

Introduction

Social Inclusion: Exploring the Concept

Fethi Mansouri and Michele Lobo

Increased human mobility along with the more pronounced permeability of nation-state borders has given way to the emergence of highly diverse multicultural cities in countries with white majority cultures. The fact that there has been a significant increase in immigration from developing countries in the Global South since the 1990s means that the social inclusion of ethnic minorities – including undocumented migrants, asylum seekers, refugees, guest workers and international students – is by no means a straightforward social policy matter; particularly if dominant patterns of majority prejudice remain unchallenged. The cultural, religious, ethnic and socioeconomic diversity new migrants bring with them presents opportunities for social inclusion and community development; but such diversity can also engender serious challenges at the level of social and political policy-making. This has been the case, for example, with recent media coverage of globally organised acts of terrorism by fundamentalist groups, as well as racial disturbances and immigrants' rights rallies in towns and cities of Europe, America and Australia. Cultural diversity is now increasingly linked in the public imaginary to risk, fear, anxiety, vulnerability and alienation. Therefore, addressing these ambivalent feelings towards migration and cultural diversity presents challenges for a social inclusion agenda, particularly, if counterterrorist security strategies by national governments contribute to a 'self-fulfilling spiral of hatred' (Vertigans 2010: 26) and privileged communitarian ideals of social cohesion and belonging.

The ensuing social inclusion framework as explored and discussed in this volume, however, aims to move beyond ideological understandings and policy applications that privilege dominant cultural norms. Rather, our conceptualisation of social inclusion is underpinned by a utopian vision of the fundamental and unconditional exercise of the right to belong for all people regardless of ethnic identity and religious affiliation or formal status as citizens or non-citizens. This utopian thinking is necessary for transformative change as twenty-first-century cities exhibit super-diversity, and living with everyday multiculturalism is recognised as 'demographically inevitable and politically challenging' (Levitas 2003, Vertovec 2007, Keith 2009: 50). Yet multiculturalism as an ideological project and as a policy framework within the nation-state, that aimed to engender positive inter-ethnic relations and empower marginalised groups through affirmative measures, is now said to be in gradual retreat (Mitchell 2004, Turner 2006). This is ironic given that multiculturalism was originally posited as a social policy tool aimed at minimising the social exclusion of minorities in various societal spheres, most

notably, the workplace, education sectors and civic life more broadly. In our global society, utopian visions of social inclusion may begin to be imagined if we first recognise the scope for moving beyond what Hickman terms ‘multiculturalism in one country’ (2007: 320) and recognise the multiplicity of local and global connections that situate us socially and spatially as ethnic minorities/majorities.

An Empirical Focus on Australia’s Multicultural Experiment

Australia is not alone in the developed world in pursuing an active immigration policy. Issues pertaining to cultural diversity, therefore, such as race relations and social inclusion are not the exclusive domain of Australian politics. Indeed, these issues are and have been debated exhaustively across Europe and in North America (Mitchell 2004). But Australia, one of the most urbanised nations where 75 per cent of the population live in major cities, still has one of the most culturally diverse populations amongst the developed countries, with 20.3 per cent born overseas as opposed to 18.9 per cent for Canada, under 13 per cent for the US and just over 12 per cent for the UK (Infrastructure Australia 2010; UNESCO 2009). Moreover, 93.1 per cent of people who speak a language other than English and 89 per cent of the overseas born live in major cities. More importantly, what has prompted this volume to focus primarily on empirical insights from Australia is the fact that despite this high level of diversity, historically Australia demonstrates an ‘onward and upward’ history of multiculturalism, the issue of indigenous populations notwithstanding (Kalantzis 2005, Turner 2006: 616). Further this seemingly successful multicultural model has witnessed significant changes since 1999 with the so called ‘crisis’ of asylum seekers (often referred to in public discourse as the ‘boat people’, Kramer 2003). In fact, it was during the era of the Liberal Howard Government that the commitment to a national multicultural policy agenda wavered and was relegated to insignificance. With the election of the Labour Government under Gillard there appears to be a renewed commitment to multiculturalism as a policy ‘central to national interest’ (DIAC 2011: 6).

Therefore, focusing on the Australian situation for its early successes and also for its most recent challenges, will allow the various theoretical claims – anchored as they are within the key concepts of social inclusion, multiculturalism and citizenship – to be tested in the context of a fluid and dynamic social setting characterised by domestic politics and transnational currents. Indeed, the current media discussion about asylum seekers, the ongoing population debates and sensitive issues of race relations across the societal spectrum, have inspired a new urgency to the immigration and multiculturalism debate. In addition, recent nation-wide surveys on immigration, racism, ethnic relations, cultural diversity and social cohesion show the presence of strong and persistent negative attitudes (Markus 2010, Dunn and Nelson 2011). For example, a recent social cohesion survey demonstrated negative attitudes towards asylum seekers in the range of 60 to 70 per cent as well as an increase in the negative attitudes towards immigration

intake from 35 per cent in 2009 to 47 per cent in 2010 (Markus 2010). A more recent survey, however, found that while most Australians feel positively about cultural diversity, 84.4 per cent agreed there was racial prejudice, 40.9 per cent felt that Australians of a British background enjoyed a privileged position in society, and a minority had problematic views about ethnic diversity (Dunn and Nelson 2011). This recent study shows that an empirical focus on Australia would provide optimal theoretical grounds and policy contexts to explore the interrelated themes of multiculturalism, cultural diversity, social inclusion and overall race relations in a dynamic émigré society.

Ethnic Diversity and State Responses: Assimilation and Multiculturalism

In the 1950s when settler nations like Canada, Australia and former colonial European nations such as United Kingdom, France, Germany, and the Netherlands received high immigrant inflows either voluntarily or involuntarily, the expectation was that ethnic minorities would assimilate by following the social and cultural norms of the dominant white culture (S. Jones 1997, Hage 1998, Hickman 2007, Wagner 2008, Eijk 2010). These views on assimilation reflected research by the Chicago School of sociologists in the 1920s, which underlined that ethnic minorities living in enclaves and ghettos of the American cities could only become better citizens and improve their social status if they followed the norms of the predominantly white settler society (Park 1925).

But with increasing ethnic diversity, an assimilation policy that privileged whiteness and Angloness and failed to recognise the rights of ethnic minorities, was limited in its ability to address social inequalities and value the potential contribution that different citizens can make to the nation (Hage 1998). Assimilationist policies became untenable in the UK, other European nations, Canada and Australia because of its discriminatory nature (S. Jones 1997, Hage 1998). The outcome was that multiculturalism was adopted in the 1970s as an ideological cornerstone and a policy framework with a set of guidelines to bring diverse groups of people together while continuing to respect the different cultural and religious perspectives of receiving societies. In Australia, multiculturalism was touted as a distinct improvement over the discriminatory 'White Australia' policy, whereby migrants were expected to assimilate into mainstream society and in the process were forced to let go of their heritage, culture and any form of social or political attachment to their countries of origin (Mansouri 2010).

This conceptualisation of multiculturalism in Australia and indeed elsewhere was underpinned by liberal principles of democratic egalitarianism and equal citizenship that aimed to nurture cultural diversity and empower marginalised groups through affirmative measures of recognition and redistribution (Mitchell 2004, Modood 2007). The measures included addressing social inequalities in the labour and housing markets, for example, as well as the cultural recognition of ethnic minorities through governance structures encouraging greater participation

and financial support for activities such as cultural festivals and religious/cultural education (Wood and Landry 2007).

The 'Retreat' of Multiculturalism and the Emerging Social Inclusion Agenda

Despite the emphasis on social democratic principles and early indications of strong public and government support, multiculturalism has attracted much criticism and become politically problematic (Castles et al. 1988, Kobayashi 1993). While the original ideals were well-meaning, what has developed, to a large degree, is a process designed to attract political votes from specific minority groups in particular among those recently-settled migrant communities. Further still, multicultural policies failed to account for the fact that apart from ethnicity, society is divided along multiple axes such as gender, sexuality, religion and class (Modood 2007). These poststructural criticisms have been influential in questioning the analytical prominence of 'race' as the only mode of social exclusion and as a key basis for social and political identity. The primary critique levelled at multiculturalism, however, is that migrants have been able to access the rights associated with Australian citizenship and more broadly the Australian way of life without having to assume the social and civic responsibilities necessary to build a cohesive society (Mansouri 2010).

Building a cohesive and harmonious society has become a formidable challenge given dramatic changes to the nature of diversity as well as global acts of terrorism. Reviewing this diversity in Britain, Vertovec (2007) argues that since the 1990s, there has been a phenomenal increase in the inflow of people from a wider range of countries than ever before, who arrive through diverse migration channels, speak several languages, affiliate with several religions and ethnicities, and demonstrate different immigration statuses. This increase in the global flow of visible minorities – migrants and citizens, particularly Muslims – is seen as a threat to the unity, harmony and common values of the nation-state and elicits feelings of anxiety and worry, following acts of terrorism and racial disturbances in major cities (Amin 2002, 2008, Hage 2003). It seems that multiculturalism as a state policy has failed to integrate ethnic minorities and provide communal harmony. Instead, diversity policies coupled with the openness of national borders have encouraged some citizens to become 'home-grown terrorists' and enabled fanatical fundamentalists to infiltrate the secure borders of the nation-state (Eijk 2010).

Against this background, the challenge for the contributing authors in this volume is to explore how social inclusion as a concept can unsettle these normative visions of diversity that have come to be associated with multicultural policies, transcend the focus on the stigmatisation and tolerance of difference, and engender genuine foundations for individual agency at all levels of social interactions. A key aim of this collection, therefore, is to unsettle the assumption that the 'rights and wrongs of multiculturalism' (Bilge 2010: 9), as an ideology and a policy, are simply an assessment on whether migrants from an ethnic/ethno-religious minority background successfully integrate into white majority societies and provide social,

economic and civic benefits. For certain minorities, in particular Muslim migrants, the entrenched notion of a civilisation clash between their heritage ‘culture’ and that of their host Western society means that national government policies, media comments, as well as international practices increasingly essentialise them as ‘outsiders’ unable to integrate and, therefore, represent them as a challenge to the pervasive notions of social harmony in the West (Vertigans 2010).

Given that living with difference has been recognised as one of the main challenges of the twenty-first century, civic citizenship and community cohesion agendas are embraced enthusiastically as a heuristic approach towards social integration and harmony in Canada, Australia, and member states of the European Union (Home Office 2001, Levitas 2003, Freiler 2007/2008, Social Inclusion Board 2008). Within these agendas, social inclusion is constructed as a multidimensional, multifaceted and holistic concept that can address issues of socioeconomic deprivation and cultural integration, but its implementation at the policy level varies in different national and societal contexts.

In the European social policy context, it was preceded by a focus on social exclusion that aimed to tackle material inequalities in working class neighbourhoods (Levitas 2003, Wagner 2008). Despite the variety of discourses that came to be associated with the policy in the UK, Germany and even France – the ‘heartland’ of the concept – there was an overwhelming focus on social class in understanding socioeconomic deprivation. Issues of ‘colour, culture, and creed’ or race, ethnicity and gender were generally overlooked (Wagner 2008: 94). In the EU states including the UK, recent shifts in social policy clearly aim to address social tensions, impede home-grown terrorism, provide inter-ethnic harmony and integrate ethnic minority groups following global acts of terrorism in major cities such as 9/11 and 7/7 (Amin 2008, Flint and Robinson 2008, Eijk 2010). On the other hand, in the US, the immense potential of social inclusion as a multidimensional and holistic approach that moves beyond poverty measures to explore issues of cultural inclusion and wellbeing, is beginning to be recognised within public debates on social policy; but these ideas of inclusion are still underpinned by participation in activities ‘considered [to be] the societal norm’ (Fremstad et al. 2007: 1).

In émigré societies such as Canada and Australia that have always had a strong immigration programme, social inclusion policies seem to be increasingly focused on civic engagement, redistributive measures and institutional recognition of ethnic minorities. Freiler (2007/2008: 41) argues that despite the empirical rigour and widespread deployment of the concept of social inclusion within the policy agenda in Canadian cities since 2003, ‘practice typically lags behind philosophy’ and ethnic minorities continue to be excluded in terms of access to opportunities. For example, the key aspirational principles of the recently introduced Social Inclusion Agenda in Australia is to adopt an integrated approach to reduce disadvantage, increase social, civil and economic participation, as well as provide a greater voice and opportunity for people (Social Inclusion Board 2008). These principles, however, are overwhelmingly underpinned by the need to develop

benchmarks and quantifiable indicators, and it seems that recognising as well as assessing the positive contributions of people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds is seen as a straightforward and simple process that can be measured, rather than a more complex social phenomenon.

The new emphasis on social inclusion in policy circles in western societies with a white majority culture, however, remains disconnected from the rigorous debate in academia that contests the conceptual and analytical imprecision of the social inclusion paradigm (Askonas and Stewart 2000, Levitas 2003, Lima 2003, Cameron 2006, Flint and Robinson 2008, Herbert 2008, Wagner 2008, Wise and Ali 2008). This contestation often focuses on the politics of inclusion with outcomes for moving beyond repression and integration or the management of difference (Hage 1998, Markus and Dharmalingam 2007, Amin 2008, Eijk 2010). What is urgently required is a more nuanced understanding of the dynamics of difference in the twenty-first century; one that incorporates interdisciplinary academic approaches to diversity as well as relevant and robust empirical research in different settings (Flint and Robinson 2008).

Extending Social Inclusion

Although we agree that the recent shift to social inclusion within policy debate is more positive compared to dominant discourses of social exclusion that focus on poverty, unemployment and morality, our view is that the concept needs further theoretical and empirical development so that we can move beyond the ‘tolerance model’ both at the policy level and the level of everyday life. At the policy level the ‘tolerance model’ either results in negative recognition by envisaging migrants as passive subjects to be managed and disciplined, and at the level of everyday intercultural encounter keeps us safe in our separate corner through cultural practices that are non-invasive (Butler 2010: 146, Hage 1998). Indeed, despite the deployment of the concept within the policy agenda in the West since the 1990s the increasing visibility of migrants and ethnic minorities in the public realm continues to engender indifference, hostility, suspicion, prejudice, uncomfortable feelings of anxiety and fear in everyday spaces. If this is indeed the situation, such attitudes and feelings can have unintended effects particularly if they result in misunderstanding, interethnic tensions and material and symbolic privileges for white majority cultures on the one hand, and the alienation, scrutiny, aversion and exclusion of ethnic minorities with a cultural heritage that is not Anglo and/or white on the other (Wood and Landry 2007, Amin 2008, Valentine 2008).

A key aim of this book is, therefore, to build on the social inclusion debate by theoretically and empirically strengthening the concept so that its deployment within the policy agenda is informed by critical as well as utopian thinking on identity, citizenship and intercultural relations. This kind of thinking is necessary to initiate constructive action so that inclusion is not merely about the negative experiences of racialised minorities but also about intercultural encounters in the public realm

that value and welcome ethnic difference (Lobo 2010). The contributors in this book take diverse methodological routes and adopt interdisciplinary approaches as they embark on this journey that examines the Australian context to find ways to meaningfully welcome diversity. While the Tampa crisis in 2001 and the Cronulla riots in 2005 have demonstrated to the world the presence of xenophobia (including asylophobia and Islamophobia) in Australia, as many have argued, including in this collection, Australia still has the potential to be an inclusive nation that can 'show moral, cultural and political leadership in a world pulled apart by conflicts over borders and belonging' (Kalantzis 2005: 17).

We think a modest contribution to a vision of social inclusion that values rather than regulates difference is possible through reflections and critical insights from researchers working in the diverse fields of sociology, politics, geography, intercultural studies and education. The contributors adopt a range of approaches: conventional approaches that focus on measuring and describing social inclusion; critical approaches that explore the role played by religion and core national values in understanding social inclusion; and more creative approaches that move beyond critique and focus on vignettes that also reflects the compassion, joy and hope all part of living with difference (Herbert 2009, Keith 2009, Lobo 2010).

Book Structure

This book will extend and strengthen the debate on social inclusion through the diverse theoretical and empirical insights from researchers working in the interdisciplinary areas of identity, citizenship and intercultural relations. Collectively, the chapters here argue that in contrast to the historically dominant social pathological discourse, which explored the factors causing marginalisation, the concept of social inclusion can be more positive if it explores and examines creative pathways to achieve more equitable access to resources, accommodate and value cultural diversity, and facilitate active participation in society. Nonetheless, social policy-making in Europe (and in particular in the UK), Canada and recently Australia remains problematic and ineffective, particularly if political agendas continue to be underpinned by communitarian ideals that focus on achieving mono-cultural, if not exclusionary versions of social harmony and community cohesion.

The contributing authors in this volume reflect on specific themes in relation to social inclusion such as identity, citizenship and intercultural relations and raise pertinent and challenging questions for researchers and policy makers alike: for example, to what extent should the state facilitate immigrants' efforts to maintain their heritage culture? Do multicultural policies engender urban segregation and social exclusion? Will an emphasis on cultural citizenship lead to contested identities, divided loyalties and a weaker sense of belonging? These and many related issues explored by the contributing authors highlight the pressing need for an approach that focuses on the specific situation within a given country whilst

engaging with broader international debates that are shaping similar concerns in other regions.

The book is divided into three sections: Identity and Social Inclusion, Citizenship and Social Inclusion and Intercultural Relations and Social Inclusion. The chapters in the first section focus on identity politics in the Australian context and comparative public debates on national identity and values in countries, in particular, of the European Union where cultural inclusion of ethnic minorities is becoming a significant challenge (Open Society Institute 2007). Chiro explores the focus on national values, assessing whether Australian multiculturalism has altered the perceptions of the Anglo-Australian historical bloc in ways that recognise the particular local cultural needs of Australia's ethnic, indigenous and religious minorities. Fozdar's chapter takes this focus on national values a step further by looking at whether a Judaeo-Christian heritage still continues to be central to constructions of Australian identity. She underlines that if there is an emergence of an exclusive national religious identity then the consequences for religious minorities are of considerable concern. These chapters by Fozdar and Chiro set the context for exploring the different experiences of inclusion among Muslims, an ethno-religious group, and Polish Australians, migrants that arrived in the post-war period.

Hassan examines the demographic, social and economic position of Muslim Australians to argue that if young, educated Muslims continue to be marginalised in the labour and housing market as is the situation in France, Germany, and Britain, there is a danger of religious and non-religious radicalisation. Drozdewski, on the other hand, draws on in-depth interviews to detail how two different waves of Polish migrants follow different pathways of exclusion and inclusion in an effort to maintain distinct diasporic identities. She grounds this analysis in an examination of pre-migration conditions (war and the Socialist period in Poland) and the different political and social contexts that situate these two distinct waves of migrants. In an age of transnational mobility, this kind of focus on the different strategies and practices of Polish migrants is insightful.

Ayirtman's theoretical engagement with the deliberative politics of cultural diversity is interesting because she provides suggestions of how such a model could be developed in ways that challenge the current retreat of multiculturalism in many liberal democracies. Although she agrees that deliberative democracy aims to move beyond the dominance of self-interests and essentialised identities and provide the opportunity to invoke reasoned, inclusive, and transformative dialogue, Ayirtman also underlines that these goals are difficult to achieve unless majority norms are acknowledged and different ways of communicating and reasoning that are more culturally sensitive are incorporated. She argues, however, that if a pluralist turn in deliberative democracy is to be inclusive it must provide the suitable conditions and opportunities to talk about deep disagreements that may appear incompatible at first, but later reveal unexpected resonances.

The next section explores an agenda for inclusive citizenship that is situated within the broader international literature on whiteness, ethnicity, and intercultural

education. The chapters here adopt diverse approaches to examine government policies, political discourses, dominant representations, and everyday experiences of citizenship. Lobo's chapter engages with the international literature on whiteness to argue that if institutions within society such as the media and the government agencies aim to value cultural diversity in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, then social practices and cultural norms that often unintentionally privilege whiteness and regulate meanings of ethnicity in everyday life require further scrutiny. Voloder also focuses on the cultural boundaries of citizenship but underlines that despite the civic dimensions of citizenship, ethnicity continues to play a significant and central role in constructions of Australian citizenship. She draws on ethnographic work among Bosnian Australians in Sydney and Melbourne to argue that ethnic identification and community formation can be empowering only if it creates a space to claim multicultural citizenship.

Jenkins adopts the framework of active citizenship to explore strategies through which young Australians in the city experience inclusion. She focuses on the role of school programs and extracurricular activities in empowering youth, which then filters out into the community. Mansouri, Lobo and Latrache provide a comparative study of Paris and Melbourne to argue for the need to move beyond formal governance structures of the city that unintentionally romanticise or stigmatise difference and emphasise the power of grassroots organisations to engender a sense of belonging among Muslims. They argue that despite government policies that focus on equal citizenship and social inclusion, the struggle to negotiate prevailing societal attitudes that homogenise national identity and racialise Islam continue to be a part of everyday life.

The contested nature of belonging and the complex nature of intercultural relations in a mobile world are explored in the last section of the book. Andrew Markus discusses race relations and social inclusion in Australia using data gathered through the Scanlon Social Inclusion surveys. The chapter engages with the dynamics of social inclusion/exclusion in Australia based on benchmark empirical data that provides critical insights into attitudes towards migrant communities and related minority groups.

Nelson, Dunn and Paradies explore the experience of racism and its detrimental effects on personal and social morbidity. In particular, they argue for a greater examination of links between racism and belonging. Fincher, builds on this idea of belonging by focusing on the relevance of the materiality and spatiality of destination cities in facilitating social inclusion. She uses a case study of temporary and transnational tertiary students in central Melbourne, to argue that where the built form and institutional arrangements of cities discourage local intercultural encounters, the formation of a transnational network of student peers facilitates feelings of belonging. Marotta also uses place as an entry point, but his aim is to explore the inherent tension between traditional notions of home that focus on sameness and order and more recent conceptualisations of home as sites of heterogeneity and difference. Adopting a theoretical approach, Marotta emphasises

that home and otherness are encapsulated within moments where sameness and diversity cause friction, but also the potential for intercultural dialogue.

Together, the chapters in this book adopt a positive and creative approach in thinking about pathways to social inclusion, moving beyond discussions of the causes of marginalisation and prevalent political agendas that focus on social harmony and community cohesion. Contributors combine philosophical reflections on the critical concepts of social inclusion and citizenship with empirical analyses of key case studies to account for the management of interethnic relations and cultural diversity in pluralist societies. At the heart of the key arguments sustained throughout this book is a commitment to the democratic and universal right to belong (to political communities) and participate in the process of decision-making that all human beings, and not just citizens, must enjoy irrespective of their cultural backgrounds and their settlement milieus.