

To:
Committee Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on Migration

Submission to Inquiry into Multiculturalism in Australia

0. Preface

In the following submission to the Inquiry into Multiculturalism in Australia I will draw mainly on research into how the mind works, supplemented by statistical evidence that show the effects of various mind sets in specific locations. The concept of multiculturalism is placed under focus, from the intended idea to the situation on the ground. The principle differences in various demographics are examined and what they mean in relation to each other. Examples of influences of demographic markers, such as religion, value systems and the potential for progress are expressed in terms of Australian society. The submission concludes with a summary of the identified factors.

1. Human society

Before examining multiculturalism it helps to consider the nature of human activity systems in general. Findings from research into how the mind works reveal certain aspects derived from cognitive dynamics. These can be applied to various scales, from the mind of an individual up to the level of society at large [1].

No society has emerged overnight. While the timelines vary from millennia to a few decades to acquire its current definition, the nature of a society represents a sumtotal of side-by-side existing characteristics making up the whole. Since it is the members that produced the effects, ultimately a society defines itself. While that definition can be seen as a form of generalisation, a certain variance represented by individual members provides not only a more comprehensive picture but also indicates the capacity and willingness by its constituents to respond to such differences. Some members may be less achieving than the rest, yet they are tolerated; some are relatively higher achievers, but they can still be appreciated. Anyone outside that band of acceptance meets with opposition, its intensity directly proportional to the distance from the main.

The scalable nature of cognitive dynamics ensures that just as individual members can be compared with their host demographics (ie, subsections of society), so can the demographics be compared with their host society.

Although societies can and do interact with each other, due to the self-imposed act of definition as a particular society its overall standard has to be commensurate with the total capacity of its members. A failure in this regard creates major problems (consider for example the desperate measures enacted by the European Union in relation to member states such as Greece and Ireland).

If the inherent standards are poor to begin with, not only is there the need for continuous outside assistance, the shortcomings are exacerbated through the supplied means. In Africa for example decades of foreign aid have not raised the potential for improvement but artificially created a

population explosion where the negative effects of natural or man-made disasters involve ever greater numbers of people [2].

Demographics are the results of clustering. If the clusters of individuals fall within the spectrum of their host society the latter has not lost its overall definition, otherwise the society gives up its pre-defined character and fractures emerge. The effects are loss of synchronicity, lack of mutual understanding and the destruction of coherence.

2. Multiculturalism

In the West the term 'multiculturalism' has been used to sell the idea of a largely open-ended immigration policy by perceiving a multicultural society to be one of greater variety than its previous manifestation and not much more. Like a mosaic composed of many coloured tiles, or a confectionary shop displaying lots of different candy, the concept concentrated on the 'prettiness' alone. Yet people are not inanimate tiles, nor pretty candy. Rather, they constitute dynamic entities in their own right, performing in their surrounds within the limits of their respective capacities and value systems.

To what extent the demographics created under these auspices align with their host becomes a function of the clusters' overall nature, that is the composite effect of a variety of differences imported from their point of origin. The greater the number of differences, the greater the likelihood of disparity. Given the reality of present-day globalisation, an African-American stockbroker from Manhattan would be more at home in Sydney than a Basque mountain dweller.

From a certain size onwards clusters achieve a presence of their own. Their degree of particularity is again a function of their innate differences. Any rules governing their host society are not necessarily a hindrance.

Islam represents a spiritual ideology determining the daily life of its adherents like no other. From its religious rituals to its concepts of morality to its dress codes, education and its rules governing the interactions with the outside world the system could also be described as a political and cultural one.

In Brisbane the Kuraby mosque has been built through the combined efforts of Muslims who have gained a sufficient population size to make the effort possible. On its website [3] there is a page dedicated to its Islamic education classes, a "madressah" [4]. Under the heading "Madrassah Syllabus" we read that the school uses the Jamiat Syllabus from South Africa. The South African website outlining that syllabus [5] features examples of what the syllabus entails. Under "latest news" [6] South African Muslims are exhorted to protest against a proposed Marriage Bill because it goes against their sharia law. Particularly notable points raised there are "(3) The final arbiter in all cases will be the secular law, not the Shariah, and not even the MMB [Muslim Marriages Bill]", "(4) The courts will be empowered to appoint any person whether male or female and whether gay or lesbian, non Muslim or Muslim to act as the 'Family Advocate.'", "(11) According to MMB men and women have equal rights", "(12) Nikah [matrimonial contract in a Muslim marriage] under the age of 18 is criminalised", "(13) A man who marries a second wife in contravention of MMB is guilty of an offence and liable to a fine of R20000.00 or a long jail sentence", "(16) An Imaam will be fined R20000,00 if he registers a valid Islamic Nikah performed in accordance with the Shariah, if it does not conform to the provisions of MMB", "(17) Any parent, Imaam, Sheikh, Moulana or elder who advises their children, students, mureeds or any Muslim in general to abstain from MMB (i.e. after it has been enacted as law) will be sentenced to a fine or a prison term of one year", "(25) While according to the Shariah, a secular court's annulment decree is invalid, i.e. it is not a valid Faskh, MMB confers this right to the secular court", "(28) The interests and welfare of the children will be decided in the light of secular laws, not in terms of the Shariah", "(34) MMB places the non- Muslim Minister of Justice in full charge of Muslim Marriages", "(35) MMB empowers the Minister to make regulations to imprison Muslims who contravene any of the insidious provisions of this haraam so-called Muslim Marriage Bill".

Therefore that code, represented through the syllabus taught at Islamic classes in Brisbane, teaches Muslim children to treat men and women as unequal, show disrespect for the laws of the country if they don't adhere to Islamic customs, revolt against non-Muslim judges and/or administrators and

advises children to act upon the dictums of their religion rather than the laws of their host society. While South Africa is not Australia, every one of the points mentioned above would also contravene Australia's juridical framework. Individual immigrants may not be representative of their own society, but allow their clusters to grow and they merge more and more into their original identity.

3. Influences on society

A realistic assessment of one's surrounds makes for success, even survival. Pilots, emergency workers, divers are some of the many individuals whose very training ensures a calm, realistic attitude under any conditions. The same goes for society.

A compilation of countries taken from the SBS World Guide demonstrates the effects mainly spiritual ideologies have on the overall standard of their populations [7]. Based on rankings in terms of average life expectancy, infant mortality, literacy rates and GDP per capita, the intensity of religious adherence is in direct proportion to the respective worst values. Significantly, Muslim societies rank highest in terms of infant mortality and lowest in terms of literacy rates. In the other categories the results are mixed, but the effects of religious intensity are still discernible.

Since demographic clustering enables a group to largely shield itself from any ameliorating influences coming from their host society, the group's imported standards will play a role which in turn puts pressure on their host to spend its own resources in the attempt to re-educate such groups. Again the success remains a function of the others' cluster size and its degree of difference.

As people who deal with dangerous situations well know, a cardinal rule is to ensure one's own safety during the operation. On the larger scale of society the same holds. A Western-style nation like Australia needs to consider how far its own resources should be compromised to change the problematic dispositions of certain immigrant demographics.

The operative word is 'certain'. For example, after the major influx of Vietnamese refugees during the 1970s and '80s by far the majority has settled into productive lives as part of the Australian landscape [8].

4. Australia is not alone

Multiculturalism has been found wanting in other countries as well. Especially in advanced nations the problems with cultural disparities have become noteworthy.

On the 17 October 2010 Angela Merkel in Germany has declared that multicultural society has failed: "...the approach [to build] a multicultural [society] and to live side-by-side and to enjoy each other... has failed, utterly failed" [9].

On the 5 February 2011 David Cameron in the UK joined her: "Frankly, we need a lot less of the passive tolerance of recent years and much more active, muscular liberalism" [10].

On the 11 February this year Nicolas Sarkozy in France was quoted as saying, "We have been too concerned about the identity of the person who was arriving and not enough about the identity of the country that was receiving him" [11].

Australia does not deal with a similar intake of immigrants, although their degree of diversity would be comparable. How much the alignment with mainstream society has succeeded or otherwise can be gleaned from the sheer number of ethnic groups and associations that dot the demographic landscape of Queensland alone. A list of multicultural groups contains over 600 entries [12], and, as they themselves make clear, many exist not only for purely social reasons.

5. Conclusion

A complex and sophisticated society needs to deal with our contemporary challenges within its own framework. It is in a different league compared to agrarian societies and especially those bordering on dysfunctionality. Diversity in its ranks can make for a greater pool from which solutions are drawn, provided the diversity does not escalate into disparity.

Not all newcomers pose a problem for the national fabric. Yet potential incompatibilities with our overall democratic system need to play a part in the debate on the future. One question that seems to be overlooked revolves around the issue of democracy itself. Should a democratic political system admit to its ranks a mind set that is inherently undemocratic?

The question goes beyond politics alone. Our principles of consensus, discrimination in terms of standards and freedom of expression go to the heart of an achieving and dynamic society. Overriding those aspects in favour of constraints and mediocrity only leads to a polarised population with the very real prospect for destructive extremism.

Notes/References:

1. The research material can be accessed at <http://www.otoom.net>. Note that the section Parallels contains over 230 major events from around the world that took place after completing the research and confirm its findings (<http://www.otoom.net/Parallels.htm>). For example, two reports on the situation in Iraq, "Notes on the Iraq Study Group Report" and "Where is Iraq heading? Lessons from Basra" give detailed reasons for the difficulties experienced there and tally with the mind model on every point (<http://www.otoom.net/NotesOnTheISG.htm> and <http://www.otoom.net/NotesOnWhereIsIraqHeading.htm> respectively).
2. See <http://www.otoom.net/AidingTheCatastrophe.htm>. The main figures have been taken from the OECD data for African nations.
3. <http://kurabymosque.org.au/index.php>
4. http://kurabymosque.org.au/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=50&Itemid=53
5. <http://www.ummulhasanaat.co.za/our-syllabus>
6. <http://www.ummulhasanaat.co.za/category/latest-news>
7. <http://www.otoom.net/DemographicOrientations.htm>
8. On this point I can draw on personal experience. Having rescued 89 Vietnamese refugees in the South China Sea in 1980 (see <http://trove.nla.gov.au/work/9699838>) I was invited on a number of occasions to visit those who came to Australia, mostly in Sydney and Melbourne. After many years it was a delight to see their beautiful homes and healthy children, born and now grown up in Australia and making their own successful way in life indeed having children of their own - and all this without the Australian Federal Police looking over their shoulders.
9. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-11559451>
10. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-12371994>
11. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/france/8317497/Nicolas-Sarkozy-declares-multiculturalism-had-failed.html>
12. http://www.multicultural.qld.gov.au/media/maq_resource_directory.pdf

Yours sincerely,