The Politics of Migration Multiculturalism in Australia, Japan, and Malaysia

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The world has seen a dramatic increase in immigration levels towards settler countries like the United States, Canada, and Australia. Such levels of immigration are likely to exacerbate the multicultural concerns of states and societies in the world. Migration multiculturalism is the focus of this paper. It looks at the way that migration impacts upon the cultural diversity of many communities today. Does migration multiculturalism pose a serious challenge to the development of society? Does migration multiculturalism represent a threat upon states to foster a singular and coherent national community? States have become the primary gatekeepers to determine who gets to enter and stay as well as be entitled to citizenship rights. Looking at the conditions of multiculturalism in Australia, Japan, and Malaysia, the paper argues that destination countries are grappling with the problematique of how their states will reconstitute their respective societies given the increasing influx of other Asians and non-Whites as well as the reality of their declining fertility rates and the need to transform their economies to maintain overall competitiveness in the global market.

> Free institutions are next to impossible in a country made up of different nationalities. Among a people without fellow-feeling, especially if they read and speak different languages, the united public opinion, necessary to the working of representative government, cannot exist.
>
> *John Stuart Mill*
> *Considerations on Representative Government*
> *1861*

Multiculturalism is about diversity, not division — it is about interaction not isolation. It is about cultural and ethnic differences set within a framework of shared fundamental

values which enables them to co-exist on a complementary
rather than competitive basis. It involves respect for the
law and for our democratic institutions and processes.
Insisting upon a core area of common values is no threat to
multiculturalism but its guarantee, for it provides the
minimal conditions on which the well-being of all is secured.

Malcolm Fraser
Former Prime Minister of Australia
30 November 1981

Introduction

At the most basic level, there can be two different but equally compelling
views of multiculturalism. One sees multiculturalism either as a challenge (at its
best) and a threat (at its worst) to the state. The other sees multiculturalism as an
opportunity and a boon for society. One looks upon multiculturalism as divisive.
The other welcomes diversity. On the one hand, multiculturalism poses a threat to
social cohesion and "the primacy of the nation" (Wright, 2009, p. 8). The "threat"
upon the state and society that emanates from multiculturalism is that the granting
of multicultural rights undermines the sense of loyalty to the nation as determined
by the state. In not a few cases, the undermining is blamed upon immigrants and
newcomers who either find it difficult or refuse to be assimilated. In other cases,
multicultural policies are also faulted for breaking down the national consensus
and widening cultural divides (Wright, 2009). The collapse of long-standing
regimes has led to the emergence of simmering ethnic / religious rivalries such as
in Somalia as well as the former Yugoslavia and Soviet Union. On the other hand,
it can also be argued that a multicultural perspective can narrow these cultural
divides, i.e., provide the basis for unity in diversity – *e pluribus unum*. The
recognition of tolerance, and respect for differences can create a condition where
all members feel appreciated and comfortable in the midst of a larger community.
Minorities will not feel threatened and will have no reason to be assertive that
often leads to intolerance, tensions, and conflicts between cultural communities
(Wright, 2009). What these two views illustrate is that multiculturalism has emerged
as one of the key questions of the present millennium for both societies and states.

Multiculturalism has been compounded by migration. The world has also seen a dramatic increase in immigration levels towards settler countries like the United States, Canada, and Australia. Such levels of immigration are likely to exacerbate the multicultural concerns of states and societies in the world (Castles and Miller, 2003). Moreover, the increasingly recognized problem of low fertility rates among the native-born in many developed areas making large-scale immigration (particularly from the world's less-developed and high-fertility areas) a key aspect of their continued survival and prosperity indicates the growing challenge of multiculturalism in these places which must be confronted directly by both their respective states and societies (Wright, 2009). The growing cultural diversity brought about by immigrant flows in many places of the world adds to the complexity of the challenge. At the same time, assertions of identity and religious / moral ascendancy by certain groups concretely manifested in the events of 9/11 have led to an insecure social and political environment. Globalization and the end of the Cold War have caused the resurgence and an intensification of ethnic or nationalist movements for self-determination. Moreover, the increasing importance attached to an international human rights regime that values the collective rights of minorities has also "strengthened the legitimacy of ethnic minorities' claims for self-determination" (Koenig and Guchteneire, 2007, p. 8; Tsutsui, 2004). In a world that has become globally integrated at every level, where immigration flows take place at unprecedented levels, and cultural and political landscapes have changed (and continue to change) dramatically as a result of immigration, "the question of how to achieve civility and inclusive citizenship in deeply plural societies is today a near-universal one" (Hefner, 2001, p. 4). Cultural diversity is the norm. "The 'average country' has about five ethnic groups that are larger than 1% of the population, with half of the world's countries having between 3 and 6 such groups" (Fearon, 2002, p. 16).

> [A]bout 70% of the countries in the world have an ethnic group that forms an absolute majority of the population, although the average population share of such groups is only 65%, and only 18% of countries are *homogenous* in the weak sense of having a group that claims 9 out of 10 residents" (Emphasis not mine. Fearon, 2002, p. 17).

It is now difficult to find a place in the world "that is not the site of some significant controversy over whether and how its public institutions should better recognize the identities of cultural and disadvantaged minorities" (Gutmann, 1994, p. 3).

This paper looks at the way that migration leads to the condition of multiculturalism in selected destination areas. The way that migration impacts upon the cultural diversity of many communities today is referred to in this paper as migration multiculturalism. Migration can affect the degree of cultural diversity in a polity and vice versa. The in-migration of a cultural group can complicate the sense of cultural homogeneity of a society. At the same time, the forced out-migration of a specific cultural group out of a polity can be the result of tensions and conflicts brought about by the persecution of a particular culture or cultural group. In turn, the paper examines how this migration multiculturalism impacts on states and societies. Does migration multiculturalism pose a serious challenge to the development of society? Does migration multiculturalism represent a threat upon states to foster a singular and coherent national community? This paper intends to respond to these questions by critically interrogating the notion and practice of political multiculturalism in three countries – Australia, Japan, and Malaysia. Interrogating the politics of multiculturalism looks at the ways in which the state is able to maintain social cohesion in the midst of migration multiculturalism through the effective use of policy. Ethnicity and culture are treated as synonymous terminologies in this paper. Both refer collectively to practices, traditions, and beliefs exercised and emanating from a distinct group or community which may or may not comprise the numerical majority in society. Political multiculturalism refers essentially to ethnicity-affirming policies. Wright (2009) defines political multiculturalism as "specific government policies designed to help minorities maintain their specific cultures and practices while at the same time integrating them into public life" (Wright, 2009, p. 6). Policies that are culture-affirming include acts against racism, the allocation of public funds to encourage and preserve cultural practices as well as fiscal incentives for minority groups.

Why look at the state in relation to migration multiculturalism? The politics of multiculturalism is such that (since the 15th century) states have become the primary gatekeepers to determine who gets to enter and stay as well as be entitled to citizenship rights. Over the centuries, states have come to understand the polities within their jurisdictions as singular nations. The traditional conception was that of mono-culturalism and the one-to-one correspondence between society/nation and the state was the norm, i.e., that the territory where the state is sovereign is one that must be culturally and linguistically homogenous. For obvious reasons, this condition is no longer the case; in fact, it is being challenged in many settler areas today. Why look at the three countries? The discourse on political multiculturalism in the case countries observed in this paper is more nuanced compared to North America and Western Europe, partly due to their respective colonial experiences. Australia and Malaysia are members of the British Commonwealth. Japan once occupied Korea and Taiwan. As will be made evident in the discussions below, the colonial experiences of these countries have in many ways created the conditions for migration multiculturalism to unravel, compelling the states to examine questions that address the matter of cultural accommodation in the midst of diverse cultures. Countries have been heavily influenced by the state's "national and founding myths" which are codified in their respective citizenship and nationality laws and immigration regulations (Hollifield, 2009, p. 210). Australia, Malaysia, and Japan are, no doubt, grounded in such myths in varying degrees, making the examination of the nexus between multiculturalism and immigration all the more compelling.

Multiculturalism Defined

Multiculturalism embraces the principle of diversity, openness, and tolerance. The concept represents a complex set of other ideas and principles.

> Multiculturalism is a system of beliefs and behaviors that
> recognizes and respects the presence of all diverse groups in
> an organization or society, acknowledges and values their socio-

cultural differences, and encourages and enables their continued contribution within an inclusive cultural context which empowers all within the organization or society (Underscoring not mine. Rosado, 1996, p. 2).

As it is about "beliefs and behaviors" Rosado's definition of multiculturalism above takes into account the importance of norms that are actually the motivators for behavior. Consistent with this understanding, Joppke posits that multiculturalism can have several dimensions – as a challenge (or threat?) to the homogeneity of nationhood; as an ideal and a quest for the recognition and equal treatment of "historically disadvantaged and discriminated groups in society" or minorities; and "as a generalized form of anti-colonial discourse and struggle" (Joppke, 1996, p. 450). These dimensions readily convey a challenge to the fixed and limited nation-state concept. A key element of multiculturalism is the recognition of diversity. Parekh specifies three types of diversity – subcultural, perspectival, and communal. Subcultural diversity is where the members of society "broadly share their society's spaces for their society's dominant system of meaning and values and seek to carve out within it spaces for their divergent lifestyles. They do not represent an alternative culture but seek to pluralize the existing one." Perspectival diversity is when "some members of society are highly critical of some of the central principles or values of the prevailing culture and seek to reconstitute it along appropriate lines." Communal diversity is when societies "also include several self-conscious and more or less well-organized communities entertaining and living by their own different systems of beliefs and practices" (Parekh, 2000, p. 3). Multiculturalism is generally used to refer to a society that exhibits all three as well as other kinds of diversity (Parekh, 2000, p. 4).

Gutmann (1994) posits that multiculturalism has conventionally been seen as an endemic problem in liberal societies. Liberalism was thought to run contrary to multiculturalism – the former emphasized the individual while the latter emphasized the group or community.

> ... it was widely assumed that liberalism, by definition, was
> hostile to any ideas of multiculturalism or minority rights, since
> liberalism rested on 'individualistic' premises whereas
> multiculturalism reflected 'communitarian' values (Kymlicka,
> n.d., p. 40).

However, the reality is that political multiculturalism (by way of ethnicity-asserting policies) has become the norm in many liberal societies especially in the West. Indeed, political multiculturalism has become the *sine qua non* for liberal societies establishing the term liberal multiculturalism as a "short-hand" for practices that facilitate the empowerment of minorities.

> [These] include a wide range of policies relating to many
> different kinds of ethno-cultural diversity — from
> accommodation rights for immigrants, to official language
> status and regional autonomy for sub-state nationalist groups,
> to land claims and self-government rights for indigenous
> peoples (Kymlicka, n.d., p. 40).

This paper argues that the way that states in supposedly liberal societies have responded to the challenges of migration multiculturalism is that of undertaking more illiberal or restrictive policies which refer broadly to practices that restrict the engagements of minorities, including indefinite detention of third-country nationals, border controls, and serious impediments to acquire citizenship rights and entitlements. While some kind of liberal multiculturalism may be evident in the three cases, the norm has been that of illiberal or restrictive multiculturalism. It is also important to understand at this point that cultures are not fixed and absolute. In this context, immigrants and immigrant communities have a *modernizing* potential as they "fight for equality and equal treatment" in the society they are a part of. This situation implies that the cultural integration project is often inherent in political multiculturalism. As a normative stance, multiculturalism can have a positive or negative connotation. On the one hand, it can invoke a sense of tolerance and the right of minorities to maintain

their cultural identity and their right to equal treatment and access. On the other hand, it can connote a more negative view or agenda in the sense that it "threatens" the homogeneity of society and puts those in the *minority* in a position of vulnerability relative to the *majority*. In its negative context, "the term represents a recipe for the destruction of national identity and the breakdown of social cohesion" (Vertovec & Wessendorf, 2004, p. 3).

The Politics of Migration Multiculturalism

While it can be said that migration affects only a small percentage of the world's total population, there are also compelling reasons why the phenomenon must be taken seriously from the perspectives of political multiculturalism and migration multiculturalism. Globally, there are about 125 million migrants – less than 1 percent of the world's total population of 6.7 billion. This would indicate that the greater majority of the people in the world are sedentary. In contrast, the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) estimated that there were 880 million international tourists worldwide generating around US$ 852 billion in export earnings. International migration phenomena provoke "a sense of crisis" whether from a sending or receiving area perspective (Hollifield, 2008, pp. 185-186). In anthropological terms, it might be called a fear of "the other" and would, thus, fuel a certain degree of xenophobia and fear of an unknown. It can also be argued that migration places a serious strain on a country's resources (economic and social) and may be perceived as a threat to existing national institutions (language, culture, and religion). There is a fear that migrants will become a burden to the state. In sending areas, migration can be seen as a drain in precious human resources. Migration also represents a threat on the integrity and capacity of the state to determine who gets to enter and leave and the need to protect borders. International migration is often conflated with other issues and concerns such as integration, diversity, tolerance, and multiculturalism; citizenship and identity; and security and border protection. Not only can migration affect the stability of individual states but it can also have implications on international stability and security (Weiner, 1995).

The world has become increasingly characterized by the proliferation of different actors in the global arena such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), multi-national corporations (MNCs), transnational networks of epistemic communities, financial institutions, among many others. Multiculturalism within the complex context of globalization should be a non-issue. Yet (despite globalization) migration multiculturalism has and continues to be on the agenda of the state. The state provides the distinctive rallying point to ensure national survival within an inherently violent and chaotic world frame. This is especially so in the context of the demands to establish societal cohesion in the midst of ethnic diversities and disparities.

Faced with the prospects and challenges of migration multiculturalism, the society is confronted with two possible trajectories. One is to welcome, cherish, and embrace diversity and to "make it central to its self-understanding and respect the cultural demands of its constituent communities" while the other is to fear diversity and impose homogeneity through hegemony in which the different cultural communities are made to assimilate into the "mainstream culture either wholly or substantially" (Parekh, 2000, p. 6). As such, there can be two ways of understanding the notion of multiculturalism – as a fact and as a norm. The former declares the existing situation of cultural diversity while the latter works towards establishing cultural diversity. There is a peculiar relationship between these two expressions of multiculturalism. The former can be used as an instrument to challenge the latter. Multiculturalism (fact) can be used as an excuse to resist multiculturalism (norm) through nationalism and greater monoculturalism. In the normative sense multiculturalism can be used as a scapegoat to describe the erosion or the growing / impending vulnerability of the dominant population or cultural group. This situation can lead to the suppression of debate or the limiting of the space for considering alternatives that respect the rights of minorities relative to the dominant cultural group, e.g., the Malays of Malaysia; the "Whites" of Australia; the Javanese in Indonesia; and those from Honshu island in Japan. It also involves a desire to return to "the way things were" as a nation.

The state is expected to utilize all its capacities to undertake its mandate of nation-building especially in the context of a globalizing and increasingly multi-ethnic setting.

> ... liberal-democratic states have historically been 'nation-building' states in the following sense: they have encouraged and sometimes forced all the citizens on the territory of the state to integrate into common public institutions operating in a common language. Western states have used various strategies to achieve this goal of linguistic and institutional integration: citizenship and naturalization laws, education laws, language laws, policies regarding public service employment, military service, national media, and so on. These are what I call the tools of state nation-building (Klymlicka, 2002, p. 1).

Kymlicka refers to the dynamic relationship between the state asserting its mandate and the minorities asserting their communal rights and identity as "the dialectic of state nation-building and minority rights" (Kymlicka, 2002, p. 2). Castles specifies three ideal types of responses to multicultural situations: differential exclusion, assimilation, and pluralism. Differential exclusion is "a situation in which immigrants are incorporated into certain areas of society ... but denied access to others (such as welfare systems, citizenship, and political participation" (Castles, 2000, p. 135). Assimilation is the incorporation of "migrants into society through a one-sided process of adaptation: immigrants are expected to give up their distinctive linguistic, cultural, or social characteristics and become indistinguishable from the majority population" (Castles, 2000, p. 137). Pluralism is "the acceptance of immigration populations as ethnic communities which remain distinguishable from the majority population with regard to language, culture, and social organization over several generations" and "implies that immigrants should be granted equal rights in all spheres of society, without being expected to give up their diversity" (Castles, 2000, p. 138).

The Rise and Retreat of Multiculturalism

"From the 1960s to the 1990s multiculturalism was in vogue" (Calhoun, 2009, p. 223). In the post-9/11 world, it seems no longer fashionable to push for multiculturalism and cultural tolerance even in societies that used to welcome diversity. In place of multicultural acceptance, religious intolerance seems to be on the rise in many parts of the West. Plans to build mosques and Muslim community centers in communities in places like Australia, Russia, and the United States have been met with opposition. The state of Arizona in the US has initiated local regulations that make it difficult for undocumented migrants to become part of the community. Lately, a number of countries in Europe have deported their respective Roma Gypsy populations. These occurrences reinforce the argument in this paper that supposedly liberal polities are responding to migration multiculturalism in ways that are illiberal or restrictive.

During the late 1980s, there was a celebration of a new-found sense of multiculturalism in Australia that sought to transcend the "ideology of nationhood" and embracing "a community without nation" (Castles, et al., 1992, p. 148). At the time, many Western states had begun to embrace cultural diversity. This sense of optimism towards multiculturalism was not unanticipated. Castles, et al. (1992) argued that only a few countries can truly claim to be culturally monolithic and that the old way of characterizing Australia as predominantly white was no longer the case. Indeed, such a traditional characterization was no longer enough to describe Australia. The authors spoke of a "nation without nationalism." Today, nothing can be further from the truth as nationalism takes a front seat forcing a retreat of multiculturalism not only in Australia but elsewhere in the world as well. In the United States where multiculturalism had been the norm, more and more Americans are "harboring ambivalent or conflicting attitudes toward immigration and immigrants [and] overwhelmingly resist any conception of multiculturalism that discourages immigrants from quickly learning and using the English language" (Schuck, 2008, p. 250). Much of this ambivalence is colored by fear - "arguably the most sinister of demons nesting in the open societies of our time" (Bauman, 2009, p. 119). There is the fear that

multiculturalism can "damage" society and make the state weaker such as in Bosnia and Somalia. As such, multiculturalism has come under attack in many Western (liberal) societies such as France, Germany, and the United States.

Cultural diversification has been greatly accelerated by globalization and vice versa. The rapid as well as extensive manner by which capital, goods, and people (combined with intense Westernization) are transported across geographical spaces in a short period of time heightens the awareness of the existence of an "other" that can raise concerns for all publics. Globalization and transnational migration present the face of a new set of challenges to states and societies. Foremost among these is the question of how to maintain cohesiveness in the face of social and cultural diversities alongside ethno-economic disparities. As a consequence, new social movements have emerged that are based on ethnic, linguistic, or religious differences that "demand full and equal inclusion in society, while claiming the recognition of their particularistic identities in the public sphere" (Koenig & Guchteneire, 2007, p. 3). What is strongly implied in such demands is their criticism of "the assumption of congruence between political unity and cultural homogeneity which was characteristic of the classic model of the nation-state" (Koenig & Guchteneire, 2007, p. 3).

Like globalization, multiculturalism and migration pose serious challenges to states. The main traditional orientation of the state has been on how to ensure cultural homogeneity where the identity recognition claims are "routinely seen as a threat to state stability and to national cohesion" (Koenig & Guchteneire, 2007, p. 4). This assumption is now increasingly being contested.

> Policies of assimilation or of differential exclusion are increasingly considered as illegitimate, both at domestic and international levels, while pluralistic policy responses, as exemplified by anti-discrimination legislation, affirmative action programmes or special minority protection, have gained momentum (Koenig & Guchteneire, 2007, pp. 4-5).

For many countries in the developing South, the colonial system produced a stratified order based on a kind of division of labor with different groups from various places of origin performing different functions. Colonial society was essentially a multicultural society serving the purpose of maintaining and enhancing the capacity of the colonial power.

> There would be the representatives of metropolitan government, entrepreneurs, farmers and workers from the metropolis; there would be religious missionaries from the metropolis; there would be secondary colonialists coming from other countries than the metropolis and engaging in those forms of trade which were unacceptable to or insufficiently profitable for metropolitan entrepreneurs; and there would be slaves and indentured labourers (Rex & Gurharpal, 2003b, pp. 109-110).

The colonial experiences of a society greatly impacts on the multicultural project (Rex & Gurharpal, 2003b). Upon their liberation, however, the departure of the colonial power (particularly from the metropolitan center) left a political vacuum that had to be filled up.

> ... power often passed to one of the ethnic segments who now controlled the state. Alternatively, while one group controlled political power, economic power might be in the control of one of the others... (Rex & Gurharpal, 2003b, p. 111).

Monocultural societies are increasingly becoming unlikely in the context of the intensifying effects of migration and globalization. Multiculturalism and pluralism are now the norm. Multiculturalism questions the primordial assumption of monoculturalism. However, embracing multiculturalism raises a primordial question: why must communal cultures exist separately? Rex and Gurharpal respond to this question by enumerating three reasons why cultural distinctions must be respected.

The first is that they are allowed to exist in the belief that they may have value in themselves... The second is that their culture provides individuals with a moral and emotional home which is essential for their personal psychological stability... The third reason for preserving these groups is that they make possible collective action to protect their members in political life (Rex & Gurharpal, 2003a, p. 7).

For states, migration conveys a certain (negative) appeal on the prospect of multiculturalism. The restrictions raised against the *en masse* entry of economic migrants into the highly developed societies of the world are embedded in the notion of defending against multiculturalism. The entry and presence of a large number of immigrants can be seen to pose a danger to the unity and homogeneity of societies in receiving areas (Rex & Gurharpal, 2003a). Immigration has both economic and non-economic effects. Variances need to be taken into account because:

> ... the effects of immigration are not evenly distributed in the population. In other words, while a country as a whole might gain from migration, the distribution of income among natives is affected by the presence of immigrants. In addition, immigration has an impact on the native population through non-economic channels, for example by affecting cultural diversity and perceived and factual levels of security (Facchini & Mayda, 2008, p. 28).

The following sections describe how selected communities have responded to the challenges of migration multiculturalism.

Migration Multiculturalism in Australia: In the Shadow of the "White Only" Policy

At the beginning of the 20th century, Australia applied its own "White Australia" policy that limited the entry and immigration into the island-continent

primarily from Europe and restricted entry from non-White areas, specifically those coming from Asia (Winkelmann 2001). John Curtin who was prime minister of Australia during World War II declared: "We shall hold this country, and keep it as a citadel for the British-speaking race, and as a place where civilisation will persist." Being a former British colony, this was not a surprising statement by an Australian PM. Historically, the targets of this racially defined entry policy were the Chinese and Japanese. While Europeans and whites were allowed to acquire Australian citizenship after only five years of residence, the required residence for non-whites was 15 years. By the 1960s, the White Australia Policy had been effectively repealed at a time when emerging forms of dissent challenged long-standing notions of power and identity. Under Malcolm Fraser in the late 1970s, Australia initiated steps that would lead many Australians to think that multiculturalism was becoming more and more institutionalized in the policy discourse. One was the re-creation of the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs whose "ethnic affairs" component had been reassigned elsewhere a few years before. Advisory councils were also introduced such as the Australian Population and Immigration Council and the Australian Ethnic Affairs Council (AEAC) in 1976 and the Australian Refugee Advisory Council in 1979. And in 1981, all three councils were merged into the Australian Council on Population and Ethnic Affairs (ACPEA). One of the AEAC's first reports recommended the adoption of three elements in the foundation of a multicultural society for Australia – social cohesion, cultural identity, and equality of opportunity and access – a fourth element (equal responsibility for, commitment to and participation in society) was added in 1982. In addition to these advisory councils, the Fraser government also created specialist agencies such as the Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs (AIMA) and the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) in 1979.

The openness to migration multiculturalism in Australia was not without its pitfalls. One of the major obstacles to political multiculturalism in Australia is the populist and anti-intellectual discourse that asserts that cultural tolerance and encouraging multiculturalism (especially from non-Whites) is bad and that it needs to be stopped. Hansonianism is one that has taken root in Australia, becoming most evident in the 1990s.

Immigration and multiculturalism are issues that this government is trying to address, but for far too long ordinary Australians have been kept out of any debate by the major parties. I and most Australians want our immigration policy radically reviewed and that of multiculturalism abolished. I believe we are in danger of being swamped by Asians. Between 1984 and 1995, 40 % of all migrants coming into this country were of Asian origin. They have their own culture and religion, form ghettos and do not assimilate. ... if I can invite whom I want into my home, then I should have the right to have a say in who comes into my country. A truly multicultural country can never be strong or united. The world is full of failed and tragic examples, ranging from Ireland to Bosnia to Africa and, closer to home, Papua New Guinea. America and Great Britain are currently paying the price (Hanson, 1996, n.p.).

Pauline Hanson was also of the view that Australia stands to "save billions of dollars" if it were to abolish "the policy of multiculturalism" and pave "the way to a strong, united country."

Immigration must be halted in the short-term so that our dole queues are not added to by, in many cases, unskilled migrants not fluent in the English language. This would be one positive step to rescue many young and older Australians from a predicament which has become a national disgrace and crisis. I must stress at this stage that I do not consider those people from ethnic backgrounds currently living in Australia anything but first-class citizens, provided of course that they give this country their full, undivided loyalty (Hanson, 1996, n.p.).

By the 1990s, despite its relative success, political multiculturalism in Australia was still criticized for continuing to place greater emphasis on Whites from Europe and making it less likely for Asians to fit in. Ang

critiques the celebratory rhetoric of multiculturalism in Australia and looks "at the way in which this discourse suppresses the ambivalent positioning of 'Asians' in Australian space" (Ang, 1996, p. 36). In the wake of 9/11 and the war against global terrorism, migration multiculturalism has been seen in Australia as a threat not only to the "white-dominated" sense of homogeneity but also to the security of the state. Such a threat has been manifested in anti-Islamic sentiments that have been raised in the public and official discourses recently.

> If you want to be an Australian, if you want to raise your children in Australia, we fully expect those children to be taught and to accept Australian values and beliefs. We want them to understand our history and our culture, the extent to which we believe in mateship and giving another person a fair go, and basically if people don't want to support and accept and adopt and teach Australian values then, they should clear off (*ABC News Online*, 2005).

Australia is considered a traditional country of immigration. In demographic terms, much of Australia remains largely under-populated, leaving ample prospects for population growth particularly through immigration. A report by the Australian Department of Immigration in 1945 noted that Australia's population needs to have a "growth rate of two percent per annum, one percent from natural increase and one percent from immigration" (Winkelmann, 2001, p. 2). Australia's population grew between 1979 and 1996 by an average of 1.3 % annually mainly due to immigration. Its population in 1979 was 14.5 million. By 1996 it had reached 18.3 million (Winkelmann, 2001, p. 3). In 1995, nearly a quarter of the total foreign-born population in Australia came from Asia and the Middle East (West Asia) (Winkelmann 2001, p. 24). By 2001, more than one in five Australians were foreign-born. Indeed, the foreign-born proportion is highest in Australia (22 %) compared to two other traditional immigration areas – the United States (11 %) and Canada (18 %).

As a result of its non-discriminatory immigration policy, Australia has become a destination area for migrants coming not only from the Asia Pacific region but also from the West Asian (Middle East) countries and even from North Africa. By 2002, however, Australia responded to its growing immigration concerns with its "Pacific solution" which meant that asylum seekers had to be intercepted prior to landing in Australia and processed on two Pacific islands first to determine their eligibility to enter and stay in Australia (Mercer, 2002). This was triggered by the entry of a Norwegian freighter called *Tampa* carrying around 400 refugees mainly from Afghanistan – about a month before 9/11. The vessel was intercepted and refused permission to land anywhere in Australia. It ended up in camps on islands in Papua New Guinea and Nauru. The "Pacific" policy was eventually abandoned in 2007. However, this option was explored once again during the 2010 elections.

The Pacific Solution speaks of an attempt to conflate economic migration with political migration in the same way that economic migration is conflated with terrorism. The state incorrectly conflates all migrants as economic migrants and this has caused it to respond to migration in a way that leads to violations of basic human and labor rights. Similarly, conflating economic migration with terrorism also leads to related violations of human rights as "suspects" are treated as criminals. As pointed out in the Australian case, repressive measures do not help in addressing the problems associated with migration and can in fact lead to the emergence of new issues.

At present, the government seems to be sending confusing signals. In 2007, the term "multicultural affairs" was removed from the Immigration and Citizenship Department. In 2008, the Rudd government created the Australian Multicultural Advisory Council (AMAC) to provide concrete and practical approaches to ensure social cohesion and overcoming racism and xenophobia by promoting tolerance and respect for cultural differences. If anything, this signifies that multiculturalism continues to be a point of debate in Australia in terms of what it means to be *Australian*. Politicians have used (manipulated) the jargon of multiculturalism in their rhetoric at various times to advance various (even

competing) agendas. In the 2010 elections, for instance, the two leading parties – Labor and Liberals – adopted the line that Australia needs to put a stop to the boatloads of asylum seekers from as far as Africa and West Asia passing through Indonesia; setting aside the agenda of multiculturalism in the policy discourse that has been evident since the 1980s.

Australia continues to grapple with the problematique of how it will reconstitute itself given the increasing influx of non-Europeans / non-Whites and the reality of its declining fertility rate. While it continues to exhibit a degree of ambivalence towards immigrants, it has nevertheless placed a strong emphasis on the principle of border security and the fear of an "invasion" from outside. A survey done in 2007 indicated that although a substantial number of Australian (78%) say that immigrants make Australia more open to ideas and cultures and that a majority (59%) say that immigrants are good for the Australian economy, nearly half (43%) say that immigrants increase the crime rate and a plurality (29%) say that immigrants take away jobs from Australians. A significant proportion of Australians (40 %) say that the number of migrants allowed into Australia should be reduced (MacAllister & Clark, 2008, pp. 33 and 34). Additionally, anti-Muslim sentiments are becoming evident which can lead to the polarization of society and does not bode well in the creation of a more tolerant and respectful society. These mixed attitudes do not sit well with multiculturalism in general and may well delay any attempt to open Australian society and make it more culturally tolerant. Multiculturalism remains an enduring reality as well as a necessity for Australia.

Japan and Deceptive Homogeneity

For a long time, Japan has been in the grips of two powerful myths: "it is an ethnically homogeneous society and an immigrant-free country" (Tarumoto, 2003, p. 89). Both myths are now in the process of being questioned and eventually shattered. Japan is far from being ethnically pure and homogenous and a great part of its cultural heterogeneity is due to significant levels of immigration. Japan is portrayed as a uniquely culturally homogenous society

(Sugimoto, 2010). Like Australia, Japan is also affected by migration multiculturalism. The portrayal of Japan's homogeneity is constantly being challenged by the presence of different migrant settlers most notably the "oldcomers" or *zainichi* (i.e., those of Korean or Chinese descent born and living in Japan) and "newcomers" (mostly migrant workers coming from Southeast Asia) including *nikkeijin* (i.e., foreigners of Japanese descent who come mostly from South America). Aside from these groups, there are also other foreigners in Japan, mainly Americans and Europeans, who are officially allowed to work in Japan as professionals and business people although they represent a much smaller proportion relative to the *zainichi, nikkeijin,* and other newcomers. Since 1990, Japanese immigration policy has been revised to accommodate *nikkeijin* or foreigners of Japanese descent who come mainly from Brazil. *Nikkeijin* are allowed to work and settle in Japan, unlike migrants from Southeast Asia.

Throughout Japan's 2000-year history, there have been several waves of large-scale immigration. The first wave began in the eighth century with the arrival of many intellectuals and skilled artisans, mostly from Korea, in a period of great cultural growth. The second wave occurred in the 1640s, under the Tokugawa Shogunate, when several noble families of the Chinese Ming dynasty sought asylum in Japan, escaping from political oppression in China (Shiba, 1987, pp. 498-507). The third wave occurred during the 1930s and 1940s, when many Koreans and Chinese were imported as forced labor during the time of the Japanese occupation of Korea and parts of China. Most of these returned by the end of the Second World War, but more than 100,000, mostly Koreans, remained. They have become the *zainichi*. Although it is comparatively lower compared to other traditional settlement areas like the United States or Canada, Japan's current foreign resident population is still significant relative to its own historic experience. The number of foreign residents in Japan hit a record high in 2006 at 2,084,919 accounting for 1.63 percent of the country's total population (*The Yomiuri Shimbun*, 2007). Current figures indicate that Chinese and Korean *zainichi* make up almost 56% of the total foreign resident population in Japan today followed by *nikkeijin* Brazilians at 15% and a smaller (but slowly increasing) proportion of migrants from Southeast Asia such as the Philippines and Thailand.

The multicultural character of Japanese society has also been unraveled with the acknowledgement of different minority groups in Japan.

> ... [T]he myth of homogeneity has long been challenged by the presence of ethnic and national minorities, including ethnic Koreans and Chinese. Ironically, the idea has denied basic human rights to the "Oldcomers" who were Japanese subjects before 1947 and are now permanent non-national residents in Japan, where they were born and educated (Tarumoto, 2003, p. 91).

This unraveling is due mainly to a number of factors that have also posed a serious challenge for the state and society. Japan has become an ageing society. About a fifth of its population are aged 65 and above (Prideaux, 2007). Moreover, its birth rate has been constantly declining and is now below replacement levels. Japan can overcome its aging population problem through increasing productivity by (a) allowing more and more of the elderly to continue to be productively employed; (b) providing more opportunities for Japanese women to be employed; and (c) allowing for the entry of foreigners to compensate for the gaps in the labor market (Prideaux, 2007; Webb, 2006). Homogeneity (or its conception as applied) in Japan is also increasingly being challenged broadly by the forces of globalization and also particularly by the increasing presence of foreigners. However, the process of diversification in Japan is taking place not only gradually but in varying degrees within certain localities. For Tsuneyoshi, Japan is already multicultural. However, its multicultural-ness is characterized by "patches of visibly diverse districts [which is termed as "diversity points] ... scattered amidst a vast sea of seeming homogeneity" (Tsuneyoshi, 2004, p. 57).

The situation of Asian migrants in Japan (and its creeping multiculturalism) is/are compounded by the ambivalence or silence of state policy in regard to officially accepting migrant workers, particularly from Southeast Asia (Sugimoto, 2010; Tsuda, 2008) despite the conclusion of bilateral agreements towards the deployment of technical-skilled migrants from Thailand, Indonesia,

and the Philippines and away from the stigma of entertainment workers. In addition, certain gaps between the formal rules and informal practice can be noted as is the situation of foreign workers in factories. Conditionally, while there is now an expressed official policy to restrict the entry of foreign workers, there are ways by which this has been circumvented such as the trainee system which is actually a euphemism for the informal hiring of workers in factories and manufacturing companies.

The prevailing reality is that Japan needs to accept foreigners because of its declining birth rate and its growing human capital needs. As a result, numerous foreigners become visa over-stayers and undocumented. What is even more interesting is that "many immigrants are beginning to settle long-term in Japan and their numbers will dramatically increase if current economic growth and population levels are to be sustained" (Tsuda, 2008, p. 118). Such a situation will certainly test the myth of Japanese homogeneity.

The entry of *nikkeijin* from South America into Japan has had the effect of creating "a linguistic and cultural minority within Japanese society" (Brody, 2002, p. 101). While this is not altogether historically unique in Japan, what is interesting here to note is that this *nikkeijin* immigrant minority group is entitled to membership in the ethnic community that also intensifies and complicates Japan's crisis of multiculturalism (Brody, 2002; Tsuda, 2009). Serious differences in cultural and linguistic backgrounds make the integration of *nikkeijin* difficult, if not impossible.

> ... the Japanese government places *nikkeijin* in an impossible position vis-à-vis integration. On the one hand, the official Japanese claim is that foreigners can never be "Japanese" and that *nikkeijin* are permitted entry **because** of their "ethnic membership." But, on the other hand, once in Japan, even *nikkeijin* are to become "as Japanese as possible" (e.g., language, social rules, etc.) or to remain separate from the broader Japanese society (Emphasis not mine. Brody, 2002, p. 107).

The continued inability to integrate *nikkeijin* (learning Japanese being the most significant problem), combined with Japan's declining fertility, and compounded by (a) the reluctance to fully accept Korean and Chinese *zainichi* oldcomers and (b) the entry of low-skilled migrants from Southeast Asia, can be a most unsettling situation as far as political multiculturalism is concerned. Koreans in Japan are discriminated against.

> The Korean minority in Japan is, thus, like the new *nikkei* Brazilian minority, kept from integrating into Japanese society by both discriminatory policies and negative Japanese attitudes toward "foreigners." In other words, Koreans are excluded and discriminated against on the basis of their "non-Japanese blood" while *nikkei-jin* are excluded and discriminated against **despite** their "Japanese blood" (Emphasis not mine. Brody, 2002, p. 96).

The assimilationist paradigm of "Japanization" for *nikkeijin* runs counter to the norm and practice of political multiculturalism in Japan which is to respect differences and diversity and encourage the practice of distinct cultures and religions. At the same time, majority of Brazilian *nikkeijin* continue to assert their Brazilian counteridentities as an act of ethnic resistance (Tsuda, 2003). "[M]inorities that are not racially Japanese and culturally assimilated will continue to suffer from discrimination, which obstructs their socioeconomic mobility" (Tsuda, 2009, p. 222). At the same time, the lack of social mobility among migrants can exacerbate their capacity to fit into the rest of Japanese society. One positive development, though, is that research now shows that the children of *nikkeijin* are able to assimilate into Japanese society more rapidly than adults and that they cannot be distinguished from other Japanese in terms of "speech, dress, or mannerisms" (Tsuda, 2009, p. 223). How far and to what extent this emerging situation can truly transform Japan into a genuinely open and multicultural society still remains to be seen.

Affirmative Action in Malaysia

Malaysia provides an interesting case study of how multiculturalism as a public policy is able to operate within extremely adverse circumstances not found in many societies in the West. Malaysia is undeniably a multicultural society. However, its multiculturality is proscribed by the state. Political power rests in the hands of the Malays; economic power (trade and commercial enterprises) has come largely under the control of the Chinese; and the agrarian sector has landed on the laps of the Indian population. Such has been the ethnic division that has evolved throughout much of labor in peninsular Malaysia. Yet the discourse of multiculturalism that has come to dominate Western societies such as Australia, Canada, and the United States, appears to be less prominent in Malaysia (Fenton, 2003). Communalism has become a term used to describe the extent of ethnic cleavages that have persisted in Malaysia and other similarly situated societies. "This is usually a pejorative term, meaning that politics is 'reduced to' the politics of group identities and the search for advantage, simply for a religious or ethnic community" (Fenton, 2003, p. 136). Communalism affirms ethnic loyalties that are seen as socially divisive and politically destructive.

The role of migration in the creation of Malaysia is also undeniable. Colonial policy under the British encouraged it which led to a situation where there were more Chinese and Indian immigrants combined than the indigenous Malays. "Transnational migration during the colonial era and in recent decades, has been a major factor in the making of modern pluralism in" Malaysia (Embong, 2001, p. 60).

> The Chinese were admitted in large numbers to facilitate tin mining while Indians were recruited in large numbers, often as indentured labor, to work on the rubber plantations. Both rubber and tin figured prominently in the British economic exploitation of Malaysia and their commodities were in turn obtained through migrant labor (Ganesa, 2005, p. 138).

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The ethnicised system of governance is one in which the Malay population is over-represented has created a general perception (not confined to non-Malays) "that the public service has deteriorated in the quality and performance of its personnel, not least because of ethnically influenced decisions on recruitment and promotions, which favoured less capable Malays over their non-Malay counterparts" (Teik, 2005, p. 29). Post-colonial policies have actually muted multiculturalism's adverse effects.

Bumiputera (literally, "sons of the soil") politics has come to dominate the Malaysia political landscape. *Bumiputera* is a Malay term that designate Malay and Malay-related ethnicity. There is a kind of primus inter pares relationship between the Malays in relation to the Indian and Chinese populations. There is an institutional primacy given to "Malay culture and recognition of the special position and privileges of the Malay population" including the primacy given to Islam (Fenton, 2003, p. 137). The typical characterization of Malaysian society today is that it is comprised of three ethnic groups – Malays, Chinese, and Indians. However, it is important to note that there is also a significant number of non-Muslims in Sarawak who are also considered Malays in Malaysia. There are also the distinctions between *Orang Asli* (members of aboriginal communities) in Sabah and Sarawak as well as the different Chinese dialect groups and, of course, the distinctions between Punjabis, Tamils, and Pakistanis (Teik, 2005).

> Over 47 years since independence in 1957, the basic response of the elites has been to manage ethnic problems by openly practising ethnic politics, and adopting avowedly ethnic policies—and not by relying, say, on "colour-blind" politics or measures (Teik, 2005, p. 1).

Patronage plays an important role in maintaining political solidarity in the midst of cultural diversity in Malaysia. Under Mahathir, the political leadership has managed to balance different group interests in a manner that does not invite social implosion. Under Mahathir's rule, the leadership is able:

> ... to balance group interests in a multi-ethnic society by linking their needs to economic growth, political stability, and the capitalist transformation of Malaysian society. Mahathir's moral claim to state power has rested on his ability to promote Malay unity, protection, and dominance... While playing the role of protector of the Malays he has tried to persuade the Chinese and Indians that his government responsibly checks Malay chauvinism. The institutional basis for striking this balance – redressing Malay grievances while respecting non-Malay identities and property rights – is realized in the patronage system that distributes to all the communities (Verma, 2002, pp. 153-154).

Malaysian-style multiculturalism intersects with politics and economics. What the British had left in Malaysia was a situation where society had become divided across three distinct cultures – the Indians, the Malays, and the Chinese. What is peculiar here is that the multiculturalism question is being addressed by a political authority dominated by Malays in partnership with the Indians and Chinese. Political institutions in Malaysia largely mirror this ethnically plural situation. Indeed, political parties are openly ethnic in orientation (Teik, 2005). The dominant political party is the United Malays National Organization (UMNO). The Chinese have the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) and the Indians have the Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC). All three political formations are part of a bigger political alliance called *Barisan Nasional* (BN) or National Front. Not surprisingly, UMNO is the dominant partner in this alliance. Notwithstanding the gains made by its New Economic Policy (NEP) combined with its affirmative action program, many Malays remain poor.

> Economic deprivation and large and visible inequalities persist in Malaysia even if the acute association of economic disadvantage and ethnic group has been muted (Fenton, 2003, p. 139).

Poverty became embedded in the ethnic division of labor where "inter-ethnic comparisons invariably led to interethnic inequalities" leading to the troubling "conclusion than that to be Malay was to be relatively poorer than a non-Malay" (Teik, 2005, p. 10).

These economic conditions would show that the underlying issues in Malaysian society and politics continue to be raised. The *Bumiputera* argument continues to be contested and that this resonates throughout the rest of Malaysian society and that "the framing of political loyalties as merely a matter of communal identities, indexed by culture, is losing ground" (Fenton, 2003, pp. 144-145). Since independence, Malaysia has been able to manage its multicultural society by employing the threat of communalism but combined with a tendency to directly engage in ethnic-based politics that eventually mitigates tensions and clashes between cultures. The kind of political multiculturalism that prevails in Malaysia is different from those found in the West in the sense that it does not fully convey respect for all cultures as this is seen to run against the policy dictum of the primacy of the *Bumiputera* group.

Concluding Remarks

Migration is a growing and increasingly complex phenomenon. As people move they also settle. As they settle, they interact with people from other cultures. This is what gives rise to migration multiculturalism and the need to foster engagements between cultures that create a more tolerant and respectful society. Multiculturalism resonates differently in different societies.

> In first-world countries, multiculturalism may retain a critical edge in some contexts, but it has also become, along with "diversity", an establishment concept. In societies which have long been ethnically diverse, and which became more ethnically diverse in their colonial periods, diversity is understood but not "embraced" in quite the same way (Fenton, 2003, p. 145).

In much of Europe, Canada, the US, and Australia, there has (at least since the 1960s) been a rejection of the notion of assimilationism (Vertovec and Wessendorf, 2004). In the Asia-Pacific region, however, multicultural challenges continue to be evident and states as well as societies have responded to these challenges in peculiar ways as the case studies have shown. Where there is now a greater sense of tolerance and openness towards accommodating ethnic minorities politically, economically, culturally, and socially in a growing number of societies throughout the world, there are also places where resistance against pluralism continues to be the norm. In some cases, there is also a "ritualistic debate" that takes place that ultimately (and ironically) robs the immigrants themselves of a say in their agency and capacity to assimilate.

> The way the voice of the 'ethnic other' is made passive not only by those who want to eradicate it, but also by those who are happy to welcome it under some conditions they feel entitled to set is one of the main features of these ritualistic 'immigration debates' [in which] ... the 'migrants' and the 'ethnics' are welcomed, abused, defended, made accountable, analyzed and measured. Ultimately, the debates work to silence them and construct them into passive objects to be governed by those who have given themselves the national governmental right to 'worry' about the nation (Ghassan, 2000, p. 17).

Nevertheless, the notion of social cohesion (and the problems associated with it) remains on the agenda table in many societies. The case studies show the many compelling views of multiculturalism and how states and societies have responded to these views either by way of contesting, rejecting, or affirming them.

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