

Introduction

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It is often argued that Australian multiculturalism as a public policy has never been explained. This is quite untrue, but it remains true that changes of emphasis between governments of different persuasions have created a confusing impression. Different usages of the term in various European and North American democracies have added to this confusion. However, Australia has good claims, along with Canada, of having developed and implemented a coherent set of policies over a period of almost forty years. A range of public and private institutions has taken part in this process. What is still lacking is a widespread understanding of the ethnic, cultural and linguistic changes which have occurred in Australia during this period. Partly this reflects the fact that multicultural interactions are largely confined to metropolitan areas (in which the majority of Australians live), a few provincial cities, and irrigation and mining districts. They have only marginally impacted on the provincial and rural districts on which so much of the 'myths' of Australia continue to rest. They have also been resisted by many established politicians, bureaucrats, academics and business leaders who still conceptualise Australia as an homogenous and uniform society, as it largely was in the era in which they grew up.

A diverse world

Multiculturalism is a term which has been used and disputed for four decades in various democracies in Europe, North America and Australasia. It refers essentially to political systems based on liberal democratic principles. There have been many other systems in many parts of the world which recognize ethnic variety – the Russian Federation, India and former Yugoslavia being examples. However these have usually dealt with ethnic variety by federation, where each ethnic community has its own political institutions and geographical boundaries. Multiculturalism as practised in Australia, Canada or Sweden, is essentially intended for mixed populations created by international migration. These are typically found in major cities living together but having different origins, religions, languages and other aspects of distinct cultures.

The typical multicultural situation is one where there is a dominant ethnicity, usually based on early settlers, although these might also contain Indigenous or earlier communities such as Roma, Welsh, Aborigines or Maori. The dominant ethnicity has typically seen itself as a 'founding nation' even when others have been established in the modern territory for much longer but in smaller

numbers. This is obviously the situation in Australia, where 'Europeans' (in effect from the British Isles) have only formed the majority since the 1830s, or over most of North America below the Arctic Circle.

The 'founding nation' through its control of the instruments of government, education and the economy, has historically defined the characteristics of the nation as a whole, including its language, its religion, its 'way of life' and its sense of superiority. However mass immigration by others may well challenge this status or, alternatively, be expected to conform to its values, institutions and practices. In liberal democracies, of course, the domination of the 'founding nation' is justified in terms of voting majorities. These determine the social institutions, practices and attitudes. Others may be excluded from the franchise, as were many Afro-Americans in the southern US, Jews in Nazi Germany or Africans in South Africa.

The need for multiculturalism was not strongly felt in most liberal democracies until after the Second World War. Prior to that, and especially after the First World War, empires began to break up into component parts based on the Wilsonian notion of self-determination. This was enshrined in the principles of the League of Nations and, after 1945, the United Nations. The result to date has been the creation of two hundred sovereign states, each one with the legal and constitutional status of all other nation states. Yet even these units are not ethnically uniform. On the contrary, there are very few states which do not contain ethnic variety within them. As population migration continues despite borders and legal obstacles, this variety also increases. States which broke away from others in the past now face the danger of lesser ethnic groups breaking away from them. The most obvious recent case has been in Yugoslavia. The alternative to such a breakdown has been to devolve power to ethnic groups on a quasi-federal basis. In recent years once unitary states such as the United Kingdom and Spain have chosen this solution. India is the largest state in the world to devolve authority on a linguistic basis, creating new states where there is a political demand for them. It works well except in the state of Kashmir, where the Muslim religion is more important than language.

Well-established states do not favour total defection and may fight to prevent it, as the UK has done in Northern Ireland. States which are ethnically diverse but do not have distinct concentrations of minorities on which a viable unit could be built, may turn to multiculturalism as a solution. But this is not universal and many liberal democracies, including the United States, Germany, France and Denmark, have specifically rejected this approach, even while adopting some of its practices. In Australia there are no distinctive population concentrations large and developed enough to form the base of a viable state. All component states and territories of the Commonwealth have a mixed population with Anglo-Australians dominant. In the United States and Canada there are states which

are ethnically distinct. That is not the basis on which their original boundaries were drawn, except for the newly created Nunavut area of northern Canada. Indigenous North Americans (First Nations) all have claims on territories and exercise some authority within them. But apart from Canada these do not constitute self-government.

The multicultural political solution to ethnic diversity is, then, not universal. But some aspects of multiculturalism are found in many societies which have not adopted it as a national policy; in particular, many cities with large immigrant populations have adopted welfare services, interpreting systems, school curricula, grants to organisations and religions, and festivals. Looking at the policies of cities and provinces in Germany, France or the United States will show close resemblances to those in Australia, Sweden, Canada or Britain. Indeed, while Britain is not officially multicultural at the national level, its local government authorities are legally obliged to foster policies and practices that cater for their multi-ethnic populations. The opposite trend may also be true, where second rank authorities impose restrictions, as with the English-only policy adopted by many American States. In Switzerland, a multicultural society with power largely devolved to cantons, the building of minarets at mosques was forbidden by a majority referendum, and many other issues are also decided this way. Apart from local variety, multiculturalism is usually sustained by legal provisions protecting minorities from discrimination. These are endorsed in detail by the European Union and the government of the United States, mainly in response to the civil rights campaign of the 1960s.

While Australia insists on preserving English as its only official language and rigorously subscribes to the equal treatment of all religions (s.116 of the Constitution) this is no longer very common in the rest of the world. Most nation states recognise or give official status to a variety of languages, with the largest choice being in India and South Africa. Others giving multiple official choices include the majority of recently colonial societies, with English and French a common official or second language throughout Africa, English in the Pacific and Russian in central Asia. Second languages, usually on a regional basis, are recognised legally in the United Kingdom, Switzerland, Finland, Belgium, Spain, Russia, Canada, Peru, Bolivia, Sri Lanka, New Zealand, Singapore and Malaysia, among others. The outstanding exceptions, the United States, Australia, Germany, France, Greece, Turkey and Pakistan, for example, are by no means monolingual. Australian public policy has funded English language classes for immigrants since 1947, has a state owned multilingual broadcasting system and issues public notices in sixteen languages. Even in the United States, in response to court rulings, voting information is published in Chinese and other languages where there is a significant number of voters using a language other than English.

State support for religion is also quite common. It ranges from the official Protestant churches of England, Scotland, Germany and the Scandinavian states, to public funding for religious schools. This has reached a level of catering for one third of pupils in Australia and is not limited to Christian schools, as in many other states.

What is multiculturalism?

The whole world is multicultural and many states – democratic or authoritarian – make some provision for cultural variety and the needs of minorities. Despite this, multiculturalism under that name has been highly controversial and is currently said to be in retreat, even where it has been officially adopted. In Australia national public policy has moved away from ‘multiculturalism’ to ‘integration’ while most State and Territory governments continue their programmes unchanged. In Europe there has been a positive ‘backlash’¹. These changes have been reflected in party politics in most liberal democracies.

Multiculturalism as an ideology and a public policy has most enthusiastically been copied by the liberal and social democratic side of party politics – the Canadian Liberals, the Swedish and other Scandinavian social democrats, British Labour, the Australian and New Zealand labour parties, and the Greens. Most of these have recently suffered electoral defeats or a reduction in their support and cohesion. In Europe democratic socialist governments are now confined to Norway, Spain, Portugal and Greece. In Australia, New Zealand, Switzerland, France, Denmark, the Netherlands, Britain and even Sweden, conservative parties critical of multiculturalism have recently been victorious. Even more importantly, extreme parties have made considerable progress although they have usually been excluded from government. This has not been the case in Australia, where One Nation reached its peak in the 1990s and then disappeared. However some of its attitudes were taken over by the Liberal-National Coalition under John Howard (1996-2007).

Partisan and electoral support for multiculturalism has weakened in most liberal democracies and has always been contested in the United States. It has never been officially endorsed in Germany or France. There are several reasons for this resistance:

- the collision between liberal democracy and Islamic fundamentalism as evidenced by terrorist attacks in various cities in the new century;

1 Vertovec, S and Wessendorf, S (eds) (2010). *The Multiculturalism Backlash*, Routledge, London.

- resistance to continuing, increasing and frequently uncontrolled immigration from poorer societies, especially from Africa, the Middle East, South Asia and Latin America;
- economic and social problems which social democracy has failed to solve;
- poverty and social dislocation in some concentrations of immigrants and refugees;
- a perception that the distinct civilisations and cultures built on a European basis are losing their pre-eminence;
- rapidly changing social structures and belief systems which creates anxiety.

The significance of these varies from time to time and place to place. Religious objections to Islam are less powerful in secular societies, including Australia, than in the United States where there are strong movements to reassert the 'Judeo-Christian' inheritance. Fears of terrorism are probably less significant where there has been none within the society, as in Australia, New Zealand, Switzerland or Scandinavia. Extreme anti-immigrant parties vary in strength considerably and this is not related to economic conditions; the concept of national culture may be more rigorously adhered to in some societies (such as Denmark or France) than in others (such as Australia or other immigrant societies). However judgement of some of these influences is often subjective and influenced by partisan loyalties. Eruptions of anti-immigrant feeling and attacks on multiculturalism are not always predictable. The sudden rise and equally rapid fall of One Nation in Australia is but one example. The rapid shift to extreme positions in the Netherlands, prompted by individual acts of terror, was even more spectacular and longer lasting.

What, then, is the multiculturalism which has provoked such opposition and led to such major political shifts? The classic Australian definition is contained in the Galbally report of 1978 (*Migrant Services and Programs*). While this was presented to the Prime Minister, Australian multiculturalism has always been concerned with immigrants and has remained within the Immigration portfolio for most of the past thirty years. This is not the case in Canada, where policy rests with the Department of Canadian Heritage, or in most other states which have adopted the term. In Europe it is common for immigration to be allocated to the Department of Justice (or equivalent). In Britain immigration and multiculturalism were the responsibility of the Home Office through the Commission for Racial Equality, but were later transferred to the Local Government Department as the Commission for Integration and Cohesion.

The Australian definition of 1978 stressed the delivery of services to non-English-speaking background migrants (NESB):

- migrants have the right to maintain their culture and racial identity... provided that ethnic identity is not stressed at the expense of society at large;
- the development of a multicultural society will benefit all Australians;
- the most significant and appropriate bodies to be involved in the preservation and fostering of cultures are the ethnic organisations themselves.

Four guiding principles were laid down²:

1. all members of our society must have equal opportunity to realise their full potential and must have equal access to programs and services;
2. every person should be able to maintain his or her culture without prejudice or disadvantage
3. needs of migrants should, in general be met by programs and services available to the whole community but special services and programs are necessary at present;
4. services and programs should be designed and operated in full consultation with clients, and self-help should be encouraged as much as possible with a view to helping migrants to become self-reliant quickly.

The *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* of 1988³ concentrated on four areas:

1. combating racism and discrimination;
2. ensuring that the Government of Canada represents the country's diverse population;
3. promoting shared citizenship –making sure that all Canadians feel part of Canada;
4. cross-cultural understanding.

These two classic definitions of multiculturalism start from different premises and move in different directions. Canada has been a bicultural (Anglophone/Francophone) society for three centuries. Australia had just ended an immigration policy (White Australia) which preserved its monocultural character. Most of its NESB migrants had come as Displaced Persons in need of welfare and language services. The new intake from southern Europe was starting to organise and demand greater services from a more sympathetic state. While this was also happening in Canada, the long-term perspective there was that cultural differences would endure. The Australian expectation was that they

2 Galbally, F (chair) (1978). *Migrant Services and Programs*, AGPS, Canberra: 4.

3 *Annual Report on the Operation of the Canadian Multiculturalism Act*; Ottawa, 2002 Cat no. Ci95-1/2002.

would fade but should be endorsed while they lasted. Both agreed that their societies were moving from a monocultural (Australia) or bicultural (Canada) form to a multicultural one. At this pioneering stage Canadians were more willing to accept this than were many Australians. But in both societies political leadership on these issues was bipartisan. Neither had much experience with non-Europeans or with non-Christians until the 1980s.

Aims and content of the volume

Against this background, this volume represents the first substantial results of an interdisciplinary project conducted by the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia, with funding from the Australian Research Council under its learned Academies Special Projects scheme (LASP)⁴. The Academy took a leading role in the early days of multicultural studies in the 1970s, but this has not been evenly developed by the appropriate academic disciplines. This project, entitled *Multiculturalism and Integration – a Harmonious Relationship*, brings together scholars from the disciplines of demography, geography, history, linguistics, political philosophy, political science, psychology and sociology. They are based at seven universities. It goes beyond the usual descriptive work on immigration to look at issues such as population distribution, language usage and adaptation, public attitudes, integration and incorporation and demographic change.

The background to the project is the current concern with social cohesion and national integration. In most Western democracies there has been an increase in academic work on terrorism, Islam, immigration and refugees. Governments have often sponsored these studies, but they are fragmented and of varying quality. Cultural diversity was once a very important interdisciplinary area in Australia which contributed to policy formation and also to Australia's status in the field. This work has tended to be run down in recent years. The object of the Project is to encourage its revitalisation so that policy is informed by local research and collaborative work. Much research emanates from North America or the European Union and is not always relevant to Australia although it has been consulted. Most chapters are supported by substantial statistical and diagrammatic information. This study is concerned with Australian multiculturalism, rather than with the many alternative formulations and policies adopted in other democracies.

This volume is dedicated to the memory of two eminent scholars who were pioneers in the field of migrant and multicultural studies. They paved the way for understanding the kind of Australia we have today.

4 Project 10 LS0800003.

The ANU demographer Dr Charles Price, AM (1920-2009) is well known for studies of people of different backgrounds. These indicate both a more diverse and a more integrated society. He also wrote many studies on Germans, Italians, Greeks, Maltese, 'Slavs', Jews, Chinese and other groups at a time when such studies were rare. For several years in the 1950s and 1960s he published bibliographies and digests on Australian immigration, keeping a tab on the state of a small but growing field. He was often the first port of call for graduate students, new scholars and visiting academics, providing excellent advice and networking nationally and internationally.

The ANU sociologist and demographer, Professor Jerzy (George) Zubrzycki, AM (1920-2009), is often credited with being the 'father' of Australian multiculturalism. His rejection of the assimilationist and monocultural attitudes, which greeted those arriving in the post-war migration boom, reflected his own experiences as a new arrival from Poland by way of Britain and the London School of Economics. He embodied and demonstrated the importance of the link between research and policy. His role on the Australian Ethnic Affairs Council, the Immigration Advisory Council, and especially the National Multicultural Affairs Council was essential, as most of these were still dominated by native-born Australians. He was a central figure in the research-focused Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs between 1979 and 1986 and served on the committee which developed the latest multicultural agenda in 1999.

Professor Zubrzycki saw Australia as offering the world a harmonious model for migrant integration, in which cultural and economic rights were respected. His published work included studies of Polish migration to Australia and elsewhere. His two classics were *Settlers of the Latrobe Valley* (1964) and *The Foreign Language Press in Australia* (1967, with Miriam Gilson).

Exact contemporaries, Price and Zubrzycki had quite different backgrounds. But both saw the multicultural future of Australia more clearly than many of their colleagues at the time. Both left a major legacy of academic work without parallel in the early post-war decades.

All the contributors focus on the complementarity of multiculturalism and integration in Australia. This needs to be done because of the attempts by the Howard government (1996-2007) to wipe the multicultural slate clean by substituting integration, as though it were opposite and superior. In practice the two go together. The debate centred on 'values' was a transparent attempt to isolate Muslims as 'unAustralian', which was both unfair and not sensible in terms of maintaining social harmony. Certainly Muslims have a longer road to travel than, say, Irish or Dutch migrants. James Jupp examines the religious aspect of multiculturalism, which has become increasingly important in the last decade.

Migrants become 'acculturated' in the sense of learning English (which many from Asia know already), by enjoying the delights of an affluent society, perhaps by calling their children Wayne and Kylie. But they speak their own language in the home, attend their own churches, mosques and temples, prefer soccer to rugby league or Australian rules, and keep an 'ethnic' kitchen. They can also maintain links with the original homeland much more easily than in the past, through frequent and relatively cheap flights and mobile phones. Many even maintain a resting place for visits to their home villages and relatives. In a major study of locations, Graeme Hugo sets the scene.

The book follows with an overview by James Jupp of Australian policies on assimilation, integration and multiculturalism. This opens the section devoted to political ideology and public attitudes.

Immigration and ethnic relationships are highly politicised and have led to major wars and revolutions over the past century. While these are unlikely in Australia, social tensions can arise which need amelioration, and individual problems need some assistance from public agencies. The Australian immigration system depends very heavily on selection by government agencies and on settlement through public intervention. Both of these centre on a distinct department of immigration. The whole process is political and determined by ideological views on the nature of the nation state. This is explored from the viewpoint of political philosophy by Geoffrey Brahm Levey.

The complex and sometimes contradictory world of public opinion, which is so important in a democracy, is analysed by Andrew Markus, who has already completed a major opinion study in Melbourne on which his analysis is based. His study of social cohesion among people of differing ethnic origins in suburbs with different demographic backgrounds is rare among Australian social scientists.

The relationship between multiculturalism and integration is followed through from the viewpoints of demography, language and religion. Siew-ean Khoo looks at the often neglected area of intermarriage and the second generation. It is usually assumed that 'problems' arise in the migrant generation or because of marriage within an ethnic or religious community. Her studies show that, as elsewhere, the processes of family building frequently involve the crossing of cultural boundaries. Nor is it self-evident that this creates serious tensions in the resulting children.

Christine Inglis examines the problems and successes of youth in a multicultural world, most of whom have a strong sense of Australian identity but may not be fully accepted by their peers.

Kim Kirsner offers a model for testing the relationship between fluency in language and integration. So many 'New Australians' in the post-war period only acquired a limited proficiency in English. While the state provided English teaching from 1947, this did not solve the problem because of shortage of resources or limited teaching skills. It was not that migrants did not want to learn, as critics often claimed, but that they could not do so and make a living at the same time.

Michael Clyne focuses on the relationship between English and migrant language in Australia. This includes integration of English elements into migrant languages, the differential shift from those languages to English, the geographical distribution of these languages, bilingualism and English proficiency and the changing fate of language policy in Australia.

Reg Appleyard draws on his four-decades-long longitudinal study of a group of imported brides from Greece and their descendants, describing how the families have participated both in multiculturalism and integration. The women arrived in Australia as part of an official plan to avoid the 'un-Australian' practice of proxy brides. Young Greek women were brought to Australia so they could marry single Greek men but this, of course, created families dedicated to maintaining Greek culture – one of the many contradictions in the official attempts to mould others to Australian ways. In their own time and in their own way, these families adopted those aspects of the affluent suburban life which suited them. Links with Greece and the Greek community are maintained, although the narrow village-based clubs have declined. Very high numbers of the children proceed to university, despite the rural and often illiterate backgrounds of their recent ancestors – integrated but not assimilated in the crude sense so popular in the 1950s.

Multicultural policy has passed through several stages, corresponding to differing waves of migration. The earliest emphasis was on language in three senses – learning English, maintaining the community language and access to translating and interpreting. Migrants were classified into Non-English-Speaking Background (NESB) and Main English Speakers (MES), until the new division of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) was coined by the Howard government in 1996 and slowly adopted. With the final ending of the White Australia Policy in 1973, migrants could no longer aim at being 'like everybody else' as they were urged to do throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Not only did they not look like everybody else, but they had different religions, (including different varieties of Christianity) spoke non-European languages and came from societies which were often much poorer and oppressive than Australia.

Prejudice was revealed by One Nation in 1996, and the Cronulla rioters in 2005 when thousands waving Australian flags attacked a small number of people 'of Middle Eastern Appearance' at a Sydney beach. Despite this, 'CALD' newcomers fitted comfortably into the structures, practices and attitudes created by past generations. They joined actively in multicultural organisations as well as enjoying suburban affluence, just like their European predecessors. The monument to multiculturalism is simply that much of this would have been much more difficult if the changes of the 1970s and 1980s had not happened, or had been repudiated by national and state governments.

The world is multicultural and so are the great majority of 'nation states' that make up the international community. As each state differs in some respects from others this naturally means that multicultural policies and practices will differ. Even with considerable interchange of ideas within the English-speaking world there is no identical model of multiculturalism. In some respects the European social democracies such as Sweden or The Netherlands have been closer in policy terms than the United States. The factors which have recently impacted on harmonious social relations are particularly varied. They include controlled immigration programmes (Australia, Canada, New Zealand); regionally based minorities (Canada, Spain, Switzerland); religious variety (Germany, Switzerland, Netherlands); unplanned migrant arrivals (United States, Italy, United Kingdom); large scale Islamic migration (France, Germany) and so on. Each set of circumstances creates different responses.

Yet there are some similarities that are relevant to Australia. These include a growing Muslim population; the unplanned arrival of refugees; the existence of socially disadvantaged Indigenous peoples; politically focused criticism of changing populations; and a concept of the nation state which privileges some cultural groups and individuals above others. Even quite small changes in the 'ethnic balance' may provoke strong reactions in a society which has been sheltered from foreign occupation or warfare on its own territory and authoritarian or revolutionary politics.

In this context multiculturalism is a manifestation of liberal democracy based on mutual tolerance and co-operation. It does not validate cultural attitudes which are incompatible with these objectives but neither does it glorify Australian culture above all others. Indeed it argues that Australian culture is in a constant state of flux, as befits a society built on successive waves of immigration. Within those changes it has always been liberal-democratic and based on elected responsible government. This implies a high degree of freedom of expression, belief, worship and political competition.