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MULTICULTURALISM: A FORM OF NATIONAL IDENTITY

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...through policies of cultural pluralism the state is now actively supporting forms of cultural identity whose defining boundaries are not those of the nation-state itself (Castles et al, 1992:128).

The endorsement of cultural pluralism by the Australian state is understood by Castles et al as its necessary progression from nation-state defined by nationalism to a multicultural state defining "the nation in non-nationalistic terms" (1992:13). Castles et al argue, that the nation-state through nationalism creates an illusion of cultural, social, economic and political unity (1992:112). It is then this image of national hegemony, that the nation-state deploys as "a critical ideological tool" for social and political mobilisation (Castles et al, 1992:112). However, with the structural changes "in the world economy and the internationalisation of the culture industry" (1992:136) the nation-state, Castles et al insist, begins "to lose its political and cultural significance" (1992:114). Particularly in Australia since the late 1970s, there is a decline "in the importance of identification with nation-state" (1992:135). Consequently, Castles et al suggest that it is no longer necessary, and indeed viable for a state "to construct an imagined community that fits neatly within the boundaries of the nation-state" (1992:136). The state thus tactically moves away from nationalism to multiculturalism, which becomes its "necessary ideology" in the attempts to legitimise its political control (1992:13).

Although later Castles departs from the premises that nationalism and multiculturalism are simply ideologies imposed by the state upon its community (Castles, 1992), he still maintains that the policies of multiculturalism signal the demise of the nation-state (1992:106). Addressing this issue it will be argued that in most contemporary democratic countries (like Australia, Germany and France) the nation-state is still the most effective and dominant form of social, political and cultural control and management. The function of a democratic government, as Jaffe et al note is to regulate the interaction among the individuals and groups so that they can live together in harmony "*despite* deep-seated differences on fundamental matters on religion, morality and consciousness" (1981:1). Similarly, it will be suggested that, rather than signalling the demise of the nation-state, the policies of

Australian multiculturalism are defined by this obligation to regulate social, political and cultural life.

The initial policies of multiculturalism in the 1970s were aimed at providing more effective methods of integrating migrants into mainstream Australian society. These policies were formulated as provisions to deal with the unplanned change in the demographic contour of the Australian community (Part I). Only later, did it become evident that Australian nationhood needs to be redefined in terms of multiculturalism. In other words, national identity in the 1980s and 1990s begins to be articulated in terms of multiculturalism: every Australian citizen "can be 'a real Australian' without necessarily being 'a typical Australian'" (Zubrzycki, 1982:17).

This development of multiculturalism, from policies aimed at social integration to a strategy to reformulate Australian national identity in terms of citizenship, would suggest that multiculturalism is far from being a postulated ideology with one dominant objective as Castles et al claim. Instead, multiculturalism is a complex web of governmental policies, programs and incentives aimed at regulating the changing conditions in social, political and cultural life. The attempts to redefine the Australian national identity through multiculturalism would indicate that the policies of cultural pluralism, rather than advancing beyond the boundaries of a nation, redefine these boundaries in a profoundly new way (Part II).

Nationalism, in this respect is not a static ideology limited in its scope, as Castles et al assert (1992:103-6, 112), but a manner in which individuals imagine themselves to be part of a nation (Anderson, 1983). Historically, this imagining has been a product of cultural standardisation (Smith, 1986:133), emerging as a result of the contingent development of "print-capitalism" (Anderson, 1986), and as such it is "not somehow natural, primary and permanent" (Hobsbawn, 1990:14). Indeed, the national imagining can be renegotiated, as Smith argues, so that it can become relevant to all ethnically and culturally diverse members of the nation-state (Smith, 1986:149). This strategy to renegotiate the national imagining is reflected in the attempts to redefine Australian identity (Anglo-Australian ethnocentrism) in terms of multiculturalism.

However, although today "it is far more common to live in a multicultural society than in a monocultural society" (McCaughy, 1992:9), it is not so common for a contemporary nation-state to make cultural and ethnic pluralism "co-extensive and fully congruent with the state" (Smith, 1986:150). In other words, it is not so conventional for a nation-state to either acknowledge its cultural and ethnic diversity (Germany) or to manage its diversity through the policies of multiculturalism (France). By comparing, the difficulties resulting from excluding migrants from having citizenship rights in Germany and from having rights to retain cultural heritage in France, it will be argued that although there is nothing inevitable about multiculturalism, it is certainly the most effective way of managing ethnic and cultural diversity (Part III).

I. AUSTRALIAN MULTICULTURALISM 1970s: A POLICY OF SOCIAL INTEGRATION

The initial policies of cultural pluralism in Australia were formulated as governmental provisions to deal with the unplanned changes in ethnic and cultural composition of the Australian community. The post-WWII immigration program in line with the notion to “populate or perish” was designed to strengthen Australia economically and militarily against the potential threat coming from Asia (Jupp, 1991:69-81). However, although the immigration, regulated through The White Australia Policy (1901), was aimed at maintaining the integrity of an Anglo-Australian nation, it brought about great ethnic diversity (Castles, 1992:9-12)].

In the late 1940s, it became obvious that “immigration from Britain would be insufficient to sustain demographic and economic growth” (Castles, 1992:8). The Australian Governments thus encouraged immigration from northern and southern Europe (Foster and Stockley, 1988:8-11). With the boom of western European economies attracting migrants from poorer European states, it became more difficult for Australia in the 1960s to recruit migrants from Europe. Consequently, Australia started to receive migrants from Latin America and it began to relax the White Australia Policy (Castles, 1992:9).

Initially, to solve this dilemma (of how to deal with the emerging ethnic and cultural diversity) Australia adopted the doctrine of assimilation: assuming that “immigrants could be culturally and socially absorbed, and rapidly become indistinguishable from the existing Anglo-Australian population” (Castles, 1992:12). The migrants were perceived as future Australian citizens (naturalisation could be obtained after five years)¹⁾, and as such, they needed to be fully integrated into Australian society. The government’s provisions to ensure the successful settlement included special services such as: “provision of initial accommodation and basic English courses, [and] help in finding work” (Castles, 1992:12). In 1972 however, the Australian Labor Party (ALP) initiated a move away from the assimilation program to multiculturalism.

There were three pragmatic reasons why the ALP considered the need to establish multicultural policies in assisting migrants to settle in Australia. Firstly, it became quite obvious from labour market segregation and social segregation of migrants that the assimilation program was not working (Castles, 1992:13). Secondly, the modification of White Australia Policy in 1966²⁾, which led directly to a large intake of Turkish migrants of the Islamic religion (Jupp, 1991:86), meant that there would be an influx of culturally and racially diverse migrants who could not be as easily assimilated as European Christians. Thirdly, the large ethnic communities (Greek and Italian) began to be recognised by the ALP as politically significant interest groups, whose demands needed to be considered. (Castles, 1992:13).

1. The status of “Australian Citizen” was created in 1949 - 50, when Nationality and Citizenship Act of 1948 was legislated (Foster and Stockley, 1988:9).

2. The policy was completely abandoned in 1976 (Jupp, 1991:87)

These demands were met by the early multicultural policies: to abandon assimilation programs and to institute the right for citizens to maintain their cultural identity.³⁾

However, multiculturalism at this stage was far from being an attempt to redefine Australian national identity on the basis of cultural pluralism. Instead, multiculturalism, formulated through a number of policies, programs and incentives, was aimed at more effective integration of migrants into the Australian community. Whitlam's government (1972-1975) policies focused mainly on improving the welfare and education systems (Castles, 1992:13). These included specific measures such as the right to invalid and widows pensions, migrant housing and low interest loans, family health insurance, work-based child-care programs employing workers of appropriate ethnic backgrounds (Jakubowicz et al, 1984: 60-1). The following Fraser's government (1975-1983), as Castles states "set out to redefine multiculturalism by emphasising cultural pluralism and the role of ethnic organisations in provision of welfare services" (1992:13). It set up various bodies to produce and to disseminate "multicultural attitudes" [such as the Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs (AIMA), the Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia (FECCA) and the Special Broadcasting Services (SBS)] (Foster and Stockley, 1988:31). Nonetheless, the objectives of these governmental and non-governmental bodies were to regulate social and cultural life, rather than to redefine Australian national identity.

This is perhaps most evident from Galbally's recommendations to the Fraser's government in **Migrant Services and Programs: Review of Post Arrival Programs and Services to Migrants**. The Galbally's report proposed that the government should adopt four "guiding principles" in its approach to multiculturalism:

(a) all members of our society must have equal opportunity to realise their full potential and must have equal access to programs and services;

(b) every person should be able to maintain his or her culture without prejudice or disadvantage and should be encouraged to understand and embrace other cultures;

(c) needs of migrants should, in general, be met by programs and services available to the whole community but special services and programs are necessary at present to ensure the equality of access and provision;

(d) services and programs should be designed and operated in full consultation with clients, and self-help should be encouraged as much as possible with view to helping migrants to become self-reliant quickly (1978:4 emphasis added).

3. The person's liberty to maintain his or her culture without prejudice became a right legislated in the Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (HRC, 1986:1). This provision also reflects Australian international commitments, namely the signing of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination in 1966 (HRC, 1986:1).

These provisions should be implemented, the report suggested, by establishing and improving special services in areas including employment, health, consumer protection, legal aid, welfare, and housing (1978:7-9). The Galbally's report also stressed the importance of fostering multicultural attitudes through institutions such as education and media, in order to overcome the problems encountered by assimilation policies (1978:105). It was believed that by promoting cross-cultural understanding and tolerance, migrants would be more readily accepted by Australians. Similarly, the review argued that the right to retain cultural heritage would enable ethnic groups "to take their place in their new society with confidence and a sense of purpose if their ethnicity has been accepted by the community" (1978:104-5).

This need to support cultural pluralism as a more effective way of integrating ethnic groups into a mainstream Australian society is also reflected in the reports: **Ethnic Broadcasting in Australia 1979** (EBA) and **First Annual Report of the Special Broadcasting Services (SBS)**. The objectives of ethnic television, set up by the government to foster and retain ethnic cultural heritage, were to fulfil, as the EBA report stated:

an emotional need in people who migrated here from non-English-speaking lands, and... to alleviate their sense of isolation and nostalgia they feel to their home lands (1979:8).

Similarly, the SBS recognised the role of "the ethnic television" as complementing ethnic radio in relieving "a feeling of inferiority and loss of self-esteem" among the migrants(1980:9). By promoting cross-cultural understanding, tolerance, and preserving cultural diversity, SBS aimed to assist migrants in their transition and settlement in their new environment. It was not until later that SBS began to see itself as a multicultural media playing "a dynamic role in reflecting, re-shaping and modernising Australia's image of itself" (1990:6).

It is quite evident from EBA, SBS and Galbally's reports that the early forms of multiculturalism were nothing more than governmental policies aimed at providing more efficient methods of integrating migrants into the Australian community. Australian multiculturalism, emerging in the 1970s as pragmatic measures to regulate the changing conditions of Australian social and cultural life, was thus far from moving beyond the obligations of the nation-state. At this stage multicultural policies were also still far from being attempts to redefine the Australian national identity on the basis of cultural pluralism. Nonetheless, it should be noted that both the legislation of the right to retain cultural heritage and the endeavour of governmental and non-governmental institutions (education, media, AIMA and FECCA) to disseminate the cross-cultural understanding and tolerance were instrumental, if the need to reinterpret the Australian national identity was to emerge.

II. MULTICULTURALISM: AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL IDENTITY 1982-1990S

In 1982, Zubrzycki set out to reformulate and refine the principles of multiculturalism in **Multiculturalism for all Australians: Our developing nationhood**. In this report, Zubrzycki has argued that multiculturalism should become "more than the

provisions of special services to minority ethnic groups” (1982:17). It should become the basis for Australian national identity (1982:15). To achieve this, Zubrzycki proposed that the government needed to expand the present principles of multicultural policies (see Galbally’s report) by the concept of “equal responsibility for, commitment to and participation in society” (1982:12). This would oblige all citizens, no matter where they were born or what their cultural background was, to “share responsibility for the direction in which our society develops” (1982:12).

In this respect, the report attempted to reformulate the national identity in quite a profoundly new way. Australian nationalism, as it was suggested, should be defined by affiliations to the state and its institutions, rather than to a specific ethnic group. However, in order for a nation to ‘sunder the citizenship from ethnic solidarity’ (Smith, 1986:151), it would need to subsume the two poles of a political unit and an ethnic diversity, so that the diversity becomes “co-extensive and congruent with the state” (Smith, 1986:150). The nation thus needs to balance what Smith calls “the dual attachment”:

on the one hand, loyalty to the political unit, the state, expressed in terms of citizenship rights and obligations; on the other hand, a sense of affiliation and solidarity with the ethnic community into which one’s family was born and socialized (1986:151).

Like Smith, Zubrzycki recognises that loyalty is a “two-way process” (1982:16). If the allegiance of citizens to the structures of nation-state can be achieved, he argued, these structures have to “effectively reflect the culturally and ethnically diverse composition of the national community” (1982:16). Only then can all citizens imagine themselves to be part of the Australian multicultural nation.

This new approach to multiculturalism is supported by the **National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia... Sharing Our Future** launched by the ALP in 1989. Similarly to Zubrzycki’s report, **National Agenda** recognised multiculturalism as a principle both in the management of Australian diversity and in the development of a harmonious and cohesive nation (1989:2). While multiculturalism supports the expression of cultural identity, it is not an unlimited right, but a right clearly defined within the boundaries of the nation-state.

Indeed, the **National Agenda** set the limits to multiculturalism in terms of citizenship rights and obligations:

** multicultural policies are based upon the premise that all Australians should have an overriding and unifying commitment to Australia, to its interests and its future first and foremost;” (OMA, 1989:vii)*

** multicultural policies require all Australians to accept the basic structures and principles of Australian society - the Constitution and the rule of law, tolerance and equality, Parliamentary democracy, freedom of speech and religion, English as the national language and equality of the sexes, and*

** multiculturalism policies impose obligations as well as rights: the right to express one’s own culture and beliefs involves a reciprocal responsibility to accept the right of others to express their views and values (1989:vii emphasis added).*

The Commonwealth Government has also identified three dimensions of multiculturalism which equally apply to all Australians, "whether (of) Aboriginal, Anglo-Celtic or non-English speaking background; and whether they were born in Australia or overseas" (OMA, 1989:vii). These principles are cultural identity, social justice and economic efficiency (1989:vii).

In line with the earlier policies of multiculturalism, **National Agenda** has acknowledged that some groups are disadvantaged by the structures of the Australian state, which have had a particularly negative impact on the life and the well-being of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders (1989:51). The Commonwealth Government thus recognised the obligation of its agencies to take greater responsibility in servicing these groups, in order to guarantee "access and equity" for all Australians (OMA, 1989). This would be achieved both by setting up new and improving the existing governmental institutions, as well as by encouraging the development of non-governmental institutions furthering the interests of the disadvantaged groups (Betts, 1992:158). The government also recognised the need to retrospectively identify and correct the past injustices inflicted upon Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders. Indeed, the Keating's government (1991-1996) has acknowledged that it is paramount to reconcile Australian native people with the rest of the Australian population, if Australia is to succeed in becoming a harmonious and cohesive multicultural nation.

Although on the whole Australian multiculturalism appears to be quite successful in regulating the cultural diversity within the limits of nation-state, it is still far from achieving its goals: to establish a harmonious nation, guaranteeing access and equity to all citizens. Australian native people as well as the people of non-English speaking origins, as Johns states, are still "brutally under-represented... (in) media, arts, and educational and political institutions" (1992:20). **National Agenda** also admits this to be the case in governmental bodies as well as in non-governmental institutions, such as trade unions, and even in social clubs (1989:11-12). But perhaps more importantly, Australia has yet to achieve a full reconciliation between Australian native people and the rest of the population.

This process has been already initiated by the „Mabo“ native title case in 1993. The ruling in this case reversed the principle of *terra nullius*, which had legally defined the land of Australia as belonging to no one before the British settlement. The reversal has set a legal precedent that recognises the native Australian peoples' bond with the land and thus becomes a landmark judicial decision - "rewriting Australian history" (Gregory, 1992). However to extend this achievement, Jupp suggests the government still needs to sign treaties with Australian native people which would "guarantee them some rights to ancestral lands" (1992:132). Only then the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders could, without contradictions, identify themselves with structures of the Australian nation-state.

Even though Australian multiculturalism is still far from achieving its goals, it is certainly the most effective way for a nation-state to manage cultural and ethnic pluralism. This will be more evident, by examining two less successful models of integration policies: German exclusionist and French assimilation systems. These models, as it will be suggested, do not reflect the particular phase of nation-state along the path towards its demise, as Castles et al's argument would imply (1992:13,148). Rather, they correspond to a specific national imagining. In both cases, the national imagining still reflects the historical consequences of its forma-

tion, and as such they do not mirror the present cultural diversity of German and French nation-states.

III. THE NATION-STATE AND ETHNIC MINORITIES: *GERMANY AND FRANCE*

Similarly to Australia, both Germany and France experienced a large immigration in the period between 1945-1973, which changed the cultural and ethnic compositions of these two nation-states. Today, Germany has a foreign population of 5 million (7.5 % of the whole population) (Castles, 1992:96), where the Turkish minority (making up about one third of the alien residents) is the largest ethnic group (Castles, 1992:96). The other significant minorities are from Southern Europe, such as Yugoslavia, Italy, Spain, Portugal and Greece (Ansay, 1991:833), as well as the traditional minorities such as Gypsies and Jews (Castles, 1992:93). In France, the Muslims from the former North African colonies make up the largest minority group (562,300) "out of an active foreign population of 1,556,260" (Kastoryano, 1991:53). However, although both countries have a significant proportion of ethnic minorities, neither of the two nation-states adopts the policies of cultural pluralism.

In fact, Germany does not even recognise itself to be a country of immigration (Kastoryano, 1991:54). Initially, the majority of migrants were recruited as *Gastarbeiter* (guest workers), who were expected to return to the country of their origins when they were no longer needed. The German government, realising that the guest workers "would not be returning home" (Miller, 1989:945), later redefined the status of these migrants from *Gastarbeiter* to *Auslander* (permanent worker) (Kastoryano, 1991:56). Nonetheless, this has not changed the government policies supporting exclusion of migrants from having citizenship rights and from being integrated to a German nation (Castles, 1992:98).⁴ Since 1973, the German government has even encouraged migrants to return to the countries of their origins, despite the fact that they may have been second or third generation migrants living in Germany (Kastoryano, 1991). This policy of excluding the ethnic minorities from citizenship rights reflects the German concept of nation-state: *Volkstaat* or 'ethnie-state' (Castles, 1992:98).

The nation, according to the concept of *Volkstaat*, precedes the state and polity. This idea of a nation emerged as a result of the historically and culturally contingent formation of German national consciousness in the 18th century before the development of national institutions and unified nation-state state in the 19th century (Kastoryano, 1991:60 & Castles, 1992:98). Consequently, German citizenship has been understood in terms of *ius sanguinis* (blood or ethnicity) (Castles, 1992:98). In this respect, anyone who can claim to have German blood, such as "remote descendent(s) of Volga German" can become a German citizen without even being able to speak German (Miller, 1989:946). On the other hand however, millions of foreign workers who have settled and become part of a civic society have been excluded from citizenship rights and from the nation because they do

4. Only 0,3% of alien residents in Germany are naturalised each year (Miller, 1989:984)

not have German blood. This is despite the fact that they were born and they have lived all their lives in Germany (Castles, 1992:98).

Unlike Germany, France does not exclude migrants from having citizenship rights. Migrants are encouraged to become naturalised and their children born in France automatically become French citizens (Brubaker, 1992:138). French assimilation policies, however exclude migrants from having the right to retain their cultural heritage. It is believed that to become a French citizen demands “full political integration into the national community by accepting *les regles du jeu* (the rules of the game)” (Kastoryano, 1991:57). In other words, acquiring citizenship means renunciation of one’s origins both cultural and religious and acceptance of the French way of life.

Like the German exclusionist model, the French assimilation system is a result of the historical consequences of the formation of the French national imagining during the French Revolution. This tradition, projecting itself as universal, egalitarian, rational, individualistic and secular, Kastoryano states:

seeks to absorb all the differences and ensure the political and cultural unity of a nation: political integration implies cultural integration, even the “assimilation” of individuals (1991:59).

The French nation-state is therefore defined in terms of *isu soli* or territoriality, which unlike *ius sanguinis* is inclusionary towards people of different ethnic backgrounds. The right to become part of the French nation is however limited by the obligation to embrace its political, cultural and legal structures, which do not tolerate ethnic and cultural diversity.

French “assimilation” policies are thus based upon an irreconcilable contradiction, where nation in Smith’s terms does not balance “the dual attachment” to the state and the affiliation and solidarity to ethnic community (1986:151). The structures of the French nation-state do not recognise and reflect the present reality of its cultural and ethnic diversity. Similarly obsolete and contradictory are the German policies aiming at preserving the ethnic homogeneity of the German nation-state. Neither model provides an effective way of managing ethnic minorities. French assimilation policies fail to distribute the capacity to ethnic minorities to imagine themselves as being part of the French nation since the nation is still defined in narrow terms of one ethnic, while German policies discourage an integration altogether.

With the continuation of migration to both nation-states, these exclusionary policies towards ethnic minorities (denying them citizenship and cultural rights) cannot be maintained in the long run. Such policies contradict the very principles upon which the legitimacy of liberal democratic government is based: to maintain harmony in the community by regulating the interaction between the individuals and groups. The role of the democratic state, as Castles notes is to “incorporate all significant sections of civil society, and to take account of their interests” (1992:102). By alienating and marginalising a large and growing portion of civil society, both French and German models create the conditions for separatism, social unrest and racial conflicts. Indeed in Germany for example Turks have become the target of racial violence which in 1992 alone amounted to over 1,600 acts of terror, where 12 people were killed and over 2000 people were injured (Neaman and Funka, 1993:12). Although in France there is less racial violence, the ethnic minorities still experience discrimination and social and cultural segregation.

Both the racial violence and cultural segregation, resulting from the deep-seated historical and cultural formation of national consciousness, no longer represent the present. The ethnic and cultural diversity of these nation-states could only be resolved by redefining the national imagining. While the distribution of migrants with citizenship and cultural rights may give them leverage to pressurise the government to provide more effective safe-guards to protect their well being, these alone could not eradicate the conflict. Complete social and cultural integration could be achieved by redefining the nation in terms of multiculturalism. Like nationalism that takes different forms, multicultural imagining would need to take into account the particular historical and cultural consequences of that nation-state. Since Australia has always identified itself as being a nation of immigration, the redefining of the nation in terms of cultural pluralism would seem as a less radical process than for European countries perceiving themselves for over hundreds of years as being culturally and ethnically homogeneous. Although it would be a strenuous and complex process to alter such national consciousness, it would seem as the most effective way for a nation-state to regulate its cultural and ethnic diversity. In this respect multiculturalism is not going beyond the boundaries of the nation-state, nor signalling its demise. On the contrary, in line with the principles of liberal democratic state, it regulates and incorporates the already existing diversities and thus creates environment in which individuals and groups can live in harmony.

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Resumé:

Studie „Multiculturalism: a form of National Identity“ zkoumá multikulturalismus a jeho proměny v australské společnosti.

V první části poukazuje studie na to, že multikulturalismus jako systematická a pečlivě vypracovaná vládní politika začal být v Australii prosazován koncem 70. let. Cílem této politiky bylo usnadnit integraci kulturně a etnicky různorodých přistěhovalců do převládající anglo-australské kultury.

V 80. a 90. letech se obsah multikulturalismu mění, neboť tento pojem začíná definovat také australskou národní identitu. Ta totiž, na což poukazuje druhá část studie, není už chápána jen ve smyslu úzce anglo-australském, nýbrž skutečně multikulturálně, takže se každý australský občan může stát „pravým Australanem“, aniž by musel být „Australanem typickým“.

Třetí část studie se zabývá srovnáním Austrálie s jinými státy (např. s Německem či s Francií) a s jejich přístupem k této problematice. Z tohoto srovnání zřetelně vyplývají výhody multikulturálního přístupu při spravování etnicky a kulturně různorodé společnosti.