

Abstract

Multiculturalism is the latest in a series of ideologies which have been developed to control the social and political consequences of cultural and linguistic pluralism in Australian society. Education is seen as the key element in achieving a multicultural attitude. The paper argues that, on the manifest level, there has been a transition from migrant to *multicultural* education, but that, on the latent level, forces favouring the *status quo* have led to a *de facto* 'ethnic' education stream within the education system.

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**EDUCATION OF ETHNIC MINORITY CHILDREN:  
AN ISSUE IN AUSTRALIAN MULTICULTURALISM**

*Introduction*

Multiculturalism as public concept and policy is almost a decade old. Yet multiculturalism is without a coherent theoretical and practical content or meaning for most Australians. Notions of 'them and us' endure, perhaps illustrated most clearly in the widespread designation of children of non-English speaking background as 'migrants' whether they have been born in Australia or overseas. This may happen, in part, because Australia is only experiencing its first generation of ethnicity. Distinctions between ethnic and immigrant factors are unclear and the relationship between those factors in the creation of unequal life chances and those of class and gender are even less understood. Any consideration of the educational provision for ethnic minority children traces a revealing seam in Australia's social and political life.

Ethnic minority students, particularly those coming from the more recently arrived immigrant groups amongst whom feature the Turkish, Lebanese, South American and South East Asians, are known to suffer social, educational and economic disadvantage.<sup>1</sup> Though the reason may not lie in overt discrimination, the reduced rates of participation and equity experienced by minority youth require a broadly based explanation.

The institution of education is embedded in a social context which is a powerful determinant of its functioning. No review of the educational provision for ethnic minority groups can be conducted without reference to what has happened and is happening in the wider environment. The schooling issues of the 1980's are reflections of the social, economic and political issues of Australian society in general.

The issues which dominate are three-fold. Firstly, there are those of *participation* and *equity*. These concepts refer to active engagement in society's institutions and to provision of structures and processes which minimise the systematic advantage accruing to some social groups and the disadvantage accruing to others. The consciousness and consequences of the *pluralist composition* of Australian society is a second concern given the volatile nature of ethnic relations in Australia. Thirdly, considerable attention is being given to appropriate *responses to technological innovation* as its potential for closing down traditional employment opportunities and for questioning conventional schooling is recognized. All of these concerns bear on and are influenced by the perceived

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and actual changing place of this country in the world given that the foreign policy stance of the present Federal Labor government is changing Australian relations with countries external to itself especially as the policy fosters closer ties with the South East Asian region. This has import for evolving national and personal identities in Australia.

For a country as heterogeneous as Australia, these are issues which impinge indirectly and quite directly on policies and practices. Immigration policy is a particularly sensitive indicator of strain, conflict and change in any of the areas noted above. In turn, the press for change in educational policies and practices may increase as pressures on immigration policy increase. In 1984, the consequence of changed directions in immigration policy, which were initiated in 1974 with respect to refugees, has emerged as a dominant social and political controversy. Similarly, the education of refugee youth has been given a high profile by education and immigration authorities in 1983-84.

We must now briefly review the immigration issue and the present specific controversy over Asian immigration, the acceptance of the concept of 'multicultural' Australia and the structure of the Australian education systems as a backdrop to tracing the nature of migrant and multicultural education in Australia — the main theme of this paper.

#### *Background*

Observers of the Australian scene could be forgiven for experiencing 'time warp' as they read/heard the media reports in the past few months on the 'Asianisation of Australia' (shades of the now defunct White Australia Policy). For example, prominent academics have joined the fray with suggestions that Australia's immigration policies have changed from 'White Australia' to 'surrender Australia'.<sup>2</sup> Survey researchers have declared that 'White Australians . . . have become more racist towards Asians'.<sup>3</sup> The Returned Services League has demanded that the government apply a moratorium on *all* immigrants claiming that we have too many migrants.<sup>4</sup> The bipartisan support for a 'multicultural' Australia and the slogan 'Bringing Australia Together' used so effectively by the Hawke Labor Government to win the 1983 Federal election, appear to have waned in importance in the face of the continuing row over immigration policy.

The controversy demonstrates that the ambivalence towards the concept of immigration which has marked Australia's origins and development persists. The present furor over Asian immigration recalls the hysteria in the nineteenth century over the influx of Chinese to the goldfields or the fears of the 'yellow peril' just prior to the second world war. That immigration *per se* is also under attack in 1984 echoes similar unease in the depression of the 1930's and the economic recession of the early 1960's accompanied as those periods were by inflation, unemployment, a decline in the level of small business and manufacturing, and a hostile reaction to the processes and outcomes of formal schooling.<sup>5</sup>

Yet immigration has contributed in a major way to the doubling of Australia's population in the forty years since the end of World War II,<sup>6</sup> has fuelled the accelerated industrialisation of the country,<sup>7</sup> and has diversified Australia's population in terms of the social facts of race, ethnicity, language, religion, and age-structure.<sup>8</sup> Immigration issues continue to dominate the functioning of Australian institutions. Institutional responses include the following. Law reformers ponder the changes on the part of the host society and migrants, especially with respect to Family Law, necessary to accommodate expectations other than those congruent with the Westminster and British law system — the basis of Australian law.<sup>9</sup> The churches have developed a large stake in

the sponsorship and settlement of migrant groups, but have suffered considerable tension in modifying practices and teachings in churches and church schools in the light of different ideas brought in by the newcomers to their congregation.<sup>10</sup> The schooling systems pressured, on the one hand, by falling enrolments due to demographic changes and hence the spectre of small educational budgets and unemployment among teachers and, on the other, by the continued influx of migrant children, especially the less familiar groups such as the South East Asian refugees, who challenge existing resources in terms of competent personnel and adequate support services, have shown considerable resistance to multicultural education policies fostered, in general, at the upper levels of the systems rather than by grass roots movements.<sup>11</sup>

A consequence of this ambivalence has been the attitudinal slide — reflected in policy making — from assimilationism to multiculturalism.<sup>12</sup> Assimilationist thinking refers to an inability to tolerate racial or cultural diversity and therefore, to the demand that those who differ from the Anglo-Celtic norm should 'shed their culture' to 'fit in' to Australian society. This position gave ground in the early 1970's to one which embraced integration — a deceptively democratic view of ethnic diversity suggesting 'live and let live' but which, in practice, called upon ethnic minorities to do most of the 'giving'. In the latter part of the 1970's and into the 80's, a new position was espoused, especially by the Fraser Liberal governments between 1975 and 1983, that of multiculturalism. The features of this ideology are equality of opportunity and access, maintenance of culture and tolerance of other cultures, provision for migrant needs via community and special services and consultation with migrant clients leading to self-help as soon as possible.<sup>13</sup>

The rhetoric has been celebrated by means of special organisations, for example, the setting up of an Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs, and Multicultural Television and by changes bringing greater access to dominant group sectors such as the public service by those of non-English-speaking background, government grants for various aspects of cultural and linguistic maintenance, and educational and social welfare policies labelled 'multicultural'. Special emphasis has been given to the role of formal education in supporting the maintenance of difference and a cohesive framework — the multicultural ideal. The Galbally Report, which launched the official support for and promotion of 'multicultural' Australia in 1978, asserted that the schools, in fact, were 'the key element'<sup>14</sup> in the achieving of a multicultural attitude in Australian society. Australians would be taught to exhibit intercultural understanding not only by embracing the notion that citizens of varying linguistic and cultural origins should retain their cultural heritage but also by activities designed for that purpose.

In reality, the conflation of ethnicity and class relationships systematically disadvantageous to various groups, the operation of prejudice and racism in spite of anti-discrimination legislation, the segmentation of the labour force and the minute contribution in empirical terms of non-Anglo-Celts to the professional, political, corporate, religious and social elites within Australia attest to countervailing forces of considerable magnitude which maintain the *status quo* and pre-multiculturalism ideology.<sup>15</sup> For example, at the educational level, considerable numbers of students of non-English-speaking background fail to succeed, are 'cooled out' and perpetuate the presence of an ethnic 'under class' within the Australian working class either by joining the ranks of the unskilled in the factories attached to the manufacturing or heavy industrial concerns or the unemployed. Ethnic differentiation is particularly marked here. Such disadvantage is suffered more by the more recent migrant groups, by those of non-western origin and by females.<sup>16</sup> The resultant ethnic stratification is due to the often hidden 'structuring structures'<sup>17</sup> of Australian capitalism. It is not readily ameliorated solely by the institution of education.

Australian education<sup>18</sup> is structured in a way which helps to reproduce the inequalities inherent in any capitalist system: it would be strange if that were not so. The Australian situation, however, exhibits some differences from those of a comparable country like Canada.

Schooling in Australia is organised on a tripartite basis. Three-quarters of the school-age population is educated in schools controlled by centralised state Departments of Education. The remaining twenty-five per cent is distributed unevenly between the Catholic and non-Catholic (Independent) school systems, the bulk of students being accommodated within the Catholic system. The State schools are financed by the federal government via the annual Loans Council Meetings (at which the States receive their proportion of the budget raised by taxation) and by funds for specific programs which are disbursed by the Schools Commission, a Federal instrumentality established in 1973 to advise the government on matters of educational policy. The Catholic and Independent systems are funded also from federal government sources but, in addition, charge tuition fees. Decisions on capital and recurrent expenditure, curriculum, staffing, school organisation and student management are taken autonomously by the non-government sector whereas they are largely controlled by the state Education Departments (although there are variations within States, for example in Victoria, there has been a considerable devolution of authority over curriculum and school councils).

A somewhat marginal extension to the Independent system are the ethnic schools. Such schools are run by ethnic communities, often in rented premises and in out-of-school hours, for the purpose of teaching community languages and culture. Although these schools now receive minimal federal funding, they are not subject to mainstream educational legislation which determines, for example, the legal obligations of parents and children with respect to formal schooling.

The post-compulsory schooling system is also structured into three parts: the technical and further education sector (T.A.F.E.), the colleges of advanced education sector (C.A.E.) and the university sector. These sectors are all federal government funded. Australia has no 'private' tertiary organizations with the exception of a few teacher training colleges established by the Catholic Church and, of course, theological colleges belonging to various religious denominations.

In theory, the State system is open to all. Access is not hindered in terms of, for example, economics, philosophical position, race, ethnicity, gender or age. In practice, of course, many do not avail themselves of the free, secular and compulsory (to approximately age fifteen years) nature of the State schools and post-compulsory schooling afforded by colleges and universities. This may be through choice or because there is both overt and covert structuring in Australian society which influences people to utilize other options (for example, to use independent schools or private tuition, to limit their formal education to the statutory leaving age, to encourage boys to remain longer at school and to enter post-secondary education rather than girls, or to induce migrant parents of non-English-speaking background to enrol their children in the non-government system to escape the alienation they feel in the State system because of cultural dissonance between their expectations of schooling and the philosophical and pedagogical values espoused by the State schools).

The paper has argued so far that the education of minority group children cannot be divorced from considerations of the wider socio-economic and cultural context such as the concepts, policies and practices related to matters of immigration, ethnic relations and multiculturalism. The question still remains why, and indeed on what grounds, should the education of minority group

children be seen, in a sense, divorced from the education of the majority group. Further, as the concept of multiculturalism in Australian terms is purported to include *all* Australians, it might be considered that we are violating the underlying assumptions of multicultural education by placing the emphasis on minority groups in Australian society.

Some of the reasons for this orientation include the following. To focus on minority groups is to provide a useful lens to critically observe the nature of Australian society (and education) as a whole, the proviso being that these groups are not reified and somehow thought to exist apart from other groups. The debate over multicultural education illustrates in microcosm the debates about the nature of Australian society from the perspective of the tension arising from claims advanced by the Australian state and opposing claims proposed by minority groups within that state having a diversity of social, economic, cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The legitimacy of such claims and their resolution pose problems for the decision-makers at political and also educational levels.

It has been suggested, for example, that there is an inequitable distribution of funds released as a result of official multiculturalism/multicultural education policy because of pressure group activity. That is, the claim has been made that the larger, longer established ethnic groups have more political clout and hence, greater success in obtaining grants and other concessions than the less well organized, perhaps numerically smaller, ethnic groups. The issue of which community languages are taught in mainstream schools is often discussed in these terms.<sup>19</sup>

A study of the education of minority group children has the potential to uncover the hidden dilemmas in the concept of multiculturalism *per se* and which arise upon implementation of multicultural policy.<sup>20</sup> This specific issue enables us to sample the controversies, conflicts and issues of one crucial element of multicultural policy — that is, multicultural education. For example, I would argue that the assumption underlying the principles enunciated in the Galbally Report (see pg. 196), a watershed in the career of the concept of multiculturalism, is that Australian society is a democratic, egalitarian and essentially cohesive society. A survey of the disadvantage (including educational disadvantage) suffered by members of some ethnic groups, however, and attributed by those belonging to the majority group to deficiencies within the groups themselves (for example, lack of competence in English and job skills), may rather be located within the structure and functioning of Australian society.

Such a view raises also the complex question of ethnic differentiation and stratification which may not be addressed if the dominance of the majority Anglo-Celtic group is accepted as the starting point. Neglected aspects which are likely to receive attention by focussing more strongly on minority groups, include the *settlement* issue (all those problems consequent upon migration from one country and society to another), the *class* issue (those problems associated with unequal distribution of occupations and their material rewards), issues of *status and prestige* (those less tangible rewards accorded by others) and issues of *access* to influence and representation (those structuring forces which act to exclude particular groups from positions of political power). I would suggest that the concept of tolerance of other cultures, learning about other cultures, accepting cultural diversity as 'a good thing' — the assumptions underlying much of multiculturalism policy and practice to date in Australia — touch on status and prestige issues but have little to do with settlement, class or political aspects — aspects with far more potential for improving or failing to improve the everyday existence of the disadvantaged in Australian society, amongst whom are represented ethnic minorities.

On the pragmatic level, multicultural education and, more especially, the education of newly arrived migrant and refugee youth are matters of particular concern in the 1980's. Concern over human rights, the youth labour market and educational issues including the provision for youth in the post-compulsory schooling age group and the transition period from school to work<sup>21</sup> are in the forefront of public discussion here as in other industrialised countries and are relevant to the problems faced alike by Australian born and newly-arrived youth.

There is an extra degree of concern felt for newcomers to this country and for those, longer resident and even born here, of non-English speaking background. The demands of a monolingual, Western, nominally Christian society which is itself experiencing dislocation due to the 'new' technological revolution and conditions of economic recession render vulnerable those who are 'different'. For example, the Research and Policy Division of the Ethnic Affairs Commission in Victoria has noted that unemployment rates for migrant youth are very high and their situation is deteriorating faster than for Australian born youth.<sup>22</sup> This body has reported also that the visibility of Indo-Chinese refugees has provided a handy scapegoat for the shortcomings of Australian social and economic structures.<sup>23</sup>

In general terms, Australia's population of non-English speaking origin is to be found mainly in metropolitan rather than in rural areas. Different ethnic groups are found in greater numbers in various cities and within cities. For example, Italo- and Greek-Australians are concentrated in Melbourne and those of Indo-Chinese and Lebanese origin in Sydney. A greater proportion of these groups occupy the lower socio-economic strata of the society than do the English-speaking Australian born.<sup>24</sup>

Ethnic minority children then are accommodated to a great extent in government schools but with a significant proportion of those of Catholic background in the Catholic system. A recent trend has been the rise in enrolment of children of non-English speaking background in the Independent school system. In some cases, it is suggested that this is a trans-class move taken deliberately to 'buy' social mobility.

There was no official policy to identify and make provision for children of non-English-speaking background until 1970. When the change came, the focus was firmly on English language tuition as exemplified by the Child Migrant Education Programme. With the promotion of *multicultural* education policy in 1978, innovations such as community languages, bilingual education and intercultural studies began to alter curricula and services in the school systems. Previously, language learning and maintenance could be obtained only through the marginal ethnic schools. We shall turn now to a more extensive review of these provisions.

#### *Migrant and Multicultural Education*

At one level, the history of provision for child migrant education in Australia is not difficult to chart. Although large-scale immigration commenced in 1947, it took the amendment of a federal Education Act to inaugurate the official child migrant education programme. Prior to that, the educational needs of migrant children were ignored or treated minimally and in an *ad hoc* fashion with the focus almost entirely on the problems experienced by non-English speakers in the monolingual English environment of the education systems. To understand why such recognition took so long is a more complex matter.<sup>25</sup> Part of the answer lies in the dominant ideology which was, at that time, assimilation. Hence the general acceptance of the view expressed by one senior education bureaucrat that information was not collected on the educational needs of migrant

children because once they entered Australian schools they were 'no different from' other Australian children.<sup>26</sup> What followed from this perspective was a policy of benign neglect.

The numbers and proportion of children of a variety of non-English-speaking backgrounds continued to increase and, thus, to challenge the resources of the education systems. The Child Migrant Education Programme (C.M.E.P.) established as a short-term 'band-aid' measure to give instruction in the English language, using teachers 'trained' in four-day workshops, escalated rapidly much to the dismay of the federal immigration and education departments. Even this minimal acknowledgement that migrant children have special educational needs encouraged parents, students and teachers alike to press for the assistance to continue and to be offered on more generous terms.

Throughout the seventies, high rates of migrant inflow continued to compound existing problems and deficiencies. Professionals in the helping professions and in education became more outspoken on the lack of adequate settlement policies.<sup>27</sup> Migrant groups themselves, especially the more established groups, began to speak out against their experiences of active repression or passive denial.<sup>28</sup> Politicians ever sensitive to pressure group activity began to see the potential of the 'ethnic' vote.<sup>29</sup> The newly-vamped ideas and policies of the Whitlam Labor government (1972-1975) had as their focus reform based on a concept of *need*.<sup>30</sup> These were amongst the factors leading to a shift of attitude towards integration. In a more 'liberal' climate, the gathering of information on migrant educational disadvantage burgeoned as academics and civil servants vied with one another to reveal the ineptitude of education departments and their systems.<sup>31</sup>

The establishment of the Federal Schools Commission, enabling for the first time direct negotiation between individual government and non-government schools and a federal funding agency, tipped the balance in favour of the transition from migrant to multicultural education.<sup>32</sup> In particular, the Child Migrant Education Programme came under the control of the Schools Commission in 1976 ensuring its continued existence and considerable development. For example, training for teachers was extended to four weeks, more appropriate materials for the teaching of English as a second language were written and capital expenditure on additional accommodation in schools was authorised. The high profile given to support for English language instruction combined with needs-based funding led to a greatly expanded inflow of resources into schools of high migrant density. There was some criticism even at this stage that 'migrants' were receiving more than equitable treatment.

The importance of Grassby, first Minister for Immigration in the Whitlam government and later first Commissioner for Community Relations, cannot here be discussed in detail.<sup>33</sup> Suffice to say, that his constant rhetoric of 'the Family of the Nation' — a particular vision of a plural Australia and his actual practice, for example, the reduction of the privileged position of British migrants and the phasing out of the White Australia policy, created an impetus towards toleration of cultural pluralism. This in not to say that any significant degree of acceptance of structural pluralism<sup>34</sup> accompanied it. The return to conservative government in 1975, however, was marked by a somewhat out-of-character championing of the the cause of ethnic minorities; ironically, perhaps, the most enduring legacy of the Grassby years. The government moved to institute an inquiry into the post-arrival programmes and services for migrants out of which came the Galbally Report. Almost without debate, the 'package' of measures with their \$50 million price tag<sup>35</sup> and the label of 'multicultural' policy was launched — for all intents and purposes the transition stage was complete.

What were the immediate effects on education? Manifest multicultural education policy under Galbally proposed the following elements:

- Extra funding for teaching English.
- Financial incentives for bilingual staff.
- Intensive English courses to enable migrants with overseas teaching qualifications to have them recognised.
- Financial support for courses at pre-service and in-service levels to enable trainees and teachers to obtain or upgrade knowledge of other cultures and languages and increased provision of interpreters and translators.
- Multicultural programmes (including language maintenance and intercultural understanding) in schools.

Note that since 1973, schools could be rated as *disadvantaged* (one criterion was the presence of a high proportion of students of non-English speaking background). Schools so rated were eligible for funding over and above the 'normal' and these funds could be used to improve human and material resources within the schools. Indirectly, then, the Disadvantaged Schools Programme became an element of multicultural education policy.

Specific grants were allocated to support the teaching of English (channelled into the Child Migrant Education Programme) and for multicultural education (with tagged programmes designated by the Schools Commission). The initial amount for multicultural education was half that for teaching English. The establishment of the Telephone Interpreter Service (available at no cost to all with access to a telephone) rather than a great expansion in numbers of interpreters (or ethnic consultants) attached to the educational bureaucracies was the mechanism for improving interpreter/translator services. In addition, the Schools Commission programmes enabled schools to apply for funds to employ bilingual staff in the form of ethnic teacher aides or ethnic welfare officers. Such personnel were expected to fulfil interpreting/translating tasks as part of their role. No special funds were made available for the re-training of overseas teachers or for pre- and in-service training of Australian personnel. Given the competition for resources in teacher education, only where colleges or universities were willing to enter into 'multicultural' teacher education were such courses provided.

In essence, the major emphasis remained with the teaching of English — migrant education rather than multicultural education. Two official inquiries conducted by the Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs in 1980 and 1982<sup>6</sup> have provided evidence of the uncoordinated and uneven implementation of multicultural education policy in the years since 1978 with little shift from the pre-eminence of the English language element.

The structural underpinnings of multicultural education policy at federal and state levels can be identified as follows. The Schools Commission had its provenance extended to include officially designated multicultural education. Under its aegis, federal and state multicultural committees were established to control and disburse the Galbally funds. Support was given to a range of multicultural activities including community languages, bilingual education, multicultural awareness programmes and the employment of ethnic aides initiated within government and non-government schools, and, to a limited extent, within agencies responsible for teacher education.

The mechanism for implementation of such programmes and activities at school level as part of the structure of the multicultural education policy must be noted. With respect to the Schools Commission, the applications of individual schools funnelled through regional committees at the state level were considered by the appropriate committee within the Commission. Successful

applications were then funded on a strict time limit. Similarly, applications destined for the state multicultural education committees were developed by individuals, individual schools or groups of schools. Applications were funded by the local committees. In later years, Ethnic Affairs Commissions (established by some of the state governments) have developed Small Grants funding programmes which supplement the direct federal funding mechanism.

Within the state and Catholic education bureaucracies, provision has always been made for *special* education; that is, the education of children with special needs — originally physically and mentally handicapped. With the recognition of the needs of migrant children, child migrant education sections have been added, the task of which has been to assist in the provision of English language tuition in schools. Upon the adoption of multicultural education policy, these sections expanded to include consultants with expertise in community languages, cultural differences, the development of relevant curriculum and learning/teaching materials and the capacity to liaise with ethnic communities and their ethnic schools.<sup>37</sup> These arrangements might be seen as an 'organic' development — an extension of accepted, taken-for-granted measures needed to accommodate individual differences in any society. To encompass ethnic pluralism in the *mainstream* systems reflects, at least, the illusion of a multicultural Australia — a social system in which the Anglo-Celtic hegemony has been broken, to be replaced by new cultural and structural forms. Another interpretation, however, is that by locating these services within the 'special' education sector, ethnic education rather than multicultural education is perpetuated.

It can be seen that multicultural education was and is not a 'blanket' policy embracing all schools nor is it required of schools. Schools can choose to take up or not take up the multicultural education option. On the other hand, it has been said that those who know how to 'play the system' best are more likely to win the multicultural funding 'lottery'. In relation to this, cynics have commented that some school administrators have become adept at identifying the 'ethnics' in their enrolment since a higher proportion of this group might place their schools into the coveted status of disadvantaged schools, hence attracting considerable additional funding.

I have argued elsewhere<sup>38</sup> that one of the major *latent* consequences of the multicultural education policy has been to set up a *de facto* 'ethnic education' stream within the education systems. The impetus to innovations in curricula, staffing programmes and services, as part of multicultural education has been as much to silence the criticisms of government policy as to meet real needs. But, the effect has been largely to provide a separate form of education for a particular group within the school-age cohort. This separate development has been reinforced by the action taken by ethnic communities themselves. There is a whole network of ethnic schools throughout Australia serving limited educational purposes, but increasingly, some of the long established groups like the Greeks and those with very different religious practices such as the Muslims are turning to the establishment of their own day schools. These developments have only been possible because of federal funding for school level education — a move originally intended to defuse the 'State Aid' issue.<sup>39</sup> There is some concern now as these provisions become more widely known that the existing divisions within the education systems (on class, gender, and religious grounds) will be intensified as cultural differentiation increases. Such a consequence is supposedly antithetical to Australian multiculturalism as it is presently defined.

*Concluding Statement*

The review of educational provisions for ethnic minority children has revealed the following trends:

- Reluctance to recognise language and other educational needs resulting in the delayed introduction to the Child Migrant Education Programme and failure to prepare teachers for the challenges to their professional competence.
- Incomplete transition from migrant to multicultural education because of the voluntaristic nature of multicultural education programmes and services and the common perception that multicultural education is for 'migrant' children, not for *all* Australian children.
- Changes in immigration policy ensuring the continued heterogeneity of the school-age population. Recent developments have increased the Asian component of the intake and triggered public controversy over the size of the immigration programme and expression of racist feelings.

What of future developments? We shall briefly note three differing scenarios posed by professionals working in the 'multicultural' field.

The first is given by Liffman, an activist in ethnic matters and director of the Ecumenical Migration Centre, basically a voluntary social welfare agency which assists, in particular, the Turkish and Indo-Chinese communities in Melbourne.<sup>40</sup> His assessment is that multiculturalism is under threat from the growth of neo-conservatism with its emphasis on societal division and conflict arising from the diversity of multiculturalism and the theme of the political or cultural superiority of Anglo-Celtic, Christian systems. On the other hand, the radicals or progressives who have in the past supported multiculturalism, are now espousing a more critical stance based on a fear that the multicultural idea leads only to superficial reforms and that the emphasis on ethnic or migrant factors masks the greater significance of factors of class and gender in the production and reproduction of inequality. Hence, he suggests that multiculturalism may decline in vigour and by extension, innovation in multicultural education.

Rado, who is in the forefront of the production of bilingual and multicultural education materials in Australia, strikes a more optimistic note. She considers that the changes in policy reflect both the reality of pluralism within the schools and new directions in the attitudes of educators and educational administrators. There is no turning back to the previous dominance of Anglo-monolingualism and monoculturalism. What is needed, however, is more precise identification of the needs of all children and youth in the complex, heterogeneous environment of the schooling systems and a much greater allocation of resources to support the range of programmes and services required.<sup>41</sup> A specific multicultural element favoured by Rado is the more widespread implementation of student-centered bilingual education.

Finally, Foster and Stockley, in their analyses of multiculturalism which have utilized concepts from sociology and history, have identified a particular ideology of multiculturalism in Australia.<sup>42</sup> They have traced its legitimization which carried with it a truncated notion of ethnicity and an attempt to minimize a consciousness of disparity based on class by the perhaps less tangible disparities of ethnicity. Official multiculturalism, then, is seen as the latest solution to the 'problem' of ethnic pluralism in Australian society. Their view is that the future of multiculturalism (and multicultural education), in the short term, lies in the outcome of the meeting and perhaps confrontation of the two ideologies currently dominant in the Australian consciousness, *multiculturalism* and the Hawke Labor Government's notion of *reconciliation and consensus*.

It is difficult to know exactly what is meant by 'reconciliation' and 'consensus'. These concepts subsume, among others, redirection of conflict and the submerging of individual and group interests by a commitment to the greater good of the nation. It is a vision of a country working together. The stress on submerging individual and group differences has not been in the mainstream of multicultural thinking in the past decade. Mainstream Australian multiculturalism has emphasised the valuing of ethnic diversity. Cultural pluralism has been affirmed although there has been considerably more disagreement about structural pluralism. It may be that the government will be faced with implicit and then explicit contradictions between its overriding theme of consensus and its particular policies on immigration, ethnic affairs and multiculturalism. This could become a nasty dilemma, one resolution of which would be a return to the earlier ideologies of integration or assimilation (building on existing conservative thinking within, for example, the powerful trade union movement). Alternatively, the solution may be to go beyond present multiculturalism to a 'new' Australian society quite different from the largely Christian, Western European, English language dominant orientation (this would be in line with the thinking of the current Labor Foreign Affairs Minister who supports a 'Eurasian' Australia). A third alternative relates to the race-ethnicity dichotomy in Australia especially with respect to the position of Aborigines. Overt conflict between black and white Australians could blow wide open the whole current conception of multiculturalism. The rise of black power mediated by the controversial legislation over land rights suggests that race relations rather than ethnic relations has the potential to be a powerful determinant of the future of the concept and policy of multiculturalism in Australia.

The multiculturalism dilemma is only one of a number being faced at present by the ruling political party. We have noted already the controversy over immigration policy. The federal government is engaged also in a struggle over its policies on education funding, at school and post-compulsory schooling levels, with various interest groups. Issues such as the continuation of aid to wealthy independent schools, the failure to provide adequate child-care facilities at the pre-school level, a contraction of funding for the college and university sectors of tertiary education, especially in regard to teacher education, continue to dominate. The nature of the education provided for ethnic minority children and the proportion of resources allocated to it is a sensitive indicator of the fortunes of the dominant and subordinate groups in these conflicts. The state of the balance between migrant and multicultural education reflects in microcosm present and future options in a 'multicultural' Australia.

#### *Résumé*

Le multiculturalisme est la dernière d'une série d'idéologies qui ont été développées afin de contrôler les conséquences sociales et politiques d'un pluralisme culturel et linguistique dans la société australienne. L'éducation est perçue comme l'élément clef du développement d'une attitude d'ouverture aux différences culturelles. L'auteur soutient qu'officiellement on est passé d'un système d'enseignement à l'intention d'une population de migrants à un système multiculturel mais que, dans les faits, des forces favorables au maintien du statu quo ont mené à la création, dans les écoles, d'une voie réservée aux minorités ethniques.

## NOTES

\* The term ethnic minority includes, of course, the indigenous minority, that is Australian Aborigines. Given the history of separate provision for the education of Aboriginal children, except for the small numbers of urban dwellers, and because of the identification made by many Aborigines of themselves as 'the only true Australians', I have chosen not to discuss the education of this group here. The main focus is on children of *non-English speaking* background. The literature on the education and educational progress of English speaking migrant children, in Australia for example, from America or New Zealand is sparse.

<sup>1</sup> Examples from the substantial literature available include: Department of Education and Youth Affairs, *Immigration and Refugee Youth in the Transition from School to Work or Further Study* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1983); W. Hannon and G. Spinoso, *A Mediterranean View of Schools* (Melbourne: Brusec Hodja, 1982); F. Mackie, *Structure, Culture and Religion in the Welfare of Muslim Families* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1983); K. Marjoribanks, *Ethnic Families and Children's Achievement* (Sydney: George Allen and Unwin, 1980); J. Smolicz (Chairperson), *Education for a Cultural Democracy* (Adelaide: Government Printer, 1984) and R. Taft and D. Cahill, *Initial Adjustment to Schooling of Immigrant Families* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1978).

<sup>2</sup> These sentiments were expressed by Professor G. Blainey, a well known historian from Melbourne University and quoted in *The Age*, April 3, 1983, p. 14.

<sup>3</sup> Survey report released by SSC & B. Lintas advertising agency, and quoted in *The Age*, June 18, 1984, p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> This stance promoted at the RSL Federal Conference, July 1984, was widely reported on radio, television and in the press.

<sup>5</sup> A commentary on this period is to be found in R. Birrell and T. Birrell, *An Issue of People* (Melbourne: Longman Cheshire, 1981).

<sup>6</sup> Australia's population by the end of 1983 was 15,369,000, Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, *Statistics Monthly* (Canberra: June 1984, p. 25). Immigration has been responsible for over half of the nation's growth since 1947. Borrie's discussion of Australia's population structure and trends, see W. Borrie and M. Mansfield (eds.), *Implications of Australian Population Trends* (Canberra: Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia, 1982, pp. 9-54).

<sup>7</sup> For example, net migration contributed 35 per cent to the growth of the labour force between 1966 and 1980, a relatively higher percentage if one considers only the manufacturing center. (Comments by Fisher, in Borrie and Mansfield, op. cit. pp. 133-135).

<sup>8</sup> The post-war immigration flow had reduced the proportion of the population of British origin from more than 90 per cent in 1947 to 78 per cent in 1982. The origins of the remaining 22 per cent cover an array of more than 40 nationalities and more than 80 languages. Non-Christians account for a significant minority. The 'surplus' to be found in the below 30 age group cannot be accounted for by natural increase; immigration of families or family-building by migrants once settled in Australia is a significant factor. (See Borrie's comments in Borrie and Mansfield, op. cit.) and the analysis presented in the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, *Review of Australian Demographic Trends* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1983).

<sup>9</sup> Considerable publicity has been given in Australia in recent years to the problems of the Family Law Court system, especially with respect to non-Anglo Celtic citizens. Altercations in court, threats to court personnel, the murder of one judge and, in the most recent incident in 1984, the death of the wife of a judge in an attack directed at her husband, have been attributed, in part, to cultural differences among systems of law and differing perceptions of adherents to those systems in respect to family roles, authority in the family, family honour, etc. For example, Mr. Justice Kirby, the Chairman of the Australian Law Reform Commission commented that no other country except Israel has such a high proportion of ethnic minorities and that Australia's legal system should be sensitive to this fact. 'The law should reflect and serve the country as it is, not as it was'. Quoted in Victorian Ethnic Affairs Commission, *Newsletter* (No. 2, Vol. 1: September 1983, p. 10).

<sup>10</sup> The position of the Roman Catholic Church is a case in point. From the point of view of numbers, the Church has benefited from large scale immigration and has actively engaged in its promotion. On the other hand, variations in dogma and practice have challenged the strongly Irish tradition of Catholicism in Australia. The Church has resisted setting up 'ethnic' parishes but has modified the curriculum in its schools, for example, by placing particular emphasis on the teaching of community languages such as Italian. For a detailed study of the Church and migrants, see F. Lewins, *The Universal Church* (Canberra: Australian National University Faculty of Arts, 1978).

<sup>11</sup> A full scale Australia-wide review of multicultural and migrant education conducted in 1979-80 by the Australian Institute for Multicultural Affairs (A.I.M.A.) concluded that the effective pursuit of multicultural education has been hindered by a broad range of difficulties and obstacles. The Report stated:

The dominant conclusion emerging from an examination of agencies and programs in the multicultural area is that activity, effort and commitment of resources is severely circumscribed by the lack of any sustained organisational focus or coherence.

A.I.M.A., *Review of Multicultural and Migrant Education* (Melbourne: A.I.M.A., 1980, p. xii.)

<sup>12</sup> Useful analyses of these concepts and their careers are to be found in R. McL. Harris, 'Anglo Conformism, Interactionism and Cultural Pluralism. A Study of Australian Attitudes to Migrants', in P. de Lacey and M. Poole, (eds) *Mosaic or Melting Pot* (Sydney: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1979, pp. 23-39) and L. Foster and D. Stockley, *Multiculturalism: The Changing Australian Paradigm* (London: Multicultural Matters Ltd., 1985).

<sup>13</sup> Stated in F. Galbally (Chairman), *Report of the Review of Post-Arrival Programs and Services* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1978, p. 4), the Galbally Report was accepted *in toto* by the Liberal-National Party Coalition and led to a range of policy initiatives under the umbrella of multiculturalism.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12.

<sup>15</sup> This assessment is influenced by M. de Lepervanche, 'Immigrants and Ethnic Groups', in S. Encel and L. Bryson (eds), *Australian Society* 4th ed. (Melbourne: Longman Cheshire, 1984, pp. 170-228).

<sup>16</sup> Recent evidence of this situation can be found in, for example, a series of papers commissioned by the Victorian Ethnic Affairs Commission, *Migrants and the Workforce* Numbers 3 and 4 (Melbourne: E.A.C., 1984), C. Young, and A. Daly, *Report of the Greek and Italian Youth Employment Study* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1983); and C. Young, M. Petty and A. Faulkner, *Education and Employment of Turkish and Lebanese Youth* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1980).

<sup>17</sup> G. Rocher, *A General Introduction to Sociology. A Theoretical Perspective* (Toronto: The Macmillan Co. of Canada, 1972, p. 393).

<sup>18</sup> For a description of the structure of Australian education, its relationship to other institutions and its role in reproduction of the relationships inherent in the capitalist state, see, for example, L. Foster, *Australian Education: A Sociological Perspective* (Sydney: Prentice Hall, 1981); J. Branson and D. Miller, *Class, Sex and Education in Capitalist Society* (Melbourne: Sorrett, 1979) and R. Connell *et al.*, *Making a Difference* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1982).

<sup>19</sup> To illustrate: in our research contacts in Melbourne with a range of ethnic groups, we have frequently heard dissatisfaction over the high profile Greek spokespersons adopt in interactions with education authorities and funding bodies and the success achieved in developing Greek programmes, especially at the primary school level.

<sup>20</sup> For an extended analysis of the hidden dilemmas of multiculturalism, see Foster and Stockley, *op. cit.*

<sup>21</sup> The following publications are amongst many which illustrate the official concern over these matters: *Human Rights*. Human Rights Commission Newsletter, 1 (3) March/April 1983 which comments on current major projects of the Commission including human rights in deportation decisions, freedom of expression and racist propaganda — of concern to migrants to Australia. *Youth Labour Market Supplement* a publication of the Vocational Orientation Centre, Melbourne, 1983; the *Manpower Programs Survey* initiated in 1983 by the

Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs at the request of the Commonwealth Government; G. Hubbert, *An Evaluation of the Education Program for Unemployed Youth* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1980); Ministerial Review of Post-compulsory Schooling, *Discussion Paper* Melbourne, 1984; Commonwealth Schools Commission, *Participation and Equity in Australian Schools: The Goal of Full Secondary Education*, (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1984); Department of Education and Youth Affairs, *Immigrant and Refugee Youth in the Transition from School to Work or Further Study* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1983); Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission, *Learning and Earning*, Vol. 1 (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1982). L. Shears and J. Matthews, *Youth Policies* (Melbourne: Government Printer, 1983) and D. Spearitt and J. Colman, *Schooling for Newly-Arrived Indo-Chinese Refugees. An Evaluation of the Contingency Program for Refugee Children* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1982).

<sup>22</sup> Victorian Ethnic Affairs Commission, *Newsletter* (No. 2, Vol. 1: September 1983, p. 1).

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>24</sup> These simplified trends are examined in complex detail by the demographer Charles Price. See, for example, C. Price *Australian Immigration: A Bibliography and Digest*, Vol. 2 (Canberra: Australian National University, 1979) and in an article based on the 1981 Census, C. Price, 'Multicultural Australia. Demographic Background', in B. Falk and J. Harris (eds), *Unity in Diversity* (Carlton: The Australian College of Education, 1983, pp. 6-25).

<sup>25</sup> Two accounts which attempt a sociological explanation of the move from migrant to multicultural education are those of Martin, *op. cit.*, chapters 3 and 4 and L. Foster, 'From Migrant to multicultural Education?', in R. Browne and L. Foster (eds), *Sociology of Education: Australian and New Zealand Studies*, 3rd edn. (Melbourne: Macmillan, 1983, pp. 424-439).

<sup>26</sup> Attributed to Sir Harold Wyndham when he was Director General of Education in New South Wales in the latter part of the 1960's.

<sup>27</sup> See, for example, L. Rodopoulos (ed.) *Readings for "Helpers" in a Culturally Plural Society*, (Melbourne: Clearing House on Migration Issues, 1981).

<sup>28</sup> Two relevant reports are Centre for Urban research and Action, '*But I Wouldn't Want My Wife to Work Here*' (Fitzroy, in interactions with education authorities and funding bodies and the success achieved in developing Greek programmes, especially at the primary school level.

<sup>29</sup> For an extended analysis of the hidden dilemmas of multiculturalism, see Foster and Stockinre for Independent Studies, 1982) and L. Allan, 'Ethnic Politics in the A.L.P.', in J. Warhurst (ed), *Politics in Victoria* (Melbourne: Drummond Heinemann, 1983).

<sup>30</sup> The concept of needs-based funding was an underlying theme of the Australian Labor Party National Conference, Launceston, Tasmania, 1970.

<sup>31</sup> For an analysis of increased publication in the area of educational disadvantage of migrant children, see Martin, *op. cit.*, chapter 3.

<sup>32</sup> More details on the transition are to be found in Foster (1983), *op. cit.*

<sup>33</sup> Grassby's contribution has been explored in depth in Foster and Stockley, *op. cit.*

<sup>34</sup> Acceptance of cultural pluralism brings with it an encouragement of maintenance of 'ethnic' languages and life-styles. Structural pluralism would require toleration of, and active encouragement of, distinctively 'ethnic' institutions to support equality of *life-chances* with the current dominant groups in Australian society. Amongst those who have examined these definitions and their practical implications is A. Jakubowicz, 'State and Ethnicity: Multiculturalism as Ideology'. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology*, 1981, 17(3): 4-13.

<sup>35</sup> *The Galbally Report*, *op. cit.*, pp. 6, 14.

<sup>36</sup> Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs, *Review of Multicultural and Migrant Education* (*op. cit.*) and *Evaluation of Post-Arrival Programs and Services* (Melbourne: A.I.M.A., 1982).

<sup>37</sup> A typical model is that of the Victorian Education Department's Equal Opportunity Education Division. Within that division, one sector deals with Aboriginal and another with migrant and multicultural education programmes and services.

<sup>38</sup> Foster (1983), op. cit.

<sup>39</sup> 'State Aid' refers to the financial contribution made by federal and state governments to the schools in the non-government sector. There has always been opposition in some quarters to such aid as it has been seen as a way of undermining the effectiveness of the state systems of education and entrenching social privilege because even the wealthiest of the 'private' schools obtain some public funding.

<sup>40</sup> M. Liffman, "Multiculturalism: where to, with whom — and why?" *Social Alternatives*, 1983, 3(3): 13-17.

<sup>41</sup> Rado's ideas have been documented in such sources as *The Multilingual Project*, a set of social science oriented teaching/learning materials produced in 10 language versions for junior secondary students; also, M. Rado, *Teaching in the Multilingual Classroom* (Canberra: Curriculum Development Centre, 1984) and M. Rado, *The Place of Community Languages in Victorian Schools*. (A paper prepared for the Ministerial Policy Committee on Multicultural and Migrant Education and the State Board of Education, Mimeo, 1984).

<sup>42</sup> Foster and Stockley, op. cit., especially Chapter Five.