

Essay on egalitarian in australian society

[Technology](#), [Development](#)



Introduction:

This paper analyzes and explains how the social class play influences social inequality in Australia, as well as how the myth of egalitarianism was created and how it is maintained. It also shows how inequality has influenced transformations in political, familial and industrial relations and how it has to be taken into account when endeavoring to come to grips with all kinds of inequalities. Due to changes in the societies, there is a need to recollect the ideas of different classes, ethnical backgrounds, gender inequalities, political class, and embed them in the self, body and politics.

There is a long history here that I could point to but I just want to draw out some of the more important forces operating to create the particular understandings of Australian egalitarianism. If we are going to talk about how egalitarianism became so firmly rooted in the Australian ethos we have to go back to the 19th century. According to McCarthy, the idea that Australia was relatively classless or that class did not matter very much stems back to colonial days. In its beginnings white Australia lacked the rigid class system taking shape in Great Britain. Australia did not have the traditional aristocracy of Great Britain – that group who gained their social position at the top of the tree through birth, title and rank. There were very few genuine gentlemen – people who did not need to work but were independently wealthy through inheritance. A wealthy land-owning class quickly developed but they fell below those traditional elite of Britain. Initially Australia's class structure centered on a fairly basic division between landowners and their workers and across the 19th century it developed into

a more complex system as the economy itself became more complex. So how did the idea come about that class didn't matter very much? There were some desires to escape a rigid class structure.

Firstly the argument is advanced that while there were social classes the barriers between them were fluid - there was fairly free mingling between social groups (especially in comparison to Britain) and there was also fluidity in terms of climbing the ladder - that is that people, through hard work, could move from the working class to the middle and perhaps from the lower middle to the more solidly middle class. And nor in colonial Australia were the ranks of gentlemen firmly closed. This idea took hold pretty early in Australia because of instances of emancipists, former convicts, achieving comfortable lifestyles. The ex-convict who made good helped to foster the idea that people in Australia were judged on their merit rather than birth or past deeds. As a new society, with everything needing to be built from scratch, there was a lot of opportunity in Australia to 'do well'. Australian workers were in a good position because there was a shortage of labor.

Another important argument is that on the frontier people simply had to join together, regardless of class. You might remember from the early reading of Russel Ward's description of the 'typical' Australian - he wrote of a fiercely independent person who hates officiousness and authority and displayed a cynical attitude to the pretensions of the wealthy and to anyone who liked to think of themselves as superior. Ward traces the development of this egalitarianism of manners to the convicts - convicts he argues developed a strong sense of community and solidarity; and a disdain for their masters.

This was carried into the 'lower orders' more generally. Free immigrants he claims adopted the outlook of the old hands. Ward also thought that life on the frontier was important in the development of an egalitarian, collectivist ethos. People worked together - rich and poor. Success required hard work there was no real place for gentlemanly pretensions - all needed to roll up their sleeves. And because bush life was so difficult with the population being spread over such large tracts of land for people to survive they needed to rely on one another. So class structures and more importantly class attitudes broke down.

The discovery of gold in the 1850s did a lot to enhance this image of Australia. It was partly because on the goldfields former wage-earners might have been able to throw off the yoke of service and work for themselves rather than for a boss - small groups worked co-operatively without a master - bred a sense of independence - Some diggers did strike it lucky - new-found wealth enabled workers to acquire property, a house and perhaps establish a business - employees became employers. Wealth came through luck not breeding education or talent. This is a very brief historical background that goes some way to explaining the development of a strong commitment in Australia to egalitarianism. (McCarthy, 2008)

According to Poleg, Egalitarianism in Australia is a dangerous indication of contemporary disparity since it reveals and makes people conscious on the way favors and resources are inequitably distributed against the expectations of the people on what they perceive as their rights. These feelings or experiences of unfairness are indelible in Australians especially as

they grow through their stages of childhood socialization to adulthood.

Controversies surrounding this unfairness present themselves more explicitly at the political class as well as social life. Nevertheless, my core element is to analyze the persistent structures as well as the transformation of social inequalities since I realize that a new approach is essential. Painstaking researches have grouped these links into three categories of inequality being; Empirical reality, or the proof of its existence, Theory, or its sociological approaches and finally the individuals experience extent

Egalitarianism originated during the time of the white settlements through the English prisoners who were the outcasts of the English system. Also, the struggle against the British soldiers and later, the early Australians developed types of brotherhood and mate ship among the pioneer Australians. Egalitarianism in Australia was reinforced by foreign visitors but not fully invented. At the beginning of the 20th century, Lawrence D. H visited Australia and gave some remarks through writing that Australia was a great relief in the entire atmosphere where then he cited that everybody should be free in Australia.

Lawrence was impressed that there was no class distinction in the entire Australian society where nobody felt special or than another. According to how Lawrence's confession, some of the Australians were better than others but they could not show. In the 19th century, an English author called Marcus Clark wrote exclaiming that the new Australians were not a nation of snobs like the English and that they were not of extravagant boosters like the Americans but a simple nation of drunkards. In addition to that, Australia

is also considered to be among the pioneers of women social rights.

According to the (Female suffrage act, SA) It was the second country in the world to recognize women as voters constitutionally. After the formation of the Brotherhood, inequality was highly enhanced. Australians became sexists as well as egalitarian mate-ship among males actively excluded female even though they were reluctantly accepted formally in 1885 as equal. Poverty is also another factor that has highly affected egalitarianism since it was discovered to be among the threats to social life in Australia in the late 1960s. (Poleg, 2004)

Greig, suggests that egalitarian in Australian nation or in other words classless society as he calls it, pervaded the colonial awareness at around 19th century whereby Australia emerged as a fresh economy during that period. Urbanization rate was growing tremendously at a very alarming rate leading to complex divisions of labor and then giving birth to a modern state called Australia. At that time, it became integral therefore finding a place in the global capitalist economy via the growing and exporting of crucial products where this was made easier through the mercantile ports which as well served as manufactured imports destination. Even though modern manufacturers remained embryonic at work, especially men, they were sufficient and led to the development of urban class alongside a class of pastoral capitalists and local mercantile. Toward the end of nineteenth century, egalitarianism was fully captured in Australia whereby it was simply referred to as the Workingman's paradise; the term initially used by Henry Kingsley a novelist.

Due to the fact that urban workers had recently migrated, their current status by then could not be compared to those they had left behind and this led to the reinforcement of the myth of egalitarianism in Australia. As a repercussion, the myth of workman's paradise was misused by capitalists and statesmen since they triggered migration from the British Isles toward the workman's paradise. As a result, travel memoirs both local and international journals began to praise the kind of lifestyle that Australian working class had. They also started congratulating Australian government of for taking good care of their working class. Daily articles like the Melbourne that there was no country in the whole world which the comfort of the working class was so guaranteed and secure as Australia. It was later concluded that the working class permeated the Australian culture in terms of attitude. This led Australia to be considered as social reforms laboratory. (Greig, 2003)

As observed by Gregory Smith, egalitarianism has been transformed into a study which investigates qualities in Australian literature since it is among the characteristics that which celebrates the Australian national identity and character as well. The Australian identity was counterfeited in the wretchedness of pioneer era, put under a litmus paper the ' first and the second world wars' followed by the drastic challenges of immigration after war. Australian identity is carefree, democratic and egalitarian as Smith extols it. Due to the egalitarianism, the consciousness of Australian religion features respect among them empirically sensitive real and suspicious of theories. The mainstream culture of Australia is characterized by a firm past

pioneering individualism. Australia is multi-cultural, full of skepticism and indifferent toward religion (Smith, 2001)

Conclusion:

Since the mid 1990s the idea of there being two Australia's has developed – an educated, cosmopolitan and affluent urban Australia and a culturally marginalized rural or outer suburban Australia on the other. Some among the elites embraced the culturally diverse and more cosmopolitan Australia; others welcomed the more open economy. But for many ordinary Australians both the new economy and the new diverse society threatened what they saw as the Australia old. And because many did not prosper with globalization it has been easy to displace their anxieties about economic insecurity onto new immigrants and Aborigines. What we have also seen is an argument that suggests that minorities /Aborigines are privileged (getting more than a fair go) and the needs of old Anglo-Celtic Australians have been ignored. One of the more invidious developments in Australia from the mid 1990s - More recently this acceptance of diversity has come under threat. And what is so fascinating is that many in wanting to cling to a particular sort of egalitarianism have attacked minority groups as being the recipients of special privileges. Indigenous Australians, so this line of argument goes, get too many handouts. Such was the argument of new political as well as social forces that emerged in Australia in 1996.

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