] Finally, and most importantly, the findings in Table 6 support the hypothesis that the ethnicity of the MP does make a difference. The dominance of the general ethnic issue type for both Calwell in the ethnic group (the highest at 83%) and Bowman in the non-ethnic group (100%) further supports the idea discussed above that ethnic representatives take on an 'areal' as opposed to a constituency-based role to representation. They become (willingly or not) national representatives and symbols for Australians of ethnic background.

Conclusion

Political representation is an activity and an institution which connects the people to the government (Schwartz 1988, 1). It is now generally accepted that to fully understand the process of representation, it must be viewed as a series of activities which involves the representative being responsive to his or her constituents. Reviewing the literature over a decade ago, Jewell (1983,329) concluded that too much work had been done on the delegate/trustee dichotomy and not enough on the complexities of representation in modern democracies, especially the representation of minorities. A key complexity in many societies, including Australia, has been the increasing ethnic diversity of its citizenry. This was illustrated by the fact that 48 of

Australia's 148 federal electorates can be classified as 'ethnic'. Studies of representation in Australia continue to be within the delegate/trustee mould, while those on ethnic representation are virtually non-existent.

This paper began with the assumption that ethnicity influences representational behaviour in two ways: first, the ethnicity of the electorate; and second, by the ethnicity of the representative. It set out to explore the effect of ethnicity on the degree of responsiveness of MPs in their official arena or face of representation. Based on a content analysis of parliamentary interventions over time, several tentative conclusions can be made. First, the ethnicity of the electorate does have an influence on ethnic responsiveness in absolute terms but less so in relative terms. In other words, MPs from ethnic electorates generally make more ethnic-related interventions than MPs from non-ethnic electorates, but not as many as the proportion of ethnic constituents in these electorates would suggest they should make. The ethnicity of the electorate also influences the types of ethnic issues MPs make, with those from ethnic seats more likely to make constituency-related issues. Second, the marginality of the seat, especially in ethnic electorates, would appear to have a bigger influence on the degree and type of responsiveness than the political party to which the representative belongs. Finally, the ethnicity of the MP does have an influence in both the degree and type of ethnic responsiveness. The findings suggest, albeit tentatively, that spaghetti should rejoice when linguini are elected!

1. Ethnic or ethnicity refers to Australians of non-English speaking background (NESB). A distinction is also made between people born in non-English speaking countries (NESBI) and their Australian born children (NESBII). While the concept of ethnicity is more complex than this it provides a useful working definition which is consistent with its usage in public policy.
2. This paper is part of a wider project investigating how the ethnicity of the Australian electorate influences the nature of political representation, see Zappala (1997a, b).
3. This in fact corresponds to the finding by Emy (1974,474) that MPs recognised three general sources of satisfaction in their work, related to their legislative, electoral and party work.
4. The postwar immigration program has made Australia one of the most ethnically diverse countries in the world. Almost one quarter of Australians were born overseas, with those born in NESCs making up 14% of the population. Twenty-two per cent of Australians were either born in a NESB or had one or both parents born in a NESB.
5. Such electorates are termed 'ethnic electorates' throughout this paper. While such a cut-off point is arbitrary it closely corresponds to the proportion of people being born in a NESB at the national level.
6. A possible explanation for this finding is that MPs from safe districts correlate better with their constituents' preferences because they have more time to learn the preferences of their constituents, see Penhock (1979,317).
7. In contrast, Economou (1995) has argued that a strong primary vote for the ALP in 'ethnic seats' is not simply the product of the ALP being more sensitive to 'ethnic' demands relative to other political parties but a reflection of the class basis of ethnic voters.

8. Even Economou (1995,29) has argued that 'certainly policy matters pertaining to the interests of NESB Australians would be keenly appreciated in these areas' (ie ethnic electorates).
9. For an examination of this issue for Australia using survey data, see Zappala (1997b).
10. Other terms used in the literature to mean the same thing include descriptive or statistical representation.
11. For arguments on how to achieve mirror representation as well as some of the theoretical and practical problems associated with it see Kymlicka (1995,chs 2 and 7).
12. One survey, for example, suggested that the proportion of radio talkback callers supporting the anti-immigration and anti-multicultural MP fell from 63 to 33% after Parliament passed the bipartisan motion (Sydney Morning Herald, 2 November 1996).
13. The 1996 year includes only the first sitting period of the year which ended on 27 June 1996.
14. There were no rural electorates with more than 15% of the population born in NESB.
15. Annual results are not reproduced here although these are available on request from the author. 16 In general, they related to interventions by coalition MPs who criticised aspects of the Labor Party's approach to multiculturalism rather than multiculturalism itself. Furthermore, such interventions were often prefaced by remarks that they were also speaking on behalf of their ethnic constituents.
16. The ethnic electorates in the study, however, constitute one-quarter of all 'ethnic electorates'.
17. This was also found to be the case in a study of service responsiveness in an ethnic electorate where two ethnic groups made much greater use of the services of the federal MP, see Zappala (1997a, 79-84).
18. See, for instance, Theophanous (1995).
19. Further evidence, albeit more tentative (because of the short time periods involved), are the electorates of Grayndler and Lowe. In the case of Grayndler, the new member who was elected at the March 1996 election, Anthony Albanese (NESBII) had an adjusted ethnic reference ratio of 33% in his first half year in Parliament. In the case of Lowe, the new member elected in March 1996 was Paul Zammit (NESBI), whose adjusted ethnic reference ratio for the first half of 1996 was 23.4%. It is also interesting to note that the member for Moore since 1990, Paul Filing (born in Germany of English speaking parents), had one of the lowest ethnic distance ratios (at 1.45) even though he represented a non-ethnic electorate.
20. Another reason why homeland political issues may be underestimated is that many MPs often pass on diasporic issues to other MPs to air publicly, where they feel that their intervention on behalf of a particular country is likely to be either interpreted as being influenced by the presence of a particular ethnic community in their constituency or offend other ethnic groups which also reside in the electorate (Zappala 1997a).
21. Informal interviews conducted with several MPs, for instance, indicated that some feel 'captured' or constrained to express certain views on particular foreign policy issues because of the particular ethnic composition of their electorates. For one politician's view see Theophanous and Michael (1990).

[Table 1.](#)

Characteristics of the ethnic electorates

Legend for Chart:

A - Electorate
 B - % born in NESC
 C - Ethnicity rank
 D - State
 E - Party
 F - 2PP in 1993[a]
 G - 2PP in 1996[b]

A	B	C	D
	E	F	G
Fowler	44.5 ALP	1 72.0	NSW 68.3
Grayndler	39.0 ALP	2 72.8	NSW 66.4
Prospect	37.8 ALP	4 69.0	NSW 63.9
Reid	34.2 ALP	8 68.8	NSW 61.4
Lowe	31.0 ALP/Lib	11 55.0	NSW 52.5
Calwell	29.3 ALP	16 68.4	Victoria 67.2
Bruce	28.7 Liberal	17 55.1	Victoria 50.8
Menzies	23.0 Liberal	20 59.2	Victoria 61.0
Wentworth	22.8 Liberal	21 55.5	NSW 57.8
Chisholm	22.2 Liberal	22 52.9	Victoria 52.6
Greenway	21.3 ALP	24 63.4	NSW 53.4
Chifley	19.9 ALP	26 72.6	NSW 64.5

Notes:

a Shows the two-party preferred vote in the 1993 federal election.

b Shows the two-party preferred vote in the 1996 federal election.

Sources: Australian Electoral Commission and Parliamentary Research Service. 1995. Electoral Atlas 1995, rev. ed. January 1996. Canberra: AGPS; A. Kopras. 1995. Comparisons of 1991 Census Characteristics: Commonwealth Electoral Divisions (1994 Boundaries), BP. no. 34. Canberra: Parliamentary Research Service, Department of the Parliamentary Library; G. Newman and A. Kopras, Federal Elections 1996, BP. no. 6, 1996-97. Canberra: Information and Research Service, Department of the Parliamentary Library.

[Table 2.](#)

Characteristics of the non-ethnic electorates

Legend for Chart:

- A - Electorate
- B - % born in NESG
- C - State
- D - Urban/rural
- E - Party
- F - 2PP in 1993
- G - 2PP in 1996

A	B	C	D
	E	F	G
Bendigo	2.7 ALP/Lib	Victoria 50.1	Rural 50.9
Dawson	4.5 National	Qld 53.8	Rural 59.9
Wakefield	4.9 Liberal	SA 67.0	Rural 70.0
Riverina	4.9 National	NSW 62.9	Rural 71.0
Bowman	6.0 ALP/Lib	Qld 57.4	Urban 50.9
Moore	9.7 ALP/Lib	WA 58.7	Urban 58.2
Boothby	10.0 Liberal	SA 57.8	Urban 61.6
Canning	10.2 ALP/Lib	WA 50.2	Urban 50.7
Burke	10.5 ALP	Victoria 60.0	Rural 57.0
Berowra	13.9	NSW	Urban

Liberal

62.2

68.4

Sources: as for Table 1.

Table 3.

Example of how ethnic interventions by MPs were classified in the content analysis

Legend for Chart:

- A - Type of issue
- B - Electorate
- C - Type of intervention
- D - Example

A	B
	C
	D
Constituency ethnic issue	Riverina
	Speech, 30 May 1991
	On the contribution of Australians of Italian descent
Constituency ethnic issue	Lowe
	Speech in adjournment debate, 10 May 1983
	Appeal to the minister for Immigration re the case of a Lebanese constituent
General ethnic issue	Calwell
	Speech/Bill, 27 March 1985
	Major speech on multicultural affairs and the need for representation of ethnic communities
General ethnic issue	Bowman
	Speech, 25 August 1988
	Concern over apparent racism in immigration debate
Homeland politics	Reid
	Speech, 25 November 1993

Homeland politics	<p>Condemns the USSR for treatment of Ukrainians making reference to constituents of Ukrainian origin in his electorate</p> <p>Fowler</p> <p>Speech, 18 February 1991</p> <p>Referring to constituents of Croatian origin makes an appeal for Australia and the West not to ignore their plight</p>
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Source: Hansard content analysis. All interventions were entered on specially formatted sheets listing the electorate, year and name of MP, the type of issue, the type of intervention including a page reference to Hansard, and a brief summary of the issue.

Table 4.

The ethnic distance ratio of the electorates

Legend for Chart:

- A - Ethnic electorates; Electorate
- B - Ethnic electorates; Ethnic distance ratio[a]
- C - Non-ethnic electorates; Electorate
- D - Non-ethnic electorates; Ethnic distance ratio

A	B	C	D
Fowler	3.65	Bendigo	2.54
Grayndler	1.87	Dawson	1.44
Prospect	3.09	Wakefield	3.62
Reid	1.61	Riverina	0.77
Lowe	1.70	Bowman	0.85
Calwell	0.77	Moore	1.45
Bruce	2.98	Boothby	3.89
Menzies	10.64	Canning	6.21
Wentworth	2.10	Burke	4.70
Chisholm	4.22	Berowra	2.0
Greenway	5.47	--	--
Chifley	46.1	--	--
Mean	3.55	--	2.74

Note:

The EDR was derived by dividing the proportion of people born in NESCs in the electorate by the adjusted average reference ratio.

Table 5.

The ethnic distance ratios of the marginal electorates

Legend for Chart:

- A - Marginal ethnic electorates
- B - Ethnic distance ratio
- C - Marginal non-ethnic electorate
- D - Ethnic distance ratio

A	B	C	D
Lowe	1.70	Dawson	1.44
Wentworth	2.10	Bendigo	2.54
Bruce	2.98	Canning	6.21
Chisholm	4.22	--	--
Mean	2.75	Mean	3.39

[Table 6.](#)

The types of ethnic issues in the ethnic and non-ethnic electorates

Legend for Chart:

- A - Electorate
- B - General ethnic issue (%)
- C - Constituency ethnic issue (%)
- D - Homeland politics issue (%)

A	B	C	D
Ethnic			
Fowler	19	13	69
Grayndler	75	25	
Prospect	56	26	18
Reid	51	24	25
Lowe	41	49	10
Calwell	83	3	14
Bruce	63	6	31
Menzies	63	38	
Wentworth	24	14	62
Chisholm	80	13	7
Greenway	40	40	20
Chifley	76	21	3
Total	58	21	21
Non-ethnic			
Bendigo	100	--	--
Dawson	39	56	5
Wakefield	67	33	--
Riverina	61	22	17
Bowman	100	--	--
Moore	70	18	12
Boothby	90	10	--
Canning	91	9	--

Burke	89	11	--
Berowra	100	--	
Total	80	16	4

Source: Hansard content analysis, unweighted interventions.

GRAPH: Figure 1. The average adjusted ethnic reference ratio for all electorates

GRAPH: Figure 2. The ethnic distance ratio of the electorates in rank order

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[Appendix.](#)

Federal electorates with at least 15% of population born in NESCs (N = 48)

Legend for Chart:

- A - Electorate
- B - State
- C - % born in NESCs[a]
- D - % using LOTE at home[b]
- E - Party (< 3/96) [c]
- F - Member and 2PP (< 3/96) [d]
- G - Party, Member (> 3/96) [e]
- H - 2PP (> 3/96) [f]

A	B	C	D	E
Fowler	NSW	44.5	54.5	ALP
F G H T. Grace (72) ALP 68				
Grayndler	NSW	39.0	47.8	ALP
J. McHugh (73) ALP, A. Albanese 66				
Watson	NSW	38.6	53.1	ALP
L. McLeay (64) ALP				

62					
Prospect	NSW	37.8	48.3	ALP	
	J. Crosio (69)				
	ALP				
	64				
Maribymong	Vic.	35.9	48.8	ALP	
	A. Griffiths (69)				
	ALP, B. Sercombe				
	69				
Blaxland	NSW	34.6	47.2	ALP	
	P. Keating (72)				
	ALP[g]				
	63				
Gellibrand	Vic.	34.4	43.5	ALP	
	R. Willis (75)				
	ALP				
	71				
Reid	NSW	34.2	44.6	ALP	
	L. Ferguson (69)				
	ALP				
	61				
Hotham	Vic.	31.1	36.5	ALP	
	S. Crean (63)				
	ALP				
	61				
Holt	Vic.	31.0	33.0	ALP	
	M. Duffy (60)				
	ALP, G. Evans				
	63				
Lowe	NSW	31.0	40.4	ALP	
	M. Easson (55)				
	Lib., P. Zammit				
	52				
Kingsford-Smith	NSW	30.6	36.0	ALP	
	L. Brereton (65)				
	ALP				
	60				
Melbourne	Vic.	30.5	36.7	ALP	

	L. Tanner (74) ALP 70				
Scullin	Vic.	30.0	46.1	ALP	
	H. Jenkins (69) ALP 71				
Batman	Vic.	29.8	43.7	ALP	
	B. Howe (73) ALP, M. Ferguson 71				
Wills	Vic.	29.8	43.2	IND	
	P. Cleary (52) ALP, K. Thomson 72				
Calwell	Vic.	29.3	40.8	ALP	
	A. Theophanous (68) ALP 67				
Bruceh	Vic.	28.7	32.4	ALP	
	A. Griffin ALP 51				
Barton	NSW	27.5	36.7	ALP	
	G. Punch (59) ALP, R. McClelland 54				
Melb. Ports	Vic.	24.2	25.4	ALP	
	C. Holding (56) ALP 56				
Menzies	Vic.	23.0	30.6	Liberal	
	K. Andrews (59) Lib. 61				
Wentworth	NSW	22.8	21.9	Liberal	
	A. Thomson (55) Lib.				

58					
Chisholm	Vic.	22.2	25.8	Liberal	
	M. Wooldridge (53) Lib. 53				
Bennelong	NSW	22.1	24.6	Liberal	
	J. Howard (53) Lib. 60				
Greenway	NSW	21.3	24.4	ALP	
	R. Gorman (63) ALP, F. Mossfield 53				
Sydney	NSW	19.9	20.8	ALP	
	P. Baldwin (69) ALP 64				
Chifley	NSW	19.9	22.8	ALP	
	R. Price (73) ALP 64				
North Sydney	NSW	19.8	19.4	IND	
	T. Mack (52) Lib., J. Hockey 66				
Perth	WA	19.8	19.6	ALP	
	S. Smith (56) ALP 56				
Lalor	Vic.	19.7	26.0	ALP	
	B. Jones (67) ALP 68				
Parramatta	NSW	19.0	21.1	ALP	
	P. Elliot (53) Lib., R. Cameron 54				
Port Adelaide	SA	18.9	24.2	ALP	

		R. Sawford (62)			
		ALP			
		57			
Tangney	WA		18.5	15.7	Liberal
		D. Williams (62)			
		Lib.			
		62			
Higgins	Vic.		18.4	20.1	Liberal
		P. Costello (60)			
		Lib.			
		61			
Stirling	WA		18.2	20.8	Liberal
		E. Cameron (51)			
		Lib.			
		55			
Throsby	NSW		17.4	21.8	ALP
		C. Hollis (74)			
		ALP			
		70			
Cowan	WA		17.2	17.1	Liberal
		R. Evans (51)			
		Lib.			
		52			
Stun	SA		17.1	21.2	Liberal
		C. Pyne (56)			
		Lib.			
		60			
Adelaide	SA		16.4	20.7	Liberal
		T. Worth (51)			
		Lib.			
		53			
Kooyong	Vic.		16.3	18.0	Liberal
		P. Georgiou (64)			
		Lib.			
		64			
Swan	WA		16.2	14.5	ALP
		K. Beazley (50)			
		Lib., D. Randall			

			54		
Aston	Vic.	16.1	17.2	Liberal	
	P. Nugent (51) Lib. 56				
Bradfield	NSW	15.9	14.8	Liberal	
	D, Connolly (73) Lib., B. Nelson 76				
Banks	NSW	15.9	20.1	ALP	
	D. Melham (61) ALP 51				
Fremantle	WA	15.2	18.2	ALP	
	C. Lawrence (58) ALP 54				
Deakin	Vic.	15.1	16.1	Liberal	
	Ken Aldred (51) Lib., P. Barresi 52				
Cunningham	NSW	15.1	17.8	ALP	
	S. Martin (68) ALP 63				
Werriwa	NSW	15.0	18.4	ALP	
	M. Latham (66) ALP 56				

Notes:

a Percentage of persons in electorate born in non-English speaking countries.

b Percentage of persons in electorate speaking a language other than English at home.

c Political party which held the seat prior to the election on 2 March 1996.

d Name of MP who held the seat prior to the March 1996 election. The number in parentheses refers to the two-party preferred vote for the winning party/MP (1993 election). (Figures are rounded.)

e Political party and member (where different) which held the seat after the March 1996 election.

f Two-party preferred vote for the winning party at the March 1996 election. (Figures are rounded.)

g Paul Keating resigned from Parliament on 23 April 1996 and a by-election was held on 15 June 1996. The ALP candidate, M. Hatton held the seat with a 2PP vote of 69%.

h The post-1993 boundary changes turned Bruce into a notional Labor seat which it in fact won in 1996.

Sources: Australian Electoral Commission and Parliamentary Research Service. 1995. Electoral Atlas 1995, rev. ed. January 1996. Canberra: AGPS; A. Kopras. 1995. Comparisons of 1991 Census Characteristics: Commonwealth Electoral Divisions (1994 Boundaries), BP. no. 34. Canberra: Parliamentary Research Service, Department of the Parliamentary Library; G. Newman and A. Kopras, Federal Elections 1996, BP. no. 6, 1996-97. Canberra: Information and Research Service, Department of the Parliamentary Library.

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