

number of unemployed spouses is very much smaller than the number of unemployed PAs.

Table 3 shows that about the same proportions of employed Preferential Family and ENS/Business immigrants were working as managers/administrators or professionals before and after migration. However, in the Concessional Family and Independent visa categories a smaller proportion of employed PAs were in these occupations after migration than before, in spite of their having post-school qualifications.

In conclusion, immigrants' labour force status after arrival in Australia appears to be closely related to their English proficiency and post-school qualifications. Although the unemployment rate of these newly arrived immigrants seems high, it should be noted

that it refers to the period between three and six months after arrival in Australia. Unless the immigrant has made arrangements for employment before migration, three to six months is not a very long time in which to look for and secure employment, particularly in the economic conditions of 1992. It should be of interest to see what the unemployment rate for this group of immigrants is after a longer period of settlement. This will be possible when data from the second round of interviews become available for analysis in the next few months.

References

- ¹ R. Birrell, *The Chains that Bind: Family Reunion Migration to Australia in the 1980s*, AGPS, Canberra, 1990.
- ² Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Transition from Education to Work, Australia May 1992*, Cat. No. 6227.0, 1992.

RELIGIOUS IDENTIFICATION IN AUSTRALIA: 1981 TO 1991

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There has been more change in the religious composition of Australia in the decade from 1981 to 1991 than in any other decade since the arrival of the first fleet. An examination of the census data on religion over this period of time reveals that these changes have affected both the large Christian denominations and the smaller religious groups. The focus here is on religious identification, and not on other measures of religiosity such as church attendance.

Between 1981 and 1991, Catholics supplanted Anglicans as the largest

religious group. Otherwise there has been no change in the rank order of the 'big six' religious groups.¹ The two largest groups, Catholics and Anglicans have long accounted for more than 50 per cent of the Australian population; the other four (no religion, Uniting, Presbyterian/Reformed and Orthodox) account for a further 28.2 per cent. Among the smaller groups, since 1986 Muslims and Pentecostals have increased from 0.5 per cent to 0.9 per cent, Buddhists from 0.2 per cent to 0.8 per cent (moving from 15th to 11th rank), while the Baptists have traded ranks with the Lutherans. At 0.4 per cent of

Table 1: The standing of various religious groups in the 1981, 1986 and 1991 Censuses

Religious Identification*	1981		1986		1991		Rank			86-91 growth rate	1991 m/f ratio
	000s	%	000s	%	000s	%	1981	1986	1991		
Christian											
Anglican	3810	26.1	3723	23.9	4019	23.9	1	2	2	7.9	.93
Baptist	190	1.3	197	1.3	280	1.7	8	7.5	7	42.3	.90
Catholic	3787	26.0	4064	26.1	4607	27.3	2	1	1	13.3	.96
Churches of Christ	89	0.6	89	0.6	78	0.5	9	11	12	-11.8	.81
Jehovah's Witness	52	0.4	66	0.4	75	0.4	13	14.5	14	12.1	.82
Lutheran	200	1.4	208	1.3	251	1.5	7	7.5	8	20.4	.95
Orthodox	421	3.0	427	2.7	475	2.8	6	6	6	11.1	1.05
Pentecostal	72	0.5	107	0.7	151	0.9	10.5	9.5	9.5	40.8	.88
Presbyterian/Reformed	*638	4.4	650	3.6	732	4.3	5	5	5	12.7	.95
Salvation Army	72	0.5	78	0.5	72	0.4	13	12.5	14	-7.4	.81
Uniting	*1203	8.3	1182	7.6	1388	8.2	4	4	4	17.4	.86
Other Christian	*599	4.1	*670	4.2	339	2.0					.90
Total	11,133	78.6	11,382	73.0	12,466	74.0				9.5	.93
Buddhist	35	0.2	80	0.5	140	0.8	15	12.5	11	74.0	1.00
Judaism	62	0.4	69	0.4	74	0.4	13	14.5	14	7.7	.94
Muslim	77	0.5	110	0.7	148	0.9	10.5	9.5	9.5	34.7	1.12
Other	24	0.2	36	0.2	84	0.5					1.06
Total	198	1.4	316	2.0	445	2.6				40.8	1.04
Inadequately described	74	0.5	58	0.3	49	0.3					
No religion	1577	10.8	1977	12.7	2177	12.9	3	3	3	9.1	1.25
Not stated	1595	10.9	1864	11.9	1712	10.2					
National Population										7.9	.985

* In 1981 the category 'Presbyterian' did not include the 'Reformed' who were enumerated as 'Other Christian'; the category 'Uniting' did not include 'Methodists' (3.4%) as it has in subsequent censuses, but they are included here in order to facilitate cross-census comparisons; to the category 'Other Christian' have been added those who had responded 'Seventh Day Adventists' (0.3% in 1981 and 1986), 'Congregational' (0.2% in 1981 and 0.1% in 1986), 'Brethren' (0.2% in 1981 and 0.1% in 1986), and 'Protestant, undefined' (1.5% in 1981 and 1.3% in 1986). Groups representing less than 0.3% of the population were not separately recorded in the 1991 census.

the population each, Jews, Jehovah's Witnesses and Salvationists now share the distinction of being the smallest groups separately enumerated in the census reports.

Between 1986 and 1991 the national population grew by 7.9 per cent. Most religious groups grew at a rate greater than the national population. All but two of the separately enumerated religious groups (Churches of Christ and the Salvation Army) increased their numbers. One group, Judaism, grew but at a lower rate than the population. Jews have been a stable 0.4 per cent of the population since 1947, but can be expected to decline in proportion if their growth rate continues to fall below the national rate. Only the Churches of Christ had fewer numbers in 1991 than in 1981 and, although the Salvation Army peaked in 1986, it had an increase of only 410 persons over the decade.

These figures do not support the idea that Australia is becoming more secular or that there is a decline in religious identification. For the first time in many censuses there has been an *increase* in the proportion of the population identifying with a religious group, from 75 per cent in 1986 to 76.6 per cent in 1991. As Table 1 shows, almost 1.1 million additional Australians identified themselves with some Christian group in 1991 than in 1986. Over 540 thousand, or more than half of this growth, were 'new' Catholics. In both 1986 and 1991 censuses about 120,000 were added to the numbers of those identifying with a non-Christian religious group. The result of the changes in percentages of the population identifying with various religious groups has been consolidation among the larger groups and new clusterings of the smaller groups into

one cluster at the 0.9 per cent level and another at the 0.4 per cent level.

What are the sources of this increase in religious identification? Migration accounts for the vast majority of the growth of Muslim and Buddhist groups and for some of the Catholic growth. About half of the national population growth between 1986 and 1991 was due to immigration.² This period witnessed one of the largest intakes of migrants in Australia's history. Between 1987 and 1991, 33,000 'net immigrants'³ were received from the Middle East and 131,500 from Southeast Asia, which alone could account for much of the growth among Buddhists and Muslims. Data from 1987 to 1991 are used rather than 1986 to 1991 because in 1987 the categories of reporting were changed to report Middle East and South East Asia separately from Asia.

But where did the extra Catholics come from? The largest single source of migrants (145,700) in the period 1987 to 1991 was Europe and the former USSR.⁴ Many of these migrants are likely to be of Catholic religious identification. Other sources of 'Catholic' migration include the Philippines (33,600 'net migrants' in 1986 to 1991) and Vietnam (46,500). However, since these sources fall well short of the total Catholic growth, other factors must be at work.

Some of the Muslim, Buddhist and Catholic growth will be due to the higher fertility rates of these groups. Muslims, Mormons and Buddhists in the 1986 census had the highest levels of completed fertility and Jews the lowest.⁵ Muslims had the highest rate of marriage (and lowest rate of divorce) and the lowest proportion of women with no children despite having a very youthful age profile.⁶ While the completed fertility of Catholic women

in 1986 was relatively high (3 children per woman aged 45-54 years) it was not much greater than, for example, Anglicans (2.7). However, given that this rate applies to a relatively large population, the net increases in numbers will also be large. Catholic women were the most likely to have large families (almost 10 per cent having 5 or more children).

Baptist and Pentecostal growth is primarily a result of transfers of identification from other Christian groups.⁷ This is in response to adoption of an evangelistic approach to church growth developed largely in the United States by Baptist and Pentecostal groups which have long comprised more than 25 per cent of the US population, compared to 2.6 per cent in Australia in 1991.

There is another factor operating in this census - the introduction of the 'tick-a-box' method of answering the question 'What is your religion?'. As a result, there has been a great decrease in the proportion who gave indefinite, or vague responses such as 'Protestant', or 'Christian' without further specification. Moreover the response rate increased as can be seen by the decline of the proportion in the 'not stated' category. Some people who would have given one of these less distinct categories under earlier methods of response are now likely to be found among the groups listed on the census form. Thus a change in the method of response accounts for some of the growth in the larger groups, including Catholics. This same pattern of increased response occurred when New Zealand introduced this method of response a decade ago.

Another element in the growth of Muslim and Buddhist numbers is the fact that it often takes a while for a migrant to take on a religious identity

as it is defined in the host country. Both ethnic identity and religious identity are learned and re-learned as the migrant negotiates a new life and new self in the new country.⁸ Hence some of those appearing for the first time as Muslim or Buddhist in the 1991 census may be doing so as a result of learning how to respond to the question, 'What is your religion?'⁹ This is particularly true for Muslims as Islam itself has been undergoing a revitalisation through this period of time. This together with the events of the Gulf War which occurred just before the census was taken, may well have increased the saliency of Muslim identity for some.

There were some notable differences between Melbourne and Sydney in 1991. Catholics, at 30.5 per cent and 31.1 per cent respectively, were the largest group in both cities. Anglicans were second but in Melbourne they comprise 16.8 per cent, just larger than the 15 per cent declaring 'no religion'; while in Sydney, Anglicans were 24.5 per cent and the 'nones', 10.8 per cent. On this evidence Sydney can clearly be declared the more religious of the nation's largest cities. The fourth largest group in Melbourne was the Orthodox (6.2 per cent), while in Sydney it was Uniting Church (4.9 per cent) followed by the Orthodox (4.4 per cent). Presbyterians were 3.8 per cent in each city. Buddhists and Muslims are concentrated in Sydney and Melbourne. Muslims comprised 1.6 per cent of Melbourne's population, and 2.1 per cent of Sydney's population as compared with the national figure of 0.9 per cent. In some suburbs Muslims exceed 5 per cent of the population. Buddhists comprise 1.4 per cent of Melbourne and 1.5 per cent of Sydney as compared with the national figure

of 0.8 per cent. These differences reflect the history of migration to Australia and in settlement patterns of various groups.

Table 1 also indicates that there are noteworthy differences in the sex balance of religious groups in Australia. For example, for all Christians, the male/female ratio was 0.93. This means that for every 100 females there were 93 males. Within this section of the population, the Churches of Christ, Jehovah's Witness and Salvation Army each display a relatively low ratio of males to females. These groups may have an older age profile as well since, as populations age, they become increasingly female. The Churches of Christ and Salvation Army also declined in overall numbers between 1986 and 1991. Declining groups of religious identification also tend to become increasingly female and aged as they decline. It may also be that converts to these groups are disproportionately female.¹⁰

As the proportions of the Australian population that are Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu and Pentecostal continue to grow, there will be much more apparent variety in the institutional structures which are designed to help people make their lives meaningful. Anglicans and Catholics have been learning to share with other groups in ways neither had previously envisioned. As Muslims, Buddhists and others erect their places of worship, the landscape will change as more and different religious symbols are raised for all to see. The fact that Australians are not as tolerant, broad minded or multi-cultural as they often like to present themselves to the rest of the world is made evident, time and again, as city councils deny building permits to some religious groups while

granting them to others. Australians are obviously more ready to be ecumenical about cuisine than they are to be multicultural about religion.

References and Notes

- ¹ For the purpose of this analysis, the 'no religion' category has been treated as a religious group. The catch-all 'other' categories and the 'no response' category have not.
- ² In the 1991 census 1,248,025 more Australians were enumerated than in 1986, and in the years 1987 to 1991 alone there were 576,900 'net immigrants' (Australian Bureau of Statistics, Cat. No. 3221.0). If one allows another 100,000 alone for 1986, more than half the increase is due to immigration.
- ³ Australian Bureau of Statistics, Cat. No. 3221.0, Estimated Resident Population by Country of Birth, Age and Sex, Table 4.
- ⁴ *ibid.*
- ⁵ Australian Bureau of Statistics, Cat. No. 2510.0, *Religion in Australia*, Figure 4.4.
- ⁶ *ibid.*, Table 4.
- ⁷ The 1989 National Social Science Survey (n=4,500) revealed that less than 2 per cent of Pentecostals and less than 0.5 per cent of Baptists gave 'no religion' as their religious identification at age 14.
- ⁸ This is a clear theme emerging from interviews recently conducted as part of a Bureau of Immigration Research project focussed on the role of the mosque in the settlement of Muslim migrants.
- ⁹ For a more complete discussion of this phenomenon see G.D. Bouma *Religion: Meaning, Transcendence and Community in Australia*, Longmans, Melbourne, 1992, pp. 53-56.
- ¹⁰ The 1989 National Social Science Survey of Australians revealed that 27.1 per cent of males and 23.4 per cent of females changed their religious affiliation from the time they were 14. Three-fourths of those who did change, changed to 'no religion'. Women who were working in paid employment were the most likely to make a change to 'no religion'. While the least likely to change, women who were not working in paid employment were the most likely to change to some other religious group.