

Zeitschrift: SPELL : Swiss papers in English language and literature
Herausgeber: Swiss Association of University Teachers of English
Band: 15 (2002)

Artikel: To what extend does globalisation equal americanisation? : An onomastic response
Autor: Chevalier, Sarah
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-100004>

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 15.01.2026

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

To What Extent Does Globalisation Equal Americanisation? An Onomastic Response

Sarah Chevalier

Introduction

In recent Australian birth notices I came across the names *Scarlet*, *Scout* and *Savannah*. This eclectic trio may, at first sight, seem to reflect parental creativity. However such names are rarely products of the imagination; they are usually inspired by cultural influences. The names people choose for their children are in fact a fairly accurate reflection of the currents in a society at any given time. In this paper I plan, therefore, to look at one of the major forces in today's society, globalisation, in the light of personal naming patterns. I will use naming patterns in Australia to explore the nature of global influence, and to examine the extent to which globalisation means Americanisation.

I shall begin by giving a brief historical outline of global influence in Australia in general. The second part of my paper will deal with personal naming patterns and multiculturalism, and here I will look at naming practices of different ethnic groups. In the third part I will examine the major new trends in naming patterns in Australia, and especially their sources. I shall then describe the influence of the mass media, and finally draw some conclusions as to what naming patterns can tell us about global influence.

1. Historical outline

From a historical perspective, globalisation has made itself felt only very recently in Australia. The continent has been inhabited for at least 50,000 years, and, as far as sources can tell us, the original inhabitants lived with effectively no contact with the outside world until the First Fleet landed in

1788. The arrival of the British is the first recorded form of global influence in Australia. Colonisation forged a national identity linked to British culture and English monolingualism. Non-native speakers of English, whether indigenous people or immigrants, were expected to adapt. Negative attitudes towards things non-Anglo were reinforced by the two World Wars. In the 1930s, for example, many Greek immigrants anglicised their names, while Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany warned their compatriots not to speak German in the streets (Clyne 15).

In the 1970s the idea of multiculturalism as opposed to assimilation emerged (Clyne 18). Since this period there has been recognition of ethnic minority cultures and, as Clark (328) points out, there have been some steps towards reconciliation between the original settlers of the country and the later ones. At the same time, however, Australian society has the weight of the old British Empire behind it and, in front of it, the model of a single English-speaking superpower, the United States. It is these elements in Australian society which I plan to explore in this paper: multiculturalism and globalisation, the latter both in its old cloak of colonisation, and in its bright new feathers of the free market. The angle I shall take will be an investigation of personal names. Naming patterns mirror currents and forces in society. The adoption of Anglo names by Greek immigrants in the 30s, for example, is a clear indication of the climate of nationalism at the time. Similarly, the names parents give to their children are a reflection of other aspects of society.

2. Naming patterns and multiculturalism

In this section I will explore how naming patterns among ethnic minorities in Australia reflect levels of maintenance of the original culture. The data consist of a corpus of interviews compiled between 1997 and the year 2000, which contains the family naming practices of 123 people. These were people from the Sydney region who spoke a native language which was not English, or who were the children or grandchildren of non-native speakers. These data are drawn from a larger corpus and research project on personal naming patterns in Australia. The countries of origin of the 123 informants or their parents or grandparents were: China, Croatia, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Holland, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Lebanon, Macedonia, Myanmar, Norway, Peru, Poland, Rumania, Scotland and Ireland (only native speakers of Gaelic), Serbia, South Africa (only native

speakers of Afrikaans), Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Thailand, Turkey and Wales (only native speakers of Welsh). There are no native speakers of Aboriginal languages (the one Aboriginal informant in the larger corpus spoke English, as did all her family members). Indeed, in the area in which I undertook my research, the Sydney region, speakers of Aboriginal languages are relatively few. According to the 1986 census only 806 people in the state of New South Wales said that they spoke an Aboriginal language in the home, compared to 113,203 for Italian or 66,974 for Chinese or 88,475 for Arabic (Clyne 43).

The corpus consists of information on the personal names of 38 first generation immigrants and non-native speakers of English, 69 children of immigrants, and 16 grandchildren. Among the 38 non-native speakers, 5 had anglicised their names (a very simple procedure in Australia). Thus *Shang-Wei* became *Rosalie*, *Ya-Ying* > *Yvonne*, *Chi-Ying* > *Chris*, *Po-Yu* > *Paul*, and *Lai-Mui* > *Flora*.

Among the 69 children of immigrants (children born in Australia or occasionally in another country where English is spoken as a native language), 31 were given Anglo names only (i.e. both first and middle names). An example is a boy called *Patrick Francis* whose father was Italian and whose mother was Irish. The example is typical of this group in that one parent was a native speaker of English. In fact, out of the 31 people who had Anglo names only, 27 had one parent with English as their mother tongue.

Twenty people in the second-generation group were given a mix of Anglo and non-Anglo names. One example is *Jeremy Eeing Jhek* who was born in England in 1974 of Chinese parents. Jeremy's father explained: "My son was born in England, thus an English name was chosen." With regard to *Eeing* he said, "this means 'England' in Chinese. This will help to identify with his country of birth." And for the third name, the father said "Jhek in Chinese means 'extremely intelligent'." This is also a typical example in that those parents who chose a mix of Anglo and non-Anglo names usually put the Anglo name first. Of the 20 people, 16 had names which followed this pattern.

Eighteen people had no Anglo names. Here only 3 people had a parent whose native language was English. The other 15 came from families in which both parents were non-native speakers. An example is *Ali Mustafa*, born in Australia, whose parents were both Lebanese. If we take a closer look at this group we see that the avoidance of Anglo names is stronger in certain cultures than in others. Among second-generation Italians, for instance, those Italians who gave only Italian names to their Australian-born

children were not a majority. Altogether there were 4 children with Italian names only, 3 with mixed Italian and Anglo names, and 4 with Anglo names only. However, if we look at the overall figures for the Turkish and Lebanese informants, we see that all 4 Australian-born Turks were given Turkish names and 9 of the 12 Australian-born Lebanese. The numbers are small but if we note that these are both Muslim cultures, the figures are revealing. They indicate that Muslim cultures tend to keep their traditions longer than others. This matches Clyne's findings concerning community languages in Australia. Clyne notes that certain ethnic groups guard their native languages more tenaciously than others, citing in particular Turks and Lebanese (65). One factor he attributes this to is "distinctive religious affiliation" (68). If we examine the actual names used and the reasons for their choice, we see that religion indeed plays a central role. One example is a 20 year-old informant born in Australia of Turkish parents. He was given the names *Mustafa Adem* after the two prophets. When asked if he liked his given names he replied: "Yes, I feel honoured to carry the names of two wonderful people."

Among the 16 grandchildren of non-native speakers of English, almost everyone had Anglo names. There were just two people whose names were taken from their immigrant grandparents' ethnic group: *Arianwen Koel* whose names were chosen by her Welsh grandmother, and *Eleanor Toinette* whose middle name comes from the French family tree.

In the whole corpus there were 60 people with non-Anglo names. Out of these 60, 6 had anglicised their names: the 5 people with Chinese names mentioned above, and a second-generation Italian who changed his name from *Guisepppe* to *Joseph*. In addition, two people had their names unofficially anglicised for them: *Mustafa* and *Hafez*, twenty-year old Lebanese men, said they were always called *Steve* and *Harry*.

The Aboriginal informant in my corpus had Anglo names only. All her five brothers and sisters also had Anglo names. In general, most Aboriginal people have at least one Anglo name, the exception being older people who have not had much to do with white Australia. English teachers in Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory informed me that it is common for Aborigines to have an Anglo first name and between one and three Aboriginal names which follow. We see this pattern if we look at the names of well-known Aboriginal figures such as the painter Albert Namatjira, or the tennis star Evonne Goolagong, or actor David Gulpilil.

The ethnic naming patterns just described have two main features which are of interest for a study of global influence: from a synchronic perspective, we can say that today in Australia there are many names from different cul-

tures. New names are always coming in, and since only a minority anglicise their names or have them anglicised (8/60 in this corpus) these names stay at least for the lifetime of the new immigrants. From a diachronic perspective, however, we see that assimilation takes precedence over the preservation of ethnic culture, at least if that culture involves a language other than English. Already by the second generation, more children are given Anglo names than names from the ethnic group of their parents and by the third generation, names rarely display evidence of ethnic background.

The next question concerning ethnic names is whether the main stock of names in Australia has absorbed any of these names, that is, whether any of the names used in ethnic minority groups become established outside the original ethnic group. A recent list of popular names, contained in the 1998 *Top 100 NSW Baby Names Book*, reveals just one name which obviously comes from a different ethnic group: *Ali*. *Ali* is a popular Muslim name, meaning 'sublime or elevated.' There were 78 boys given this name in New South Wales in 1998, making it the 99th most popular name. We can observe a similar occurrence in England and Wales in the year 2000 when the 27th most popular name for boys was *Mohammed* (*National Statistics*). According to Hanks' and Hodges' dictionary of first names, *Mohammad*, the name of the Prophet, is probably the most popular name in the Islamic world, and a whole group of names associated with the Prophet's family or close companions are also used very frequently (375). An example is the name I just mentioned, *Ali*, the name of the Prophet's cousin and first convert to Islam (360). Considering the fact that Australia – and Britain – have large Muslim communities these names will be a reflection of the Muslim population, and are unlikely to be an example of names spilling over into the main stock of given names. As I described above, it is the Muslim population that appears to be the most tenacious in keeping its traditional naming practices.

A few Aboriginal names have become popular in the general population. *Kylie* became the third most popular name for girls in the 1970s and today a few other names, such as *Kirra*, are also used.

On the whole, however, names from ethnic minorities are rarely used by people outside those groups. From my larger corpus on the naming practices of over 400 people in the Sydney region I have only a handful of examples. When describing their motivation for choosing a name, or talking about why their own name was chosen, very few people mentioned that a name had been specifically taken from another culture. One boy was given a place name, *Keira*, which the parents believed to be an Aboriginal word, with the

same roots as the name *Kirra*, mentioned above. They liked the etymology, as well as the connection to a particular place near where they lived: Mt Keira. The other two people were given French names. One was *Cielle*, which the child's grandmother invented from the French word for sky, *ciel*, and the other was *Sandrine*, a current French name. Of course it can be risky choosing a name from a language outside one's own culture. Parents may not be aware of certain associations a name has, nor of the pronunciation in the original culture. I recently met a woman in Sydney called *Chia* /'tʃi:ə/. She explained that the name was short for *Chiara* /tʃi'a:rə/. Her parents had seen this Italian name in written form and liked it. It was only as an adult that Chia discovered that in Italian *Chiara* is pronounced /ki'a:rə/.

3. New trends in mainstream naming patterns

It appears that Australia's multiculturalism rarely penetrates mainstream naming practices. What, then, does influence naming patterns? In general, given names are still overwhelmingly traditional English ones, that is, names that have a long history in the English-speaking world. The most popular names according to birth notices in the main Sydney daily newspaper, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, usually derive from the traditional stock of English names. Over the past decade the names which have reached number one for girls are: *Jessica*, *Emily*, *Emma*, *Sarah*, *Madeleine* and *Alexandra*, and for boys: *Matthew*, *James*, *Thomas*, *Nicholas* and *Joshua*. *Jessica*, for example, which comes from the Hebrew name, *Iscah*, was first used by Shakespeare for the name of Shylock's daughter. *Emma* was brought to England by the Normans, *Sarah* and *Joshua* are Old Testament names and *Matthew* is from the New. The dominance of Anglo culture is clearly reflected in the continuing popularity of traditional English names. However, it is the new names that can tell us about trends and directions in the culture. If we examine a recent list of popular girls' names, the top 30 names in 1997 (Table 1), we can see that among the traditional names there is a sprinkling of non-traditional ones (in italics).

Table 1 Most popular female names 1997 (Source: Chulov and Dasey, 2)

1. Jessica	16. <i>Taylor</i>
2. Emily	17. <i>Stephanie</i>
3. Sarah	18. <i>Amy</i>
4. Emma	19. <i>Brooke</i>
5. Georgia	20. <i>Olivia</i>
6. Chloe	21. <i>Rachel</i>
7. Samantha	22. <i>Maddison</i>
8. Hannah	23. <i>Grace</i>
9. Lauren	24. <i>Zoe</i>
10. Rebecca	25. <i>Alexandra</i>
11. <i>Courtney</i>	26. <i>Ashleigh</i>
12. Caitlin	27. <i>Jasmine</i>
13. Isabella	28. <i>Brittany</i>
14. Laura	29. <i>Kate</i>
15. Sophie	30. <i>Elizabeth</i>

The six names, *Courtney*, *Taylor*, *Brooke*, *Maddison*, *Ashleigh* and *Brittany*, fall into specific onomastic classes. One is the “surname as given name” category. Five of the names fall into this category: *Courtney*, *Taylor*, *Brooke*, *Maddison* and *Ashleigh*. Another category is “place name as given name” which can be seen with the names *Brittany* and *Maddison*. The latter is both a surname and a place name, as in Madison County, Madison Avenue or Madison, the capital of Wisconsin. The third onomastic class is that of words taken from the general lexicon – in this class we can place *Brooke*, a surname, but also a common noun (*brook*).

These fashions are worth close examination. They are the only obviously new trends that stand out from traditional naming patterns. As such they are a reflection of new currents in Australian society.

With regard to the fashion of surnames as given names, the first recorded examples in the English-speaking world are in the sixteenth century. The fashion became quite popular among the nobility of Queen Elizabeth's reign. One example is the husband of Lady Jane Grey, Guildford Dudley, who was given his mother's maiden name as his first (Withycombe, xxxii). Surnames were also given to girls, although less frequently. The fashion was designed to keep old family names alive and cement dynastic alliances. The use of family names as given names continued among the aristocracy until last century when it began to be imitated more generally, especially in the United States. In 1948 Withycombe wrote that “[i]t has been calculated that three

out of four eldest sons of American families of any pretensions bear their mother's maiden names either as first or middle names" (xxxiii). This custom is very likely to be behind the fashion of giving surnames not connected to the family as given names for both boys and girls. The surname fashion began in earnest in the United States in the 1980s. It is exemplified in Tom Wolfe's satire *The Bonfire of the Vanities* published in 1987: the protagonist, Wall Street broker Sherman McCoy, has a six-year-old daughter called *Campbell* – and Campbell has a school friend called *Mackenzie* (12). And in Wolfe's 90s novel *A Man in Full* the daughter of the wealthy southern businessman Charlie Croker is called *Kingsley* (137).

The popularity of this naming trend can be traced to famous figures, either real or fictional, in particular soap opera characters. The name *Ashley*, for example, was given to a female character in the *Young and the Restless* who appeared in 1982. Through the 80s the soaps were at the forefront of the fashion of surnames as given names for both men and women. *Dynasty* had female characters called *Fallon* and *Kirby*. *LA Law* had a *Kelsey*, *As the World Turns* a *Taylor*. Surnames used as male given names in 80s soaps include *Blake*, *Hogan*, *Hunter*, and *Tyler* (Rosenkrantz and Satran, 108ff.).

An additional possible reason for the popularity of this trend is the classic fashion model of vertical diffusion (see Besnard, and Besnard and Grange). According to this model many names are found first in higher socio-economic classes from which they trickle down to lower ones. This may be the case with the fashion of using a surname not connected to the family as a given name, especially considering that the origin of the fashion lies in the aristocratic tradition of passing on a family surname. Wolfe's protagonist in *A Man in Full*, Charlie Croker, thinks of his daughter's name: "Kingsley was some name . . . Charlie had argued with Serena [his wife] about it, but she was determined to add a little yuppie grandeur to the premises" (137). The Harvard sociologist Stanley Lieberson notes that "usage of a name among more highly educated mothers is more likely to precede usage among less educated mothers than are shifts in the opposite direction" (1320). Lieberson and Bell, in a study in 1992, examined the choice of name in the light of the variable of the mother's education. The study was conducted in New York State over a 13-year period, 1973-1985. The name *Ashley* for girls, for example, became a top-20 name in 1983 for the children of women with some college and post-college education. The following year it appeared in the top 20 among mothers who were college and high school graduates, and

the year after it appeared among the children of mothers with the lowest level of education: 9-11 years of schooling (543).¹

The name *Ashley*, like the whole surname trend, appears later still in Australia. In order to gather sufficient data on this recent fashion, I collected all the birth notices from an Australian newspaper over a 9-month period, from 28 July 2000 to 30 April 2001. The *Central Coast Express Advocate*, a local newspaper from a region just above Sydney, furnished me with a corpus of 607 birth notices, 311 female and 296 male. According to these notices, the surname-fashion has indeed penetrated mainstream naming patterns in Australia. An examination of the female notices shows the following surnames recorded as given names (the numbers in brackets indicate the number of occurrences):

1. Ashleigh / Ashlee / Ashley (7)
2. Brooke (8)
3. Casidi / Cassidy (2)
4. Courtney (3)
5. Drew (2)
6. Fynlay
7. Hayley (3)
8. Kendall
9. Layne (2)
10. Mackenzie / Makenzie (6)
11. Maddison / Madison / Madisyn (10)
12. Paige (3)
13. Pacey
14. Piper (2)
15. Taylor / Tayla / Taylah (11)
16. Tylah

Some parents even gave their daughters two surnames as given names, for example *Maddison Taylor*.

These surnames used as given names fall into different subcategories. If we make a semantic categorisation, we see that a number of the names originally designated an occupation: *Paige*, *Piper*, *Taylor*, *Tylah* (tiler). The category of occupation names is becoming increasingly popular in the United States. An example is the name American model Christie Brinkley gave to her daughter: *Sailor*. A recently published American baby name book lists

¹ Lieberson and Bell argue, however, that there is probably more than simple class imitation behind such a pattern. They note that different sections of the population may be copying from a single stimulus (for example an upmarket clothing chain) that they are exposed to differentially (544).

further possibilities such as *Judge*, *Mason* and *Racer* (Rosenkrantz and Sastran, 43f.).

A phonological categorisation throws light on the choices of these names as girls' names. According to studies by the Australian linguist Cate Poynton (170) approximately 2/3 of female names in English end vocalically while 3/4 of male names end consonantly. Indeed 11/16 or 69% of the names on this list end vocalically. The most common vocalic endings for female names in English are /ɪ/ (/i/ in Australian English) as in the name *Lucy* or schwa, as in the name *Cassandra*. Among the surname names we see the same endings. There is the /ɪ/ ending in *Ashleigh*, *Cassidy*, *Courtney*, *Hayley*, *Mackenzie* and *Pacey*, and the schwa ending in *Piper*, *Taylor* and *Tylah*. These phonological features seem to play a role in the choice of particular surnames as female given names. This is confirmed by a comparison with the surnames used as first names for boys, which are distinguished by the fact that the majority have different sound patterns. Below is a list of surnames that have recently come into use as male given names (also from the *Central Coast Express Advocate*):

1. Anders
2. Bailey (6)
3. Birrell
4. Blake (4)
5. Bowen
6. Bronson
7. Campbell
8. Carson
9. Cohen
10. Conner (9)
11. Cooper (5)
12. Emerson
13. Finley (2)
14. Finn
15. Fletcher (2)
16. Harrison (5)
17. Hayden / Haydn (4)
18. Hudson
19. Jackson (4)
20. Larsen
21. Logan (2)
22. Mason (3)
23. Regan
24. Remington
25. Ryley / Rylie (4)

26. Tyler (2)
 27. Wade

This list reveals that the surnames chosen for males have – overall – a different sound pattern to those chosen for females. Twenty out of twenty-seven or 74% of the names end in a consonant, which is a percentage that matches the sound patterning of male given names in general.

Quite a few of the surname names can be traced to figures from American popular culture. Of the 16 female names, 12 were names of soap opera characters, actors, or their children,² and 13 were among the 1,000 most popular names in America for girls last year.³ A few better-known examples of famous figures with surnames as given names are actors Courtney Cox and Drew Barrymore, or soap character Blake Carrington from *Dynasty*.

One of the surname names, *Madison*, which was originally a metronymic meaning ‘son of Maude’ (Hanks and Hodges *Dictionary of Surnames*, 340), may also have become popular due to its appeal as a place name. The film *The Bridges of Madison County* (1995) has also no doubt played a role in the use of this name. Place names as given names belong to the second onomastic class this paper seeks to explore. This type of given name may well have been influenced by the surname fashion as some names belong to both categories. Both fashions appear to have been made popular by famous people or television characters. A popular name in Australia, *Brittany*, for example, first appeared as the name of a child in the television series *thirtysomething* in 1987. Other place names used as given names I have recently seen or heard in Australia include: *Paris*, *Sienna*, *Asia* and *Montana* – all of which are en vogue in the United States. *Montana* is of course Spanish for mountain, /mɒn'tænə/, but the given name is pronounced /mən'tænə/ like the American state, indicating that it falls into the place-name category. *Bronte* is another place name that has become popular with Sydneysiders – it is the name of both a beach in Sydney as well as the suburb adjoining. In an interview in *The Sydney Morning Herald* (Date 1), three mothers who chose the name gave a variety of reasons: the place name, the Brontë sisters, and the character called Bronte played by Andie MacDowell in the film *Green Card* (1990). Here we can observe some of the new influences on naming patterns rolled into one: place name, surname, and film character.

² *Ashley, Brooke, Cassidy, Courtney, Drew, Hayley, Kendall, Mackenzie, Madison, Paige, Taylor, Tylah* (most common spellings listed; for details see Rosenkrantz and Satran, 101ff.).

³ Above list plus *Piper* (Campbell).

The fashion of using place names as given names in the *Central Coast Express Advocate* corpus of birth notices is less common than that of surnames but nevertheless present. Among the female notices, the following place names were found:

1. Avalon
2. Bronte
3. Britteny / Britney / Brittony (3)
4. Chelsea / Chelsey (6)
5. Paris

Most of the names are borne by famous figures in the United States: Chelsea Clinton; Britney Spears; Bronte, the *Green Card* character; Paris, Michael Jackson's daughter. One name that does not appear among American celebrities or on American name lists is *Avalon*, the mythical place name of Arthurian legend. *Avalon* is also, however, the name of a northern Sydney beach. If we bear in mind that *Bronte* is likewise a Sydney beach, we may be observing an original Australian twist on the place-name fashion!

There are names which have multiple claims to fame. The name *Brooke*, which appeared on the 1997 list of popular names (Table 1) may have become popular because of the various soap opera characters bearing this name, or because of the actress and model Brooke Shields, or because of the name's semantic value. The word *brook* places the name in the category of nature names such as *Rain*, *Sky* and *Sunshine* which surfaced in the 1960s. Such names fall into the third onomastic category this paper seeks to investigate, that of names taken from the general lexicon. This refers to using common nouns as proper names, such as the nineteenth century fashion of flower names (*Rose*) or jewel names (*Pearl*). In the *Central Coast* newspaper corpus we see some additions to the traditional flower and jewel names:

Plant or nature names:

1. Brooke (8)
2. Oceanne
3. Savannah
4. Willow

Jewel names:

5. Jade / Jayde (22)
6. Krystle

Others:

7. Scarlet (2)
8. Scout

The list contains one French name, *Oceanne*, which, according to a web-based baby name guide *Le guide des prénoms*, was the fifth most popular name for girls in France last year (spelt *Océane*). The Australian birth notice included the names of Oceanne's brother and sister: *Blaine*, a name fairly popular in America, and *Montagne*, which appeared neither on Australian, French nor American name lists. If we recall the earlier example of *Cielle* it seems that these few occurrences – *Oceanne*, *Montagne* and *Cielle* – hint at the fact that French has remained a prestige language in Australia, after having been the main foreign language taught in schools for most of the last century.

Most of the other names taken from lexical items have American roots. *Krystle* and *Brooke* can be traced to Krystle Carrington (a *Dynasty* character) and Brooke Shields, mentioned above. Brooke Shields also influenced the popularity of *Jade*, the name of the 15 year-old protagonist Shields played in the 1981 film *Endless Love*. *Scarlet* has its roots in *Gone With the Wind* (Scarlett O'Hara) and *Scout* is the little girl's nickname in *To Kill A Mockingbird*. *Savannah* was the 39th most popular girl's name in the United States in the year 2000, and indeed all the names except *Oceanne* appear in the most recent American name chart (Campbell).

4. Influence of the mass media

All three fashions examined in this paper: surnames, place names and specific items from the general lexicon have been diffused with the aid of the mass media. Television, in particular, has played a major role in the spreading of American naming trends. Quite a few of the names described here owe their popularity to daytime soaps.

The increasing influence of the media can be seen when we examine the diminishing influence of other sources of given names. In the early part of the century, the most common source of given names in Australia was the names of other members of family (for example, naming a son after his father). According to a study I undertook on this practice (Chevalier), we see a correspondence between a decrease in the use of family names and an increase in the use of names from popular culture. This study looked at how many people were named after family members in a corpus of 432 Sydney

residents born between 1907 and 2000. The pattern across the century shows that out of those born in the period 1907-1939, roughly 3/4 were named after a family member (76%). There was a significant drop to 58% in the middle period (1940-1969) and a further slight drop to 55% in the last 3 decades (1970-2000). This pattern fits inversely with the introduction of television. Sociologists Morgan, O'Neill, and Harré comment on the importance of television and how its role is reflected in personal naming patterns (23):

The idea that a child should grow up towards a standard implied by his or her name has not disappeared. The standards are no longer represented by the words for abstract virtues or the names of saints. They have been replaced by pop stars and TV characters and personalities as exemplars . . . [S]uch people now have a similar status in many people's eyes as did the traditional saints and monarchs.

An example from my research is a teenage girl whose first and middle names were taken from television characters. She was called *Jaime Nyssa*, *Jaime* from the American television series the *Bionic Woman* and *Nyssa* after the doctor's assistant in *Dr Who*. Another person in my study was named *Elton* after pop singer Elton John, and I went to school with half a dozen *Laras* and *Larissas* born just after the film *Dr Zhivago* came out in 1965.

New naming trends in Australia clearly reflect the influence of pop culture, largely American, diffused by the mass media. But does the pattern occur in reverse? Are there any examples of Australian names or naming fashions that influence the American name stock? In fact there is only one name popular in the United States which I could trace directly to Australia and that name is *Kylie*. *Kylie* was a very popular name in the 70s but has now gone out of fashion in Australia. In the United States, however, the name gained ground at the same time as it was losing popularity in Australia. In the 70s it crept into the 1,000 most popular names at number 991, was twice as popular in the 80s at 421, and last year it had reached number 104. Its popularity outside Australia is almost certainly due to the influence of Australian actress and singer Kylie Minogue.

We see, then, that apart from the rare exception, taking over names and naming fashions is not reciprocal. In the list of the top 30 female names in Sydney in 1997 (Table 1) there are 6 names which are obviously American-influenced. However, even looking at the top 100 names in the United States of the same year there are no examples of Australian names (even *Kylie* did not reach the top 100). Although these are national differences and not socio-economic ones, we are reminded of the model of vertical diffusion discussed earlier. The penetration of American popular culture into Australian

naming patterns but not vice versa shows that global influence seems to be largely a one-way affair.

5. Conclusion

To conclude, we can say that the name stock in urban Australia is still largely composed of traditional Anglo names, such as *Emma*, *Matthew* and *James*. New trends, however, such as the surname and place-name fashions tend to be American. Not all name-givers are aware, of course, of where the name they choose comes from. The fact alone that the name *Montana* is chosen by Australian parents does not necessarily mean that parents identify with the American state. They may not even know it is the name of an American state. Whether parents actively identify with the culture of origin or not is irrelevant compared to the fact that the name has penetrated the Australian name stock.

Names used in Australia's very diverse ethnic communities rarely penetrate mainstream naming patterns. On the contrary, depending on the ethnic group they tend to die out within two generations. The only names in my corpus that were obviously adopted from a non-Anglo culture by Anglo-Australians were the handful of Aboriginal names (e.g. *Kirra*) and French ones (e.g. *Oceanne*). Here we see some evidence of native culture touching upon the imposed Anglo culture, as well as of French global influence. The French language remains, overall, the most commonly studied foreign language at schools (Clyne, 123) and things French carry a certain amount of prestige. (However, one informant mentioned that her mother wanted to name her *Claire* but changed the spelling to *Clare* after the French began nuclear testing in the Pacific!) In any case, French influence on mainstream Australian naming patterns, like Aboriginal influence, is slight.

The main findings of this paper can be summarised as follows:

- Among ethnic minority groups we see evidence of acculturation rather than globalisation.
- Personal naming patterns in the Sydney region reveal two dominant influences in Australian society: British heritage, and increasingly – and non-reciprocally – American popular culture. The onomastic evidence presented in this paper allows us to conclude that today globalisation does indeed equal Americanisation.

References

1998 *Top 100 NSW Baby Names Book*. New South Wales Registry of Births Deaths and Marriages, 1999.

Besnard, Philippe. "Pour une étude empirique du phénomène de mode dans la consommation des biens symboliques : le cas des prénoms." *Archives Européennes de Sociologie* 20.1 (1979): 343-51.

Besnard, Philippe, and Cyril Grange. "La fin de la diffusion verticale des goûts? (Prénoms de l'élite et du vulgum)." *L'Année sociologique* 43 (1993): 269-94.

Campbell, Mike. *Behind the Name: The Etymology and History of First Names*. <www.behindthename.com>. 1 Aug. 2001.

Chevalier, Sarah. "What's in a Name: Family Naming Practices." *Australian Style* 9.1 (2001): 1-2.

Chulov, Martin, and Daniel Dasey. "Jessica and Joshua are Tops." *Sydney Morning Herald* (28 Dec. 1997): 2.

Clark, Manning. *A Short History of Australia*. Fourth revised edition. Ringwood, Victoria: Penguin Books, 1995.

Clyne, Michael G. *Community Languages: The Australian Experience*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Cutler, Anne, James McQueen, and Ken Robinson. "Elizabeth and John: Sound Patterns of Men's and Women's Names." *Journal of Linguistics* 26.2 (1990): 471-82.

Date, Margot. "All Brontes: Babes and Beach." *Sydney Morning Herald* (27 Dec. 1993): 1.

Guide des prénoms, Le. <www.prenoms.com>. 1 Aug. 2001.

Hanks, Patrick, and Flavia Hodges. *A Dictionary of Surnames*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

———. *A Dictionary of First Names*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.

Lieberson, Stanley. "Reply to Philippe Besnard." *American Journal of Sociology* 100.5 (1995): 1317-25.

Lieberson, Stanley, and Eleanor O. Bell. "Children's First Names: An Empirical Study of Social Taste." *American Journal of Sociology* 98.3 (1992): 511-54.

Morgan, Jane, Christopher O'Neill, and Rom Harré. *Nicknames: Their Origins and Social Consequences*. London, Boston and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979.

National Statistics: The Official UK Statistics Site. <www.statistics.gov.uk>.

20 May 2001.

Poynton, Cate McKean. "Address and the Semiotics of Social Relations: A Systemic-Functional Account of Address Forms and Practices in Australian English." (Diss.). University of Sydney, 1990.

Rosenkrantz, Linda, and Pamela Redmond Satran. *Beyond Jennifer and Jason, Madison and Montana: What to Name Your Baby Now*. New York: St. Martin Griffins, 1999.

Wolfe, Tom. *The Bonfire of the Vanities*. New York: Bantam Books, 1987.

_____. *A Man in Full*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1998.

Withycombe, Elizabeth Gidley. *The Oxford Dictionary of English Christian Names*. Revised edition. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1948.