GLOBALISATION AND TRANS-NATIONAL STUDENT MOBILITY: A TEST CASE FOR MULTICULTURALISM IN AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION?

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Abstract: *A key feature of contemporary globalisation is international migration, which has long been a feature of Australian education. Indeed, it is often remarked that other than Aborigines, all Australians are migrants. This is very different to the European experience, and is more like countries of migration such as the USA and Canada. The paper examines the character of multiculturalism in Australian education, from both historical and contemporary perspectives, and uses brief sketches of two migrant communities (Muslim Australians and mainland Chinese) as ways to illustrate some of the key issues, and how the patterns of migration and multiculturalism are changing.*

Key words: *globalisation, migration, multiculturalism, Australian education,*

Multicultural Australia?

Of 150 million students enrolled in higher education worldwide, some 3 million are classed as international. This includes both those who travel abroad to study, as well as those who study an international programme at home, either via distance, or at a branch campus of a overseas university.

Australia has been signally successful in attracting large numbers of students to its universities and more recently to its vocational education sector. In higher education, of a total current student population of 1 million enrolled in Australian universities, around 250,000 are international students. With the singular exception of Switzerland, hardly any other country comes close to this ratio of 25%. As is seen below, however, the flood of students has not always been well regulated, and has become something of a test-case for Australian openness and diversity.

With around 24 per cent of Australians born overseas, and a reputation worldwide as a prototype of a modern, diverse society, Australia can fairly be deemed multicultural. Yet many teachers, students, and their parents may also remember recent events such as efforts to demonise asylum seekers and prevent their landing on Australian shores (Gale, 2004); the violent, racist clashes in December 2005; demonstrations against vicitimisation of Muslim Australians, (*SMH*, 2005, 31 August, 3 December); and attacks on Indian students, principally in Melbourne.

In the following, it is argued that cultural differences have long been a critical element in Australian education and society. Indeed, it can fairly be claimed that with the exception of Indigenous groups, Australians are all migrants. This key feature of Australian society became even more marked, in the context of its vigorous post-war migration program, a planned piece of social engineering that sets it apart to an extent from other countries of migration, such as Canada, Argentina, or the United States, where immigration was less persistently planned (Jupp, 2002).

More recently, a trend towards migration from the Asia Pacific region is evident, notably including international students, some of whom decide to remain in Australia at the conclusion to their studies. As is illustrated below, while such students are generally welcomed, the trend has not been without its problems, largely of Australia's own making.

The fact that Australia has long been a country of migration does not mean that it has always been a bed of roses for migrants, nor that the education they received was always well suited to diverse migrant cultures and aspirations. As is evident below, while Australia can fairly be said to be one of the more successful multicultural nations, its history is also replete with racism, making it critical for each generation to renew the commitment to diversity and multiculturalism, including in education. This could not always be taken for granted. It has often been the case that first-generation migrants have had to struggle for acceptance, while the second generation has more commonly enjoyed the fruits of their parents' labour, including in education. As is argued, education has often been a powerful incentive for Australian immigrants, with parents aspiring to better educational options for their children in the new country, and the social mobility that more and better education can confer. At the same time, some groups have been more successful than others in negotiating associated processes of adaptation, integration, and cultural maintenance.

A key focus within the article is the role of international students, who present something of a test case for Australian multiculturalism. Of the 15 million students enrolled in higher education worldwide, an estimated 3 million are classed as international.

Culture, Language, and Identity in Australian Education

The fact that around 200 migrant communities exist in Australia raises complex issues of culture and identity. Given that language is clearly a key bearers of culture, it is clearly important for Australia to foster its community languages, and knowledge of relevant cultures. This enhances its social, cultural, and economic relations both with its neighbours—including for example, China, Vietnam, and the world's most populous majority-Muslim country, Indonesia (SMH, 2009, Feb. 21), as well as Europe, from which Australian migrants have long been drawn, and the Middle East. Yet, a recent analysis concluded that, while both of Australia's largest cities have populations of which at least 25 per cent speak another language at home, far too little is being done to nurture this store of cultural knowledge and expertise:

> Like some other English-speaking countries, such as the United Kingdom, the United States and New Zealand, Australia is treating languages at best as a luxury and not a necessity, at worst as a diversion from more important things, which are defined in monolingual terms (Clyne, 2005, p. 22).

The *Australian Language and Literacy Policy*, or ALLP (1991) listed a range of priority languages (European, Aboriginal, and Asian). The second policy, the *National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools* (NALSAS) of 1994, was based on the economistic premise (see chapter 1) that certain key Asian languages were of critical importance to Australia's future (as part of a larger move to integrate Australia more with the region). This instrumental approach to the learning of languages and cultures intended that 60 per cent of Australian school pupils would take one of the priority Asian languages (Mandarin Chinese, Japanese, Indonesian, and Korean). A National Asian Languages and Studies Program, initiated by the new federal government in 2008, represented a modest re-commitment to Asian languages, but the funding cap of $62.4 million for the 2008-11 triennium ensured that it would fail to fulfil the then (Mandarin-speaking) Prime Minister's goal of substantially lifting Asian language proficiency, nationwide.

Table 1, following, shows the main community languages spoken in Australia, and their degree of growth, or decline.

Table 1. Selected community languages spoken in Australia, 2001, with percentage change from 1991

Language	No. of speakers in 2001	Percentage change since 1991
Italian	353,606	−15.6
Greek	263,718	−7.7
Cantonese	225,307	38.9
Arabic	209,371	28.6
Vietnamese	174,236	58.1
Mandarin	139,288	155.9
Spanish	93,595	3.4
Tagalog (Filipino)*	78,879	33.4
German	76,444	−32.6
Macedonian	71,994	11.7
Serbian	49,202	102.2
Hindi	47,817	110.4
Korean	39,528	100.1
Indonesian	38,724	42.4

Source: Clyne, 2005

* Tagalog, the main language of the Philippines, cannot be distinguished in the Census from Filipino, the national language.

The overall pattern of languages taught in Australian schools is compared with their national rank throughout Australian society, and their significance among 0–14 year olds, in table 2.

Table 2. Top ten community languages in Australian schools, 2001

Language Rank (Schools)	No. of Students	Language Rank (National)	Top 20 rank, among 0–14 age group (national)
Japanese	402,882	Not among top 20	17
Italian	394,770	1	5
Indonesian	310,363	20	13
French	247,001	18	20
German	158,076	9	15
Mandarin Chinese	111,464	6	6
Arabic	31,844	4	1
Greek	28,188	2	4
Spanish	24,807	7	7
Vietnamese	22,428	5	2

Source: Clyne, 2005

The data show that patterns of language use, and the cultures that they support, are closely related to waves of migration. Migration has affected Australian society, and changing constructions of national identity, in different ways, however, including in education.

Australia's Migration History

In 2002, Australia welcomed its six millionth immigrant—a Filipina information technology specialist. Paradoxically perhaps, at the very same time, Australia was establishing internment camps in remote desert locations (Woomera, Port Hedland), and offshore in places such as Nauru and Manus Island, to incarcerate asylum seekers from countries such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, and Iran. Some camps were deliberately established overseas, to prevent asylum seekers from landing on Australian shores. Why was Australia warmly welcoming some immigrants, while at the same time desperately seeking to prevent other aspirants from settling in the country?

The first point derives from the fact that it was the British (rather than Dutch or Portuguese of French explorers) who colonised Australia, (in 1788). Other key features of Australian immigration are also linked to British colonialism. By the time

of federation (1901), some 20 per cent of Australia's populace was overseas-born, including significant Chinese and German minorities, and smaller populations of Pacific islanders and Afghans. Nonetheless,

> Australian immigration policy over the past 150 years has rested on three pillars: the maintenance of British hegemony and 'white' domination; the strengthening of Australia economically and militarily by selective mass immigration; and the state control of these processes (Jupp, 2002, p. 6).

This led to a key contradiction of Australian immigration history: the tension between place, and dominant cultural heritage. On the one hand, the continent's location at the heel of South East Asia, in the South Pacific, with all of its nearest neighbours being non-European (the single exception, then as now, being New Zealand), suggests an Asian–Pacific influence. Yet the arrival of a few hundred Indian and Melanesian settlers) and tens of thousands of Chinese migrants in the aftermath of the discovery of gold in the 1850s, was met with racist outbursts, and riots, among elements of the dominant ethnic group, largely of British extraction (Jupp, 2001, p. 45). Largely as a result, many Chinese settlers who migrated as a result of the gold discoveries, in the hope of making their fortune, eventually returned home (Sherington, 1990). China-born settlers declined from 38,142 in 1861 to 6404 in 1947 (Hugo, 2005a).

Such outbursts by local whites, however, underlined that place was much less important than perceived racial purity and notions of dominant culture. Australia's cultural referent was unmistakably British: the colonial ruling class during the nineteenth century still looked to 'Mother England' for cultural inspiration, values, and the design of legal, parliamentary, and social institutions, including education. Legislation in the various colonies embodied these prejudices, using devices such as poll taxes and residence fees to effectively proscribe immigration by Chinese settlers, and subsequently by Indians. (Much the same occurred in Canada and the USA at much the same time, of course.) Such racist views, a by-product of European imperialism of the nineteenth century, viewed Indian and Chinese migrants to Australia as dangerous.

Such views underpinned what came to be known from the 1880s onwards (at a time when the total of Chinese and Indigenous population would have reached no more than 5 per cent of the national figure) as the 'White Australia' policy, enshrined in the infamous *Immigration Restriction Act* of the new national parliament in 1901, and effectively in place until the 1960s (Sherington, 1990). As a result, in the 1947 Census the proportion of the Australian populace that was neither Caucasian, nor Aboriginal, stood at a mere 0.25 per cent (1 in 400). 'Australia had become one of the whitest countries in the world, outside northwestern Europe' (Jupp, 2002, p. 9). In the late 1930s, such exclusionary ideology was used to prevent many Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi Europe from being accepted in Australia, with a 3-year cap of 15,000 being set (Tavan, 2005, p. 28; see also Bartrop, 1994). Even some of those who did gain entry were promptly interned because their language was German, despite being refugees from Nazi persecution (Jupp, 2001, p. 179). (Again, this was

little different to the USA, at the same time.) Assimilation remained official policy well into the post–World War II era, including in education. Migrants were advised 'not to behave in any way that would attract attention. Assimilation would be complete when nobody noticed the newcomer' (Jupp, 2002, p. 22). By 1950, while still in place, the policy was being interpreted more flexibly (Tarvan, 2005, p. 65). At a time when the overseas-born proportion of the Australian population was a mere 9.8 per cent, 'White Australia had been struck a small blow' (Tavan, 2005, p. 66).

A further scheme, targeting those from Europe's post-war refugee camps, brought 70,000 immigrants per year to Australia, a figure that grew to 150,000 in later years (Calwell, in Jupp, 2001, p. 71). Nonetheless, it was only from the mid 1960s that the policy of policing entry, with only 'white' and preferably British migrants being sought, effectively ended. When the White Australia policy ended in the 1960s, British migrants still formed half of Australia's annual intake, and were only replaced (by New Zealand!) as the largest source country in 1966. Nonetheless, the 1961 Census revealed a dramatic rise in non-British, non-indigenous elements of the Australian population (Jupp, 2001, p. 67), as indicated in the following Table. Ultimately, the election of a social-democratic Labor government in 1972 saw the abandonment of discriminatory migration, replaced (as Canada had already done) with a points system, based on both 'desirable' personal and social qualities, and occupational status (Jupp, 2001, p. 68).

Peak migration years for several European migrant groups was in the 1970s, and thereafter a degree of cultural ossification often occurred, as fewer European migrants refreshed the cultures of those communities. Much the same had been true for Germans who migrated to Australia in the nineteenth century, and for East Europeans and Scandinavians before the Second World War. Education played a role in this phenomenon of cultural ossification, as schools often used outdated textbooks from the homeland, embodying a culture that had long since changed, while language teachers (rarely native speakers themselves) were often unfamiliar with recent developments in the source culture.

Table 3. Major non-British, non-indigenous ethnic groups, by birthplace, and total, Australia 1947, 1961, 1996, 2006.

Ethnic Group	Number 1947 (by birth place)	% total populace 1947 (by birthplace)	Number 1961 (by birth place)	% total populace 1961 (by birth-place)	Number 1996 (by birthplace)	% total populace 1996 (by birth-place)	Total number, 1996*	Overall % populace, 1996*	Overall % populace, 2006*
Italian	34,000	0.45	228,000	2.10	274,000	1.50	600,000	3.28	4.29
Greek	12,000	0.16	77,000	0.72	167,000	0.91	348,000	1.90	1.84
German	14,000	0.18	109,000	1.00	141,000	0.77	675,000	3.69	4.09
Polish	6,573	0.09	60,000	0.56	72,000	0.39	164,000	0.89	0.82
Chinese	12,000	0.16	14,395	0.14	293,000	1.60	369,000	2.02	3.37
Vietnamese	715	0.00	2,747	0.03	176,000	0.96	176,000	0.96	0.87
Lebanese	1,886	0.02	7,245	0.07	158,000	0.86	224,000	1.22	0.92
Total Aust. Population	7,579,358	1.06	10,634,267	4.62	18,310,700	6.99		13.96	16.2

Source: Jupp et al 2001, Sherington 1990, Official Census 1947, 1961, 2006

Notes:

1. The use of birthplace as the principal measure in the above table, based on Census measures, significantly underestimates total numbers and proportions of longstanding ethnic groups, such as Italians and Germans. Hence, the final two columns (marked with an *) incorporate second and other generations. Also, in 2006, respondents could give 2 answers to 'ancestry'.
2. Chinese also includes ethnic Chinese from SE Asia, and elsewhere.
3. In 1947 Census Lebanese includes Syria, Vietnamese were included in category: 'Other Countries in Asia'
4. In 1961, Census, Vietnamese were included in category: 'Other Countries in Asia'

Notwithstanding moves to end race-based migration, towards skill and family reunion, migration from countries within the region grew relatively slowly, at least in absolute terms. By 1981, of a total population total of some 14.5 million, 'there were only about 300,000 Australians of Asian origin' (Sherington, 1990, p. 166). But this was changing rapidly. Whereas in 1982–83, UK-born settler arrivals comprised 28 per cent and China-born 1 per cent, by 2002–03, UK-born settlers had declined to 13 per cent, while China-born arrivals now comprised 7 per cent of the total (Parliamentary Library, 2005). 'By 1996, around 41 per cent of Australians were either immigrants or children of immigrants, one in five was not of British … descent, and one in twenty was not of European descent' (Jupp, 2001, p. 70). Tables 4 and 5 illustrate some of these changes.

Table 4. Settler arrivals by birthplace 1993–94 and 2003–04: leading countries

Birthplace	1993–94	2003–04	% Change
UK & Ireland	9563	19,214	100.9
New Zealand	7772	14,418	85.5
China	2740	8784	220.6
India	2643	8135	207.8
South Africa	1654	5849	253.6
Sudan	340	4591	1250.3
Philippines	4179	4111	−1.6
Malaysia	1252	3718	196.9
Indonesia	622	2584	390.8
Singapore	502	2224	343.0
Vietnam	5434	2212	−59.3
Zimbabwe	143	1620	1032.9

Source: *DIMIA, cited in SMH, 2005, 29 October*

Note: Just as in Table 7.4, it is likely that some of the migrants from Vietnam, Indonesia, and Malaysia are of Chinese ethnicity. See Jupp, 2001, p. 81.

Table 5. Family and Skilled Migrant totals, 1990–91 & 2003–04

Eligibility Category	1990–91 Total	1990–91 %	1996–97 Total	1996–97 %	2003–04 Total	2003-04 %	2008-09 total
Family	53,934	44.3	36,490	42.6	29,548	26.6	56,500
Skilled	48,421	39.8	19,697	22.9	51,529	46.8	115,000
Gross annual intake	121,690		85,752		110,000		**190,300**

Source: *Parliamentary Library, 2005; Jupp, 2002, DIC 2009*

The balance between permanent and temporary migration also shifted. Whereas in 1982–83, the numbers of permanent arrivals outstripped that of long-term temporary arrivals (83,010, compared to 79,730), by 2002–03 long term arrivals had risen to 279,879, while permanent arrivals had risen only slightly, to 93,914 (Parliamentary Library, 2005). Many of the former are international students, principally from the Asia-Pacific region. In many cases, Asian migrants were more highly educated than the general Australian population, as with Asian migrants to Canada and the United States.

As indicated in earlier tables, the current situation is still very mixed. Rather like Canada, and other such countries of migration, Australia has had open, non-discriminatory migration for close to 40 years. By the late 1970s, this meant that something like 30 per cent of Australian migrants stemmed from the Asian region. Current estimates are that 39 per cent of Australia's current annual intake of migrants stem from the Asia-Pacific region (Tavan, 2005, p. 1). By the mid 1980s, less than half the population could claim direct maternal and paternal descent from British and Irish stock (Sherington, 1990, p. 170), while of the total overseas-born among the Australian population, the proportion of UK-born declined from 58 per cent to 25.4 per cent, from 1901–2001 (Parliamentary Library, 2005). Other aspects have remained more stable—since 1971, the proportion of overseas born in the Australian population has ranged from 20 to 24 per cent (Parliamentary Library, 2005).

The spread of migrant communities is also very mixed. By far the greatest density reside in the capital cities, most particularly Melbourne and Sydney. Several suburbs that in the 1960s were largely peopled by working-class Anglo-Australians, and some European migrants, are now vibrant centres of Vietnamese culture, for example, or were settled by significant Lebanese, Chinese, and other communities. Outside the cities, however, many Australians still lack much direct experience of living, working, and studying with people from other cultures. Equally, some migrant groups have intermarried more than others: more recent migrant groups such as Indo-Chinese and some Lebanese have had little time to do so, while earlier minorities such as Greeks, Italians, and those from the former Yugoslavia have displayed relatively low rates of inter-marriage. Equally diverse are patterns of English language usage at home (Clyne, 2005; Cruickshank, 2003)**.**

Implications for Education

The far-reaching changes in Australian society sketched above have not left education untouched, and illustrate the complex role of education in social change. Australian education has not always kept pace with other dimensions of social change, in particularly the increasing levels of ethnic diversity.

Nineteenth century education in Australia was no less susceptible to the prevailing ideologies of race and religion than other aspects of society. Indeed, religion and racism were often mixed. Even the (largely Irish) Catholics, who represented a significant element of the Australian populace, were commonly seen as different, and discrimination was common. How much more so for Chinese and

Indians in Australia, who were not merely non-Christians, but who were also non-Caucasian? Christianity itself was not unsullied by racist doctrines (Evans et al., 1975, p. 102), while newspapers, magazines, and anthropological journals commonly paraded spurious assumptions about the characters and physical appearances of non-whites (Evans et al., 1975, p. 6; De Lepervanche, 1980, p. 28; Welch, 1996b, pp. 28–33, 107).

While Aboriginal Australians suffered most from such assumptions, Asian settlers also suffered. The rising tide of evolutionary theory, epitomised in the publication of Charles Darwin's famous *On the Origin of Species* in 1859, was popularly held to give scientific support to the view that a racial hierarchy existed, with Aboriginal Australians at the base, and white European society at the apex. Asian races fell somewhere in between, it was commonly held. Hence, with very few exceptions, little or no provision was made in schools for the cultures of Aboriginal children. A severe and unyielding mix of science, Christianity, and capitalism was the basis for the white curriculum, to which all others were also subjected. As indicated above, many of the colonies had passed legislation severely restricting Asian immigration in the 1880s, and since Indians and Chinese were prohibited from settling in Australia, and Asian men were prohibited from bringing their wives and children with them, appropriate schooling for them was largely irrelevant. And for those 'Asiatic' women who did give birth, federal legislation, soon passed, in 1912, denied them the Commonwealth maternity bonus, of £5, for every live birth (Tavan, 2005, p. 8).

The Cultures of Australian Education

The above sketch shows that, for the entire period since the British colonised Australia at the end of the eighteenth century, Australia has had significant numbers of settlers from key non-UK sources. At the onset of the new millennium, this diversity is even more evident. But what forms of education have been provided, and what has been the experience of migrant Australians in education? Examples of the education of Muslim Australians, and of highly skilled Chinese migrants, illustrate the changing face of education and immigration.

As with some of the countries of Europe, where in France, for example, the Muslim population is now close to 8.5%, a growing proportion of Australians are now Muslim (although this includes more settlers from the majority-Muslim countries of SE Asia, than is the case in Europe).

Table 6. Muslim Settlers, Australia and Selected OECD countries, 2010.

	US	Germany	France	UK	Spain	Canada	Australia
Total Population	305.5m	82m	65m	62m	46m	34m	22m
No. of Muslims	2.5m (0.8%)	3.3m (4.0%)	5.5m (8.5%)	2.4m (3.9%)	900,000 (1.95%)	1m (2.94%)	350,000 (1.60%)
No. of Mosques	1,900	2,600	2,100	1,500	454	198	100-300

Source: Time 2010, DFAT, islamia online

Given the larger numbers of such migrants, Islamic education has understandably grown. The growth of Arabic speakers has been commensurate, from 50,000 in 1976, to 120,000 in 1986, 163,000 in 1991, and 210,000 in 2001. Of these, 40 per cent are Australian-born, while another 40 per cent are Lebanese-born (Cruickshank, 2003, p. 54). Community schools are currently responsible for the teaching of about 50,000 students of Arabic language, but retention rates are poor, while in primary and secondary schools only a small proportion of Arabic speakers learn their language. Teachers of Arabic are often untrained language teachers, and some have 'uncertain proficiency in MSA (Modern Standard Arabic)' (Cruickshank, 2003, p. 66). Currently, there are Islamic schools in almost all states with a total of perhaps 12,000 to 15,000 enrolments (Saeed, 2003, p. 151). The two decades of the 1980s and 1990s were when most of the schools were established, reflecting the patterns of migration from Lebanon and neighbouring countries, as well as from other regions. By 1986, there were more than 109,000 Muslims in Australia, from the Middle East, Cyprus, Yugoslavia, Malaysia, Indonesia, Egypt, Fiji, Pakistan, and Bangladesh (Kabir, 2004, p. 152). Asmar cites 200,805 individuals who identified themselves as Muslim in the 1996 Census (Asmar, 2001, p. 140); by 2006, this had risen to 281,600 (ABS, 2006).

The profound disruptions to employment and education experienced during the Lebanese Civil War by many third-wave migrants to Australia meant that, according to the 1986 census, although a higher per cent of Muslims possessed higher degrees than the general Australian populace, and almost as many had Bachelor's degrees, far fewer held vocational qualifications than the Australian population (Kabir, 2004, p. 168). Young Turkish Australians were generally less well educated than the overall Australian population (Kabir, 2004, p. 172), although significant progress had been made compared to a decade or two earlier. By the 1996 census, Muslim Australians were shown to be as educated as the Australian-born population, and in the categories of Bachelor and higher degrees, more so (Kabir, 2004, p. 273). Overall, at least 10,498 Muslim students were reported as studying at Australian universities in the 1996 census, yielding a rate of attendance higher than that for the general population. (It should be noted, however, that some of these Muslim students were likely to have been international students.) Nonetheless, the rate of higher education participation is very differential: some gaining the higher educational qualifications needed to access professional and managerial jobs,'while others experience inter-generational unemployment and poverty' (Batrouney, 2001, p. 568).

The same census showed that the unemployment rate for Muslims was 25 per cent, relative to 9 per cent for Australia-born and the total population (Kabir, 2004, p. 272, Donohue-Clyne, 1998), a disparity that persists in parts of both Melbourne and Sydney. This rate was also significantly higher than that of their Christian Middle East–born counterparts (Kabir, 2004, p. 275; see also Humphrey, 1998). Language issues were partly to blame for higher levels of unemployment:

Some Arabic-speaking children dropped out of school early, especially if they had an inadequate command of English … for them employment would be difficult. Some also left school because they could not relate to the school's dominant culture. (Kabir, 2004, p. 275).

Despite numerous promises by state and federal politicians in the aftermath of the Cronulla riots of 2005, youth facilities in such areas are often sadly lacking:

There's no … youth centre out here…We've been speaking to the Premier, we've been speaking to MPs, but it comes to nothing… Look at our streets: some of them, they're like ghettos' (SMH, 2008 August 22; SMH, 2008, October 23).

Muslim schools

Schools vary greatly in size, with some having enrolments of over 1000. By 2005, there were 28 Islamic schools in Australia, 12 in NSW. Nationwide, enrolments totalled 13,000, with 7,000 in NSW (where, however, 90 per cent of Muslim students attend a non-Muslim school (AIS, 2005). Many schools enrol both primary and secondary students, and although many were able to obtain support for their establishment from both local Islamic communities, and from overseas sources, all now depend heavily on government support. This is no different from other religious schools, such as Christian, or Jewish: 'In most cases, around 80 per cent of the funding for the running of the school comes from the government. Fees vary from as low as $600 to around $2000 per annum' (Saeed, 2003, p. 150). Some Islamic schools have already become very successful in the high-stakes Year 12 results race, which determines not merely university entry, but also functions as a powerful recruitment tool for parents deciding which school to choose for their children. One, in Sydney's western suburbs, has been unapologetic about weeding out less academic students, whom it feels are less likely to bring it credit by gaining high HSC scores in the increasingly competitive and status-ridden New South Wales school system (*SMH*, 2004, 7 October). Largely as a result, *Malek Fahd* was ranked within the top twenty-four schools across the state. While some other Muslim schools are also very successful, others are located in poorer suburbs, qualifying for heavy subsidies from government. Overall performance of the sector varies greatly.

Curriculum is governed by state Education Departments and boards of studies, as for all schools. With the exception of religious teachers, who are generally required to be fellow Muslims, 'the teaching staff … are much like other public schools' (Saeed, 2003, p. 155), although perhaps more diverse, stemming from the Middle East, South-East Asia, and Turkey among others. Just as with other faith-based schools, religious instruction is emphasised—several hours a week are devoted to the study of Islam, including midday prayers (*Zuhr*) and Friday prayers (*Jum'ah*). But, as with other minorities, finding qualified teachers can be a problem, while difficulties are also experienced with textbooks for religious education, which are almost always imported and hence often do not reflect the Australian context adequately (Saeed, 2003, p. 154). Attention is also paid to the observance

of key religious festivals, while food supplied at the school must conform to halal standards. Modesty is deemed important, hence Islamic dress codes dictate long pants for boys (shorts are not thought proper), and long-sleeved blouses, and slacks or long skirts, for girls. Headdresses are common. Some schools are mixed, others single-sex.

Even before the first Gulf War (1991) instances of 'name-calling, ridicule, harassment and physical threats' against Muslim students were reported (Kabir, 2004, pp. 175–176; Aslan, 2009), although the incidence of Islamophobia is less than in countries such as Germany, (Gardner, Karakasoglus, & Luchtenberg, 2008; SMH, 2009). Incidents of such harassment only increased in the aftermath of the war, especially against Muslim women, some of whom were often more conspicuous due to wearing the *hijab*. One New South Wales parliamentarian, the conservative Christian Fred Nile, even called for Muslim women to be banned from wearing the *chador* in public (Kabir, 2004, p. 283), as have one or two other federal parliamentarians since. There are also charges by some who 'see Islamic schools as divisive, preventing full participation of their female students in Australian society' (Saeed, 2003, p. 151). Interestingly, much the same critique was made of schooling for Greek girls in Australia, as late as the 1970s and 1980s (Welch, 1996b, pp. 126–128; Strintzos, 1984). Clearly, there are different gender regimes within branches of Islam, including its educational institutions. Some recent scholars have attempted to disinter a form of Islam that is less patriarchal (Barlas, 2002).

The fact that unemployment rates for young Islamic men in suburbs of Muslim density are around twice the average of young males in Sydney, and Year 12 completion rates are less than two-thirds of the average for the country are part of a worrying pattern of a 'lack of understanding of community and authority' (*SMH*, 2005, 19 December) among a small section of the Muslim community, mostly males, leading to feelings of anger, frustration, and alienation: 'They feel they don't owe any allegiances to anyone' (*SMH*, 2005, 19 December). When allied to racism in the wider society, particularly against Muslims (Collins et al., 2000; Poynting et al., 2004, Aslan, 2009), these problems fuel an explosive mix of alienation on the part of some young Muslims, and resentment on the part of some white Australians. On occasion, extremist sentiments – 'provocative nonsense' – have been expressed by segments of 'white bread' suburbs, such as Camden in Sydney or Carara on Queensland's Gold Coast, opposed to the establishment of a mosque, cultural centre or Muslim school in their area (Courier Mail, 2008).

Highly skilled migrants—recent Chinese migration and education patterns

Other migration and settlement patterns reflect flows of high-skilled migrants. As was indicated above, patterns of Australian migration have shifted substantially in recent decades, from a concentration on filling labouring and manufacturing jobs, to emphasising high levels of skill, and appropriate work experience, such

individuals now form around half of all settlers, annually (Table 5). Over much the same period, the policy of non-discriminatory migration has led to a significant increase in the numbers and proportions of Asian migrants to Australia. Table 5 shows that, while family-reunion visas became a smaller proportion of the total over the period, the skilled visa category has grown significantly, as a proportion of the total intake. The ongoing loss of expensive, high-skilled labour from the Asia-Pacific region to Australia is contributing to charges of 'brain drain' from some of Australia's neighbours, although as is evident from the case study below, 'brain circulation' is sometimes a better descriptor, as the loss to developing countries is not always permanent, and even when it does result in more permanent resettlement, modern communications technology allows sophisticated trans-national networks to be built up and sustained (Welch & Zhang, 2005, 2008; Yang & Welch 2010). Of these diasporic communities, the Chinese is the fastest growing.

The trend towards high-skilled migration adds another dimension to older understandings of multiculturalism in Australian education, which have often been based on less highly-skilled migration patterns. There is no doubt that such knowledge diasporas will become more important in the coming years, particularly for those with good English. Australia's developing relations with Asia gives added impetus to the trend towards highly skilled migration, as does the age structure of the Australian academic profession, and ongoing skills shortages in other key professions such as nursing, teaching, and engineering.

Effective Multiculturalism in Education: Policies, Programs, Parameters

Australia, rightly regarded as a successful example of a modern, diverse society, has had multicultural education policies for some 30 years; yet this is no cause for complacency, nor does it mitigate racist legacies, as recent events demonstrated.

Multicultural education policies introduced by both Commonwealth and state governments from the late 1970s, moved beyond mere acknowledgement of the fact of ethnic and linguistic diversity, to affirming multiculturalism as a value (Welch, 1996). Despite early criticisms that multiculturalism in fact failed to include class differences within ethnic communities, and later criticisms that mainstreaming multiculturalism weakened its focus, all state and territory governments have long affirmed the importance of multiculturalism in education. This is no surprise: 40 per cent of Australians are either migrants, or have one migrant parent, and in the two most populous states, one in four students in public schools come from language backgrounds other than English. But what do the policies emphasise?

A common principle of Australian multiculturalism is that diversity is both dynamic and enriching, and something from which all should benefit – not just recent settlers, ethnic minorities, or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (Education Victoria, 1997, p. 8). Common too, is the acknowledgement that schools play a vital role in promoting values of respect for cultural diversity, within a shared

set of overall values: '… achieving unity in diversity and the existence of shared democratic values for all Australians (DECS, 1996, p. 4). While English is often acknowledged as the national language, in which everyone needs to become proficient, support for linguistic and cultural diversity is a core value, as is the development and maintenance of culturally and linguistically inclusive learning environments (DECS, 1996, p. 4). Anti-Racism policies stress the responsibilities of educational authorities, including TAFE Directors and school Principals, to monitor practices and policies, to ensure these are consistent with, and support, the policy; to provide an environment where differences are respected, and to deal promptly and fairly with complaints.

Community language programmes are an important element of Multiculturalism; in NSW, for example, the Department of Education funded classes in 47 languages by 231 community groups in 2004 (DET, 2005). Other states, too, emphasise both languages other than English (LOTE), including after-hours ethnic schools, and the provision of English as a Second Language (ESL) programmes (Education Victoria, 1997, p. 8). Also important are workshops and professional development for the regions, for example workshops on effective education for refugees, or inclusive strategies for Muslim pupils. Ethnic Community festivals also gain support.

Barriers to more effective multicultural education have been pointed to above (see also Kalantzis, 1990; Welch, 1996b, pp. 105–131). Securing good-quality teachers of community languages, and appropriate curriculum resources, are difficult for contemporary Muslim communities, but were also reported as difficult in Greek (and other community) schools in the 1970s. Textbooks in the humanities and social sciences have become more culturally inclusive, but more needs to be done on this front also. School participation rates of several of the more successful migrant communities, notably East and some South-East Asian, Greek, and Jewish, have now surpassed that of the overall population, but other immigrant communities (such as Maltese, Arabic, Turkish, and Pacific Islander) have been less successful (Cruickshank, 2003):

> The Lebanese have been left behind compared with other groups such as the Chinese, Vietnamese, Greeks and Jews. Their level of education and therefore their level of employment and employability are lower than average … So there is a lot of resentment there (SAWF, 2005).

This pattern was exacerbated by cutbacks to migrant English programs, savaged for more than 20 years (Welch, 1996b). The privatisation of the Adult Migrant English Service withdrew one of the key means to effective citizenship. The closing or mainstreaming of specialist agencies such as the Australian Institute for Multicultural Affairs and the Bureau for Immigration and Population Research further weakened the focus on migration and resettlement, while cutbacks to public schooling systems in all states have effectively reduced specialist services such as English-language support programs for NESB students. Services to refugee children, too, are stretched, ad at times *ad hoc* (Sidhu & Taylor, 2007; Victorian Foundation, 2007). The hidden curriculum still often perpetuates monocultural values and practices, while school organisation could often still do more to respect

and promote difference. Assessment procedures, too, need to be re-examined to see whether a variety of cultural responses are considered legitimate, or legacies of monocultural practices persist. Bullying of ethnic minorities, sometimes by other minorities, is also not new. 30 years of multiculturalism, and a longer period of non-discriminatory migration, mean that ethnic bullying is hopefully less common. It still exists, however, as the recent Australian film *The Combination* with its unflinching portrayal of racial tensions and bigotry in a western suburbs high school, fuelled by male adolescence machismo on both sides, illustrated. State departments of education now have anti-racism policies and programmes, that are designed to ensure that students and teachers respect cultural diversity, and that racist incidents are minimised and not allowed to persist. Cyber-bullying has added a new dimension, however, at times more removed from parental and educators' gaze: 'All the stuff that was on the website was all stuff about my coloured skin and things like that, just really bad racist comments' (ABC, 2009). Professional development is available to teachers, complaints manuals are made available in different languages, and websites help educate pupils and teachers about dealing with racist bullying at school. Ethnic discrimination is illegal under the federal Racial Discrimination Act (1975), and state legislation such as the Victorian Equal Opportunity Act (1995).

Indian students in Australia: case study or test case?

The spectacular success of Australia's efforts to recruit international students to its education sector, over more than two decades, has undoubtedly enriched those institutions with a major vein of talented students, principally from the Asia-Pacific region. In some cases, such students have gone on to gain appointments at Australian universities, after completing their doctorates (Hugo, 2005; Welch & Zhang, 2005, 2008). Chinese students comprise perhaps 40 percent of total international enrolments in higher education, while Indian numbers, although as yet less prominent in higher education, have grown particularly rapidly in recent years, now comprising perhaps 20 per cent of overall enrolments in education.

The downside to burgeoning enrolments also became apparent, however. The unintended consequences (Boudon, 1982) were the result of a pattern of inadequate regulation, over-enthusiastic recruitment, too tight a nexus between education and migration, and an emphasis on the economic returns provided by the sector, particularly in private Vocational Education and Training (VET) institutions, which in one state (NSW) alone numbered 552 in 2006, some 58.5% of the total number (944) of registered training organizations (RTOs) (VETAB, 2006, p. 5). By 2009, the overall total of RTOs in NSW had increased even further, to 1,042. Overall international enrolments exploded in recent years, rising from 50,000 in 2004, mainly driven by spiralling enrolments in private training colleges (SMH, 2010b).

Overall, extraordinary growth has been evident in Australia's international education sector, with enrolments rising from 228,119 students in 2002 to

491,565 students overall in 2009 (ESOS, 2010, iii). (About half of this total were higher education students). Among other things, this has resulted in an industry estimated to be worth A$17.2 billion overall in 2008–09; although the key benefits have been cultural, diplomatic and educational. All in all, as the principal author of a major review commissioned by the federal government put it recently, while benefits have outweighed disadvantages, the results have been more complex than has often been admitted. This unprecedented inflow of international students undoubtedly

> enhanced Australia's cultural richness, strengthened diplomatic ties and delivered great economic benefit to Australia. It has also put a number of pressures on the sector in terms of education quality, regulatory capacity and infrastructure. (ESOS, 2010, p. iii)

In a sense, the problems that arose were predictable - a direct result of changes to Australia's migration programme, instituted as a response to perceived skills shortages. From another perspective, they illustrate what the French sociologist Boudon termed 'effets pervers' (van Parijs, 1982; Boudon, 1982). For many years, the Australian migration programme has emphasised skilled migration, to some extent at the cost of other migration categories. Some years ago, the former Australian government, responding to perceived skills shortages, introduced the Migration Occupations in Demand List (MODL). As from the early 2000s, overseas students were allowed to remain in Australia; and graduates of listed courses automatically gained points on the scheme that formed the basis for Permanent Residence, the first step towards citizenship. The fact that the MODL listed 106 occupations, including such qualifications as hairdressing and cooking, led to a proliferation of poor-quality private training institutions, that were more devoted to quick turnover, and fee-generation, than the provision of quality training or adequate facilities: "This link (between education and migration) has resulted in some providers and their agents being interested in 'selling' a migration outcome to respond to the demand from some students to 'buy' a migration outcome." (ESOS, 2010, p. 7; see also 4 Corners, 2009). A survey released in 2010 indicated that 24 per cent of international students enrolled in 10 sampled universities were studying 'in the hope of gaining permanent residence, up from 5 per cent when the question was asked in a similar survey in 2005 (SMH, 2010a). One provider pungently pointed to problems with English language proficiency, and lack of practical skills requirements, at some private colleges, which had mushroomed in response to the changed regulatory framework:

> It was crazy. The students coming out of these courses are never going to solve the skilled labour shortage in my industry You can't train people in 14 months who don't have the (English)language. One school still has 1500 people doing hairdressing at one time. The chances of them cutting the hair of a real, live client before they leave the course is 1000 to 1. (Australian, 2010)

Even at his own college, he admitted,

> I would say it would have been lucky to have been one in 10 who ended up working in the

hairdressing industry after doing a course at my school. The rest were just doing it to get a visa. (Australian, 2010)

Under such relentless pressure to expand, the number of registered training organisations (RTOs) in the most populous state (New South Wales) rose to 1,042 in 2009, from 946 in 2006, stretching to breaking point the capacity the capacity of state authorities to regulate this growth. State-based agencies charged with regulating the sector simply could not cope, retreating in some cases from site visits to 'desk audits'. Other states experienced similar problems, leading one submission to the ESOS review to lament that "*..the coupling of immigration and education has brought short-term benefits to a few providers, to the long-term detriment of the sector as a whole.*" (ESOS, 2010, p. 6).

Unscrupulous agents, some themselves Indian, preyed on unsuspecting students, promising them (wrongly) that completion of a course in Australia would guarantee them Permanent Residence. And, although the problem was more widespread in the VET sector, some Australian universities, too, exploited the opportunity, thereby becoming almost 'immigration factories' (t-net, 2006).

A further problem, relating to work experience, further highlighted the lax regulatory environment. For courses such as cooking or hairdressing, a substantial and critical component was practical work experience. Some of the more unscrupulous training providers simply certified that the practical experience had been done; even when it had not. Some even charged the students extra to provide the false evidence of having satisfied work experience requirements. Others used the work experience requirements to service their labour needs, to prey on, exploiting vulnerable students as unpaid, or underpaid, workers.

In response to these growing problems, the Minister for Immigration announced in February 2010 that the existing nexus between education and migration would be ended. Some 20,000 General Skilled Migration applicants were to have their applications withdrawn, and any fees returned. The MODL was to be phased out and replaced by a Skilled Occupations List, (SOL), that would target "high-value professions and trades." (Evans, 2010). At the same time, a review of the points scheme was announced, that would report to the federal government on whether some occupations should warrant more points than others, whether sufficient points were awarded for work experience and excellence in English, and whether points should be awarded for qualifications obtained from overseas universities.

International students with a student visa (vocational, higher education or postgraduate) were still deemed able to apply for a permanent visa if their occupation was on the new SOL. If not they could apply for a temporary skilled graduate visa on completion of their studies, which, if awarded, would allow as much as 18 months in Australia to acquire work experience and seek sponsorship from an employer. As a result of the capacity strain experienced by individual state regulators, a national VET Regulator was also announced, to begin operations in 2011.

Other perverse effects of the unparalleled growth, particularly in the private VET sector, were even more troubling, making headlines in both Indian and

Australian media, and temporarily disturbing bi-lateral relations between India and Australia. A worrying pattern of attacks on Indian students, some racist and some opportunistic, particularly in one state (Victoria), was unexpected, unprecedented and unexplained. Crimes such as robbery and assault against persons of Indian origin in Victoria rose from 1,082 in 2006-7 to 1,447, and further, to 1,525 in 2008-9 (Australian, 2010). While some arrests were made (The Age, 2010), and a high level working group established (Thaindian News, 2010), the tardy responses by both the Victorian Premier, and the Police Commissioner, attempts to pass the attacks off as simply opportunistic, in the face of evidence that some proportion were indeed racially motivated, and a failure to fully investigate the spate of attacks, made a bad situation worse, fuelling the anger and frustration felt by Indian students and their families. Even if the picture was unclear, and the phenomenon as yet unexplained, "Over time, it has become increasingly difficult to deny – but equally impossible to prove statistically – that Indians are being deliberately targeted by racists in the suburbs of Melbourne" (Australian, 2010).

What is to be done?

Clearly, vigilance is required, both to prevent discrimination and bullying. Security concerns by international students must be addressed, both by police and campus security, and efforts made to investigate scrupulously the attacks on students. While Australia is a safe place to study, more needs to be done to improve student security.

Another good start would be to give more support to languages. The growth of English as a global language has only weakened further the already lamentable failure of native English language speakers to study other languages, while community languages still languish in the school curriculum. As Clyne argues, although languages are designated a Key Learning Area (KLA) within the school curriculum, implementation often falls far short of ideal. The hidden curriculum of the school values such subjects as mathematics, the sciences, and English well above that of languages. Yet well beyond the economic benefits that are usually cited in a neo-liberal era as the defence for learning a language, there is the important move away from what has been termed a monolingual mindset. Learning another language provides another window onto the world, with all the attendant benefits of increased flexibility and understanding. Australia's rich mix of languages and cultures needs work to be preserved, yet too often children grow up without the benefit of their parents' language, cutting them off from that culture, and often resulting in barriers developing between generations. As a recent Governor General lamented:

> The thing that distresses me most is how little most children and grandchildren of overseas-born Australians retain of the cultures and languages of their lands of origin. The loss of ancestral languages is grievous for the individual and the nation. We should be a nation of great linguists (Clyne, 2005, p. 65).

The longstanding failure of many Australians to learn languages other than English (LOTE) is but a proxy for the wider problems of understanding cultural difference, however. It is here, that the education system can arguably do more, by promoting genuine respect for other cultures. The German theorist Hans-Georg Gadamer (1975); see also Snodgrass, 1992; Welch 2007) has provided a typology of relations between self and other, which, if extended to the arena of intercultural relations, could offer a means of analysing different modes. Notably, his notion of a *fusion of horizons*, arguably the structural equivalent of Habermas's *ideal speech situation*, is predicated on only the desire to reach consensus, in the spirit of dialogue.

Within Gadamer's fusion of horizons, relations, including in principle intercultural relations, are based on an open-ended dialogue, where neither party is in control. As with Habermas' Ideal Speech Situation, this is where we 'risk and test our own prejudices' (Bernstein, 1983, p. 144). In this form of interaction, there are no privileged epistemological or cultural positions.

Here, Gadamer argues, the 'I' must go beyond the world of his/her taken-for-granted cultural and epistemic realities, proceeding with genuine openness and respect, to engage with the Lifeworld (*Lebenswelt*) of the other ('Thou'). (See also Habermas, 1971, 1981, 1990; Thompson & Held, 1982; Hesse, 1976). The goal of coming to an understanding is to bring about an agreement that terminates in the intersubjective mutuality of reciprocal understanding, shared knowledge, mutual trust, and accord with one another. Agreement is based on recognition of the corresponding validity claims of comprehensibility, truth, truthfulness [or sincerity], and rightness (Habermas, 1979, p. 3).

In this final form of relationship between self and other, the interest is in freedom from coercion, in egalitarian social relations. Mutual recognition is thus seen as the basis for human communication, but, at least for Habermas, understood in relation to a critical conception of society. The question that remains for a critical social science is still that of what kinds of social, political, and economic conditions need to be realised in order to sustain an open, non-hegemonic society. For the model of an ideal speech situation is one in which neither party has an interest in anything other than the reaching of agreement. This occurs via an open dialogue, in which each protagonist accepts that their understanding of the other is open and changeable. It resists, however, situating that dialogue within current relations of power in society, which have the capacity to deform open dialogue.

Multiculturalism can also not flourish in education if children do not mix with those of other cultures, and there are some worrying signs that show that certain schools are becoming more culturally concentrated, with a corresponding reduction in the opportunity to mix on a daily basis with those from cultures that are significantly different. For example, some schools in Sydney have now become largely confined to students of Arabic background, with a major decline in students of English language background. (Cruickshank, 2003, p. 48).

Even with widespread support, can multiculturalism in Australian education fulfil

such lofty ambitions? Not on its own, certainly, but it has an important role to play. And the notion of fusion of horizons, or the ideal speech situation, each provides a useful empirical and ethical benchmark, against which to measure programs and policies. Given such a benchmark, the persistence of masculinist cultures among some Anglo and non-Anglo Australians; racism, including in our schools (*SMH*, 2005, 23 December); efforts by the federal government in recent years to demonise asylum seekers, and to create a climate of fear regarding the other (Marr & Wilkinson, 2004); populist law and order ('zero tolerance') campaigns by state politicians that result in higher rates of imprisonment without addressing the root of the problem; strident opposition by some locals to plans for a Muslim school in 'our' area, and sensationalist reporting of both international and domestic affairs (*Australian*, 2005, 14, 17 December; *SMH*, 2005, 21 December) that has the effect of stereotyping Muslims, Chinese or Sudanese, for example, (Poynting et al., 2004) are a poor base for mutual intercultural relations, including in education. It goes without saying that attacks on Indian students are a betrayal of such principles.

The formation of the Australian Multicultural Advisory Countil in December 2008, which includes representatives of both Chinese and Islamic communities, was a welcome re-commitment to Australian multiculturalism, including in education. That this commitment must be forged anew, with each generation, is evident from the following:

> Many opponents of the (Muslim) Carrara school have claimed it will stop the local Islamic community from assimilating into Australia. On that logic, we would be opposing every religious school on the basis it could potentially cause a schism in our increasingly secular society… The antipathy displayed by some protesters reeks of fear and ignorance and will achieve nothing other than to deepen cultural divides (Courier Mail 2008, December 4).

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