

Japanese Multicultural Coexistence: Emblematic of a Liberal Democratic Society?

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I. Introduction

Beginning in the 1980s and then in 1989, Japan saw a precipitous rise in the number of foreign residents coming to Japan as economic migrants (See Figure 1.0).¹ The first wave of foreign residents was fueled by the roaring economy which raged during the “Bubble Economy” era.² These foreign residents were deemed *newcomers* and acted as the labour pool in the 3 K (*kiken, kitainai, kitsui*) industries.³ The second wave was instigated by the 1989 amendment of the Immigration-Control and Refugee-Recognition Act, enabling those non-skilled individuals of Japanese heritage and mostly from South America to come and work in Japan.⁴ As a result, in concrete terms the population of foreigners living in Japan has increased 1.5 times in the last 10 years and 7.0 times in the past 30 years.⁵

According to the Statistics Bureau of Japan, the number of foreigners living, working and studying in Japan reached 1,973,747 in 2004 representing 1.6% of the total population.⁶ This number represented a 46% increase in the number of registered foreigners compared with 1994. This figure does not include the number of known illegal foreign residents which according to the Ministry of Justice has climbed to 207,299.⁷ Moreover, the number of foreign residents could be much higher if we consider those children that come from international

1 See: Ministry of Justice’s Basic Plan for Immigration Control (3rd edition) <http://www.moj.go.jp/ENGLISH/information/bpic3rd-02.html#2.htm> (Accessed September 2007)

2 Shipper, A.W. “The Political Construction of Foreign Workers in Japan” in *Critical Asian Studies*. Vol. 34, No.1, pp.41-68

3 Ibid.

4 Yamanaka, Keiko. New Immigration Policy and Unskilled Foreign Workers in Japan. *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 66, No. 1. (Spring, 1993), pp. 72-90.

5 Suzuki, Eriko. 2004. “Tabunkaka suru Nihon wo Kangaeru: Kokkyo wo Koeta Hito no Idou ga Shinten suru Naka de.” in *FIF Special Report No.8. Tokyo: Fujita Mirai Keiei Kenkyujo*. pp.16-18.

6 See: Japan Statistics Bureau Homepage for a break down of foreigner population growth. (Accessed January 15th, 2006)

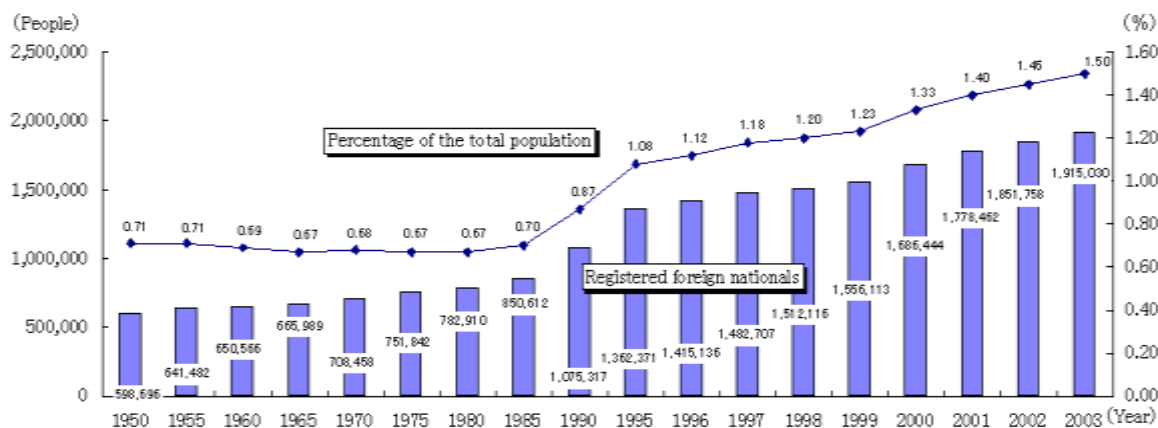
<http://www.stat.go.jp/data/kokusei/2000/gaikoku/00/01.htm>

7 See: Ministry of Justice homepage:

<http://www.moj.go.jp/English/issues/issues05.html> (Accessed September 16th, 2006)

marriages euphemistically called *daburu*⁸ in Japan.⁹

Figure 1.0 Changes in the number of foreign nationals from 1950 to 2003 and its percentage of the total Japanese population



(*) "Number of registered foreign nationals" as of December 31 each year.

(*) The "percentage of the total population of Japan" is calculated based on the population as of October 1 every year from the "National Census" (for 1950–1995 and 2000) and "Estimated Population" (for 1996–1999 and 2001–2003) of the Statistics Bureau, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications.

Source: Adapted from the Ministry of Justice's Basic Plan for Immigration Control (3rd Edition) <http://www.moj.go.jp/ENGLISH/information/bpic3rd-02.html#2.htm> (Accessed September 2007)

As of 2005, Japan's population began to decline owing to low fecundity, a reality that will affect the country's future economic vitality.¹⁰ The unpredictability of future social and economic prosperity is exacerbated by a rapidly graying population and the unabated pressures associated with globalization, including economic interdependence and migration.¹¹ In fact, according to the *Keirendan*'s¹² "Second Set of Recommendations on Accepting

⁸ *Daburu* is the Japanese pronunciation of "Double". It refers to children who have one Japanese parent and one non-Japanese parent. Children who have two parents from different countries but whose parents are not of Japanese nationality are called international children or just foreign children.

⁹ Suzuki, Eriko. 2004. "Gaikokujin Shuju Chiki ni miru Tabunka Kyoushakai no Kadai: "Kyousei" wa Nani Ka?" in *FIF Special Report No.8*. Tokyo: Fujita Mirai Keiei Kenkyujo. pp.23-25

¹⁰ *Economist*, January 7th-13th 2005, pp. 29-30.; *Economist*, July 28th-August 3rd 2007, pp.

11, 24-27; Also see: Sakanaka Hidenori. "The Future of Japan's Immigration Policy: a battle diary" in *Japan Focus*. <http://japanfocus.org/products/details/2396> (Accessed May 23rd, 2007)

¹¹ Soumusho. 2006. *Tabunka Kyousei no Suishin ni kan suru Kenkyukai Houkokusho: Chiiki ni okeru Tabunka Kyousei no Suishin ni Mukete*. Japan: Tokyo. p.5

¹² *Nippon Keidanren* (Japan Business Federation) is a comprehensive economic organization born in May 2002 by amalgamation of Keidanren (Japan Federation of Economic Organizations) and Nikkeiren (Japan Federation of Employers' Associations). Its membership of 1,662 is comprised of 1,343 companies, 130 industrial associations, and 47 regional

Non-Japanese Workers” released March 27, 2007, the Japanese work force is expected to drop by 4 million workers in 10 years if nothing is done to curb the population decline.¹³ The UN has also commented on Japan’s coming demographic crisis estimating that Japan needs to accommodate for an influx of 600,000 immigrants a year to maintain its current standard of living (United Nations 2000).¹⁴

The implications of these challenges are several-fold. Firstly, growing numbers of retirees will place an inflated burden on the social welfare system.¹⁵ More specifically, as 4 million Japanese retire and begin enjoying what life offers outside the *kaisha* existence, they will not only demand social insurance payments be paid for their many years of work, they will also require medical care to treat health conditions associated with growing old.

Above and beyond the impact this graying population will have on social welfare system, the shift of the work force from *tax contributors* to *tax consumers* means that industries will be losing a vast capacity of knowledge and skilled workers who maintain the high-skilled infrastructure of Japan, and contribute to the coffers of the national government. Importantly, the removal of this body of knowledge and experience rich workers truncates Japan’s ability to be globally competitive in two ways.

First and most obvious, is that there is a sudden removal of knowledge, experience and human networks from the work force which has the effect of removing a vast source of economic potential. Second, this large body of tax consumers affects Japanese economic prosperity in a more significant way, since economic resources, including workers and educational institutes shift their activities to support services, programmes and infrastructure that meet the needs of this gray population. The effect of this shift in resources is significant in that resources are directed away from industries and sectors of the economy that make Japan globally competitive towards services industries related to health care for the elderly etc.

Compounded by the low fecundity, Japan is predicated to see a large drop in its population

economic organizations (as of June 22, 2007).

<http://www.keidanren.or.jp/english/profile/pro001.html> (Accessed December 2007)

¹³ <http://www.keidanren.or.jp/english/policy/2007/017.html> (Accessed December 21st, 2007)

¹⁴ <http://www.ipss.go.jp/pp-newest/e/ppfj02/ppfj02.pdf>

Population predictions for future Japan (accessed December 21st, 2007)

¹⁵ The Prime Minister’s Commission on Japan’s goals in the 21st Century. 2000. *Japan’s Goals in the 21st Century, The Frontier Within: Individual Empowerment and Better Governance in the New Millennium* January 2000. Japan: Tokyo. pp. 5-6.

over the next 50 years, decreasing from its peak in 2006 of 127 million to 80 to 100 million in 2050.¹⁶ Out of this population, 35.7% will be those Japanese 65 plus, subsequently creating a scenario in which a very large number of retired Japanese are being supported by an insufficient number of tax paying individuals.¹⁷

To help mitigate the demographic challenges that lie ahead, Japan has used foreign workers in a very limited capacity to compensate for her labour shortage.¹⁸ According to David Bartram of the Center for Migration Studies of New York, foreign labourers constituted less than 1.5 percent of the total Japanese labour force in 2000.¹⁹ Others like the *Shuukan Daiyamondo*, a Japanese weekly news magazine further describe the role of foreign workers and in particular, their role in the Japanese automobile industry as crucial and integral to the Japanese automotive and manufacturing industries profitability.²⁰ No matter which hypothesis you accept vis-à-vis the role of foreigners and their contribution to the labour market, we cannot dispute that the number of foreign residents is increasing in an unrelenting fashion year-by-year.

In order to deal with the growing foreign resident issue as well as its associated problems, in March 2006 the Japanese Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIAC) released a report entitled “Research Report on the Promotion of Multicultural Coexistence” as a response to the growing diversification of Japanese society that is occurring in concert with ever increasing numbers of non-Japanese coming to Japan for work, studies, marriage or to settle.

Multicultural coexistence, in contrast to the more widely recognized multiculturalism has been adopted by numerous local governments in Japan and the MIAC as the panacea to

¹⁶ See Obuchi Cabinet Report, <http://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/21century/report/pdfs/> (Accessed December 21st, 2007)

¹⁷ National Institute of Population and Social Security Research. 2002. *Population Projections for Japan: 2001-2050, With Long-range Population Projections: 2001-2050*. Japan: NIPSSR. Pp.3-4.

¹⁸ See Ministry of Justice Homepage for a complete explanation of the Immigration and Refugee Recognition Act: <http://www.moj.go.jp/ENGLISH/IB/STANDARD/standard01.html> (Accessed November 15th, 2005)

¹⁹ David Bartram. “Japan and Labour Migration: theoretical and Methodological Implications of Negative Cases” *International Migration Review*, Vol. 34, No.1. (Spring 2000) ,pp. 5-32.

²⁰ See *Shuukan Daiyamondo*. June 6th, 2004.

mitigate the growing real and perceived stresses caused by a growing number of foreign residents choosing to stay in Japan for extended periods of time or obtaining permanent residency.

Questions remain though as to what exactly is multicultural coexistence, and how does it differ from multiculturalism as seen in countries most experienced in multiculturalism such as Australia, Canada, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United States? Whereas the aforementioned countries who practice multiculturalism view multiculturalism as a part of immigration, on the road to citizenship or a mid-point in the integration process,²¹ in Japan's multicultural coexistence discourse, immigration is a peripheral and distant debate at best, being neither a road to citizenship, naturalization or immigration. In fact, multicultural coexistence is a set of policies and practices primarily targeted at denizens²² or what Micheal Walzer articulates as *metics*²³.²⁴

The aim of this paper is to examine Japanese multicultural coexistence through the prism of liberal democratic multiculturalism. The purpose of this examination is to locate Japan's multicultural coexistence policy within the liberal democratic multiculturalism debate, and to examine whether or not Japanese multicultural coexistence adheres to the principles of the liberal democratic multiculturalism tradition.

To achieve this objective this paper will be divided into 4 sections. The first section located above introduced the demographic changes that have prompted local governments and most recently the MIAC to adopt multicultural coexistence policies. The second section will then introduce the multicultural coexistence policy of the MIAC and some of its recommendations

21 Kymlicka, Will. 2003. "Immigration, citizenship, Multiculturalism: Exploring the Links" in *The Political Quarterly*. Oxford, UK: The Political Quarterly Publishing Co. Ltd. pp. 195-208.

22 Hammer, Tomas is professor emeritus at the Centre for Research in International Migration and Ethnic Relations (CEIFO), Stockholm University. He proposed the term "denizen" to denote the quasi-citizenship foreign residents of foreign residents characterized by long-term residency, access to a host of rights, privileges and obligations that are customarily associated with passport holders, i.e. full fledged citizens of a particular country. See: Hammer, Tomas. 1990. *Democracy and the nation state : aliens, denizens, and citizens in a world of international migration* Aldershot, Hants, England : Avebury Brookfield, Vt. : Gower Pub. Co.

23 Michael Walzer, Professor at the School of Social Science at the Institute for Advanced Study describes *metics* as permanent residents who are denied citizenship. See: Walzer, Michael. 1983. *Spheres of Justice: A Defense of Pluralism and Equality*. Oxford: Blackwell.

24 Chapman, David. "Discourses of Multicultural Coexistence (Tabunka Kyousei) and the "old-comer" Koreans of Japan", *Asian Ethnicity*, Vol.7, No.1, February 2006, pp. 91-102

in terms of specific practices in order to orient the reader as to what multicultural coexistence is in terms of policy and initiatives. The third section will then examine the debate which exists between multiculturalism and liberal democratic principles. The purpose of this section is to introduce the debate surrounding the complementary or uncomplimentary nature of multiculturalism and liberal democratic principles and whether equal outcome or equal opportunity should be the barometer of liberal democratic multiculturalism. This position will be subsequently used in the fourth section of this paper in order to conduct a critique of Japanese multicultural coexistence using the prism of the compatibility of multiculturalism and liberal democratic principles. The results of this critic will indicate whether or not Japanese multicultural coexistence is emblematic of liberal democratic principles.

II. Multicultural Coexistence

The origins of Japanese multicultural coexistence type activities can be traced to the immediate post WW II environ in which cultural exchange activities occurred between the United States and Japan. However, the “catch word” of multicultural coexistence surfaced in the early 90’s, in particular the Kansai area of Japan.²⁵ In the crucible of the Kansai area, multicultural coexistence activities blended the troika of social integration activities, anti-discrimination initiatives and mutual cultural understanding activities in order to mitigate the challenges faced by Japanese vis-à-vis foreign residents, attenuate intercultural friction and ameliorate the social integration of foreign residents.²⁶

Multicultural coexistence activities eventually culminated in the establishment of the Foreigners Earthquake Information Centre in January 1995, and the subsequent establishment of the *Tabunka Kyousei Senta* / Multicultural Coexistence Center in October 1995, a centre for information exchange, and the promotion of multicultural coexistence related activities.²⁷

Beginning in 2001, several local governments in Japan began to implement multicultural coexistence plans including; Toyada City (2001), Tobashi (2002), Shinjuku Ward (2005), Kawasaki City (2005), Iwata City (2005), Tachikawa City(2005), Adachi Ward (2006), Hiroshima (2006), amongst others.²⁸ Most recently in March 2006, the MIAC published a

²⁵ Miyajima, Takashi. 2003. *Kyousei ni Ikirareru Nihon he: Gaikokujin Jissaku to Sono Kadai*. Tokyo: Yuhikaku. pp.4-5.

²⁶ Ibid.; Also see Menju Toshihiro. 2003. “Kokusai Kouryu/ Kokusai Kyouryoku to wa” in *Kokusai Kouryu/Kyouryoku Katsudou Nyumon Kouzai I: Kusa no Ne no Kokusai Kouryu to Kokusai Kyouryoku*. Menju, T. (eds). Tokyo: Akashi Shoten. Pp.37-41.

²⁷ <http://www.tabunka.jp/osaka/summn.html> (Accessed January 29th, 2008)

²⁸ Yamamoto, K., Matsumiya, Asa. 2007. “Jichitai no Gaikokujin Jissaku ni kan suru Hikaku

report entitled “Report on the Research Group concerning the Promotion of Multicultural Coexistence: Towards the Promotion of Multicultural Coexistence at the Local Level”.²⁹ This report was completed the following year by the publication of the “2007 Report concerning the Research Group concerning the Promotion of Multicultural Coexistence”.³⁰

The MIAC defines multicultural coexistence in its most recent report entitled “Research Report on the Promotion of Multicultural Coexistence”³¹ as the following:

Local multicultural coexistence refers to people of different cultures and ethnic backgrounds living alongside one another as contributors to civil society, and the building of bridges between each other through the acceptance of each other’s culture.³²

The overall theme behind the MIAC statement is the acceptance of cultural differences and living along side people of difference cultures and ethnicities. This statement can be examined at three levels.

The first level of the MIAC multicultural coexistence statement relates to its target audience. Examining the statement we can see that the Ministry targets all residents of Japan, without prejudice for nationality, ethnicity and presumably other differences such as religion or race. The statement does not expressly mention sexual orientation or gender. The inclusive nature of the multicultural coexistence statement is significant in that it considers all residents of Japan to be the target of its policy initiative.

Whereas the first level of the MIAC multicultural coexistence statement above addresses the target audience, the second level stresses the objective of the statement, in particular, the creation of a “local society”/ *chiiki shakai* or local community in which all residents live together as the same members of the community. Again, this position is emphasizing oneness or a shared role in living together in the same community as members of the same community. Encompassing all residents, regardless of background, this focus on residency, resonates inclusiveness and equality by eliminating hierarchical and role designations. By not stressing

Kenkyu: Aichi Ken no Jirei wo Chushin ni” in *Gaikoseki Jumin no Souka to Chiiki Saihen: Tokai Chihou wo Jirei Toshi*. Japan: Aichi Kokuritsu Univeristy. Pp.131.

²⁹ Soumusho. 2006. *Tabunka Kyousei no Suishin ni kan suru Kenkyukai Houkokusho: Chiiki ni okeru Tabunka Kyousei no Suishin ni Mukete*. Japan: Tokyo.p.5

³⁰ Soumusho. 2007. *Tabunka Kyousei no Suishin ni kan suru Kenkyukai*. Japan:Tokyo.

³¹ The Japanese name for this report is: *Tabunka Kyosei no Suishin ni Kan suru Kenkyukai: Chiiki ni okeru Tabunka Kyosei no Suishin ni Mukete*.

³² Somusho.2006. *Tabunka Kyosei no Suishin ni Kan suru Kenkyukai: Chiiki ni okeru Tabunka Kyosei no Suishin ni Mukete*. Tokyo

particular roles for foreign residents and Japanese residents, the MIAC statement overcomes the dichotomization of Japanese and foreigners and as a result inculcates inclusiveness in its statement, *at least on paper*.

The third and final level of the MIAC multicultural coexistence statement stresses the means through which the MIAC objective will be achieved, namely through the mutual acceptance of cultural differences. Through the advocating of mutual acceptance of cultural differences, we can conclude that MIAC believes that it is cultural differences and ignorance of those cultural differences that impedes foreign and Japanese residents from feeling as if they form part of the same community.³³ This is an interesting standpoint, especially for foreign residents, as it insinuates that cultural savvy is an integral part of good local citizenship. Where this logic crumbles is when we enquire as to the treatment and feelings related to *oldcomers*, those foreign residents of Japan who are of Korean, Taiwanese or Chinese ethnic extraction. This will be covered in the final section in more detail.

The report also broaches the manner in which it will achieve this objective. It points out the significance of being Japanese, the need to adhere to international conventions, the economic importance of multicultural coexistence and the concept of “Universal Design”³⁴, which refers to planning and building cities for everyone. In the Ministry’s view, the most ideal way to preempt intercultural friction between Japanese residents and the growing number of foreign residents is to accept each other’s culture. In short, to build cities that are easy to live within, and convenient for people of multiple cultural backgrounds.

As a supplement to this definition of multicultural coexistence, in the March 27th 2006 Sogyokoku Dai 79 edition to local governments called the “Information concerning the promotion plan of multicultural coexistence in local governments,”³⁵ the Ministry stressed

³³ In the MIAC Report, language, culture and customs are highlighted as the primary hurdles that newcomers face in Japanese society. In particular, the Ministry stresses that these deficiencies prevent foreign residents from being able to receive administrative services, being informed about the local community to which they live and having a limited set of knowledge concerning their community in general. Although it is very clear how language proficiency would strengthen the newcomers’ ability to be independent, cultural savvy and awareness of customs is more nebulous in that good citizenship is being associated with culture and custom rather than just abiding by local laws and good local citizenship. See: Soumu 2006. p.4-5

³⁴ For information on Universal Design refer to:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Universal_design (Accessed October 11th, 2006)

³⁵ The Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications’ International Affairs Office for Local Authorities released the *Chiiki ni okeru Tabunka Kyousei Suishin Puran ni tsuite* in March 2006 in order to jump start its new initiative to promote multicultural coexistence in municipalities across Japan. Interestingly, in interviews conducted with public officials in

that multicultural coexistence at the local government level was significant for five reasons. Firstly, local governments are the immediate interface for foreign residents and thus the locus of multicultural coexistence policy implementation. Second, the communiqué stressed the importance of securing the human rights of foreign residents in an effort to abide by all international conventions. Third, the Ministry highlighted that multicultural coexistence can be used as a tool to revitalize local municipalities. Fourth, multicultural coexistence was a good opportunity to raise the overall understanding of other cultures and lastly multicultural coexistence was part of the creation of universally designed municipalities.

Part in parcel of realizing the above ideals, the Ministry put forth four areas in which it consider essential pillars or the bedrock to the promotion of multicultural coexistence: (1)Communication Assistance, (2)Lifestyle Assistance, (3) The creation of multicultural coexistence in local communities, and(4)The establishment of a multicultural coexistence system (See Table 1.0). The report also proposed for future research on the establishment of an emergency network, the establishment of an information system and an enquiry as to the manner in which a multicultural coexistence promotion system could be implemented at the local government level.

In short, multicultural coexistence as advocated by MIAC is a social integration system based on the aforementioned pillars. What makes multicultural coexistence different from other social integration programmes is its emphasis on the acquisition of cultural savvy and language proficiency. Moreover, where most social integration programmes are coeval with either a step on the road to permanent residency, multicultural coexistence attempts to stave off problems associated with linguistic and cultural gaps.³⁶

Itabashi Ward, there were numerous questions as to the relevancy of instituting multicultural coexistence from both the standpoint of necessity and ability. See Sogyokoku Dai 79 Go. Heisei 18 Nen 3 Gatsu 27 Nichi. *Chiiki ni okeru Tabunka Kyousei Suishin Puran ni tsuite*. Jiji Gyoseikyoku Kokusai Jitsucho.

³⁶ Kymlicka, Will. 2003. "Immigration, citizenship, Multiculturalism: Exploring the Links" in *The Political Quarterly*. Oxford, UK: The Political Quarterly Publishing Co. Ltd. pp. 195-208.; Also see Inglis, Christine. "Multiculturalism: A Policy Response to Diversity" Development and the Differentiation of Growth Patterns. History and Observation of Social "transformations" (HOST) Network, MOST/ Statistical Publishing House, Vietnam, 1996. pp.28-29.

Table 1.0 Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications' Multicultural Coexistence Plan			
Objective	General Measures	Specific Measures	Notes
Communication Assistance	(1) Provision of Multilingual Information	(A) Provision of multilingual administrative & lifestyle information using diverse media	
		(B) Establishment of an lifestyle advisory window for foreign residents, staffed with professionally trained individuals	
		(C) Collaboration with NGOs etc. to distribute multilingual information	
		(D) Mobilize local foreign residents to act in the capacity of advisors	
		(E) Mobilize JET Programme Coordinators for International Relations	
Lifestyle Assistance	(1) Housing	(A) Hold community orientation programmes	Local Level
		(B) Provide Japanese language and Japanese society study opportunities	Local Level
		(C) Provide Japanese language and Japanese society study opportunities	State Level
		(D) Mobilize the Knowhow of related state institutions	State Level
		(E) Consider Japanese language proficiency as criteria for permanent residency	State Level
Lifestyle Assistance	(2) Education	(A) Housing assistance through the provision of information, elimination of housing discrimination	
		(B) Housing orientation for new complex residents	
		(C) Participation in local resident associations, town halls	
		(D) Establishment of an advisory window in housing complexes with large numbers of foreign residents	
		(A) Provision of multilingual information for school enrolment, work, work assistance programme	Local Level
		(B) Japanese Language Study	Local Level
		(C) Encourage community involvement	Local Level
		(D) Measures to combat child truancy	Local Level
		(E) Workplace assistance and placement	Local Level
		(F) Promote international understanding education from the perspective of multicultural coexistence	Local Level
		(G) Legally recognize non-japanese schools	Local Level
		(H) Augment primary school education system to be able to accommodate different cultures	Local Level
		(I) Mobilize JET Programme CIRs	Local Level
		(J) Publicize stance vis-à-vis education	State Level
		(K) Establish Japanese as a Second Language Programmes	State Level
(L) Measures to respond to employed children	State Level		
(M) Investigate the possibility of assistance for non-japanese schools(recognized)	State Level		
(3) Labour Environment	(A) Work assistance through collaboration with Hello Work	(A) Work assistance through collaboration with Hello Work	Local Level
		(B) Reform labour environment through collaboration with local chambers of commerce	Local Level
		(C) Assistance for foreign residents who would like to found their own enterprise	Local Level
		(D) Reform labour environment	State Level
		(E) Initiate measures to combat employment of foreign residents	State Level
		(F) Assistance for foreign residents who would like to found their own enterprise	State Level

Source: Soumusho. 2006. *Tabunka Kyousei no Suishin ni kan suru Kenkyukai Houkokusho: Chiiki ni okeru Tabunka Kyousei no Suishin ni Mukete*. Japan: Tokyo.

Objective	General Measures	Specific Measures	Notes
Lifestyle Assistance (cont.)	(4) Medical, Health and Social Welfare	(A) Provide information on which hospitals and pharmacies can receive patients in foreign languages	Local Level
		(B) Provide multilingual healthcare and examinations	Local Level
		(C) Establish an area wide interpretation system related to health care	Local Level
		(D) Hold advisory services for health care and health examinations	Local Level
		(E) Programmes nursery school and mother-child health care	Local Level
		(F) Programmes for the elderly and disabled	Local Level
		(G) Promote enrolment in Social Insurance Scheme	State Level
		(H) Bate some of the costs for medical interpretation services and their training	State Level
		(I) Provide training to health care workers and social welfare related workers	State Level
		(J) Emergency Assistance	State Level
Creation of Multicultural Coexistence	(1) Awareness programmes in local communities	(A) Preparations for Emergencies (Disasters)	
		(B) Know the location of foreign residents in the case of an emergency	
		(C) Provide volunteer interpreters for foreign residents during an emergency (this includes training, assistance, collaboration and cooperation)	
		(D) Secure a safe location to gather in the case of an emergency	
		(E) Collaboration in the event of an emergency to convey information to foreign residents in many language and through many media	
		(A) Multicultural coexistence awareness for local residents	
		(B) Create multicultural coexistence hubs	
		(C) Hold exchange events related to the theme of Multicultural coexistence	
		(A) Development of Self-help organizations, key-persons and networks	
		(B) Create systems to incorporate the opinions of foreign residents in local policies	
The establishment of coexistence promotion system	(1) Improve local government system	(C) Support for foreign residents to participate in local community	
		(D) Create a recognition system for foreign residents who contribute to the local community	
		(A) Establish an office for the promotion of multicultural coexistence	
		(B) Formulate a plan for local governments	
		(A) Designate roles for each level of municipal government	Local Level
		(B) Cooperation and collaboration with local bodies	
		(C) Designate roles for each level of government (Prefecture, metropolitan etc.)	Metro / Pref
		(E) Cooperation and collaboration with local bodies	
		(A) Publicize the basic policy on accepting foreigners	State Level
		(B) Provision of Japanese language and society study opportunities	State Level
	(2) Independence & Social participation of Foreign Residents	(C) Create a fast, accurate and easy to understand information system for foreign residents	State Level
		(D) Promote the involvement of foreign residents in the revision of current systems	State Level
		(E) Provide information and research and investigative capabilities related to multicultural coexistence	State Level
		(F) Implement Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in businesses	Private sector
		(G) Request concrete measures from private sector	Private sector
		(3) Clarification of state and private sector role	

Source: Soumusho. 2006. *Tabunka Kyousei no Suishin ni kan suru Kenkyukai Houkokusho: Chiiki ni okeru Tabunka Kyousei no Suishin ni Mukete*. Japan: Tokyo.

III. Liberal Democratic Multiculturalism

Egalitarian interpretations of liberal democratic principles among scholars have a significant impact on how they conceptualize concepts like multiculturalism and subsequently our interpretation of multicultural coexistence. This diversity stems from the varying degrees of support for the prioritization of individual rights in the liberal democratic debate. It goes without saying that there exists a continuum of opinions and interpretations vis-à-vis the extremes of liberal democratic principles, which manifest themselves as the poles of communitarianism and individualism, and amongst those who find themselves in these camps, we find those sometimes more or less individualistic or communitarianistic than their colleagues.

3.1 Liberal Democratic Multiculturalism as Equal Opportunity

On the one hand, Brian Barry, author of *Culture and Equality* and Professor of Philosophy and Political Science at Columbia University exemplifies one end of the spectrum in the liberal democratic multiculturalism debate. He interprets liberalism as having equal treatment or opportunity as one of its salient features.³⁷ The central thrust of his argument interprets liberalism in the classical sense, that is the “classical idea of liberal citizenship” and the egalitarian “demands of social and economic citizenship” that defines egalitarian liberalism.³⁸ In this sense, Barry’s essential supposition with regards to a liberal democracy is that a liberal democratic society with liberalism as its founding principle strives to establish judicial equality or as the author of *A Theory of Justice* John Rawls calls “justice as fairness”.³⁹ In other words, the essence of liberalism from this point of view is a judicial system that is blind to colour, ethnicity, race or religious affiliation, a system in which all citizens or residents are treated equally under the law. For these scholars, this impartial, transparent and predictable system secures equal opportunity for all citizens.

Barry’s strong opposition to multiculturalism that advocates exceptions for minority groups is based on his interpretation of liberal democratic principles. Specifically, he puts forth several convincing arguments on how multiculturalism can create exceptionalism, and as a result provides members of the same society with different cultural, ethnic or religious backgrounds

³⁷ Barry, Brian. 2001. *Culture and Equality: An egalitarian critique of multiculturalism*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

³⁸ Freeman, Samuel. “Liberalism and the Accommodation of Group Claims” in *Multiculturalism Reconsidered*. Paul Kelly. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press. pp.18-19

³⁹ Rawls, John. “Justice as Fairness” in *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. 67, No. 2. (Apr., 1958), pp. 164-194.; Rawls, John. 1999. *A Theory of Justice*. Cambridge, Mass,: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

unequal access or privileges. This inequality of exceptionalism subsequently goes against the very essence of Barry's interpretation of liberalism which he interprets as judicial equality.

In Barry's diatribe attacking multiculturalism he cites numerous examples in which a minority group compels the state/ local government to create "exceptions" to laws grounded in the argument of rights to culture. For example, Sikhs in Canada argued successfully for their religious headdress (turban) to be worn in lieu of the traditional Canadian RCMP Stetson, on grounds of religious expression and cultural protection.⁴⁰ Another example (again Sikhs), Sikhs in England fought successfully to be exempt from the law requiring that all motorcycle riders must wear helmets.⁴¹ Still another example of exceptionalism in Britain is the halah/kosher slaughter of animals for those of Muslim and Jewish faith groups.⁴² Each case illustrates how minority cultural groups, on the basis of laws espousing multiculturalism can be turned up-side down to create extra-territorial like "exceptionalism", in which groups of citizens are exempt from laws and obligations based on cultural, ethnic or religious grounds.

What Barry is espousing as part of his interpretation of liberal democratic principles and their complementary nature with multiculturalism is that liberal democratic principles provide all who are subject to them with equality of opportunity. Laws neither proactively discriminates, admonishes or prevents opportunity because they are uniform, transparent and subject to all. Securing equal opportunity ensures that all adherents of liberal democratic law can, if they choose receive equal and fair treatment.

In short, Barry's interpretation of the appropriate balance between liberal democratic principles and multiculturalism is one that emphasizes equality of opportunity. His argument against multiculturalism policies stresses that current multiculturalism initiatives over enthusiastically foment the "recognition of differences"⁴³ and as a result, do not secure equality of opportunity. Rather what develops is an unequal system that gives certain rights and privileges to particular residents based on the premise that their cultural affiliation requires them to be immune or exempt from certain legal obligations.

40 Kymlicka, Will. 2001. "The Theory and Practice of Immigrant Multiculturalism" in *Politics in the Vernacular: Nationalism, Multiculturalism, and Citizenship*. New York:Oxford University Press. pp.163-165.; Barry, Brian. 2001. *Culture and Equality: An egalitarian critique of multiculturalism*. Cambridge ,UK: Polity Press.pp.44-50

41 Barry, Brian. 2001. pp.44-50.

42 Barry, Brian. 2001. pp.296-298.

43 Taylor, Charles. 1994. "The Politics of Recognition" in *Multiculturalism*. Amy Gutmann (ed.). United Kingdom: Princeton University Press. pp.25-73.

3.2 Liberal Democratic Multiculturalism as Equal Outcome

In contrast to Barry's more pessimistic interpretation with regards to the compatibility of multiculturalism and liberal democratic principles, Will Kymlicka, Canadian Research Chair in Political Philosophy and author of several books on multiculturalism, liberalism and citizenship sees liberal democratic principles and multiculturalism to be mutual compatible.

In a similar vein to Christian Joppke, Director of the Migration and Integration Research Center at the American University in Paris, Kymlicka traces modern liberal multiculturalism's roots to the nexus of post WW II civil rights movements.⁴⁴ According to Kymlicka, the realization of civil rights for all racial groups provides the impetus to extol liberal values in a broader context, and to encompass a reservoir of minority group rights including women, homosexuals and cultural minority groups which in most cases formed the body of the immigrant roots.⁴⁵

In this view of liberal democratic multiculturalism, multiculturalism manifests itself as a political ideology chiseled out of the marble of the civil rights movement. More specifically, Kymlicka espouses a liberalism which ensures the rights of all cultural, ethnic, religious and racial groups, arguing that an inclusive liberal society is epitomized by a legal framework which is transparent and that guarantees and protects all citizens and residents from discrimination based on the aforementioned categories.

Kymlicka's views contrast those such as Barry who argue that multiculturalism and liberalism are ultimately incompatible; this collision of ideologies reaches a boiling point when the minority attempts to fully manifest their cultural, ethnic, religious etc. practices which create an obstacle to integration of the minority groups into the majority group of the host society.

The Canadian Research Chair in Political Philosophy argues that flexibility with regards to legal interpretations on laws that effect newcomers are not representative of exceptionalism, where as Barry sees exceptions to laws as a fundamental flaw in multiculturalism policy. For Kymlicka, "they are intended to make it easier for members of immigrant groups to participate within mainstream institutions of the existing society" and consequently facilitate

44 Joppke, Christian. Ethnic diversity and the state. *The British Journal of Sociology* 2004, Vol. 55, Issue 3, pp.451-463.

45 Kymlicka, Will. 2005. "Liberal Multiculturalism: Western Models, Global Trends, and Asian Debates" in *Multiculturalism in Asia*. Will Kymlicka and Baogang He (Editors). New York: Oxford University Press. pp.31-36

the integration process.⁴⁶

This interpretation of multiculturalism policy echoes other scholars such as Paul Kelly, David Miller and Iris Marion Young who asserts that liberal democratic multiculturalism should not only be manifested as equal opportunity but also as equal outcome.⁴⁷ Where Kelly differs from Young, is in shifting the emphasis of Young's argument from strict proportionality to an argument that favours "an egalitarian ethnos or broad social morality that combines both outcome and opportunity".⁴⁸ Miller on the other hand inserts the variable of "responsibly for cultural commitment" and how culture can affect one's ability to realize equality of opportunity by imposing "heavy costs" on the individual.⁴⁹

Young, Kymlicka, Miller and Kelly all have subtle differences in their interpretations of multiculturalism and its place in liberal democratic principles but they do agree that solely relying on the judicial equal to ensure equality of opportunity does not take into account the essential and integral link of culture and identity, and how this relationship affects the ability of minorities to realize equal opportunity, even if it is legally entitled to them. What they argue for is stronger adherence and a balance for not only equal opportunity but also equal outcome.

Equal outcome takes into account the inevitable influence that cultural roots and identity have and their impact on choices available in liberal democracies espousing multiculturalism. In many cases, minority groups, which could include citizens, denizens or legally residing foreign residents, may have to make the choice between forgoing their cultural identity in lieu of the choice which allows them to integrate into the mainstream society. If this is indeed the case, then minority groups are not in fact enjoying the same freedoms as their majority compatriots or fellow residents, rather they are being forced to choose between abiding by and maintaining the integrity of their mother cultures, or the latter choice of giving up their fundamental obligations to their mother cultures in lieu of realizing equality of opportunity.

For example, in many Muslim traditions women are required or strongly encouraged to wear a headscarf and in some case the full bodied *burka* to maintain their religious sense of

⁴⁶ Kymlicka 2001, p.165

⁴⁷ Kelly, Paul.2002. "Defending Some Dodos: Equality and/or Liberty? in *Multiculturalism Reconsidered*. Paul Kelly (Ed.)United States: Polity Press. pp.63-74; Young, I.M. *Justice and the Politics of Difference*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Pp.15-38.

⁴⁸ Kelly, P. 2002 pp. 76

⁴⁹ Miller, David. 2002. "Equal Opportunities and Cultural Commitments". in *Multiculturalism Reconsider*. Paul Kelly (ed.). United States: Polity Press. pp.52-55.

modesty and decorum. Similarly, Sikhs, who have taken the oath to be full-fledged Sikhs, are required to wear a turban, garner a short blade among other requirements. In both cases, removal of the required cultural and especially symbolic accessories would be tantamount to blasphemy and sacrilegious behaviour because both are culturally interpreted to be indelible requirements to their particular traditions, not merely decorative, cultural or fashionable accessories. If realizing equal opportunity entails compromising these fundamental beliefs, then the so-called equal opportunity advocated by Rawls and Barry are actually limiting opportunity.

In these cases, Kelly, Iris, Miller and Young all argue that equal outcome style liberal democratic multiculturalism creates flexibility in how laws are interpreted to manage the challenges of not marginalising minority cultures and groups by the mainstream majority. At the same time, these laws ensure that minority cultures and groups are not receiving extraordinary or special treatment compared to other citizens or residents. Liberal democratic multiculturalism policy that is inculcated with this balance ensures that all citizens and residents can realize equal opportunity through the support of equal outcome.

3.3 Liberal Democratic Multiculturalism as a blending of Equal Opportunity and Outcome

In a similar vein, I agree with Kelly, Miller, Young and Iris that solely relying on equal opportunity secured through the judicial system is first, at a legal level, inadequate to deal with the multifarious and exceedingly complex peculiarities of today's multicultural societies. Flexibility and some freedom to interpret law to mitigate the plethora of diversity that exists in multicultural societies are logical and coherent from the standpoint of ensuring that all residents and citizens can be mobilized for the benefit of the nation as a whole. In this sense I am echoing the rationale used by the Australian government's advocacy of multiculturalism in its 1989 National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia. Specifically, the Australian government at the time based their support for multiculturalism on three premises; rights to cultural identity, the rights to social justice and the need for economic efficiency which involved the effective development and utilisation of the talents and skills of all Australians.⁵⁰ Effectively, the Australian government argued persuasively that economic benefits would be gained by all Australians through the recognition of the human capacity of all Australians

⁵⁰ National Multicultural Advisory Council. 1995. *Multicultural Australia: The Next Steps Towards and Beyond 2000, A Report of the National Multicultural Advisory Council*, Canberra:AGPS.; Inglis, Christine. "Multiculturalism: A Policy Response to Diversity" *Development and the Differentiation of Growth Patterns. History and Observation of Social "transformations" (HOST) Network*, MOST/ Statistical Publishing House, Vietnam, 1996. pp.44-45.

which included cultural, professional and skill based capital.

What is more, outside the economic benefits that can be derived by broad based inclusion, cultural and skill based recognition, adopting more flexible interpretations of multiculturalism in a liberal democratic environ is also prudent from the standpoint of social integration, ensuring that minority groups are represented at all levels of society and are not prone, out of choice or necessity to form ethnic ghettos and consequently self-segregate themselves from mainstream society.

I argue that the equal outcome perspective advocated by the above authors is also important from the standpoint of creating greater cultural tolerance and awareness nationwide. By emboldening minorities groups to participant fully in mainstream society, despite cultural differences, equal outcome liberal democratic multiculturalism policies have the effect of encouraging all resident/ citizens to contribute to mainstream society because they feel part of mainstream society and are recognized by the mainstream for their contributions.

With these considerations in mind, I contend that liberal democratic multiculturalism should indeed be a balanced mixture of ensuring equal opportunity but also equal outcome. This process of accommodation and recognition should ensure that the majority or mainstream cultural norms do not marginalise minority groups while at the same time, they should ensure that minority groups do not act in extra-territorial fashion, avoiding their obligations to the mainstream cultural values. Moreover, multiculturalism policies should not only foment equal outcome but be sensitive enough to ensure the minority cultures or groups do not use fundamental obligations to their mother cultures as a means to subject, control or abuse members of their own minority groups.

IV. Liberal Democratic Multiculturalism Critic of Multicultural coexistence

Examining the policies and practices that fall under the rubric of multicultural coexistence we can conclude that elements of liberal democratic multiculturalism do exist. These elements become more coherent and salient when we examine them using policy approaches to multi-ethnic states, namely assimilationism, differentialism and inclusionism elaborated Christine Inglis, Director of the Multicultural Research Centre of the University of Sydney.⁵¹

4.1 Assimilationist, differential and inclusionary dimensions of multicultural coexistence

Multicultural coexistence in Japan in part embodies each kind of multi-ethnic state

⁵¹ Ibid.

multiculturalism policy. For instance, I maintain that the continuing vacuum in comprehensive programmes for foreign residents and naturalized Japanese epitomize this continuing dilemma and the assimilationist multi-ethnic state approach to multiculturalism. Also, the continued disingenuous and acerbic nature of naturalization requirements and the lack of recognition of ethnic schools,⁵² numerous cases of “Japanese only” and the ineligibility of graduates from ethnic schools in Japan to apply for entrance examinations for Japanese universities are the most visible examples of the assimilatory nature of Japanese society. These practices compel non-Japanese residents and those who have naturalized to attend national schools where the language of instruction is Japanese, to change their name to a Japanese sounding name and to naturalise since non-Japanese, even Special Permanent residents and permanent residents are not permitted to work at all levels of government, vote and until 1984, receive national health care, social insurance and other benefits that their tax paying Japanese counterparts enjoyed. ⁵³

The MIAC multicultural coexistence plan has put forward initiatives to overcome to assimilatory aspect of Japanese society, in particular workplace assistance and placement, the legal recognition of non-Japanese schools, the *recommendation* to establish official JSL programmes (Refer to Table 1.0) at the state level, international understanding programmes and multicultural coexistence awareness programmes, however these have yet to be realized. In the case that these recommendations are implemented they will be interesting initial yardsticks helping us determine whether or not the assimilationism approach to multicultural coexistence is being replaced by an approach which secures both equal opportunity and outcome as advocated in the liberal democratic multiculturalism discussion above.

We can also view multicultural coexistence from the lens of differentialism. In differentialism, conflict is avoided through a process which minimizes contact with ethnic minorities. It can be illustrated when we examine Japan’s recalcitrant attitudes towards immigration, quotes by ministries vis-à-vis the apparent challenge of accommodating greater populations of foreign residents and the ubiquitous myth-like rhetoric which extols the uniqueness and incompatibility of Japanese with non-Japanese cultures, languages and ethnic groups. In effect, this tendency to dichotomize Japanese and non-Japanese is as pervasive as it common

⁵² See: “Point of view: Schools for foreign children deserve support”, Nobuyuki Satou, *Asahi Shinbun* <http://www.asahi.com/english/Herald-asahi/TKY200801280049.html> (Accessed February 14th, 2008)

⁵³ Shipper, A.W. “The Political Construction of Foreign Workers in Japan”, in *Critical Asian Studies*. Vol. 34, No.1, March 2002, pp.44-68

practice.⁵⁴

A. W. Shipper illustrates the differentialism perspective in his paper on the *Political Construction of Foreign Residents*. His research shows that different ethnic groups are compartmentalized into different segments of the Japanese economy with Zainichi Koreans and Chinese being overly represented in restaurants, pachinko parlors and in self-employment, Nikkeijin (Brazilians and Peruvians) in manufacturing, and Asian workers (primarily South East Asian) in manufacturing and in “entertainment”.⁵⁵

Again, the MIAC has put forth initiatives to deal with these challenges. Proposals such as work assistance programmes through the collaboration with Hello Work, the provision to foreign residents of assistance to found their own enterprises, measures to help with unemployment and orientation programmes for housing and education, multi-lingual administrative and lifestyle information and multilingual advisory services are noteworthy examples of measures to combat the differentialism which exists. These programmes aim to put foreign residents on an equal footing with their Japanese counterparts in an attempt to break down the differentiation that occurs due to language and cultural differences.

The success of these programmes will be gauged by a broader representation of foreign residents across the Japanese labour market, possibility in the public sector in the case of permanent residents and education programmes that reflect the preexisting diversity that forms part of Japan, namely the Ainu, Ryukyu and Zainichi minority groups but also the swelling numbers of newcomers that are naturalizing and taking up permanent residency.⁵⁶ I argue that broader representation across the labour market is indicative of not only equality of opportunity but also equality of outcome which embodies the liberal democratic multiculturalism stance that advocates equal outcome as a key determinant.

Inclusion, the third approach to multi-ethnic states and multiculturalism described by Inglis

⁵⁴ Burgess, Chris. “Maintaining Identities Discourses of Homogeneity in a Rapidly Globalizing Japan” in *Electronic Journal of Contemporary Japanese Studies*.

See: <http://www.japanesestudies.org.uk/articles/Burgess.html> (Accessed August 12th, 2005)

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ For information on the minorities that exist in Japan see: Weiner, Michael.1997. *Japan's Minorities: The Illusion of Homogeneity*. United States:Routledge.; Soo im Lee, Stephen Murphy-Shigematsu & Harumi Befu.2006. *Japan's diversity dilemmas : ethnicity, citizenship, and education*. New York: Universe, Inc.; Lie, John. 2001.*Multi-ethnic Japan*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.; Oguma Eiji, 1998. *Nihonjin no Kyoukai: Okinawa. Ainu, Taiwan, Chosen Shokuminchi Shihai kara Fukki Undo made*. Tokyo: Shinyosha.

is also incorporated into the multicultural coexistence plan promulgated by the MIAC. Specifically, the MIAC attempts to promote inclusion of foreign residents by stressing Japanese language and culture acquisition in local and state led programmes, multilingual information and advisory services, broader inculcation into the Japanese labour market through support for enterprises, collaborations with local chambers of commerce and programmes to ensure that foreign residents are enrolled in social welfare programmes. These measures again are demonstrative of concrete steps to ensure that foreign residents are being given equal opportunity and access. Through their own initiatives and the tools provided, foreign residents are now able to access the same services as their Japanese counterparts and the opportunities that come with those services, programmes and so forth.

The problem with these initiatives is that although they lay the foundation for equal opportunity, they are noticeably vacuous in securing equal outcome. To elaborate, the MIAC multicultural coexistence plan does provide the tools to secure equal opportunity but it has not addressed problems that secure equal outcome. For example, will tax paying foreign residents receive the same assistance as Japanese counterparts in securing employment, founding an enterprise, housing assistance, representation in local resident associations and protection against discrimination?

Still today there are daily cases in which non-Japanese are refused entrance into schools, to rent apartments, to receive medical treatment because of language difficulties, violence, defamation and upper limits to corporate or public services positions because of nationality requirements. These upper limits to promotions and employment in the public sector are not unique to Japan as only a few nations allow non-nationals political rights and the ability to represent their host nation. Where Japan differs is with regards to their Special Permanent Residents who have only lived in Japan, may only speak Japanese and have little if any ties to their ethnic motherlands. With 2nd and 3rd generation Special Permanent Residents still being excluded from upper levels of public services and political offices we can see there is still an upper echelon to inclusionism in Japanese society that non-Japanese cannot breach. The existence of this limitation is demonstrative of the truncated equal of outcome which exists for minority groups such as Zainichi. Until laws are enacted to secure equal outcome, I openly question the extent that the current multicultural coexistence plan can foment inclusion and equal outcome, key characteristics of liberal democratic multiculturalism.

4.2 Demographic-descriptive, ideological-normative and programmatic-political dimensions of multicultural coexistence

Inglis, provides us an additional lens to look at multiculturalism in the liberal democratic context and in the case of this paper, multicultural coexistence. According to Inglis, public debates centered on multiculturalism can be distinguished into three categories: the demographic-descriptive, ideological-normative and programmatic-political.⁵⁷ For Inglis, demographic-descriptive usages of multicultural are used to refer to the existence of ethnically or racially diverse segments in the population of state. This kind of discourse represents a perception that such differences have some social significance-primarily because of perceived cultural differences though these are frequently associated with forms of structural differentiation.

Programmatic-political usages of multiculturalism on the other hand refer to specific types of programmes and policy initiatives designed to respond to and manage ethnic diversity.⁵⁸ In short, these embody the arguments presented above related to equal opportunity and or equal outcome in that they are specific initiatives to mitigate challenges included minority groups in mainstream society without marginalizing them.

Lastly, the ideological-normative usage of multiculturalism is that which generates the greatest level of debate since it constitutes a slogan and model for political action based on sociological theorizing and ethical-philosophical consideration about the place of those with distinct cultural identities in contemporary society.⁵⁹ This place in society refers to how minority groups, cultural, religious or otherwise integrate into mainstream society and are able to maintain the practice of their mother cultures without violating the judicial code or being treated differently according to the law.

From the demographic-descriptive viewpoint, multicultural coexistence does pay homage to the existing diversity that can be found in Japanese society. In the case of the MIAC report and recommendations, minority groups such as Ainu, Ryukyu people and Zainichi Koreans are not expressly mentioned, where the report does concentrate its efforts is on the newcomers who began washing up upon the Japanese shores in the 1980s to present and

⁵⁷ Inglis, Christine.1996. *“Multiculturalism: A Policy Response to Diversity” Development and the Differentiation of Growth Patterns. History and Observation of Social “transformations” (HOST) Network*, MOST/ Statistical Publishing House, Vietnam, pp. 16-18.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

those that will come in the future.⁶⁰ There is recognition from the MIAC that cultural and linguistic differences which exist between foreign residents and Japanese residents is unintentionally marginalising foreign residents in the areas of education, the ability to receive administrative services, in the area of housing, and emergency care.

The first two pillars of the Multicultural Coexistence Plan aims to overcome some of this structural differentiation through communication and lifestyle assistance initiatives as outline in Table 1.0. These initiatives will have the effect of promoting equal opportunity if they are professionally organised, widespread, easily accessible and most crucially, if foreign residents embrace these measures to substantially improve their ability to negotiate through life while living in Japan.

Japan's interpretation of multicultural coexistence cannot be completely explained using the common referents of "multiculturalism"; namely public debates which fall into three categories; demographic-descriptive, programmatic-political or ideological-normative.

First, in terms of the demographic-descriptive debate, the salient feature of this category is the recognition of ethnic or racially diverse segments of the population. In Japan's case, a vacuum exists when it comes to discussing ethnicity or racial diversity. This can be illustrated in several examples. First, the National Census conducted every five years does not ask questions with regards to ethnic or racial background. Naturalised citizens are not quantified in the census unintentionally contributing to the vacuum in the tabulation of data which recognizes ethnic and racial diversity among Japanese nationals.

Second, the same census does not recognize indigenous peoples such as the Ainu and Ryukyu ethnicity as a population that exists within Japan that are deemed ethnic or racial minorities.

Third and more widely spread is the ubiquitous image of Japan as an ethnically and culturally homogeneous society.⁶¹ For example the Basic Plan for Immigration Control (2nd edition) published by the Ministry of Justice in 2000 also illustrates Japan's concerns with the influx of foreigners and their impact on the Japanese society.

If you trace back the history of Japanese society and give thought to

⁶⁰ Kibe, Takashi. "Differentiated Citizenship and Ethnocultural Groups: A Japanese Case" in *Citizenship Studies*, Vol.10, No.4, 413-439, September 2006

⁶¹ Quote from the Ministry of Justice's The Basic Plan for Immigration Control (The 2nd edition) I Introduction -- Social changes and immigration control
<http://www.moj.go.jp/ENGLISH/information/bpic2nd-01.html> (Accessed June 15th, 2006)

the Japanese people's perception of society, culture and their sensitivity, it would not be realistic to suddenly introduce a large number of foreign labor. Rather, it is necessary for Japan to aim at maintaining the vitality of the socio-economy and enhancing tangible and intangible affluence of social life by accepting foreigners in a way that would cause little friction with society. We should solve the problems step by step; the scope of acceptance (In which fields do we like to accept foreigners?), the conditions (What experience or background should foreigners have in order for Japanese people to live together with them in harmony?), and the treatment (What social-life environment can we offer to the foreigners once they are accepted?)

On the other hand, ethnic diversity is recognized when Japan views its foreigner population, especially the categorization of foreigners into *Zainichi Kankokujin*.

Clearly, Japanese multicultural coexistence does not encompass the first category of multiculturalism in that it does not recognize ethnic or racial diversity. It also implies that without the recognition of ethnic and racial diversity, even amongst its own nationals that structural impediments may exist which do not take into account diversity amongst Japanese.

In the case of programmatic-political debates around multiculturalism, here again we see multicultural coexistence manifests itself into two different ways. On the one hand, programmes are being instituted at the local government level in various municipalities across Japan which contributes to more open diversity and recognition of this diversity by sponsors of these events but also by participants. Mutual understanding programmes, ethnic festivals, ethnic classes, language classes, annual parades and so forth are emblematic of initiatives associated with these objectives. These cultural and ethnic initiatives underpin the types of activities that are being proposed and implemented by local governments to mitigate and alleviate some of the real and perceived inter-ethnic and inter-cultural friction that exists.

From this standpoint, these activities embody the multiculturalism programmatic-political discourse that Inglis asserts by attempting to stave off both intercultural and interethnic friction through cultural exchange programmes intended to promote mutual cultural understanding, language exchanges, community spirit and dialogue.

On the other hand, the programmes implemented by local governments are in most cases patch-work, make-shift programmes that are staffed with amateur teachers, event managers,

monolingual and mono-cultural representatives that do not have the education, experience or background to successfully manage ethnic and racial diversity.

For example, Keiko Yamanaka, specialist in transnational migration and social transformation in Japan of the University of California describes the “prevailing neglect” on the part of the national government and many industries that depend heavily on immigrant labour. More specifically, Yamanaka makes the case that it is not the local government or national government that creates and implements programmes to manage ethnic and racial diversity, rather local citizens, NPOs and women who are the primary care giver and supplementary education.⁶² Staffed with women who have lived abroad, raised children abroad, these selfless women according to Yamanaka’s unstructured discussions expressed dismay and inadequacy with regards to filling the gap created by the neglect government and needs of immigrant children.⁶³

In a similar vein, the absence of programmes instituted by ministries such as the Ministry of Education, Sports, Culture, Science and Technology (MEXT), in particular officially sponsored Japanese as a second language programme reinforce the notion Japan’s multicultural coexistence lacks a programmatic-political dimension that seriously meets the needs of foreign residents of all categories.⁶⁴ The absence of specific programmes like a JSL programme which is designed to ensure that foreign residents can have equal opportunity is indicative of a lack of concrete steps being taking to secure at minimum, equal opportunity. Without advanced Japanese language skills, foreigners and their progeny are at a distinct disadvantage in terms of finding work, entering high education institutes and accessing services provide through the local government office. Based on this discrepancy in education and the lack of unwavering support for the protection of all residents, it seems that at the programmatic-political level of multiculturalism policy in a liberal democratic society, the current plan does not completely

62 Yamanaka, Keiko. “Immigrant Incorporation and Women’s Community Activities in Japan: Local NGOs and Public Education for Immigrant Children” in *Local Citizenship in Recent Countries of Immigration: Japan in Comparative Perspective*. Takeyuki Tsuda (ed.). United States of America: Lexington Books. Pp.97-119.

63 Ibid. pp.113

64 In many municipalities a body of volunteers supplement local government International Exchange Sections’ International Exchange activities which include volunteer Japanese language classes, municipally sponsored Japanese conversation class and similarly geared classes. The Japanese language classes rarely are geared for advanced language acquisition necessary for upward mobility in Japanese society. Although similar to American volunteer language classes, this approach is in stark contrast to Canadian programmes that are public programmes supported by the Multiculturalism Act and the Constitution. See: Kymlicka, Will. “Immigration, Citizenship, Multiculturalism: Exploring the Links. *The Political Quarterly* Publishing Company Co. Ltd. 2003. 195-208

secure equality of opportunity and outcome.

Examining the ideological-normative dimension of multicultural coexistence in Japan as represented by the MIAC's Multicultural Coexistence Plan, it is evident that it does not attempt to engage in a dialogue as to the appropriate place for minorities in Japanese society. In fact, the plan does not discuss foreign residents in terms of forming a minority which exists in Japan; rather it inserts foreigners all into one category and consequently marginalises all their identities and cultures.

This lack of recognition of diversity in mainstream Japanese society, and the absence of initiatives in the MIAC's Multicultural Coexistence Plan to advance the rights of non-Japanese precipitates a situation in which foreigners have the choice between exclusion or assimilation.⁶⁵ In the case that they decide to retain their mother culture and language they remain excluded from Japanese society because of the lack of recognition of diversity. On the other hand, if foreign residents make the choice of adopting a Japanese persona, they are assimilated into Japanese society.

At the ideological-normative level, for both of the above cases the policies and initiatives advocated by the MIAC's Multicultural Coexistence Plan do not encourage equality of opportunity or equality of outcome. In contrast, the vacuum in diversity related initiatives that secure the rights of foreigners to maintain their mother culture and language, while at the same time enjoy the rights and responsibilities of their fellow Japanese residents leave us to the conclusion that multicultural coexistence is not emblematic of liberal democratic multiculturalism principles.

V. Conclusion

This paper began by introducing the demographic and associated pressures that have compelled Japan to adopt a multicultural coexistence plan. It then outlined the major components of the MIAC's Multicultural Coexistence Plan which was followed by a discussion of the debate which exists vis-à-vis liberal democratic multiculturalism. As a result of this discussion, I maintain that liberal democratic multiculturalism is a sensitive blending of ensuring equal opportunity and equal outcome for all residents, based on this conclusion the final section of this paper critiqued multicultural coexistence through the prism of liberal democratic multiculturalism.

⁶⁵ Chapman, David. "Discourses of Multicultural Coexistence (Tabunka Kyousei) and the "old-comer" Koreans of Japan", *Asian Ethnicity*, Vol.7, No.1, February 2006, pp. 91-102

Critiquing multicultural coexistence using liberal democratic multiculturalism as a barometer demonstrated that multicultural coexistence as currently conceived is not emblematic of a liberal democratic multicultural society. The reasons are several-fold. First, Japan is officially still not a country of immigration and subsequently, the multicultural coexistence plan put forth by the MIAC does not inculcate immigration related objectives into its grander scheme. It does not advocate immigration or naturalisation to Japan. It also does not recognize that Japan is becoming increasingly and inevitably more diverse in terms of ethnicity, religiosity, racially, linguistically and culturally. Until there is open and widespread recognition of the current and growing diversity in Japan it will be difficult to implement equal opportunity and outcome stylized multicultural coexistence initiatives.

Second, since the multicultural coexistence plan was primarily designed with denizens, metics and newcomers in mind, most of its initiatives concentrate on social integration, especially on bridging the linguistic and cultural gap that the Ministry deems to be the most basic component to successful and frictionless integration.

Third, equal opportunity and outcome are not key components of the multicultural coexistence plan because a large number of foreigners who currently live in Japan do not hold permanent residents or are Special Permanent residents. This is also an important consideration as to why equal opportunity and out come have been unsuccessful graphed onto the current multicultural coexistence plan. More specifically, only permanent residents, Special permanent residents and Nikkei's have complete freedom as to choosing their place of employment. The rest have sponsored visas, meaning that they have much less choice in where they work and consequently realizing equal opportunity and outcome. To overcome this inflexibility, the MIAC will have to work in concert with the Ministry of Justice to develop more flexibility visa arrangements.

Fourth, as stressed throughout this paper, most of the initiatives suggested by the MIAC are not officially organised, standarised long-term integration measures. Most in practice are ad-hoc, amateur led initiatives which do provide support, but not the kind that allows beneficiaries to reach the same levels as their Japanese counterparts. Hence, continued discrepancies in the areas of equal opportunity and outcome when comparing foreign residents, naturalised Japanese and Japanese.

Kymlicka describes "national citizenship" as becoming increasing obsolete and hence he

advocates the development of a new way of assigning rights and responsibilities, perhaps based on international law and human right norms that does not presuppose that immigrants will or should become “national citizens”.⁶⁶ Perhaps his suggestion should be heeded by the MIAC in a manner in which it proposes more courageous steps to not only mitigate the problems associated with the integration of foreigners in the short run, but in advocating a multicultural coexistence plan that mirrors the strengths of liberal democratic multiculturalism; namely a sensitive balance between equal opportunity and equal outcome for all residents that has the affect of mobilising all residents of Japan for the economic and social benefit of Japan.

By borrowing some of the successful strategies that have served traditional countries of immigration such as Australia, Canada and the United States such as making naturalisation procedures more transparent and less assimilatory, creating public infrastructure such as JSL programmes that help foreign residents meet language and cultural requirements, and equal access to civil rights (freedom of speech and association), social benefits (such as public health care and unemployment insurance) and the labour market (except for a few civil service positions), as well as full protection of strong anti-discrimination laws regarding housing and employment, foreign residents may “gain the psychological and legal security that comes with citizenship, they will be more likely to put down roots, to contribute to local community initiatives, to care about how well their children are integrating, to invest in the linguistic skills and social capital needed to prosper, and more generally to develop stronger feelings of Japanese identity and loyalty.”⁶⁷

66 Kymlicka, Will. “Immigration, Citizenship, Multiculturalism: Exploring the Links. *The Political Quarterly* Publishing Company Co. Ltd. 2003. 195-208

⁶⁷ Ibid.