

Multiculturalism and the Pan-Pacific Sphere

A Comparative Analysis of Canada, Australia and Japan

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The various peoples of the world, their ideologies, cultures, languages, beliefs and values are weaving, tangling, splicing and merging with ever increasing fervour and enthusiasm, into interdependent and inseparable personal, local and global relationships. For better or worse, this is the rise of multiculturalism, an ideal of the last century and a reality of this one. For many, multiculturalism symbolizes hope, opportunity, acceptance and refuge from, perhaps, less tolerant societies. The ideal of multiculturalism is empathy and equality but the reality remains rooted in difference and segregation. Most people who are not members of a minority view multicultural initiatives with scepticism as an erosion of their values, culture, traditions and as a threat to their lifestyles, jobs and security. There are few places where multiculturalism as an official policy actually works. Canada and Australia the foremost leaders in this effort, were motivated primarily as a result of their shameful history of harsh discrimination, violent persecution and overall inhuman treatment of both minority and aboriginal peoples rather than by genuine consideration for the well being of immigrants. America, “the world’s greatest democracy” and melting pot, has no official multicultural policy despite being one of the most diverse nations in the world and is similarly beset by racial, socio economic and ideological tensions. It has taken America over 200 years to elect a representative of the people to highest office who is not of the declining white Anglo-Saxon paradigm. However in the same week a young man at New York’s JFK airport was forced to cover up his t-shirt because it displayed Arabic script (AFP, 2009). The world is changing quickly; homogenous societies with little contact from the diverse periphery are relics of the past. Economic necessity and opportunity, sharp changes in demographics including declining birthrates and aging populations, refugees from war, famine and natural disasters are creating a diversity and interdependence of a scale and rate previously unimaginable. For many this change brings fear and resentment resulting in war, terrorism and persecution, however all change is also opportunity and the world is poised

to participate in a tremendous multicultural revolution, embracing its diversity and moving peacefully from otherness to togetherness. The following will provide a comparative analysis of both the myths and realities of multiculturalism, as it exists in Australia, Canada and Japan. These countries, as key members of the Pacific Rim, are significant in their unique perspectives and histories and therefore can provide a balanced understanding of the strengths and weakness of multiculturalism. As important representatives of the past, present and future potential of multiculturalism, these examples may also serve as viable models for change demonstrating the value and need for a thriving multicultural society.

Canada

Background

In 1971 Canada became the first nation to officially fully implement a multicultural policy. This initiative, which was ratified in 1982 and written into the constitution as an Act in 1988, states that:

- All citizens are equal and have the freedom to preserve, enhance, and share their cultural heritage.
- Multiculturalism promotes the full and equitable participation of individuals and communities of all origins in all aspects of Canadian society.
- ensure that Canadians of all origins have an equal opportunity to obtain employment
- enhance the ability of all individuals and communities of all origins to contribute to the continuing evolution of Canada;
- enhance the understanding of and respect for the diversity of members of Canadian society;
- are sensitive and responsive to the multicultural reality of Canada, and

make use of the language skills and cultural understanding of individuals of all origins.

According to then Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, who was instrumental in passing legislation "The government will support and encourage the various cultures and ethnic groups that give structure and vitality to our society. They will be encouraged to share their cultural expressions and values with other Canadians and so contribute to a richer life for us all." (Statistics Canada, 2008)

The impetus for a multicultural policy first grew out of the socio-economic and ideological tensions between French and English Canada and the limitations of subsequent terms such as Bilingualism and Biculturalism which failed to represent the increasing minority populations. Canada is a country built on immigration. The first settlers to arrive in Canada in the 1500's were the French and English who continued to dominate the steady flow of newcomers into the 20th century. Although Canada has been inhabited for over 4000 years one could argue that even the aboriginal peoples are immigrants, crossing over the Alaskan ice bridge from Mongolia during the last ice age. Canada's first significant waves of immigration began at the end of the 19th century and was limited to mostly western Europeans this was later expanded to include eastern regions in particular Poland and the Ukraine. These immigrants however were invisible minorities and could easily blend in after a few years. It was not until the mass Asian immigration which flourished around the turn of the century that difficulties began. Many Chinese workers came to Canada at this time to work on the railroad or prospect for gold. Employers found them industrious, sober and cheap. Canadians resented them for the same reasons. Their increasing presence and prosperity began to spawn bitterness, discrimination and racist practices. In its efforts to discourage Chinese immigration the Canadian government issued a devastating head tax which all but ended immigration from China. Between 1900 and 1905 this tax was increased from \$50 to \$500 and as a result immigration from China dropped from 5,000 people in 1904 to only 8 in 1905. In 1923 Chinese immigration was banned outright and was not repealed until 1958. The Japanese populations also suffered terribly from discrimination and racist practices. Thousands of Japanese Canadians living on the west coast lost their homes, businesses and possessions as part of War time security measures, which required that all persons of Japanese ancestry be relocated a minimum of 100 kilometres inland. Prime Minister

Mackenzie King declared in the House of Commons on August 4, 1944 that: "It is a fact no person of Japanese race born in Canada has been charged with any act of sabotage or disloyalty during the years of war." The Japanese Canadians affected were never fully compensated for their losses. Although they were issued a formal apology in 1986, the community, culture and livelihood of the Japanese Canadian society was destroyed forever. Recent census results (2006) show a Japanese Canadian population of 77,130, approximately one third of whom, indicate multiple ethnic backgrounds, indicating an intermarriage rate of over 90% in recent decades (Statistics Canada 2008).

Immigration in recent years has further changed the face of Canada and also challenged the foundations that make it a welcoming and internationally respected country. Most immigrants in the last 20 years have come from South East Asia and Africa. With European numbers steadily declining, at the present rate the aging European majority population stands to be displaced by the influx of visible minorities over the next 50 years. In 2003 the UNESCO World Commission on Culture and Development, cited Canada's approach to multiculturalism as a model for other countries. However since the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the U.S. and the escalation of Canada's costly participation in Afghanistan, tolerance for Arab and Muslim members of Canada's multicultural society has been tested with numerous occurrences of violence, hate crimes and discrimination. In June 2006, 17 Canadians of Muslim heritage were arrested for conspiracy to commit terrorist acts. These arrests came as a shock to most Canadians as terrorism had previously only been associated with countries perceived as less tolerant or less friendly like Great Britain and the U.S. Canadians had always felt safe behind the veil of their multiculturalism. However, after these events, many Canadians began to question the practicality of multiculturalism in the face of increasing global threats to security. On June 8th 2006 the major Canadian newspapers reported the following in a series of articles evaluating the country's changing perspective of multiculturalism.

The Toronto Star: "In pursuing multicultural tolerance, Canada has been negligent in reinforcing essential, common-denominator values."

The National Post: Too often "Canada's multicultural pieties have conflicted with our need to thwart global terrorism ... and multiculturalism has gotten the upper hand,".

The Globe and Mail was more tentative, saying it was too soon to "leap to the conclusion that our experiment with mass immigration and multiculturalism is failing, that our very tolerance and openness have become a weakness."

Some Muslim leaders called for recent immigrants to embrace Canadian values and strive to integrate instead of segregating themselves.

"We can be proud Canadians without losing our Muslim identity,"

"Don't expect old men who moved here from Afghanistan to change how they dress or think, but their children play hockey, listen to rap music and watch television just like other Canadians,"

OTTAWA (AFP) June 8th, 2006 *Canada's multiculturalism on trial after terror plot foiled*

Nevertheless Canada has greatly benefited from multiculturalism. Not only is the country rich with a diverse mosaic of cultures, customs and languages Canada enjoys a stronger work force, a younger population and more positive growth rate than any of the other G8 members.

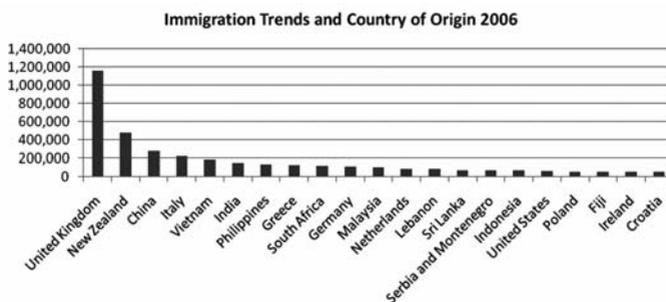
Australia

Cultural and linguistic diversity was a feature of life for the first Australians, well before European settlement. Archaeological evidence suggests that the Australian continent was first inhabited from about 40,000 to 70,000 years ago. This initial population of indigenous people originated from many of the surrounding islands particularly the Malay Archipelago and New Guinea. At the time of first European settlement in 1788 the aboriginal population was between 300,000-750,000. These peoples were spread across the continent and consisted of approximately 250 distinct nations each with its own unique culture and language. This shows that Australia truly had an historical precedent for multiculturalism even before progressive immigration policies and diversity rhetoric. Today's indigenous population stands at around 410,000 with 200 of the original languages still in use, although all but 20 are endangered. Since the first Europeans landed in Australia, the indigenous population has continued to suffer terribly from racist and assimilationist policies and practices. In the first few years of

colonization, it is estimated that disease, especially small pox, killed between 50% and 90% of the local populations. Although it has since rebounded and increased to a larger minority representation of almost 3%, the indigenous population was excluded from legal and political representation and basic citizenship until 1967. Regardless however, in 1971, in a move to disqualify native land claims, Australia was declared Terra Nullius prior to European arrival, although this was later deemed illegal and repealed in 1992. Over a 100 year period between 1869-1969 thousands of young Aboriginal Australians were taken forcefully from their families to be enculturated with more European values and have their native language replaced with English. This “stolen generation” as it is now referred to, was subjected to harsh and cruel conditions and punishment, all for the purpose of creating a “White Australia”. The atrocity of these practices has recently come to light and there have been many varying attempts at apology and statements of remorse issued between 1997 and 2007. In 1999 Prime Minister Howard referred to this as “...the most blemished chapter in the history of this country.” In other reconciliation efforts, May 26th 1998 was announced as National Sorry Day. Most notable of these is perhaps the official state apology delivered by Prime Minister Rudd on February 13th 2008 which was negotiated and co-written with Aboriginal Elders (Bureau of Australian Statistics 2008).

Considering efforts by many to keep Australia “White”, it is important to realise that Australia as a nation has always engaged in progressive and large scale immigration practices. Between 1800 and 1850 the population increased 7,696.2% by 1900 it had increased a further 828% and has grown by an average of 15% per year since. Although the majority population remains of Anglo-Celtic origins, this demographic has shifted substantially since the middle of the 20th century. Following the first waves of immigration after 1788, patterns changed to include mostly Asian and Oceanic groups. There has also been a significant level of intermixing resulting in that 60% of the present population is considered of mixed ethnicity, 20% of which have backgrounds consisting of four or more different races. In 1947, 90% of the population was Anglo-Celtic in origin this decreased to 70% in 1999 and is projected to reach a low of 62.2% in 2025. Conversely, minority populations are expected to increase. This demographic shift is largely due to aging population and declining birth rate of the European majority

population, higher birth rates of Aboriginal and minority populations and accelerated immigration trends from predominantly non-European countries. Until the 1970s, the White Australia Policy restricted immigration from non-European countries. In 2008 it was estimated that approximately 300,000 immigrants arrived in Australia, the highest number since World War II. In 2007-08, the top 10 countries of birth of permanent settlers were: United Kingdom (30 841); New Zealand (27 619); India (22 688); China (excluding Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan) (21 208); South Africa (7762); Philippines (7382); Malaysia (5139); Korea (4953); Sri Lanka (4824); Thailand (3384) comprising 66% of the total. The remaining 34% of permanent settlers were born in over 190 other countries. Opening immigration to people from a large number of countries has resulted in a great diversity of established and emerging ethnic communities in Australia. Of the present 21 million Australians, approximately 24% are first generation, recent immigrants, within this group the representative countries of origin are as follows:



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2008

In order to accommodate this group and help newcomers integrate into Australian society the government formulated a multicultural agenda in 1973. The aim of this plan is to build on the success as a culturally diverse, accepting and open society, united through a shared future and a commitment to Australia, its democratic institutions and values, and the rule of law. This vision is reflected in the four principles that underpin multicultural policy:

- **Responsibilities of all** - all Australians have a civic duty to support those basic structures and principles of Australian society which guarantee us our freedom and equality and enable diversity in our society to flourish

- **Respect for each person** - subject to the law, all Australians have the right to express their own culture and beliefs and have a reciprocal obligation to respect the right of others to do the same
- **Fairness for each person** - all Australians are entitled to equality of treatment and opportunity. Social equity allows us all to contribute to the social, political and economic life of Australia
- **Benefits for all** - all Australians benefit from the significant cultural, social and economic dividends arising from the diversity of our population. Diversity works for all Australians.

The present distribution of ethnic groups in Australia can be represented as follows:

Anglo Celtic 69%	Asian 7%	Aboriginal 2.5%
Other European 18%	African 2.5%	Other 1%

Collectively, Australians speak over 200 languages. In 2006, Italian (with 316 895 speakers) was the most popular language other than English spoken at home followed by Greek (252 226), Cantonese (244 553), Arabic (243 662) and Mandarin (220 600).

Australia has been religiously diverse for over 50,000 years considering the variations in indigenous beliefs and practices. Post colonial Australia however, has until recently, been primarily Christian. Since its peak in 1921, Christianity as the dominant belief in Australia (96.9%) has been steadily declining. In 2006 it was reported that only 63.9% of Australians considered themselves Christian as minority beliefs such as Buddhism 2.1%, Islam 1.7%, Hinduism 0.7%, and Judaism 0.4%, continue to grow in number (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2008).

Although multiculturalism has had an undoubtedly positive impact on Australia there are continuing debates and objections to open immigration and multicultural initiatives. Most significant of these is represented by the brief popularity of Pauline Hanson who made a resounding statement on September 10, 1996 in a bid for public office. Her statement although shocking and controversial, was instrumental in motivating many mainstream “white” Australians, who felt they were victims of “reverse racism”, to support a curbing of immigration and multiculturalism. The opening statement reads as follows;

“Immigration and multiculturalism are issues that this government is trying to address, but for far too long ordinary Australians have been kept out of any debate by the major parties. I and most Australians want our immigration policy radically reviewed and that of multiculturalism abolished. I believe we are in danger of being swamped by Asians. Between 1984 and 1995, 40 per cent of all migrants coming into this country were of Asian origin. They have their own culture and religion, form ghettos and do not assimilate. Of course, I will be called racist but, if I can invite whom I want into my home, then I should have the right to have a say in who comes into my country. A truly multicultural country can never be strong or united. The world is full of failed and tragic examples, ranging from Ireland to Bosnia to Africa and, closer to home, Papua New Guinea. America and Great Britain are currently paying the price. Arthur Calwell was a great Australian and Labour leader, and it is a pity that there are not men of his stature sitting on the opposition benches today. Arthur Calwell said: Japan, India, Burma, Ceylon and every new African nation are fiercely anti-white and anti one another. Do we want or need any of these people here? I am one red-blooded Australian who says no and who speaks for 90% of Australians. I have no hesitation in echoing the words of Arthur Calwell”

Although Hansen was eventually discredited and forced from public service under controversy, humiliation, criminal charges and even death threats she had an enormous impact on the growth and acceptance of multiculturalism and was even named one of the most influential Australians of all time (The Bulletin, 2006). Australia continues to flourish and embrace its diversity and considering the record numbers of immigration in recent years is likely to continue in this way for the foreseeable future. Nevertheless, the debate on the merits of multiculturalism continues, even at the highest levels. Australia’s multicultural policy *Multicultural Australia United in Diversity: Strategic Directions 2003-2006* expired in 2006. There is currently no federal government policy on multiculturalism.

Australian Bureau of Statistics 2008

Japan

Japan, like Canada and Australia, has a sharply declining birth rate and an aging population. Japan is also in many ways a very multicultural country. However Japan differs significantly in its difficulty to acknowledge its demographics, particularly in terms of:

- Developing any official policy of tolerance or integration towards minorities, whether Ainu, Ryukyu, Zainichi Koreans or Chinese, Burakumin or Brazilian,
- Addressing the critical changes in social structures in particular family, workforce, gender and socio-economic status.
- Considering perspectives required in education to survive in an increasingly interdependent global economy.

(Johnston, E. 2007 & 2008)

For all practical intents and purposes Japan has no multicultural policy or agenda and no immigration, in any form or capacity that would be recognised by United Nations standards and criteria (French, W. 2003). As has been a vigorous point of contention in the last decade, the implementation of either type of immigration policy could go a long way to solving many of Japans problems and guaranteeing its future prosperity. However, Japan cannot become America, Australia or Canada. (Burgess, C. 2003 & 2007). As much as opening Japan up to massive immigration may solve some problems it would most certainly cause other equally difficult ones. As the declining population is becoming a reality members of the Diet are calling for more relaxed policy towards immigration (Ito, M. 2007). Some members have suggested that by 2025 Japan increase the population of foreigners to 10% in order to shore up the declining workforce and save the failing pension system (Matsutani, M. 2008). This would probably not have the desired effect as there is no system in place to manage, integrate or even, basically assist such diverse groups that would be making Japan their home (French, W. 2003).

What Japan can learn from Australia and Canada is not how to supplement its population and workforce through immigration or how to benefit from the resources and merits of a diverse and multicultural society but rather how to manage, accept and

integrate the minorities already here who have a yet untapped potential to contribute greatly to the society to which they already belong (Goodman, R. and Harper, S. 2006). For this to happen though, the perspectives of Japanese education, media and government need to change. How foreigners, foreign countries, cultures, languages and events, are represented needs to be more objective (Coleman, J. 2008, Burgess, C. 2007). The idea of group and society needs to be more flexible and expanded to include a more global Japan with inclusionist rather than exclusionist membership and collectivism.

Japanese as a language can also often come across as reductionist and isolationist with examples like *uchi*, (my, inside or home), *soto* (outside) *mukou* (over there), it is easy to interpret phrases as having marginalizing connotations. In recent years several Prime Ministers most notably Nakasone, Morii and Aso have received criticism for making statements with strong isolationist and exclusionist overtones (Kyodo, 2005). The word *gaijin* (foreigner) and the commonly used prefix *gai* (foreign, outside, non-domestic) are other examples of this, as they represent a completely archaic and linguistically useless concept, devoid of any practical meaning (Arudo, D. 2008). Historically it may have been useful to distinguish persons or items solely as non Japanese. In today's Japan however, this serves no purpose other than to further boost the myth of Japan's ultra-uniqueness and to group all minorities by their lowest, albeit, most convenient common denominator "otherness". It would be much more productive to categorise people by what they have in common rather than what they do not and by what brings them together rather than what separates them. Similarly, Japanese as a culture has historically also been isolationist and collectivist. Group membership for a closed island nation was the main source of strength, protection, support and survival. People without a group like a Ronin Samurai were looked down on and feared as they had no loyalty, no code, no rules, no shame and thereby nothing to restrain them from acting against society. This is important in today's Japan as it brings people together insures civil obedience, good manners, mutual respect and safety (de Vries, P. 2008). If Japan loses these qualities it runs the risk of becoming a fragmented individualist society like America, where self preservation is a priority, personal safety is a constant concern, distrust of strangers is a survival instinct and random violence is a common occurrence.

As Japanese families, companies and other social structures change and lose there once ubiquitous cohesion this needs to also include the rising “Multicultural Ethnic Japanese”. Multicultural, in this sense would include the growing groups of freeters, neets, laid off middle aged salary men, mature students, career women, mature single women, old people, temp workers, the unemployed. Divorce rates are rising, marriage rates are falling, children are choosing not to live with their aging parents, in the traditional sense, families are fragmenting. Companies similarly can no longer guarantee life time employment and workers no longer provide unwavering loyalty, they are more likely to quit, complain, transfer or challenge their superiors (Statistics Bureau of Japan, 2008). As a result the social groups which are the essence of Japanese culture are eroding. Without these groups the tenets of Japanese society particularly patience, loyalty, and shame become weakened. This is evident in the rise of people like Tomohiro Kato, who through his isolation from society, colleagues, friends, women, peers and family, fell through the cracks and became an outsider with no group, loyalty or shame. Through such isolation, which is becoming more and more common, he was able to commit the most heinous of crimes, random, unmotivated violence (Uechi, J. 2008).

This is type of fragmentation and chaos in society is the basic fear that is inherent in all countries regarding new comers. The key is to not objectify differences but to somehow incorporate them into the fabric of society whether they are minorities or not all people have basic needs once those are met they will integrate into any society regardless of language, culture, customs or race. All people in Japan need to feel they belong and are equal regardless of their background or heritage. This is the first stage of multiculturalism which needs to be cultivated and nurtured very slowly if it is to grow. Once Japan can accommodate the diverse multitudes that already exist it will be ready to introduce more robust immigration. Otherwise Japan is destined to repeat the mistakes of Canada and Australia, where multiculturalism was born out of a need to stabilize society and curb the racism and discrimination born out of massive, unchecked immigration.

Demographics, The Future and benefits of multiculturalism

Economy

Immigration contributes to the economic development of a nation in many ways, such as: filling skill shortages; putting a demand on goods and services; investing in the economy; and fostering international trade through knowledge of overseas markets, business networks, cultural practices and various languages.

- Migration raises average incomes and increases the scale of the economy generating wealth and employment for all people.
- A multi-lingual, multicultural workforce can increase productivity and help businesses gain a competitive advantage.

Employment

In most cases and in particular with reference to Japan, immigration does not cause higher unemployment. In fact, migrants create jobs by increasing demand for goods and services, while also filling positions which are vital to maintaining a stable economy. Long established migrants tend to have lower rates of unemployment than the native-born population (4.2 % compared with 6% average).

Security

Current research shows no evidence of a causal connection between crime and ethnicity. Although some overseas-born groups have lower crime rates and some have higher crime rates than the native-born population. This does not mean that crime is linked to ethnicity. Overall, the crime rate of overseas born populations has been lower than that of native born populations. In all nations, factors such as unemployment, education, socio-economic disadvantage and lack of access to services have more bearing than ethnicity on crime rates.

Population

In the last century Canada, Australia and Japan have enjoyed a natural population increase that has generally contributed more to annual population growth than migration. However, with declining fertility and an ageing population in all countries, this is no longer the case. Immigration will become a more important influence on population growth or decline. In recent years, there has been much debate about the need for a population policy particularly in Japan, and the role of migration in such a policy. Much of the Western World's population is an ageing one. This demographic shift has

important long-term implications for future economic growth and overall living standards. Census statistics show that migration can help counter some of the negative effects of an ageing population by adding to the population of the labour force. However before this becomes a viable option the groundwork for a multicultural society and the integration of newcomers must be established otherwise the consequences, as history has proven, may be equally daunting.

2008 Estimate	Australia	Canada	Japan
Total Population	21,007,310	33,212,696	127,288,416
Average Population Age	37.1	40.1	43.8
Population over 65	13.3%	14.9%	21.6%
Population Growth	+1.221%	+0.83%	-0.139%
Total Fertility Rate	1.78	1.57	1.22
Immigration Rate	6.34	5.62	0.0

Source: The World Fact Book, C.I.A. 2008

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