This paper analyses issues that underlie UK, US and Australian governments’ attempts to manage the ‘risks’ of globalisation, diversity and social change. It argues that one of the factors underlying many governments’ emphasis on integration, national identity and values, and the increasing use of measures such as citizenship tests to reinforce them, is a deeper concern with what citizens are feeling. There is concern about the anxiety that so-called ‘mainstream’ citizens from majority ethnic groups are feeling about the ‘other’, including the challenges which multiculturalism and globalisation pose to more monocultural conceptions of national identity. There is also an anxiety about whether citizens from minority ethnic, racial or religious backgrounds feel ‘integrated’ into society (thereby also reinforcing the traditional values and identities of majority groups); or whether they feel dangerously alienated.

Such concerns are implicated in strategies for government. Isin (2004, 217) for example, has analysed a strategy of ‘governing through neurosis’ in which the ‘neurotic citizen’ is encouraged to have a number of anxieties, including ‘about the Other’ (Isin 2004, 217). Isin’s (2004, 219) approach builds on analyses of ‘risk society’ and the ‘culture of fear’. Similarly, Bigo’s (2002, 63) analysis of the ‘Governmentality of Unease’ draws attention to the ways in which ‘migration is increasingly interpreted as a security problem’. Undoubtedly terrorist events that have impacted upon the west, such as September 11, Bali, London and Madrid, have provided fertile ground for such strategies of government to be pursued (even while the impact of experiences on many non-western populations, such as the Philippines or Indonesia, have been downplayed). However, globalisation has also contributed to increased anxieties. Indeed, as Doreen Massey has pointed out, western populations are now experiencing a ‘changing geography of social relations’ in which they are experiencing the feelings of disorientation, of boundaries being penetrated, of being invaded by the other and of a general lack of control that had previously been felt by the colonised for centuries (Massey, 1994, p. 165-8; pp 146-9). In short, there are a number of recent developments that have reinforced a concern with the governance, and self-governance, of feelings in the west (and, indeed elsewhere).

However, this paper also argues that this concern with what citizens ‘feel’ is not new. Indeed, the identities, entitlements and obligations of citizenship have long been implicated in forms of ‘affective citizenship’. It is just that the concerns of that ‘affective’ citizenship have shifted in some western countries. Managing ‘the other’ has become of pressing concern in a time of multicultural diversity within nation states, globalisation, and international terrorism. Consequently, some of the mobilisations of western subjects have been very conservative. However, there has also been increasing recognition of historical inequalities that need to be addressed. Similarly, the concerns with national identity and values need not shift in ways that have such negative implications for minority ethnic, racial and religious groups. For example, Barack Obama’s programme for managing and instituting change.
demonstrates the possibilities of alternative approaches to instilling national pride amongst both majority and minority groups.

**Background: Affective Citizenship.**

The concept of ‘affective citizenship’ is used in this paper to explore (a) which intimate emotional relationships between citizens are endorsed and recognised by governments and (b) how citizens are encouraged to feel about others and themselves in conceptions of the ‘good’ citizen. Jones (2005, p. 145) uses the term ‘affective citizenship’ to refer to the ‘affection and loyalty’ which citizens are encouraged to feel about their nation. Mookherjee (2005, p. 36) uses the term in the context of French debates over the Muslim wearing of headscarves to argue for the need for governments to acknowledge ‘the emotional relations through which identities are formed’. This article retains both those meanings but the very broad concept of ‘affective citizenship’ used here also emphasises that the recognition of both intimate and social emotions has long been part of the very way in which conceptions of citizenship are constructed. In short, the concept of ‘affective citizenship’ is used to explore key aspects of the complex and multiple ways in which emotion and citizenship intersect.

Given that (at least anglophone) political science has often tended to downplay affect (Redlawsk 2006, p. 1; Barbalet 2006, p. 32; Westen, 2007, ppix) , it is necessary to provide some additional historical background for the arguments here. One could argue that western issues of citizenship have long been implicated with issues of affect, that is with what citizens feel or, to be more precise, what it is recognised as legitimate for citizens to feel. For example, the traditional unit of citizenship was based around a male property-owning head of household. That household wasn’t just an economic unit, it was increasingly seen as an affective unit, a loving family unit (Stone, 1997; Shumway, 2003, 1-28; Coontz, 2005, 5-12). Much later, government welfare and other policies were designed around that family unit, as the unit of citizenship, with the initial assumption that the male wage earner would normally support his wife and children (Pateman, 1996, pp. 13-17). Of course, who was identified as part of that loving couple and family unit was influenced by other social relations such as race (including colonial constructions); ethnicity, religion and sexuality (Povinelli 2006, 17, 4). Up until very recently, both the loving couple and the family unit were seen as exclusively heterosexual (Richardson, 2000; Bell and Binnie, 2000; Phelan, 2001; Johnson, 2002b) and still are in many parts of the world.

Issues of gender and sexuality have therefore been long implicated in the construction of the affective citizen (and I will note their ongoing impact on the politics of affect later in this paper). Western countries are only recently acknowledging the dire consequences of racial discrimination in terms of who was constructed as a loving family unit, and its implication for who was seen to have rights and entitlements. For example, we have recently seen apologies from the US House of Representatives for the way slave families were pulled apart as members were captured and sold to different owners (US House of Representatives, 2008). We have seen the Australian Labor government apologise for the actions of previous colonial settler Australian governments in forcibly separating indigenous children from their families (Australia, House of Representatives, *Hansard*, 13 February 2008, p. 169). We have seen similar apologies from the Canadian government (Harper, 2008). Such apologies presuppose
an acknowledgement that the emotional relationships between those family members were not recognised as being of equal importance to the emotional relationships between white families, and that this was part of the dehumanisation of the other that was used to justify racism and discrimination. Indeed, one could argue that the western emphasis on ‘rationality’, used to justify colonialism and slavery (Mignolo, 2002, p. 939) also justified a lack of emotional empathy for the other. Who one is encouraged or permitted to feel empathy for is still a major issue in contemporary political discourse (Johnson, 2005).

So emotion has always been important in terms of how the unit of citizenship was constructed, with resulting implications for who had full citizenship rights and protections. Affect continues to play a major role in terms of who is legitimately allowed to seek residence in a country and involves more than a fear of foreigners. Whose particular emotions are recognised as legitimate, or whether they are prioritised, still has implications for who is allowed to immigrate. Past injustices against indigenous or slave families may have been acknowledged. However, the emotional relationships of immigrant families can still be treated with scant respect. Hillary Clinton (2007) acknowledged during the last election campaign that US laws had been ‘tearing legal immigrant families apart’ as permanent residents waited as long as five or ten years for their spouses and minor children to get permission to join them. Similarly, one thinks of gay and lesbian couples whose relationships are still not recognised for immigration purposes in some countries. Affect is also of key importance for asylum seekers who have to establish a legitimate fear of persecution before they can be granted residency as legitimate refugees. Under the previous Howard government, Australia had a particularly bad record of recognising both legitimate fears of persecution and the subsequent trauma of asylum seekers in longterm detention (Marr and Wilkinson, 2003; Australian Broadcasting Commission, 2001). In a particularly perverse twist, gay and lesbian asylum seekers were frequently told by Australian authorities that they didn’t have a legitimate fear of persecution because they only needed to conceal their sexual feelings to be safe (Millbank, 2002).

**Affect, national identity and values.**

In short, there are numerous ways in which the failure to recognise emotions can have costs for those denied citizenship rights and entitlements or the potential of citizenship at all. However, this paper is not just concerned with the issue of which emotions, from marginalised groups, are recognised in the construction of the unit of citizenship (although we will see that that is highly relevant). It is also concerned with the issue of how the emotions of ‘mainstream’ groups are managed (to use a terminology popularised by US social conservatives that spread to the UK and Australia). For, if there is one thing that is clear, it is that the concerns over ‘national values’ and social integration have largely been designed to lessen the anxieties of majority ethnic and religious groups.

Hans-Georg Betz and I (2004) have argued that the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries saw the spread of forms of ethnocratic liberalism that have reinforced the dominance of majority ethnic groups via asserting ethnically inscribed forms of values and national identity. Positions that were originally associated with extreme right parties were increasingly taken up, in more muted form, by major parties in European countries (Betz and Johnson, 2004). Similarly, the so-called ‘Australian
values’ advocated by conservative Prime Minister John Howard explicitly privileged a conservative version of anglo-celtic ethnic identity and culture, thereby marginalising many other racial, ethnic and religious groups in the process (Johnson, 2007; Howard, 2006).

Issues of affect have often been quite explicitly articulated in such debates over values and national identity. In Australia, the Parliamentary Secretary for Immigration, Andrew Robb, who was given the job of overseeing the introduction of a new citizenship test, was quite explicit about what some of the concerns were. He argued that Australians were feeling less secure because of ‘galloping globalisation’. Consequently, Australians wanted ‘to reassert a sense of control’ via border security measures and by ensuring that those who were allowed to migrate were integrated into specific conceptions of values and national identity. Robb explained that ‘the more we have become globalised, the more the national instincts have raised their head because people feel uncertainty about national identity’. The citizenship test was intended to promote a commitment to Australian values and to integrate people in order to avoid having ‘people who don’t feel part of our community [emphasis added]’ (cited in Shanahan and Karvelas, 2006, p. 4). Assessing and shaping the feelings of the ‘other’ were therefore clearly important. However, in Australia, as elsewhere, such tests were also clearly designed to shore up the feelings of the majority ethnic group, by making them feel secure that the values and forms of identity associated with their ethnic culture were being privileged and reinforced. The fact that such tests were to be performed in English also reinforced the dominant ethnic group’s language. Australia had a history of using language tests to exclude people. Indeed, there is a long history internationally of forms of civics education, tests and language requirements being used to instil forms of assimilation and subordination, including in Latin America (Castro-Gómez, 2002, p. 272-50).

In Australia, such anxieties by so-called ‘mainstream’ citizens became increasingly enmeshed with fears of terrorism and religious difference. Christianity was repeatedly reaffirmed as the key religion informing Australian values. Prime Minister John Howard related his concern over those Australian Muslims who weren’t sufficiently integrating to the ‘mood of the people’ given the fear of ‘a terrorist attack which (will) inflict mass casualties on this country’ (cited in Shanahan, 2006, p. 1). Howard (2005) also repeatedly emphasised that ‘Australian values’ included a belief in the equality of women, with the implication that this posed particular problems for potential Muslim immigrants integrating. The implication that loving couple relationships amongst heterosexual Muslim migrants to the west fall short of those recognised in modern western constructions of citizenship is common (cf Khiabany and Williamson, 2008, p. 72, 76-77, 82-83). The political significance of whose couple and familial emotional relationships are valued and recognised is an issue that has been noted earlier in this paper.

The explicit reference to feelings in the context of the Australian citizenship test is not unusual. The Online introduction to the British government’s settlement and citizenship test begins with the words ‘Becoming a British citizen is an important event in your life and is something that you can feel proud of.’ (U.K. Government, 2009). However, as in Australia, it wasn’t just the feelings of the migrants that the government was addressing. Concerns about increasing Islamic immigration, subsequently heightened by the involvement of ‘home-grown’ terrorists in the 2005
London bombings, became particularly important issues in the politics of affect. Even before the London bombings, Prime Minister Tony Blair had argued that governments should address such feelings of anxiety, claiming that: ‘we cannot simply dismiss any concern about immigration as racism. …The vast bulk of the British people are not racist…. But they expect government to respond to their worries’ (Blair, 2004).

Nonetheless, while repudiating claims of racism, it is clear that Blair privileged the emotions and values of particular groups when constructing both British national identity and the related identity of good British citizens. Blair not merely asserted the right of existing Britons to feel concerned but also suggested that minority groups had a duty to ensure that more mainstream Britons weren’t made to feel uncomfortable. For example, when asked ‘do you think it is possible for a woman who wears the veil to make a full contribution to British society?’, Blair replied:

Well that is a very difficult question. It is a mark of separation and that is why it makes other people from outside of the community feel uncomfortable [emphasis added]. No-one wants to say that people don’t have the right to do it…But… we do need.. to confront this issue about how we integrate people properly…. (Blair 2006a).

Admittedly, Blair (2006b) did partly acknowledge the feelings of the ‘other’, conceding that there was a sense of fear and defensiveness in the Muslim world and that historically Islam had been a progressive and tolerant religion. However, he also asserted that, while the current ‘battle about modernity’ needed to be conducted within Islam itself, non-Muslim critics should not be silenced by ‘our wish not to trespass on sensitive feelings’ (Blair 2006b). The concept of ‘modernity’ is one that should be used cautiously given its history in colonial discourses (Mignolo, 2002; Castro-Gómez, 2002). However, it is also clear that this is not just a debate about ‘affect’ but also a debate about how values are interpreted and whose values are being privileged.

As Anne-Marie Fortier (2008, p. 96) has pointed out, the so-called ‘veil row’… is part of an ongoing process of organisation and systematisation of a disciplining gaze. That gaze constructs distinctions between the moderate and the fanatic and between those who are willing and those who are unwilling to reassure fellow nationals’ to make them feel comfortable (see further Khiam and Williamson, 2008; Butler, 2004, pp. 47-49). The ‘veil row’ also reinforces particular forms of acceptable femininity, and a related narrative closure about what wearing a veil signifies, for example assuming that it necessarily involves female subordination or feelings of separateness and alienation. Clearly the debate involved issues of whose feelings and values were being privileged and seen as legitimate. The emotion of a woman who feels uncomfortable not wearing a veil is clearly subordinated to the (apparently unquestioned) right of other Britons to feel uncomfortable around women wearing veils. Mainstream Britons are clearly the focus of empathy in a way that marginalised Britons are not.

Furthermore, as Fortier points out, affect thereby becomes implicated in the very construction of ethnic identities:
the prescription of sentiment - of feelings for the nation, for the community, for the neighbour, for the Muslim, for the suicide bomber, for minorities - is also what race and ethnicity are about… the very act of naming who and how to love, suspect, befriend, care for, embrace, welcome, and so on, performatively constructs racial, ethnic, cultural and national differences along with their gender, sexual, class, and generational ‘identities’ (Fortier, 2008, p. 89).

Those emotions and those identities are also implicated in the constructions of the good citizen. In other words, the good citizen both feels and performs particular emotions. Consequently, Fortier (2008, p. 98) argues that, especially since the London bombings, the ‘“internal states” of some citizens’ have become of great concern to politicians, public servants and in public debate. Clearly feelings cannot be prescribed or tested in the way that formal citizenship tests can test knowledge of language, facts or ‘values’. However, a concern with feelings has partly influenced the introduction of such measures. Furthermore, the politicians’ statements are a form of normalising discourse and one that encourages both a form of self-government by some citizens and forms of casual surveillance by those who feel they belong. As Fortier (2008, p. 99) points out: ‘It involves a reworking of the well-known scenario of misrecognition that goes: “Where are you from? No. (Pause) Where are you really from?” now comes with “And how do you feel about this nation? No. (Pause) How do you really feel?”’.  

The current British leader of the opposition, David Cameron is particularly concerned about how migrants feel. Cameron (2007; 2008) has identified a form of emotional pathology in the British body politic — a crisis of performativity. People, including new immigrants, do not ‘feel’ sufficiently British, and Britons generally do not adequately perform their Britishness in the way that Americans proudly perform their national identity by feeling sufficiently attached to values, the national flag and other icons. In particular, Cameron is concerned that many Muslims do not feel sufficiently British.

31% of all Muslims in this country feel they have more in common with Muslims in other countries than they do with non-Muslims in Britain. This cannot be explained simply in terms of the bonds of kinship which anyone will feel to the homeland of their ancestors. There is something deeper at work here: A feeling of alienation. A disillusionment with life in this country. …It is now absolutely vital that we address this trend… those who feel simply disillusioned and disaffected today can turn to something much more sinister, and much more subversive tomorrow (Cameron, 2007).  

Prime Minister Gordon Brown (2006) has made some quite similar comments regarding integration and displaying patriotism. Brown too emphasised the need for promoting ‘British’ values of liberty, tolerance, responsibility and fairness in order to address such concerns. He argued for values education, mandatory English lessons, citizenship ceremonies and encouraging feelings of national pride, in addition to the existing tests. Revealing the concern that many western countries now feel as Asian economic power increases, Brown also argued that the emphasis on values and patriotism would facilitate Britain standing ‘alongside China, India and America as one of the great success stories of the next global era’ (Brown 2006). He claimed that
the emphasis on values would counter the risk that ‘when people are insecure, they retreat into more exclusive identities rooted in 19th century conceptions of blood, race and territory’ (Brown 2006). Brown is arguably being disingenuous here given that forms of ethnic dominance can be asserted indirectly via forms of national identity and values (Betz and Johnson, 2004; Johnson 2002a). For example, it is noticeable that Brown claims liberal democratic and social democratic values as inherently British ones without acknowledging the role that other countries have played in the development of the values and practices associated with these ideologies. Nor does Brown adequately address the long history of British colonialism and subordination of the colonial other.

Nonetheless, Brown’s statements were not sufficient to save him from Cameron’s criticism. For, it is not just the ordinary citizen (and particularly the Muslim citizen) who is not feeling sufficiently British. In Cameron’s view the condition has spread to the top, namely Gordon Brown himself.

Gordon Brown’s view of Britishness is mechanical, not organic, it’s something to be redesigned, repackaged and relaunched by Whitehall, not something which lives in our hearts.

He talks about British values - liberty, fair play, openness. He’s right, but these are general, unspecific, almost universal. What the Prime Minister’s response lacks is the emotional connection [emphasis added] with the institutions that define Britishness.

…..Britishness is a matter of instinct, not calculation (Cameron, 2008).

In other words, Cameron argues that Brown is neither feeling the right emotions himself nor encouraging them in others. Talk of values and national identity is not enough, they also have to be felt. Furthermore, exercising true leadership is seen to have significant affective components.

However, the affective components of leadership on issues of values and national identity can take very different forms from those Australian and British examples we have examined so far. Barack Obama’s views are a case in point.

**Obama’s affective citizenship.**

One can find some very similar elements in Australian, UK and US debates. For example, when questioned about the US citizenship test, the then Director of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services affirmed that one of its key functions was to make people feel civic pride about being American (cited in Allen, 2006). Samuel Huntington’s (2004) book reflected tendencies towards ethnocentric liberalism with its privileging of US Anglo values over (his) construction of ‘Hispanic” ones. It is also possible that the May 2009 arrests of U.S. ‘homegrown terrorists’, however unsuccessful their attacks fortunately turned out to be, will give rise to increasing anxieties about Islamic integration that are similar to those in Britain.
Nonetheless, the focus of Obama’s affective citizenship has been somewhat different, from the debates over national values and identity in Britain (and indeed in many other western countries). In particular, Obama’s campaign focused on promising an alternative politics of emotion to the conservative Republican one. Lauren Berlant (2005, p. 73) has argued that under Bush the US political sphere had been ‘saturated by the deployment of emotion’ that trumped ‘dissenting counternarratives’ on issues ranging from the conduct of the War on Terror to debates over issues such as the just distribution of resources. Obama (2007a) similarly claimed that ‘for nearly seven years, President Bush has ignored Franklin Roosevelt’s wise counsel about the corrosive effects of fear. Indeed, instead of urging us to reject fear, he has stoked false fear and undermined our values.’ American values were undermined by the Iraq War, waterboarding, extraordinary rendition, Guantanamao Bay and illegal wiretapping (Obama, 2007a). Obama argues that such actions have contributed to foreigners no longer feeling positive emotions towards America. He notes that:

When you travel to the world’s trouble spots as a United States Senator, much of what you see is from a helicopter….And it makes you stop and wonder: when those faces look up at an American helicopter, do they feel hope, or do they feel hate? (Obama 2007b, p. 228)

For Obama, son of a Kenyan who saw an American education as exemplifying hope, the fact that America may now engender negative emotions is deeply troubling (as well as a security issue).

Above all, Obama is also promising to restore Americans’ own feelings of pride in their country and national identity. In Obama’s diagnosis of America’s emotional pathology, American society has been driven by the wrong, negative emotions and his job is to offer hope in a better (and more inclusive) America based on more positive feelings: ‘We are choosing hope over fear. We’re choosing unity over division and sending a powerful message that change is coming to America’ (Obama, 2008c). It was a theme that he returned to in his Victory Speech:

If there is anyone out there who still doubts that America is a place where all things are possible, who still wonders if the dream of our founders is alive in our time, who still questions the power of our democracy, tonight is your answer….It’s the answer spoken by young and old, rich and poor, Democrat and republican, black, white, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, gay, straight, disabled and not disabled. …It’s the answer that led those who’ve been told for so long by so many to be cynical and fearful and doubtful about what we can achieve to put their hands on the arc of history and bend it once more toward the hope of a better day (Obama 2008a, see further Obama 2009b).

Obama’s own persona of difference is meant to exemplify not only the narrative of hope, unity and inclusion but American exceptionalism and the American dream: ‘Hope, hope is what led me here today. With a father from Kenya, a mother from Kansas and a story that could only happen in the United States of America (Obama 2008c, p. 11).’

In short, Obama is arguing for a more inclusive conception of American citizenship and American identity. His focus is on ensuring that the values of the US government
and its citizens are more in keeping with the (idealised) version he traditionally sees them as having been. His focus is on consolidating the values of the majority rather than on the responsibility of the minority to adapt to (a conservative version of) US values. There are of course some problems with Obama’s approach. Other countries may have reservations about a teleological story of hope and progress that gives America such a privileged and unique role in the narrative. For example, Obama’s version of American exceptionalism overlooks the fact that there are many different stories of racial inclusion, resistance and liberation that can be told throughout the world (see e.g. Gilroy 2004, p. 441).

However, understandably, Obama’s concerns are focused on not only the anxieties but also the anger that he believes are present in domestic US race relations. While he wants a society that is more inclusive for immigrants, his major focus is on dealing with the legacies of slavery. In Obama’s view, the emotional pathology in the American body politic isn’t just reducible to Bush’s mobilisation of fear and a resulting lack of hope. The problem is also an anger in the heart of American society — an anger which Obama is, at least implicitly, offering to heal. Some of that anger is amongst black Americans and related to the legacies of slavery, continued disadvantage and discrimination: ‘the anger is real; it is powerful; and to simply wish it away, to condemn it without understanding its roots, only serves to widen the chasm of misunderstanding that exists between the races’ (Obama, 2008d).

However, Obama (2008d) has also diagnosed a ‘similar anger’ to the anger of American blacks which ‘exists within segments of the white community’. Obama sees some of that anger as partly resulting from the impact of globalisation on sections of the US population. He talks of whites who ‘don’t feel that they have been particularly privileged by their race’, who believe they have worked hard for what they have achieved, who are worried about the effects of globalisation such as low wages and the possibilities of losing their jobs overseas. Consequently, they ‘are anxious about their futures, and feel their dreams slipping away’. Such whites can feel resentment at those they believe are getting something at their expense, whether via welfare or affirmative action (see further Barbalet, 1998, pp. 75-76). The resulting resentments and anger ‘helped shape the political landscape for at least a generation. Anger over welfare and affirmative action helped forge the Reagan Coalition (Obama, 2008d).’ In other words, it is an anger that fed into neo-liberal arguments that ‘special interests’ were gaining benefits to the disadvantage of ‘mainstream’ Americans. It was an anger that sometimes had both gender and racial overtones, as when Republicans mobilised the ‘politics of Disgust’ against black so-called ‘welfare queens’ (Hancock, 2004).

The feeling of anxiety and that ‘dreams are slipping away’ has been heightened for all sections of the American population by the turmoil of the Global Financial Crisis. Indeed Obama has been accused of mobilising his own form of the politics of fear during the election campaign – fear of economic meltdown (Obama 2008 a and 2008e). For Obama the answer has long lain in placing less emphasis on cutting government expenditure on welfare and more emphasis on a form of affective citizenship that involves feeling empathy for others, including immigrants.

There’s a lot of talk in this country about the federal deficit. But I think we should talk more about our empathy deficit - the ability to put ourselves in someone else’s shoes; to see the world through those who are different from us -
the child who’s hungry, the laid-off steelworker, the immigrant woman cleaning your school dorm…. (Obama, 2006).

In short, Obama’s politics of empathy is arguably part of a broader attempt internationally to develop a citizen identity that is more compassionate and socially connected than extreme neo-liberal forms of the abstract, self-reliant citizen and one that allows for a larger role for government welfare. (It is a politics one sees in Australia too with Rudd’s social democratic politics of compassion, although Obama has been much more explicit than Rudd in tackling the fear campaigns of his predecessor). In Obama’s diagnosis, government economic intervention and welfare provision will lessen white feelings of antagonism towards other racial groups that (in neo-liberal ideology at least) were perceived to be getting special benefits at the expense of mainstream white Americans.

The emphasis on government tackling the economic and social factors that can contribute to social problems can also be seen in his approach to Latino immigrant issues. When in Mexico, Obama (2009a) emphasised the need to improve ‘people’s incomes…and economic opportunities on both sides of the borders’. Furthermore, rather than focusing on issues of Latinos needing to integrate into US life, he emphasised the shared values between the US and Mexico, such as beliefs in hard work, family, faith, democracy. He also pointed out that both nations were founded on a struggle for independence (Obama 2009c). Obama’s list of shared values is an implicit repudiation of the claimed differences between US and Mexican immigrant values put forward by conservatives such as Samuel Huntington (2004, pp. 253-254).

Nonetheless, It is worth noting that Obama’s post-racial politics of empathy and hope interacted with other forms of social exclusion and marginalisation in complex ways. Arguably it would have been harder for a female politician such as Hillary Clinton to mobilise emotion as effectively as Obama. As Michael Messner (2007, p. 473) notes, being caring and compassionate can easily be depicted as weakness in a female politician (while being a strong woman is depicted as ballbusting). By contrast Obama can talk openly about the need for fathers to pass on empathy for others to their children, arguing against conceptions of masculinity that wrongly dismiss kindness as ‘soft’ (Obama 2008b, p. 238). Furthermore, the same day that saw Barack Obama elected also saw Proposition Eight, which removed rights to same-sex marriage, win in California. The cover of America’s leading gay rights magazine proclaimed in ‘open letters to the next president’ that ‘Gay is the New Black’ and gay rights ‘the Last Great Civil Rights Struggle’ (The Advocate, 16 December 2008). Meanwhile, Obama’s emphasis on slavery and black issues arguably neglects the role of settler colonialism in regard to the American Indian population and also in annexing the Hawaiian Islands (that were once his home). Bill Clinton apologised for the latter in 1993 (Crawford, 2002, p. 3).

Nonetheless, whatever one’s reservations, Obama’s attempts to manage issues of national identity and racial and ethnic tension in a time of globalisation and change clearly involves a very different politics of affect from some of the approaches that were discussed earlier in this paper. In particular, Obama’s arguments about national identity and values do not focus on attempts to ‘integrate’ minorities into a narrowly defined, and frequently ethnically biased, set of national values. He is managing a
quite different set of national anxieties – an anxiety that American values have been defined by the previous political regime in ways that are not inclusive enough. In this, as in other respects, Obama is consolidating the (idealised) values of the majority rather than targeting those of minorities. After all, for Obama, it was the Bush regime that really failed the national citizenship test.

**Conclusion.**

Nonetheless, whatever its differences with other approaches discussed here, Obama’s project also reflects the growing anxiety in the west around issues of national identity and values. For, Obama is attempting to restore U.S. pride and prestige after both have taken a severe battering. While Obama’s narrative is ostensibly one of U.S. triumphalism, it may also reflect the relative decline of the west in a globalising world — a decline which the Global Financial Crisis may well have hastened.

Finally, as the examples from the U.S., U.K. and Australia have shown, the concern over national identity and values can take a variety of forms. However, they are forms in which the politics of affect continues to play a significant role. Governments and politicians are concerned not just about what citizens, and potential citizens, know and believe but also about what they feel.
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