Multicultural Citizenship

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Multicultural Citizenship

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Contents

Major Issues i

Introduction 1

Responses to Ethnocultural Diversity 2

Table 1.1 Foreign or immigrant population in selected OECD countries 3

Table 1.2 Foreign-born residents in the USA, Canada and Australia 4

The Differential Exclusion Model 5

Germany 6

The Assimilationist Model 7

France 8

The Pluralist Model 10

The United States of America 11

The International Debate on Multiculturalism 12

Democracy and Difference 13

Multicultural Citizenship 16

Australian Multiculturalism 17

Multicultural principles and Australian citizenship 17

Indigenous People and Multiculturalism 20

Social Justice and Economic Rationalism 21

Multiculturalism as Bureaucratic Practice 23

The decline of ethnic politics 24

Conclusion 27

Endnotes 28
Major Issues

Globalisation has led to mass population movements, affecting all highly-developed countries, as well as many newly-industrialising economies. By 1993, there were 19 million foreign residents in European OECD countries, and 1.3 million in Japan. Foreign residents made up 8.5 per cent of the population in Germany, 6.3 per cent in France and 1.1 per cent in Japan. The USA had 20 million foreign-born residents in 1991 (7.9 per cent of total population) and Canada had 4.3 million (15.6 per cent). Australia had the highest proportion of overseas-born population of any major country: 4.1 million (22.7 per cent of total population). A further 20 per cent of Australians had at least one immigrant parent.

Throughout the world, increasing cultural diversity is becoming a major factor in social and political change. This presents new challenges to existing models of the nation and the state. As a relatively new nation with one of the biggest immigrant populations in the world, Australia has gone further than most other countries in seeking to redefine its national identity and its notion of citizenship. In half a century we have moved away from the exclusionary White Australia Policy and abandoned the idea that people of different backgrounds can simply be assimilated into the existing culture. Our multicultural policies, which combine acceptance of cultural difference with a strong ethos of social justice, are arousing increasing international interest.

In comparing immigration countries, three basic models for responding to diversity may be identified (see pp.3-13):

- The differential exclusion model, in which immigrants are incorporated into certain areas of society (eg. the labour market) but denied access to others (such as welfare systems and political participation). Membership of civil society (as workers, taxpayers, etc.) does not confer a right to membership of the nation-state (as citizens). Immigrants become ethnic minorities, excluded from full participation in society. This model is to be found in European countries which recruited 'guestworkers' in the 1960s (eg. Germany, Austria and Switzerland), but also in some new immigration countries like Japan.

- The assimilationist model, based on 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. Immigrants can become citizens only if they give up their group identity. Assimilationist approaches have
Multicultural Citizenship

been tried in many immigration countries, and are to be found today in France and other European countries.

- The pluralist model, which means accepting immigrants as ethnic communities which remain distinguishable from the majority population with regard to language and culture. Immigrants are granted equal rights, without being expected to give up their diversity, although with an expectation of conformity to key values. This model is to be found today in 'classical immigration countries' like the USA, Canada and Australia, where the process of building new nations has led to the inclusionary notion that anyone permanently resident on the territory should be offered citizenship. Openness to immigration goes together with encouragement of family reunion, naturalisation and access to civil and political rights. The pluralist model has two main variants. In the 'laissez-faire' approach typical of the USA, difference is tolerated, but it is not seen as the role of the state to assist with integration or cultural maintenance. The second variant is explicit multicultural policies, with a high degree of state involvement, as in Canada, Australia and Sweden.

In practice there is no rigid division between the three models—some countries have aspects of all of them, while others changed their policies over time, in response to settlement and growing cultural diversity. Australia started its immigration program in 1947 with a mixture of exclusionism towards Asians and assimilationism towards Europeans. By the 1970's, the inescapable reality of cultural maintenance and community formation led to the emergence of multicultural policies. Most European and Asian immigration countries have so far rejected pluralism, for fear of loss of national identity and homogeneity. However, recent experiences of socio-economic exclusion and racist violence have made it clear that existing models lead to a dangerous split in society. The result is a growing debate on multiculturalism and the need to make immigrants into citizens.

Ethnocultural diversity has become a key issue throughout the world, making it necessary to rethink existing models of the nation-state. This paper examines current debates in political science, and argues that prevailing liberal-democratic models of citizenship are based on outmoded notions of cultural homogeneity (see pp. 14-18). There is a need to move towards a new type of multicultural citizenship appropriate to highly diverse societies and contemporary economic trends. Recognition of group difference implies departing from the idea of all citizens as simply equal individuals, and instead seeing them simultaneously as having equal rights as individuals and different needs and wants as members of groups with specific characteristics and social situations. Multicultural citizenship has the following principles:

1. Taking equality of citizenship rights as a starting point. It is essential to ensure that all members of society are formally included as citizens, and enjoy equal rights and equality before the law.
2. Recognising that formal equality of rights does not necessarily lead to equality of respect, resources, opportunities or welfare. Formal equality can mask and legitimise disadvantage and discrimination. It is necessary to consciously recognise group difference and to understand its causes.

3. Establishing mechanisms for group representation and participation. Despite formal equality, disadvantaged groups are often excluded from decision-making processes. It is necessary to make arrangements to ensure the participation of people directly affected, wherever important decisions are made.

4. Differential treatment for people with different characteristics, needs and wants. Treating people equally, despite the fact that past actions have made them unequal, can perpetuate inequality. Government should take measures to combat barriers based on gender, sexual preference, age, disability, location, Aboriginality, ethnicity, religion, area of origin and culture.

The third main section of the paper (pp. 19-29) is concerned with Australian multicultural policies, as they have evolved since the 1970s. Documents like the 1989 National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia and the recent National Multicultural Advisory Council report, Multicultural Australia: the Next Steps, Towards and Beyond 2000, imply the recognition of group difference as part of the state's task of securing universality in resource allocation. Cultural rights are implicitly seen as part of citizenship, along with civil, political and social rights. The right to cultural difference is linked to policies of social justice. However, such policies do not make an explicit statement on the need for reshaping citizenship in a culturally diverse society. There is no discussion of the need for basic changes in political institutions to accommodate cultural difference. Multiculturalism is still treated as peripheral to major political debates.

It is important to examine the extent to which multiculturalism has actually changed our society and state. The following issues may be identified:

- It is vital to include indigenous people, if multiculturalism is to offer a perspective on identity and citizenship for all Australians. Recent policy statements have recognised this, but their success has been limited: indigenous people still tend to see multiculturalism as a policy for immigrants, which has little to offer them. Multiculturalism could be made relevant to indigenous people through much stronger policies to combat racism and socio-economic exclusion.

- Social justice is a central concern of multicultural policies, and substantial progress has been achieved. However, official data reveals that indigenous and non-English speaking background (NESB) people are still under-represented in parliaments and the public services, and among major company managers and union officials. Indigenous people have extremely high unemployment rates, while NESB people have unemployment rates considerably above the national average. Other social
justice problems include continuing barriers to recognition of overseas skills as well as housing disadvantage.

- Multiculturalism has been integrated into bureaucratic practice through the policy of mainstreaming service delivery for ethnic communities. However, evaluations of Access and Equity policies show that many problems remain in this area. The official response to racism also appears deficient. There is no general monitoring of racially-motivated offences. Complaints-based procedures are often hard to access, unwieldy and ineffective.

- One reason for the slow progress in some areas of multicultural policy is the lack of effective political mobilisation by ethnic communities. This relative political passivity is partly due to the cooption of ethnic leaders through funding and consultative arrangements, and partly to the lack of opportunities for direct political involvement for minority groups in our representative democracy.

Relative to population size, Australia has had the largest immigrant intake of any developed country (except Israel) since 1947. Our policies of easy access to citizenship and active involvement of government in settlement and community relations have been remarkably successful. Australia has been able to absorb people of many different cultures without severe strains or conflicts. Multiculturalism has also provided a new model for our identity within the Asia-Pacific region. Immigration countries without such policies have experienced considerable problems, including socio-economic exclusion of minorities, serious splits in society, and growing violence. The costs of multicultural policies seem a modest price for the avoidance of such problems, which would not only cause major economic costs but also reduce the quality of life for most citizens.

However, multiculturalism has not yet succeeded in bringing about full participation of indigenous Australians and people of non-English speaking background in certain key areas of economic and political life. It is important to further improve measures designed to secure social justice and access and equity for all groups. The paper concludes that it is time to consider whether cultural diversity requires a fundamental re-examination of our political institutions. Active citizenship for all means the right of participation by citizens in decision-making at all levels. The challenge is to bring about changes in representative mechanisms and bureaucratic structures to permit more democracy in more places, for both groups and individuals.
Introduction

Globalisation has profound effects on culture, partly due to internationalisation of communication and the mass media, but also because of increasing international population movements. The populations of many countries are becoming more diverse, leading to shifts in national cultures and identities. This in turn seems certain to have major impacts on political institutions. In his opening address to the Global Cultural Diversity Conference in Sydney in April 1995, Prime Minister Paul Keating pointed to the 'period of profound transition' of the nation-state, and suggested that the international community needed to consider four possible responses:

1. redefining state borders;
2. a radical redefinition of what constitutes a state;
3. building up the role of regional institutions and identities;
4. redefining the nation.¹

Such issues are of key importance for Australia, where immigration since 1945 has led to profound demographic and cultural changes. This paper is concerned with the second and the last of Mr Keating's 'four responses': redefining the state and the nation. As a relatively new nation, made up of people from all over the world as well as indigenous people, Australia has special problems in defining its culture and identity, and in devising appropriate political institutions. Our polity is based on the model of the nation-state as it emerged in Western Europe and North America from the 18th century, but does this really fit our situation on the eve of the 21st century?

The notion of the nation-state implies a close link between ethnicity and political identity. The *nation* is usually seen as a group of people who have a feeling of belonging together on the basis of shared language, culture, traditions and history—in other words an ethnic community. The *state* is seen as a structure with territorial boundaries that should coincide with ethnic ones, and which represents the political values of the nation.² Such a concept of the nation-state implies a drive towards ethno-cultural homogenisation of the population. This can be achieved positively through institutions (such as schools, administration, church, national service) which transmit a common language and culture; or negatively through persecution of minorities and even 'ethnic cleansing'. This model of the nation-state finds it hard to accommodate the trends towards increasing migration and cultural diversity which are typical of the present epoch. The paradox is that we are
caught between conflicting centripetal and centrifugal forces. For instance, European countries are achieving greater economic and political integration through the European Union, while at the same time new forms of nationalism (such as regional movements and extreme-right anti-immigrant parties) weaken national states.

A central category for analysing the link between the nation and state in a democracy is *citizenship*. The key idea of this paper is that the transformation of our society requires a new notion of *multicultural citizenship* (see pp. 17-18). This may be characterised as a system of rights and obligations which protects the integrity of the individual while recognising that individuality is formed in a variety of social and cultural contexts.

Growing ethnocultural diversity exacerbates a basic dilemma of liberal democratic principles. These stipulate that all citizens are equal individuals and should be treated equally. State policies and services should therefore be based on the idea of universalism. However, the population actually consists of people belonging to a variety of social and cultural groups, with specific needs, interests and values. This makes equal treatment questionable, because it may maintain or cause unequal outcomes. How is a liberal-democratic political system to resolve this dilemma?

In fact modern states deal with this ambiguity by means of a range of economic, social and cultural policies. In Australia, it can be argued that recent policies on social justice and multiculturalism actually imply an underlying concept of citizenship much broader than the traditional liberal-democratic one. However, the policies have been based on more restricted and short-term policy objectives, concerned with facilitating migrant settlement and avoiding community relations problems. It is now important to move more consciously towards a new notion of citizenship.

The paper will start by looking at the ways in which various highly-developed immigration countries have responded to the challenges of immigration and growing ethnocultural diversity. Then it will examine current political science debates on the dilemma of universalism and difference. The paper will go on to discuss how Australian multiculturalism deals with these issues.

**Responses to Ethnocultural Diversity**

Mass labour migration and refugee flows have been significant in virtually all highly-developed countries since 1945. In the late 1980s, migration flows accelerated and became more complex in character. The existing immigration areas (Western Europe, North America and Australia) were joined by newcomers (Southern Europe, Japan, and the newly industrialising countries of Asia and Latin America). Immigration control became a major international issue, but along with this came a debate about how to respond to the presence of new minorities within society. Multiculturalism and citizenship became major political themes.
By 1993, there were 19 million foreign residents in European OECD countries, and 1.3 million in Japan. Foreign residents made up 8.5 per cent of the population in Germany, 18 per cent in Switzerland, 6.3 per cent in France and 1.1 per cent in Japan. The USA had 20 million foreign-born residents in 1991 (7.9 per cent of total population), Canada had 4.3 million (15.6 per cent) and Australia had 4.1 million (22.7 per cent) (OECD, 1995: Table 1.2). Figures for various countries are given in Table 1.

Table 1.1  Foreign or immigrant population in selected OECD countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Foreign population</th>
<th>% of total population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>297 690</td>
<td>3.9 8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>891 921</td>
<td>9.0 9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>104 189</td>
<td>2.0 3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>16 56</td>
<td>0.3 1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>3 714 3 597</td>
<td>6.8 6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>4 535 6 878</td>
<td>7.4 8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>83 94</td>
<td>2.4 2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>381 987</td>
<td>0.7 1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>817 1 321</td>
<td>0.7 1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxembourg</td>
<td>96 125</td>
<td>26.3 31.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>552 780</td>
<td>3.8 5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>95 162</td>
<td>2.3 3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>210 430</td>
<td>0.5 1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>397 508</td>
<td>4.8 5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>926 1 260</td>
<td>14.4 18.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>1 601 2 001</td>
<td>2.8 3.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL 14 715 19 999


1Data for the foreign population are from population registers except for France (census), the United Kingdom (labour force survey), and Japan and Switzerland (register of foreigners).

21990 for France, 1992 for Ireland.

31990 for France, 1992 for Ireland.

4Data for 1993 cover Germany, and for 1983 western Germany only.

Multicultural Citizenship
Multicultural Citizenship

Table 1.2 Foreign-born residents in the USA, Canada and Australia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Foreign-born population</th>
<th>Thousands</th>
<th>% of total population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>3004</td>
<td>4125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>3843</td>
<td>4343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>14080</td>
<td>19767</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


These statistics give only a partial indication of ethnic diversity. Figures on foreign residents leave out illegal entrants, as well as people who have become naturalised. The data also leave out members of ethnic minorities who are not immigrants or foreigners. For instance, the United Kingdom had 2 million foreign residents in 1993 (3.5 per cent of the population) but there were a further 2.6 million ethnic minority members (4.7 per cent of the population), most of whom had been born in the UK. In the USA, the 1990 Census showed an ethnic composition of 80 per cent white, 12 per cent black, 1 per cent American Indian, 3 per cent Asian and 4 per cent 'other race'. There were also 9 per cent Hispanics, who could be 'of any race'. In Canada 'ethnocultural origin' cuts across classification by immigrant or non-immigrant: 34 per cent of the population are of British origin, 24 per cent French, 5 per cent British-French combined, and 38 per cent 'other' (mainly immigrant) origin. Finally, most European countries have older ethnic minorities, including Jews, Gipsies and regional groups (such as Basques in Spain, Corsicans in France).

Each country has developed its own responses to issues of ethnic diversity. However, for the purposes of cross-national comparison, it is possible to identify three basic models:

- differential exclusion
- assimilation
- pluralism.

The following section will examine these models, discuss examples of countries which come close to them and assess some of the consequences. No country fits the ideal-types exactly. In some countries there has been an evolution, starting with differential exclusion, progressing to calls for complete and rapid assimilation, moving on to ideas of gradual integration, and finally leading to pluralist models (Australia is a case in point). Other countries, such as the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, are much more
Multicultural Citizenship

ambivalent, with strong elements of both assimilationism and pluralism. Policies of assimilation in specific areas (such as economic or social policy) may co-exist with pluralism in other areas (such as citizenship or cultural policy).

The Differential Exclusion Model

Differential exclusion may be characterised as a situation in which immigrants are incorporated into certain areas of society (above all the labour market) but denied access to others (such as welfare systems, citizenship and political participation). Membership of civil society (as workers, tax-payers, parents, etc.) does not confer a right to membership of the nation-state (as citizens). Exclusion may be effected through legal mechanisms (refusal of naturalisation and sharp distinctions between the rights of citizens and non-citizens), or through informal practices (racism and discrimination). Immigrants become ethnic minorities, which are excluded from full participation in society. These minorities are usually socio-economically disadvantaged, implying a strong link between class and ethnic background. Moreover, migrant women are usually particularly disadvantaged, so that gender becomes linked to ethnic background and class as a factor of differentiation.

Differential exclusion is mainly to be found in countries where belonging to the nation is based on membership of a specific ethnic group (or sometimes a number of such groups). The ethnic belonging (or 'folk') model is typical of Central and Eastern European countries which have been at the historical cross-roads of invasions, migrations, border struggles and the rise and fall of empires. The difficulties in forming nation-states led to an aggressive and exclusionary form of nationalism. Germany in particular, was a 'late nation' only unified in 1871, and seeking to assert itself against Britain, France and Russia in the quest for European and colonial dominance. A variant of the ethnic model is countries like Switzerland and Belgium which have developed as nations with more than one 'founding group'. The historical arrangements developed to deal with this have led to delicate balances, that make it hard to incorporate new groups.

Several newer immigration countries fit the ethnic model. In Japan, historical isolation led to a high degree of cultural homogeneity (although with both indigenous and immigrant minorities), and the move to a modern nation-state has been based on a notion of ethnic belonging. Greece has a myth of ethnic homogeneity linked to strong nationalism. Italy too was a 'late nation' which has experienced changing fortunes in a struggle against underdevelopment and regionalism. The result is an insecure nationalism, which finds it hard to accommodate new groups. New Asian immigration countries are often recently emerged nations which have sought to build nation-states out of diverse groups in post-colonial situations. They find it hard to accept new forms of ethno-cultural difference.
Nations based on ethnic belonging are unwilling to accept immigrants and their children as members. Acceptance of new linguistic and cultural diversity is seen as a threat to national culture. The official aim in such countries is to maintain 'ethnic purity' and 'cultural homogeneity', although both are myths, for modern nations are almost invariably the product of past migrations and amalgamations of ethnic groups. The result of this approach is restrictive immigration policies, the ideology of not being countries of immigration even when mass immigration has taken place, the denial of civil and political rights to immigrants, and highly restrictive policies on citizenship for immigrants and their descendants. Immigration policies are based on the notion that admission of migrants is only a temporary expedient. Immigrants are kept mobile through restrictions on residence rights and prevention of family reunion. This applies to former 'guestworker' recruiting countries in Western Europe, such as Germany, Switzerland, Austria and Belgium. It is also the case for the Gulf oil states, which have recruited workers within rigid contract labour systems since the 1970s.

Germany

The following brief discussion of Germany may serve as an illustration of the differential exclusion model. Germany is in the paradoxical situation of being officially regarded as 'not a country of immigration', and yet having had enormous inflows since 1945: nearly 20 million people in all, including 1.5 million per year in 1991 and 1992. The largest groups were Volksdeutsche (ethnic Germans) from the East immediately after 1945 (some 8 million) and then again since 1989 (about 2 million). The Volksdeutsche, whose ancestors may have left Germany centuries ago, are seen as Germans by descent and have an immediate right to citizenship because of the principle of ius sanguinis (the law of the blood, or nationality by descent) which is still the basis of German nationality.

The situation of Germany's other immigrants is quite different. Most of the 7 million foreign residents are there because of mass labour recruitment between 1955 and 1973. The Federal Government brought in 'guestworkers', mainly from Southern Europe and Turkey, who were meant to work in Germany for a few years and then go home. The Government stopped recruitment in 1973, hoping that surplus foreign workers would leave. In fact, many stayed on, and family reunion and permanent settlement took place. Since the mid-1980s, increasing numbers of temporary workers from Poland and other Eastern European countries have been employed in low-skilled jobs. In addition, there have been substantial inflows of asylum seekers, with an upward curve from 100,000 in 1986 to 438,000 in 1992. Many come from Africa and Asia, but the main growth since 1989 has been in East-West movements.

The myth of temporary sojourn still shapes the legal status of foreigners, except those from European Community countries, who enjoy social and economic parity with German citizens. Non-EC residents are denied many rights, particularly concerning
political participation. The *ius sanguinis* principle makes it extremely hard for foreigners to become citizens. Apart from a ten year waiting period for most groups, there are high fees and restrictive rules concerning employment situations, financial security and police records. In 1992, there were just 37,000 naturalisations (0.5 per cent of the foreign population). The *ius sanguinis* principle also means that children born to immigrant parents in Germany have no automatic right to citizenship.

The political exclusion of foreign residents is linked to socio-economic marginalisation. Most were recruited as manual workers and have had few chances of upward mobility. Discrimination and lack of educational opportunities has carried this disadvantaged position over to much of the second generation. Social marginalisation has made immigrants into targets for racist violence from the extreme right, especially since German reunification in 1990. Another consequence has been growing mobilisation of immigrant youth—especially Turks—to fight racism and discrimination. Since mainstream political expression is denied, mobilisation is largely around cultural and religious symbols—further strengthening popular fears of 'otherness' and fundamentalism.

The situation is in flux in Germany. There is considerable alarm at the risk of increasing immigration from the East and South. Economic stagnation and fast demographic growth in parts of the former Soviet Union as well as in Turkey and North Africa seem to create the potential for uncontrollable movements. But views on integration of long-standing immigrants are also changing fast. The myth of not being 'a country of immigration' has become unsustainable, and citizenship for immigrants has become a major political issue. The growth of neo-Nazi groups has made many people aware of the dangers of permanently excluding a large group of people from society. One of the main slogans of the growing anti-racist movement is the demand for dual citizenship. This is an important issue especially for Turks, who cannot easily give up their previous citizenship. The 'asylum compromise' of 1993—a change in Germany's Basic Law (or constitution) to restrict the right of political asylum—did make it easier for second generation immigrants to choose German citizenship, although the new rules stopped short of allowing dual citizenship.

Official policies still emphasise German national identity and culture—indeed there has been an upsurge in nationalism since reunification. This makes it hard to introduce multicultural policies or to make access to citizenship more liberal. However, the myth of cultural homogeneity is in obvious contradiction to the real situation in German cities. Whatever the political doctrine, welfare agencies and education authorities have had to set up special services and adopt multicultural policies to deal with problems in neighbourhoods and cities with immigrant concentrations. Now there is an active debate within the major political parties about citizenship for immigrants, and what this would mean for national identity and the political system.
The Assimilationist Model

Assimilation is usually defined as the policy of incorporating 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. The role of the state in assimilation is to create conditions favourable to individual adaptation and transferral of majority culture and values, through insistence on use of the dominant language and attendance at normal schools for migrant children. Immigrants can become citizens only if they give up their group identity.

Assimilationist approaches are to be found in nations which base their sense of belonging both on membership in the political community and on sharing a common culture. Examples are France, Britain and the Netherlands, which combine (in varying ways) two sets of historical factors: first, ideas on racial superiority resulting from a colonial history; secondly, ideas on citizenship, civil rights and political participation which result from the democratic-nationalist movements of the 18th and 19th centuries. These three countries conferred citizenship status on their colonial subjects to bolster ideological control and cultural domination. This had the effect of facilitating migration from the former colonies as the empires crumbled after 1945. At first migrants were welcomed by governments as usual labour, but attitudes began to change as labour needs declined and urban conflicts emerged. From the 1960s, citizenship rules have gradually been altered to eliminate the special rights of formerly colonised peoples.

The assimilationist model was the prevailing approach in the USA in the early part of this century, at a time of massive immigration and urbanisation. It was also the policy of several post-1945 immigration countries, including Canada and Australia. In some cases, assimilation policies have been abandoned over time, and replaced with pluralist policies. This happened in response to the recognition that recent immigrants were not assimilating, but were becoming concentrated into particular jobs and residential areas. This led to the emergence of ethnic communities, which maintained their mother-tongues and established social, cultural and political associations. Today, of all the highly-developed immigration countries, metropolitan France probably comes closest to the assimilation model.

France

The 1990 French Census showed a foreign resident population of 3.6 million (6.4 per cent of the total population) including 1.4 million North Africans and 1.2 million Southern Europeans. In addition there are 1.8 million immigrants who have become French citizens and an unknown number of Algerians who entered as French citizens before Algerian independence in 1961. A further category is made up of about half a million people who have migrated to metropolitan France from French 'Overseas
Departments and Territories' in the Caribbean, the Pacific and the Atlantic. These are French citizens and are not considered as migrants, but frequently experience racism and socio-economic disadvantage.

Foreign immigrants can obtain naturalisation fairly easily after five years residence—about 60,000 foreigners were naturalised in 1991. Until 1993, children born in France to foreign parents could automatically become French at the age of 18. Children whose parents became naturalised also received French citizenship. About 35,000 people received French citizenship in these ways in 1991. The Centre-Right Government changed the rule in 1993: now a young person of immigrant origin has to make a specific declaration of the desire to become French between the age of 16 and 21. Citizenship can be refused in the case of a previous criminal conviction. Acquisition of French citizenship often means dual citizenship. French law is thus 'a subtle combination of ius sanguinis, ius soli and the will of the applicant'. (Ius soli is the law of the soil: the principle that someone born on the territory of a nation is a citizen by virtue of that fact).

Once immigrants become citizens, they are supposed to enjoy full equality of rights. Special policies for ethnic groups are seen as hindrances to integration. To become citizens, immigrants are meant to display the necessary civic virtues (civisme), and fulfil their obligations to the secular, unitary state. The contradiction of this 'republican model' is that it appears to be purely political and as such to guarantee individual equality to all citizens, yet at the same time it requires acceptance of French culture and language, as necessary attributes of civisme. There is no room for cultural diversity or for formation of ethnic communities.

Two factors negate the 'republican model': socio-economic marginalisation and racism. People of non-European origin have high rates of unemployment and low average occupation status. They are concentrated in disadvantaged inner-city areas, or in the huge public housing areas on the periphery of the major cities. Racist violence has increased sharply, and the attraction of racist ideologies is shown by the success of the extreme-right Front National, which commands up to 16 per cent of the vote in elections. Thus the neat distinction between immigrant and citizen became overlaid by a graduation based on ethnicity. People of non-European birth or parentage, whether French citizens or not, constitute the ethnic minorities. These include Algerians, Tunisians and Moroccans, young Franco-Algerians, black Africans, Turks and settlers from the Overseas Departments and Territories.

Immigration and the position of ethnic minorities are central issues in French politics, as shown by the continuing debate on nationality law. Immigrants have become politically active, taking an important role in major strikes, and demanding civil, political and cultural rights. Youth discontent with unemployment and police practices led to riots in Lyons, Paris and other cities in the 1980s. The growing political role of Muslim organisations has become a controversial issue, while young people of North African origin have established movements to combat racism and to demand improvements in
housing and education. The rise in Islamic fundamentalism in Algeria, and recent acts of terrorism in France have led to an anti-immigrant backlash. In August 1995 the government announced new policies to curb illegal entries and to carry out mass deportations of illegal residents.

France is at a cross-roads: the assimilationist model of turning immigrants into citizens at the price of cultural conformity no longer works adequately. At the same time, many immigrants are no longer willing to accept assimilation when it brings neither social equality nor protection from racism. Organisations based on cultural identity are increasingly seen as the only way of combating racism and achieving a political voice. The answer for the right is to shift immigration and nationality policies towards a differential exclusion model. The left argues for maintenance of the status quo. For them, multiculturalism is unthinkable for France, for it would question the prevailing ideas on secularity and equality.

The Pluralist Model

Ethnocultural pluralism may be characterised as the acceptance of immigrant populations as ethnic communities which remain distinguishable from the majority population with regard to language, culture, and social organisation over several generations. Pluralism implies that immigrants should be granted equal rights in all spheres of society, without being expected to give up their diversity, although usually with an expectation of conformity to certain key values. Here, membership of civil society, initiated through permission to immigrate, leads to full participation in the nation-state.

This model is to be found today in the 'classical immigration countries': the USA, Canada and Australia. The process of building new nations has led to the inclusionary notion that anyone permanently resident on the territory should be offered citizenship. Openness to immigration goes together with encouragement of family reunion, naturalisation and access to civil and political rights. For the 'classical immigration countries' pluralism appears as the best way of incorporating large groups of immigrants with diverse backgrounds. Moreover, the imperative of making immigrants into citizens reinforces the pressure for pluralist policies: when immigrants are voters, ethnic groups can gain political clout. However, it should be noted that ethnocultural pluralism is a fairly new approach, going back to the early part of the century in the USA, but only to the 1970s elsewhere, and originating as a reaction to the failure of earlier policies of assimilation.

Pluralism has two main variants. In the 'laissez-faire' approach typical of the USA, difference is tolerated, but it is not seen as the role of the state to assist with integration or to support the maintenance of ethnic cultures. (This will be discussed in more detail below). The second variant of pluralism is explicit multicultural policies, which imply the willingness of the majority group to accept cultural difference, and to adapt national
identity and institutional structures. Such policies exist in Canada, Australia and Sweden, while multicultural policies exist in specific sectors, such as education, in several other countries.

Canada has many similarities with Australia as a new nation with a strong tradition of state intervention in social affairs. Sweden seems to be something of an anomaly, as a society which had a high degree of ethnic and cultural homogeneity until recently. Yet it has had large-scale settlement since 1945, and adopted multicultural policies very close to those of Australia and Canada. The reason lies in the state interventionist model of Swedish social democracy, which has used the same approaches to integrating immigrants into civil society and the state as were used earlier to integrate the working class. The Swedish model is an important indicator of the relevance of multicultural approaches in the European context.

The United States of America

Today's ethnically diverse US society is the result of five centuries of immigration. Since the 1965 Immigration Act, which opened the door for worldwide entries, new settlers have come mainly from Latin America and Asia. The main Latin American source country is Mexico, with many migrants coming as illegal agricultural workers. The main Asian countries of origin are the Philippines, China, South Korea, Vietnam and India. Current policy is for increased intakes, with a larger share of economic migrants.

Earlier European immigrants were initially incorporated into low-skilled industrial jobs, which led to labour market disadvantage and residential segregation. In the long run, many 'white ethnics' have been able to achieve upward mobility. However, such advancement was not shared by Afro-Americans, who migrated from the rural South to the new industries of North-Eastern and Western states from about 1920 onwards. Distinctions between blacks and whites in income, unemployment rates, social conditions and education are still extreme. Members of some recent immigrant groups, especially from Asia, have high educational and occupational levels, while many Latin Americans have little formal education and are concentrated in unskilled categories.

Integration of immigrants into the economy and society has been largely left to market forces. The egalitarian character of US society has been seen as providing the best possible chances for immigrant groups to become part of the 'American dream'. Nonetheless, government has played a role, by making it easy for immigrants to obtain US citizenship, and through conferring it on their children according to the ius soli (or territorial) principle. Compulsory education has been a vehicle for transmitting the English language and American values. Legislation following the Civil Right Movement of the 1950s and 1960s led to measures to prevent discrimination and secure equal opportunities for ethnic minorities. However, commitment to equal opportunities and
anti-poverty measures declined during the Reagan-Bush era, leading to increased community tension and racism.

Today US society presents the paradox of a democratic political system which incorporates immigrants and other minorities as citizens, and yet is marked by extreme divisions based on class, race and ethnicity. The constitutional and legal safeguards designed to ensure that all citizens enjoy equal rights have not been sufficient to prevent processes of socio-economic marginalisation, leading to formation of ghettos and underclasses based on race and ethnicity. Three major factors explain this paradox: the extreme racism deriving from the enslavement of Afro-Americans up to 1865; the culture of violence which was the legacy of frontier society; and the tradition of individualism with its corollary of a minimalist social policy.

The International Debate on Multiculturalism

This brief account of international responses to ethnic diversity indicates how important the issue has become. The differential exclusion model, as applied in former 'guestworker'-recruiting countries like Germany, seems highly problematic, for it attempts to deny the permanence of settlement and thus leads to socio-economic and political marginalisation of immigrants and their descendants. The assimilationist model has been gradually abandoned or modified in most countries. Where it is still applied, as in France, it is running into serious difficulties due to the contradiction between the promise of individual equality and the reality of continued socio-economic exclusion and racism.

Pluralist models have their difficulties too, as the remarks on the USA indicate. Multicultural policies are always topics of hot debate in Canada and Australia. Swedish multiculturalism is also currently under strain: first it is increasingly difficult to sustain liberal entry policies at a time of increasing South-North and East-West migration; second, generous policies on education, training, welfare and community funding for immigrants are being squeezed by the current fiscal crisis of the Swedish welfare state; third, immigrants themselves are beginning to criticise the paternalism inherent in the official notion of ethnicity. Nonetheless, in the long run pluralist approaches seem to offer the best model for dealing with ethnic diversity. That is why multiculturalism has recently become a major topic of debate even in countries which used to shun such ideas.

However, a word of caution is needed: the term is used in very different ways in various countries. In Europe, multiculturalism is generally seen as a model based on the parallel existence within society of groups with different values and culture. These groups tend to be seen as static and homogeneous within themselves. Multiculturalism is rejected because it is seen as a legitimation for separatism, cultural relativism and even fundamentalism, and therefore as threat to modernity, secularism and gender equality. In
the USA, on the other hand, multiculturalism focuses on the reinterpretation of US history and culture to recognise the contribution of groups traditionally excluded from the 'dominant canon': women, Afro-Americans, Native Americans, etc. In neither Europe nor the USA is multiculturalism usually understood as it is in Australia: as a public policy designed to ensure the full socio-economic and political participation of all members of an increasingly diverse population.

**Democracy and Difference**

We turn now to the political problems in the relationship between immigration, citizenship and democracy. There appear to be four main issues. First, the dilemma of formal inclusion concerns access to citizenship. Failure to make immigrants into citizens undermines a basic principle of parliamentary democracy—that all members of civil society should have rights of political participation—but making them into citizens questions concepts of the nation based on ethnic belonging or cultural homogeneity. This remains the main issue in many European countries, but is not very important in Australia today, where immigrants can obtain naturalisation after two years residence.

The second dilemma concerns substantial citizenship—that is the rights and obligations connected with being a member of a national political community. Where immigrants are socio-economically marginalised and targets for racist violence, granting formal citizenship does not guarantee the full civil, political and social rights which constitute modern citizenship. Achieving full participation requires a whole range of policies and institutions concerned with combating racism and discrimination, and improving labour market status, access to welfare, education and housing. This issue is significant in all immigration countries, including Australia, and it is a major focus of multicultural policies.

The third dilemma is that of recognition of collective cultural rights. This arises because it often proves impossible to simply incorporate immigrants into society as individuals. In many cases, immigrants and their descendants cluster together, share a common socio-economic position, develop their own community structures, and seek to maintain their languages and cultures. Culture and ethnicity are vital resources in the settlement process. Immigrants cannot become full citizens unless the state and society are willing to accept the right to cultural difference not only for individuals but also for groups. Collective cultural rights are therefore a central part of multiculturalism. However, they are only meaningful if they are linked to social justice strategies. If cultural difference leads to
social disadvantage (such as high unemployment, low incomes or poor housing) then we cannot speak of equality of respect for all cultural groups.

This leads on to the fourth dilemma, that of the appropriateness of our political institutions. As the Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor has argued, political ideas and institutions are the expression of a certain range of cultures, and may be incompatible with other ranges. Even a doctrine like liberalism cannot claim complete neutrality. For instance its notion of the division between the public and the private is unacceptable to feminists. A multicultural society cannot expect the culturally-bound principles of the group dominant in earlier phases of its history to remain appropriate when new groups are included in the political process. For Australia this implies that it may be necessary to re-examine the appropriateness of institutional structures based on the Anglo-Celtic traditions of the founding fathers of the Federation. The individualistic conflict model which underlies common law may not appeal to people whose legal traditions are based on conciliation and community involvement. Similarly, a form of parliamentarism which gives little room for citizen involvement between elections and which tends to polarise issues on party lines may not appear as the last word in democracy to everyone.

Liberal theories of citizenship have difficulty in dealing with collective difference. Attempts to enhance democracy have generally involved making citizenship rights available to ever-wider circles of the population. Suffrage in western countries applied initially only to male property-owners, but was later extended to the working class and then to women. In recent times, citizenship for indigenous and immigrant minorities has been seen as the key to greater equality. However, liberal citizenship tends to homogenise political identity: all citizens are supposed to have equal rights as citizens, whatever their actual economic and social positions. As women, indigenous people and immigrants have found, formal political equality may not overcome racism, economic disadvantage or social exclusion. Equality as citizens is necessary, but not in itself sufficient to achieve real empowerment and change.

There are a number of solutions to this problem. The American feminist philosopher Iris Marion Young argues that full citizenship can only be achieved through recognition that people's primary social identity may not be as individual members of society but as members of a specific community. This implies the right for groups to remain different. Young therefore advocates a concept of differentiated citizenship with two main aspects. First, democracy must mean not only enfranchisement of all, but also mechanisms to secure participation of different social groups in decision-making, especially groups which are usually excluded. This argument would legitimate special representative bodies for certain groups—a principle already embodied in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission. It could also justify veto rights on certain decisions by groups directly affected.

The second aspect concerns equal versus differential treatment. Universality implies that laws and policies should be blind to race, gender, ethnicity and other group differences.
The principle of equal treatment is based on the idea of generally applicable norms of behaviour and performance. But there are in fact no objective general norms: they are based on the experience of the groups who have the power to set them. Thus seemingly fair and objective standards may discriminate against those who are excluded—and indeed can serve as an ideological legitimation for that exclusion. As Professor Laksiri Jayasuriya of the University of Western Australia has written: "...in a plural society, we discover that people's needs are unequal but equity policy dictates that we assume that needs are equal. Hence the paradox in a plural society—that we cannot be egalitarian and equitable at the same time". Differential treatment is sometimes needed to achieve equity. The obvious examples here are affirmative action measures to improve the educational or occupational level of disadvantaged groups, or special services for groups with special needs.

Young's notion of differentiated citizenship seems both useful and problematic. It does point the way to measures for increasing equity, but it could lead to a new type of fixation and homogenisation of identity. If group rights are institutionalised, that must imply some mechanism for determining and registering group membership. But many people assigned to a group may not accept this as their principle source of political identity. They may want to relate to the political community as a whole, or they may have multiple group affiliations. Fixed group membership may be experienced as repressive, especially if it means binding people to groups with rigid values on gender, religion or social behaviour. A political system based on group rights runs the risk of undermining the equality of political rights which has been an historical demand of democratic movements.

A second approach is that of Charles Taylor, who takes as his starting point the need for recognition. He argues that our identity is shaped through recognition or its absence on the part of others. He sees liberal ideas on the equal worth of individuals as central to securing recognition in modern society. However, increasing cultural diversity and the emergence of multiculturalism lead to potentially contradictory discourses on two levels. On the one hand, the politics of universalism mean emphasising the equal dignity of individuals through the equalisation of rights and entitlements. On the other hand, the modern notion of identity has given rise to a politics of difference, based on recognition of the unique identity of a certain individual or group, and their distinctness from everyone else. The politics of universalism require norms of non discrimination which are blind to difference, while the politics of difference require special rights and treatment for certain groups, such as Aboriginal people.

Thus the claims of individual rights and protection of collective identities seem irreconcilable, but Taylor sets out to bridge the gulf, using the example of Quebec's claims for special rights for the French language and culture. He argues that one can distinguish the fundamental rights (like habeas corpus) which should never be infringed, from privileges and immunities that are important, but that can be revoked or restricted for reasons of public policy. On this basis, Quebeckers are justified in demanding special
Multicultural Citizenship

cultural differences, because bearers of individual rights develop their individuality within varying social and cultural contexts. 'A correctly understood theory of rights requires a politics of recognition that protects the integrity of the individual in the life contexts in which his or her identity is formed.' Democracy in a multicultural society therefore means guaranteeing social and cultural rights for everyone, rather than just for members of specific groups. However, as Habermas points out, this does not happen by itself, but rather as the result of social movements and political struggles.

The virtue of Habermas' formulation is that it removes the false contradiction between individual rights and group identities, by stressing that everyone is both an individual and a bearer of a collective identity. A democratic state must therefore guarantee rights at both levels. Combined with Habermas' emphasis on the legitimate role of political action in achieving change, and his notion that no political system can remain static in a changing world, this provides a valuable philosophical framework for a new notion of citizenship.

Multicultural Citizenship

On the basis of this discussion, it is now possible to suggest some principles for multicultural citizenship. Recognition of group difference and its social meaning implies departing from the idea of all citizens as simply equal individuals and instead seeing them simultaneously as having equal rights as individuals and different needs and wants as members of groups with specific characteristics and social situations.

This gives rise to the following principles for multicultural citizenship:

1. **Taking equality of citizenship rights as a starting point.** It is essential to ensure that all members of society are formally included as citizens, and enjoy equal rights and equality before the law.

2. **Recognising that formal equality of rights does not necessarily lead to equality of respect, resources, opportunities or welfare.** Formal equality can indeed mask and legitimise disadvantage and discrimination. Multicultural citizenship must be based on an understanding of group differences and their causes. Moreover, such differences must be seen as legitimate, and not as disabilities or deviance.

3. **Establishing mechanisms for group representation and participation.** Since formal equality of citizens and their representation through the parliamentary system does not in itself overcome barriers based on social markers, disadvantaged groups are often excluded from decision-making processes. This can only be combated by means of institutional arrangements to ensure the participation of people directly affected, wherever important decisions are made. This means devising mechanisms to secure more democracy in more places.
4. **Differential treatment for people with different characteristics, needs and wants.** Treating people equally, despite the fact that past conditions, laws, policies and practices have made them unequal in various ways, can only perpetuate inequality. State intervention must ensure appropriate rules, programs and service provisions to combat barriers based on social markers concerned with gender, sexual preference, age, disability, location, Aboriginality, ethnicity, religion, area of origin and culture.

**Australian Multiculturalism**

To what extent does Australian multiculturalism correspond with this notion of citizenship? Multiculturalism was originally devised in the 1970s as a model to respond to the needs of a growing immigrant population after the failure of previous policies of assimilation. It does not provide an explicit model of citizenship and democracy, but, as will be argued here, it has developed into a set of policies that makes a powerful implicit statement on these matters. The questions are, to what extent is this statement actually translated into practice, and what effect does it have on the lives of minority groups?

**Multicultural principles and Australian citizenship**

Multiculturalism was first officially embraced as a policy in Canada in 1971. Soon after, Al Grassby, Minister of Immigration in the Whitlam Government, adopted the concept for Australia. Rejection of assimilationism and a declaration that Australian was a multicultural country were linked to policies for improving welfare and educational provision for mainly working class migrants of European origin. The Liberal and Country Party Coalition, which governed from 1975 to 1983, also adopted multiculturalism, but modified the policy to emphasise cultural pluralism and the role of ethnic organisations in provision of welfare services. Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser stressed the value of multiculturalism for achieving social cohesion in an ethnically diverse society. The central notion of this type of multiculturalism was the key role of the ethnic group, which was seen as having a relatively fixed and homogeneous cultural identity and easily identifiable leaders. Australian society appeared as a collection of ethnic communities united around a set of 'core values'.

Critics of this 'ethnic group model' of multiculturalism have argued that such funding policies might actually create the communities and leaderships that government wanted to work with, while ignoring diversity and tendencies to change within each group. Nonetheless, multiculturalism made an important new statement on substantial citizenship: that it was no longer necessary to be culturally assimilated to gain full acceptance. You could be an Australian, even if you spoke another language and followed different cultural practices and life-styles (as long as these did not conflict with Australian law).
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The ALP Government of the 1980s and 1990s again redefined multiculturalism, to fit in with its key policies of economic deregulation, more efficient use of human resources, maintaining the social safety net, and integrating Australia into the Asia-Pacific region. The shift was also influenced by other changes: the shift from Europe to Asia as the main source of immigrants, increased emphasis on high skill levels as an entry criterion, and the labour market entry of second generation immigrants with much better education levels than their parents. In doing so, the Government moved away from the 'ethnic group approach' and developed what may be called 'a citizenship model of multiculturalism'.

The new model was laid down in the *National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia*, launched by then Prime Minister Bob Hawke in 1989. The *National Agenda* broadened the notion of multiculturalism to include the three dimensions of cultural identity, social justice and economic efficiency. The document implicitly embodied an innovative concept of citizenship: it took for granted the three types of rights—civil, political and social rights—suggested in sociologist Thomas Marshall's classical analysis of citizenship in postwar Britain. It went on to add a new component: cultural rights. Australian citizenship was thus said to embrace civil, political, social and cultural rights. Multiculturalism was defined in the *National Agenda* as a system of rights and freedoms, combined with such obligations as commitment to the nation, a duty to accept the Australian Constitution and the rule of law, and the acceptance of basic principles such as tolerance and equality, English as the national language and equality of the sexes.

The *National Agenda* clearly implied some of the principles of multicultural citizenship discussed above: multiculturalism was not defined as cultural pluralism or minority
rights, but in terms of the rights of all citizens in a democratic state. The National Agenda
implied the recognition of difference as part of the state's task in securing universality in
resource allocation. The program contained in the document was based on the recognition
that some groups are disadvantaged by lack of language proficiency and education,
together with discrimination based on race, ethnicity and gender. It was seen as the duty
of the state to combat such disadvantage. There was an underlying understanding that
cultural rights could not be fully realised unless they were linked to policies of social
justice. The principles of the National Agenda have stood the test of time: a new policy
document issued by the National Multicultural Advisory Council (NMAC) in 1995,
Multicultural Australia: the Next Steps, Towards and Beyond 200036 essentially reiterates
the 1989 statement, spelling out the principles in more detail and assessing the extent to
which the policy initiatives have been successfully implemented.

A wealth of further government statements and policy documents could be cited as
evidence that the principles and rhetoric of multiculturalism do, in many respects,
correspond to the principles of multicultural citizenship suggested in the previous section
of this paper. Moreover, much of the public discourse on this theme confirms the
impression that multiculturalism is now seen as an intrinsic part of Australian society and
identity. Certainly, there are dissenting voices, but few serious commentators advocate a
return to exclusionary or assimilationist models. But does this widely-held rhetoric on
multiculturalism reflect fundamental changes? In fact, it appears that cultural diversity is
only a peripheral theme in current debates on Australian identity and institutions. Monash
University political scientist Professor Alastair Davidson has argued that the republican
debate has hardly addressed the need for constitutional change to reflect the diversity of
the Australian population:

Yet despite this disagreement about the British connection, both [sides] understand what it
is to be Australian within the same parameters, those of a debate with the mother country.
The myth of our foundation as heirs to the traditions of the English-speaking peoples
carries with it an implicit notion of what it is to be a citizen. This notion excludes others
more appropriate today.40

Thus the move to a republic is seen by many as simply concerning the appointment of an
Australian head of state, while all else remains unchanged. This one-sidedness is a
continuation of the long silence about citizenship41 which has prevailed since Federation.
The lack of debate was initially based on the fact that Australians were British citizens
until 1948, since then on the notion that there was no need for change and therefore little
to discuss. In the last few years, citizenship has again become a public topic, with calls
for better understanding of what it means to be a citizen through programs of civics
education. At the same time, citizenship campaigns have been carried out to persuade
immigrants to get naturalised. But there has been little debate about the need for
redefining citizenship itself, by examining the appropriateness of rules and institutions
which govern the rights and duties of citizens.
This is partly linked to the fact that Australia—like Britain but unlike the USA, Canada and most European democracies—has no Bill of Rights to clearly stipulate what it means to be a citizen. In Canada, multiculturalism and equality rights were integrated into the definition of citizenship through the 1982 Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This explicit constitutional inclusion of multiculturalism has meant a recognition of collective identities and collective rights of specific groups as part of citizenship. In contrast the Australian approach is much more on the level of social policy: the special needs of ethnic groups are recognised, but the measures taken to deal with them are essentially concerned with welfare, education or services for individuals. The Australian approach is based on a principle of administration of social issues by the state, rather than active citizenship through group rights and collective participation in decision-making processes.

Official calls to rethink Australian identity in terms of cultural diversity and links to the Asia-Pacific region therefore seem to have had little bearing on actual change in our political and economic institutions as yet. Even within the debate on identity there is considerable ambiguity, as major recent public celebrations of Australianness have shown. The Bicentenary in 1988 acclaimed colonisation and nation-building in terms which were unacceptable to indigenous people, and which did little to include non-English speaking background people. Repeated celebrations of the fiftieth anniversary of various milestones in the Second World War evoked nationalist images of a people sustained in adversity by traditional Anglo-Australian values of discipline, stoicism and mateship. As Davidson has written: '... at the base of citizenship is a sense of national identity as against others. In both the British and Australian literature there is the theme of a warrior nation, of men and women who are ready to die for their country'.

Even on the level of political principles, multiculturalism still seems far from being an effective model for Australian citizenship. To what extent has multiculturalism actually transformed our society and state? To answer this question properly would require a detailed examination of multicultural policies and their outcomes, which is not possible here. Nonetheless, it is possible to point to some problem areas.

Indigenous People and Multiculturalism

In its early years, multiculturalism was widely seen as a strategy concerned with immigrants and their descendants. It was seldom linked to the needs of indigenous Australians, who had been excluded and marginalised far more drastically than any immigrant group. By the early 1980s, official proclamations were asserting that 'multiculturalism was for all Australians', but the agencies and services set up to implement the policy were predominantly concerned with issues affecting immigrants. The National Agenda did refer repeatedly to the situation of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders. Yet once again, the policy initiatives which flowed from the document related
mainly to the needs of immigrants. Indigenous people were only included in certain
general programs, such as those concerning Access and Equity and community relations.

This near absence of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders in multicultural policies
reflected a dilemma: many indigenous people rejected their inclusion, as they felt it
would make them seem like one ethnic group among others. Aboriginal spokespersons
asserted their special status, as the original inhabitants of the continent. Yet failure to
fully include indigenous people meant that multiculturalism could not truly be seen as a
comprehensive strategy for the recognition of collective cultural affiliations. In the late
1980s and early 1990s it became increasingly clear that Australia could never develop a
coherent and generally-accepted national identity unless it recognised the special position
of indigenous people and the historical wrongs done to them. This realisation found its

It was in this context that attempts were made to broaden multicultural policies to include
indigenous people. In its work on the 1995 policy document, NMAC did liaise with
Aboriginal spokespersons and with the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation. *Multicultural Australia* pays far more attention than its predecessor to concerns of
indigenous people. Yet such efforts remain on the level of rhetoric, and there are few
concrete policies or measures which could actually make multiculturalism relevant to
Aboriginal people, whose suspicion of immigration and multiculturalism seems as
pronounced as ever. The only way of overcoming this might be through much more
vigorous anti-racist policies combined with effective measures to overcome the socio-
economic disadvantage and exclusion of Aboriginal communities. Until such steps are
taken, multiculturalism will be weakened by its lack of support from indigenous
Australians.

**Social Justice and Economic Rationalism**

There is a strong link between cultural rights and social justice. If members of certain
ethnic groups can only maintain their culture at the price of social disadvantage (eg. high
unemployment and low socio-economic status) then we cannot speak of equal rights.
This issue is clearly recognised in the *National Agenda, Multicultural Australia, Working
Nation* and other policy statements, which lay down strategies to combat social
disadvantage and remove labour market barriers. Several government departments have
social justice strategies which target non-English speaking background (NESB)
immigrants, indigenous people, women and people with disabilities. Social justice in the
*National Agenda* is concerned with fair distribution of economic resources; equal access
to essential services such as housing, health-care and education; equal rights in civil,
legal and industrial affairs; and equal opportunity for participation by all in personal
development, community life and decision-making.45
Multicultural Citizenship

There appears, however, to be an unresolved tension between the principles of social justice and economic efficiency. Since 1983, the ALP Government has pursued policies of deregulation and privatisation of the economy. Such strategies are based on neo-classical theories of economic rationality which perceive inequality and competition as vital to efficiency. Deregulation and privatisation may reduce the ability of the Government to intervene in employment and economic matters to ensure social justice. The authors of the *National Agenda* tried to resolve the problem through the principle of economic efficiency, defined as 'the need to maintain, develop and utilise effectively the skills and talents of all Australians, regardless of background'. The *National Agenda* expressed this principle in policies designed to make efficient use of human resources through education, training and recognition of overseas qualifications. More recently, the Government has stressed 'productive diversity': the notion that it is in the general interest to make efficient use of the skills and cultural capabilities of our diverse population, especially with regard to economic relations with the rest of the world.

The objectives laid down in Government social justice policies suggest possible indicators by which to judge their success. However, as the recent NMAC Report, *Multicultural Australia* noted, it is difficult to assess many social justice policies due to 'lack of agreed benchmarks and patchy data on the many characteristics of our multicultural society'.

One area in which assessment can be made is participation in government. In 1991, only 6.7 per cent of legislators and government appointed officials at the three levels of government were of first or second-generation non-English speaking background, compared with their share in the population of about 25 per cent. This under-representation had actually got worse since 1986. The participation rate of indigenous Australians in government was 0.6 per cent, compared with a 1.6 per cent share in the population. NESB people were also under-represented in the Public Service and particularly in the Senior Executive Service, although the situation has shown some improvement since 1989. Participation by NESB and indigenous people was low in many important occupations in 1991, such as judges, magistrates, mediators and police officers. As examination of membership of government consultative bodies showed that NESB and indigenous people were well represented on bodies concerned with social and cultural issues, but significantly under-represented in other councils, such as those concerned with economic decision-making.

Participation in senior management and union leaderships is another important indicator. NMAC cites a 1994 study which indicates that NESB people made up only 6 per cent of directors and executives listed in major company handbooks. However, NESB people were over-represented among owners and operators of small businesses. A study of Victorian unions found that only 10 per cent of officials were NESB people, compared with 24 per cent of union members. Under-representation particularly affected more recent Asian immigrant groups.
Another measure of social justice is employment levels. Indigenous people have chronically high unemployment; for instance a recent major ABS survey noted an overall unemployment rate of 38 per cent in 1994. Moreover, many Aboriginal people are classified as not in the labour force, because they have given up looking for a job: the ABS survey found that 32 per cent of those not in the labour force wanted a job. It has long been noted that unemployment rates tend to rise faster than average for NESB people in recessions, and that their overall unemployment rates are higher. In June 1995, the unemployment rate for NESB people was 12.2 per cent, compared with 8.1 per cent for the total labour force. The rate for some groups was far higher: 25.1 per cent for Lebanese, 26.8 per cent for Vietnamese. These are not recently arrived groups; their unemployment rates have been high for many years, and labour market measures seem to have done little to improve the situation. Another government report has noted above-average unemployment rates for overseas-born youth from NES countries.

Recognition of overseas skills and qualifications has been seen as a crucial issue by ethnic communities since the 1970s and there has been a succession of official inquiries and policies to remove some of the many barriers and restrictions. According to the studies summarised by NMAC, it appears that there have been many improvements in accreditation procedures, but that we are still far from a situation of equal opportunities for overseas-trained professionals and tradespeople in all occupations. A recent study has shown that employers' reservations about overseas skills, and discrimination against people from certain countries influence employment chances for engineers. In 1991, the Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission (HREOC) concluded that there was also compelling evidence that the medical registration system was discriminatory under the terms of the Racial Discrimination Act of 1975. A recent working party has recommended a broad range of reform measures needed to secure equal opportunities for overseas-trained people.

The HREOC's annual State of the Nation Reports document areas of disadvantage faced by NESB people. The 1994 Report was concerned mainly with housing issues. It reported frequent racial harassment of public housing tenants in some areas, and also noted that housing authorities lacked effective strategies to deal with this. Perhaps as a result of the latter, over 80 per cent of tenants who had experienced harassment said they had not reported it. The Report also noted 'the disjointed and haphazard approach to access and equity provision within the State Housing authorities'.

Overall, the evidence suggests that multiculturalism has given rise to a wealth of measures designed to improve social justice for ethnic minorities in Australia. Some real progress has been achieved, and the picture is certainly much better than in countries which cling to exclusionary or assimilationist policies. However, in some key areas, progress has been painfully slow, and real socio-economic disadvantage persists for certain groups. Most importantly, indigenous and NESB people are still far from equality with regard to participation in political and economic power.
Multiculturalism as Bureaucratic Practice

Since the mid-1980s, both state and federal governments have been concerned to move away from multicultural policies delivered by special agencies to special target groups. Instead, multicultural policies were to become part of the mainstream of government service delivery. It was the task of watchdog agencies like the federal Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA) and the state ethnic affairs commissions or offices to ensure that multiculturalism was built into policy development, strategic planning, staff training, service delivery and evaluation. The key instrument for achieving this at the federal level was the Access and Equity Strategy, known as A&E. From 1989 to 1994 all Commonwealth departments and agencies were required to prepare A&E plans, and to report on their implementation annually. In 1992 a major evaluation of the A&E strategy reported improvements in language and information services. But the evaluation also noted many problems and deficiencies. In 1994, NMAC found that:

While there was clear evidence that the A&E performance of many government departments had improved since the 1992 evaluation, areas identified as in particular need of further attention included the delivery of services to indigenous Australians; consultation and participation policies, mechanisms and processes; services to small and remote area communities; and the collection and use of ethnicity data.

In view of these areas of concern, it seems curious that the general requirement for A&E plans was abolished in 1994. The preparation of triennial plans and of reports on their implementation is now left to the discretion of individual agencies, which hardly seems conducive to overcoming the widespread shortcomings that have emerged from the A&E process. Similarly, 1994 was the last year that Federal Government Departments were required to report publicly on their equal opportunity programs. This requirement has been abolished, although only 9 per cent of recent appointments to the Australian Public Service were NESB people.

The bureaucratic response to racism in Australia reveals similar problems. The 1991 National Inquiry into Racist Violence showed a high incidence of racism against indigenous people and, to a lesser extent, against Asian immigrants. Although it is widely believed that racism has declined since the 1960s, there is no accurate way of knowing whether matters have got better or worse in recent years. Australia has no systematic monitoring of incidents of racist violence or discrimination—unlike the USA where special legislation in the late 1980s introduced monitoring of 'hate crimes', or Britain, where the police and Home Office collect systematic data on racially motivated crimes.

The various bodies set up under federal and state laws to combat racial discrimination and vilification do not provide any comprehensive information on the incidence of such practices—they merely respond to complaints. For instance HREOC received 458 complaints under the Commonwealth Racial Discrimination Act in 1993/4, while the
New South Wales Anti-Discrimination Bureau received 329 complaints on grounds of racial discrimination and 86 on grounds of racial vilification. But there is strong evidence that only a small percentages of such cases are actually reported. This is partly because of the complex and lengthy procedures faced by those who do complain, and partly because existing laws are weak and rarely provide effective remedies. For example, the NSW Anti-Discrimination Board received 448 complaints on grounds of vilification over a five-year period; of these three cases were eventually recommended for prosecution, but not in fact proceeded with. In the light of this, people may feel that complaints are a waste of time.

Again, this section has been impressionistic and selective. What it indicates is that the principles of multiculturalism are not always effectively put into practice in the everyday work of government departments and agencies. Mainstreaming of multicultural policies—however correct in theory—has not always meant real improvements for members of minorities.

The decline of ethnic politics

On the basis of the above discussion, it seems that some of the momentum for the practical implementation of multicultural citizenship in Australia has been lost. In many areas of public policy and the private sector, the disadvantage and exclusion experienced by indigenous people and certain immigrant groups is not diminishing, or is only doing so slowly. As already noted, democratisation in liberal societies is not likely to come from above, but rather as the result of social movements and political activity. It could be argued that the main reason for the current stagnation in the development of multiculturalism is the relatively low level of political mobilisation of ethnic communities. The higher level of activism among indigenous people may help explain why their situation is currently much more on the political agenda.

One reason for the emergence of multiculturalism in the 1970s was the realisation—initially on the part of the ALP—that immigrants were making up increasing proportions of the electorate, particularly in working-class constituencies, and were joining trade unions and political parties. The migrant rights movement of the early 1970s began to link the notion of cultural pluralism with the traditional concerns of the labour movement. The introduction of social policies aimed specifically at immigrants, first by the ALP and then by the Coalition Government, put a premium on ethnic mobilisation and formation of associations to speak in the name of immigrants. There was a link between the emergence of multicultural policies and services, and the development of formalised ethnic lobby groups, of which the most important were (and still are) the state Ethnic Communities Councils (ECCs) and the Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia (FECCA).
The development of ethnic associations which could articulate political demands helped end assimilationism and bring in multiculturalism. Multiculturalism in turn encouraged the development of organisations based on ethnicity. This caused some observers to imply that there was some sort of sinister 'ethnic lobby' which was having an illegitimate influence on politics. Most political scientists, on the other hand, argue that there is no monolithic 'ethnic vote' which can be controlled by ethnic leaders to secure specific political outcomes. Immigrants have not constituted a united political force, mainly because the differences among them in terms of social position, interests and values are as great as among the Anglo-Australian population. However, the 'ethnic vote' is significant in one way: since about a quarter of voters are of NES background, any politicians tempted to play on residual racist sentiments in the Anglo-Australian population have more to lose than to gain. No party could come to power with policies which do not to some extent address the concerns of the ethnic communities.

Multiculturalism encouraged ethnic associations, but it also influenced their character. From the 1970s, leaders of such groups were increasingly drawn into government consultative bodies. The peak organisations, the ECCs and FECCA, came to be predominantly funded by government. Smaller associations representing specific ethnic groups also became dependent on government grants. Even highly critical groups like the Association of Non-English Speaking Background Women (ANESBWA) or the Australian Refugee Council demanded and got official support. These growing links between government and ethnic communities were further encouraged by the fact that many second-generation immigrants were career public servants, so that they often had the Janus-faced role of being both government officials and ethnic lobbyists. Such trends can be linked to the move away from ethno-specific agencies and towards mainstreaming of service-delivery to NESB-people.

These tendencies are ambiguous. On the one hand, the closeness between ethnic communities and the government agencies which provide services to them is beneficial in improving communication and sensitivity to needs. But it also leads to a process of creeping cooption, through which the ethnic associations became closely oriented towards bureaucratic goals and methods. The organisational tools of group mobilisation and protest meetings were replaced by skill in writing submissions or in negotiating within consultative bodies. This meant a professionalisation of ethnic community leaders. A person whose long-term career perspective is to be an ethnic lobbyist and whose salary is paid by the government may find it hard to keep in touch with the needs and concerns of the community.

The overall result of this institutionalisation of ethnic politics has been a depoliticisation of ethnic associations and a reduction of their political influence in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Old-style mobilisation of specific ethnic groups still takes place around issues connected with homeland politics, as the recent demonstrations by Greeks and groups from former Yugoslavia have shown. But major political actions connected with multicultural issues hardly occur any more. The last obvious success of ethnic politics
was the withdrawal of the cuts to multicultural services proposed in the 1986 Budget. In the words of Dr James Jupp of the Australian National University:

Although its presence cannot be ignored, the ethnic lobby since 1988 has seemed peripheral to some of the major debates on immigration. It has been defeated on many issues, for example the cuts in the intake program which have reduced net migration to only half the figures favoured by Fitzgerald in 1988. The greatest weakness of the 'lobby' has probably been the absence of a sympathetic base in parliament comparable to those that exist for major ethnic groups in the USA or Canada. There are very few NESB immigrant politicians in Canberra.87

It is hard to interpret these developments. They could be taken as indicators of the health of our political system: perhaps members of ethnic communities do not take to the streets because they feel their interests are well articulated within existing institutional arrangements. This view is contradicted by some of the findings of this paper: first the evidence of continuing serious problems and inequities for certain groups; and second the low level of participation of indigenous and NESB Australians in government and key occupations. I would therefore argue that the relative political passivity that now appears to characterise NESB Australians is the result of a lack of mechanisms which would allow group interests to be effectively expressed, in a system where the parliaments are the only significant representative bodies, and the established political parties monopolise access to them. The apparent depoliticisation of ethnic communities could bode ill for the development of multicultural citizenship, for there is unlikely to be significant progress without political pressure from those likely to benefit from change.

Conclusion

Is Australia on the way to a new form of multicultural citizenship, which could be a model for other democratic countries confronted by the dilemmas arising from globalisation and growing ethnic diversity? Or has our model become stalled somewhere between uncritical affirmation of a new conventional wisdom, failure to tackle structural inequalities, loss of reform impetus in the minutiae of bureaucratic practice, and depoliticisation of protest potential?

Both interpretations are possible, which reflects the debate in progress on our cultural and political identity. Certainly Australia has come a long way since our racist world view began to be questioned in the 1960s. Assimilationism, for all its problems, did create a basis for change by providing formal access to citizenship for immigrants—something that has still not been achieved in many immigration countries. The 'ethnic group model' of
multiculturalism in the 1970s did begin a process of rethinking identity which moved us away from the myth of ethno-cultural homogeneity—again, a step still to be taken in many places. The shift in the late 1980s towards a 'citizenship model' of multiculturalism forged the vital link between cultural pluralism and social justice, and made it possible to map out strategies for overcoming barriers to full inclusion for all groups of the population. This step raised the fundamental dilemma of how to achieve the recognition of collective cultural rights within a universalistic democracy—an issue of increasing importance everywhere, as international debates on multiculturalism and citizenship demonstrate.

A major reason for the success of Australian multiculturalism is that it has developed in a context of democracy and political stability. Yet this context has also made Australians reluctant to question existing institutions and to ask whether they are still appropriate for a culturally diverse nation on the eve of the 21st century. Our present political structures developed in a very different type of society, based on British traditions and myths of cultural homogeneity. The centralisation of real political power in parliament and the bureaucracy leads to a form of passive citizenship, in which individual rights and obligations are regulated by the state, and the citizen's political participation is virtually reduced to the act of voting every few years. Political parties and other key political bodies (like trade unions) are structured in such a way as to make it very hard for minority groups to gain representation. The integration of new groups into citizenship has not been thought to require any basic change in such forms of political participation. Measures concerned with ethno-cultural diversity have essentially been top-down social policies.

Multiculturalism has developed in an ad hoc way as a strategy for integrating immigrant communities into a basically unchanged political system. It is time to consider whether cultural diversity requires a fundamental re-examination of our political institutions. Active citizenship for all means the right of constant participation by citizens in decision-making at all levels. The challenge is to bring about changes in political parties, representative mechanisms and bureaucratic structures to permit more democracy in more places, for both groups and individuals. This means recognising that people of different ethnocultural backgrounds may have varying needs and values, and different ideas about how government should relate to the community. Debates on the move to a republic and the need for constitutional reform need to address such issues as:

- equal opportunities for participation by all citizens in public affairs, irrespective of their social status, gender, ethnicity, culture or religion;
- decentralisation of decision-making on issues of local or sectional importance;
- democratically-elected bodies to oversee public institutions and programs, for instance with regard to education and social services;
Multicultural Citizenship

- ensuring that previously disempowered groups are fully included in consultative processes;
- recognition of cultural diversity in political, legal and administrative procedures;
- effective steps to counter racism and discrimination in both the public and private sectors.

Endnotes

7 ibid, Table B3.
Multicultural Citizenship


See Castles, *op cit* and Bauböck, *op cit*.


Young, *op cit*.

Compare Young, *op cit*, p 269-70.

Taylor, *op cit.*

Habermas, *op cit.*

*ibid*, p 113.


OMA (Office of Multicultural Affairs) (1989) *National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia* Canberra: AGPS.


Davidson, *op cit*, p 2.

ibid, p 3.

See Jayasuriya, *op cit*, p 2.

Davidson, *op cit*, p 4.

NMAC, *op cit.*


ibid, p vi.


*ibid*, pp 15-16.

Multicultural Citizenship


Hawthorne, L. (1994) *Labour Market Barriers for Immigrant Engineers in Australia* Canberra: AGPS.


*ibid*, p 38.


ACTU, *op cit*, p 5.

*ibid*, p 10 & 15.

*ibid*


Jupp, *op cit*, p 220.