Identity and Pluralism:
Ethnicity, Religion and Values

Göran Collste (ed.)

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Content

Introduction

This publication contains presentations from the workshop "Identity and Pluralism" held at Linköping University in Sweden in June 2008. The workshop was organised as a part of the multidisciplinary research project *Possibilities of Religious Pluralism*. The project is carried out in cooperation between researchers at Linköping University (LiU) in Sweden and Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) and is funded by SIDA (Swedish International Development Agency). It is coordinated by Centre for Applied Ethics, LiU and CPTAG (CSR & Philanthropy Transdisciplinary Action Group) USM. Its objective is to study ethnic and religious pluralism – with a special focus on Malaysia - from the point of view of religious studies, ethics, anthropology and sociology. Questions addressed are the role of religion as a factor for identity formation, value differences and the possibility of consensus, how religious and ethnic groups can interrelate in different ways, legal implications of religious and ethnic pluralism and the impact of pluralism on higher education.

In this publication the reader will find articles reporting on empirical studies of pluralism in Malaysian working life and education. The first article by Reevany Bustami, Ellisha Nasruddin and Sarmila Md Sum offers a critique of the 'diversity and inclusion' discussions in the present CSR discourse. In doing so, it seeks to expand the parameters of diversity to include the broader community as well as the supply chain networks within which companies exist. It also examines the issues of diversity and pluralism within the context of multi religious and multi ethnic Malaysian society as well as the continuing debates of affirmative action originated from Malaysia's New Economic Policy (NEP).

In their essay on pluralism in Malaysian higher education Ellisha Nasruddin, Reevany Bustami and Ng Sen Fa discuss: 1) key future trends/alternatives within higher education and their cross-impacts; 2) how these trends/alternatives may create undesirable or desirable impact on ethnic pluralism; and 3) roadmap(s) for transformation within higher education vis-a-vis ethnic pluralism.

What is the role of Christian churches in Malaysia? Göran Wiking discusses the isolationist characteristics inherent in some Malaysian churches and denominations. Secondly, a brief analysis of the phenomenon is attempted: is this a genuine or just a perceived impediment to national integration? Are there in fact indicators to the contrary, whereby a certain degree of ethnic isolation can serve to strengthen identity and foster more wholesome members of the society at large?

Göran Collste discusses one aspect of Malaysian political pluralism; the policy of affirmative action. Affirmative action is favouring Malays and to be Muslim is one of the requirements for being beneficiary of affirmative action. He points at some problems for the policy of affirmative action in a time with increased religious tensions and an increased emphasis on religious affiliation as identity marker.

What are the conditions for a real dialogue between members of different ethnic and religious groups? Peter Gan argues that openness to transformation by the other is not strictly speaking an ethic of reducing the other to the self. Rather, it is an orientation that is predicated upon a symmetric self-other relation. In exploring this form of openness, the author attempts to unravel the intricacies embedded within the dialogic process which permeates interethnic, particularly interreligious relations.

The concept "secular state" is nowadays often used in both everyday discourse and scholarly debate. Often it comes with normative connotations; that the democratic state *should* be secular. However, the exact meaning of the concept is not clear. In his essay Marcus Agnafors examines different meanings of the concept "secular state". He also discusses some arguments commonly presented in support of the idea that the state should, in some sense, be secular.

Finally, Anne-Christine Hornborg's essay deals with the struggle for identity by an Indian tribe in Canada. She discusses the impact of the so called residential school on contemporary Mi'kmaq life worlds and identities, drawing on interviews from fieldworks conducted in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia.

Together, the essays present empirical insights and theoretical perspectives on crucial issues related to identity and pluralism in today's world.

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Corporate Social Responsibility and Ethnic Diversity in Malaysia

Reevany Bustami, Ellisha Nasruddin, Sarmila Md Sum

Introduction

During the past decade, globally, companies have been encouraged to not only demonstrate its profitability performance but also its societal responsibility. Since late 1990s, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has gained increasing attention not only in the business community and the public sphere, but also in politics. A growing number of institutions and organizations engaged in the field has emerged, a large number of management systems, principles, standards and guidelines have been developed and a growing number of companies are adopting CSR policies and practices (Moller & Erdal 2003).

CSR is referred by World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD:1999) as continuing commitment by business to behave ethically and contribute to economic development while improving the quality of life of the workforce and their families as well as of the local community and society at large. According to WBCSD's research, today, CSR priority issues are human rights, employee rights, environmental protection, supplier relation, and community involvement. These issues reflect the critical need for businesses to manage and lead their relationships with varied stakeholders appropriately, balancing both profitability and social performance.

In Malaysia, the Bursa Malaysia (formerly known as Kuala Lumpur Stock Exchange (KLSE)), which serves as regulator of Public Listed Corporations (PLCs), has made a mark influencing the PLCs with their

CSR commitments. In September 2006, Bursa Malaysia launched the CSR Framework which serves as a guideline for PLCs in addressing their CSR activities. The framework consists of four main focal areas: the Environment, the Workplace, the Community, and the Marketplace (Bursa Malaysia 2006). Companies are encouraged to adopt the CSR framework according to their business contexts (with no order of priority on the focal areas). In doing so, PLCs are reminded that even though the elements of good CSR can be applied globally, CSR must be viewed within the context of the community and environment in which corporations operate (Treasury 2006).

In determining the status of CSR practices in Malaysia, CSR Asia was commissioned by Bursa Malaysia in 2007 to conduct a survey on CSR practices by Malaysian PLCs, in line with international Standard of CSR and Bursa Malaysia CSR framework. The survey found that only 32.5% of the PLCs were either in the above average, good and leading categories whereas the other two-thirds of PLCs was either average (27.5%), below average (28.5%) or poor (11.5%). Only 4.7% was in the leading categories with 67% of them being multinational companies. The result also showed that out of four focal areas of responsibilities, the two areas that needed special attention were the Environment and the Workplace components.

The environmental issues obtained the lowest score in the survey which indicated that majority of PLCs in Malaysia failed to recognize the environment as a business concern. As for the Workplace issues, relatively high scores for matters related to health and safety, staff development processes, and provision of employee welfare were obtained but unfortunately not on diversification in the workplace. The survey revealed the under representation of gender and ethnicity in the management of majority PLCs. Female workforce was underrepresented at the management level which indicated that women still experienced the barrier when entering and progressing in workplace. As to the matter of employment trends per ethnicity and biases at the management level, the responses showed people of Chinese ethnicity were well represented at management level whereas people of Malay and Indian ethnicity were less represented (Bursa Malaysia 2007:10). This particular survey highlighted that the promotion of ethnic diversity in

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workplace is a continuing issue that needs to be addressed in the CSR initiatives of PLCs in Malaysia.

Corporate Social Responsibility

According to Steiner (1977: 320) at any one time, in any society there is a set of generally accepted relationships, obligations and duties between the major institution and the people. Philosophers and political theorist have called this set of common understanding the social contract. However, throughout the industrialized nation in the world particularly in certain countries like United States of America, provision which affect business in relation to social contract are being securitized and are being rewritten. However, today, arising from new attitudes of society towards business institutions, a major part of social contract between the two entities is being referred to as business social responsibility.

Steiner suggests that business responsibility may be considered from three points of view: conceptual, internal vs. external and impact on profit. These views are closely interrelated but not mutually exclusive. Conceptually, business responsibilities may refer to the action taken for reason beyond economic or technical interest. In a broader context it refers to obligation by companies to pursue policies and decisions that are desirable to the objectives and values of society. Looking from another view, business responsibility can also be classified into internal responsibility that refers to efforts in assuring due process, justice, equality and morality in employee selection and those that relate to improving worker environment. In another classification, business responsibility may also refer to external responsibility such as action taken by businesses to hire hard core unemployed, improved balance of payment, ease racial tension, and stimulate minority entrepreneurship. As in relation to impact on profit, business responsibility may refer to expenses or cost undertaken by businesses that have diffuse and unclear impact on profit such as increasing scholarship to children or employees, using non-hazardous machine and other actions which would be justifiable to refer it as business integrity, acting ethically or being good corporate citizen (Steiner 1977:320).

These traditional views of business social responsibility have evolved through out the years and currently being addressed as Corporate Social Responsibility, with more advanced justification by its proponents. Porter & Kramer (2006) discusses in Harvard Business Review, Strategy and Society, the Link Between Competitive Advantage and CSR four arguments of justification which can be identified as moral obligation, sustainability, license to operate and reputation (Table 1).

Table 1: Four Prevailing Justifications for CSR

Justification	Arguments for it
Moral Obligation	-Companies have a duty to be a good citizen and "to do the right thing". -*Achieve commercial success in ways that honor ethical values, respect people, communities and natural environment* (the goal of Business for Social Responsibility-BSR)
Sustainability	-Company need to emphasize on environment and community stewardship -*Meeting the need of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs* (definition by Gro Harlem Brundtland used by WBCSD)
License to operate	-Every company needs tacit or explicit permission from governments, communities and numerous other stakeholders to do business.
Reputation	CSR initiatives will improve company's image, brand, enliven morale and even raise value of its stock

Source: Porter and Kramer (2006)

Corporate executives have also given a handful of reasons in justifying why they are engaging with CSR. Among those are: CSR will help company to differentiate themselves from their competitors and also to their current and potential customers. It is also believed to help in encouraging loyalty and goodwill among employees. Besides, CSR is also known as an instrument to attract potential investors as investors believe that corporations beyond compliance behavior will be rewarded with above average returns in the market. Most companies realized that, Social Responsibility Investing (SRI) which part of CSR is growing nowadays. Adding to the argument, CSR is also seen to be contri-

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buting to good neighborhood which eventually expected to promote community goodwill. Last but not least, CSR is perceived to be able to improve the corporation relationship with regulators as companies with good CSR are those that fulfill all requirements imposed by the regulations and are in fact seen as committing beyond those regulations (Portney, 2008).

The arguments on the importance and justifications of social responsibility of business and corporation show that in undertaking this concept, companies are addressing the needs of shareholders, employees, and customers, and accept in practice, that CSR is a baseline moral obligation of businesses today (Tuleja 1985:93) However, Tujela further suggests that as society increasingly wants the private sectors to address its unmet needs, they also need to realize the private sector has always needed a healthy, active society in which to perform its economic function (Tuleja 1985:131)

In lieu of this, Porter and Kramer (2006:83) suggest that companies need to incorporate shared value principle in planning their CSR actions and initiatives. In pursuing *shared value* principle, the choice of action must benefit both sides. If either a business or a society pursues policies that benefit its interests at the expense of other, it will find itself on dangerous path. This means, a temporary gain to one will undermine the long term prosperity of both.

Porter and Kramer (2006:84) further elaborate that interdependence between a company and society takes two forms. First, the company impinges upon society through its operation in the normal courses of business which is known as *inside-out-linkages*. However, as companies are increasingly aware of the social impact of their activities, effort would be undertaken to ensure these impact could be more subtle. On the other hand, not only does corporate activity affect society, external social condition also influence corporation for better and for worse. These are known as *outside-in-linkages*. In this context, social conditions form a key part of corporations' well being. Hence, companies need also to ensure the social conditions are conducive for their business operations.

Corporate Social Responsibility and Ethnic Diversity in Malaysia

Malaysia is an ethnically heterogeneous country which had the world's tenth-fastest growing economy in 1970-90 (Snodgrass 1995). With a population of about 25 million comprising three major ethnic groups, Malaysia is a plural society. Today, the Malays and other indigenous groups, together termed *Bumiputra* (sons of the soil, accounts for 67.3% of the total population, the Chinese make up about a quarter and the Indians 7.2% of the total population (Zainal Aznam Yusof 2005).

Inequality between the major ethnic groups has been a central development issues in Malaysia. Having attempted to reduce ethnic economic inequality, the New Economic Policy (NEP) was undertaken in 1971 as an affirmative action program for the country. Its target is for poverty alleviation and the ethnic restructuring of employment and business ownership and controlled that were set to be achieved in the year 1990 (Snodgrass 1995). Its broad strategy for reducing inequalities was to be through growth and not disruptive redistribution. The programme then was succeeded in 1991 by the National Development Policy (NDP) and in 2001 by the National Vision Policy (NVP). Both the NDP and NVP incorporated the two-pronged objectives outlined in the original NEP to eradicating poverty irrespective of race or ethnicity and restructuring the society to correct the identification of race and ethnicity with economic function (Zainal Aznam Yusof 2005). These are the effort undertaken to ensure the May 1969 racial clashes would not be repeated and the development of the country would be sustained.

However, this effort cannot be solely attributed to the government but should also be undertaken as mutually by other institutions in the country including the corporations. For this reason, diversity management by the corporations is considered very much appropriate as according to Gilbert et.al (1991:61), diversity management is a voluntary organization program designed to create greater inclusion of all individuals into informal social network and formal company program (in Risberg & Sodernberg 2008:427). In comparison to affirmative actions which are based on legislation, diversity management is primarily a company initiative (Thomas 1990, Loebieki & Jack 2000 in Risberg & Sodernberg 2008:427). Diversity perspectives refer to the basic precepts that

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the workplace environment should be inclusive to all; that a wholesale change of culture is required to achieve this and that concrete, imaginative and systematic innovation is necessary to reach this goal (Barmes and Ashtiany 2003:275).

Diversity management initiatives are very much aligned with the principles of CSR and companies are in an advantageous position where resources are concerned, to assist government in reducing further ethnic economic inequality that exists in the country.

Furthermore, according to Lookwood (2005:3), the reasons to tie workplace diversity to organizational strategies goals and objectives should be an incentive for Malaysian PLCs to focus on ethnic diversity as part of their CSR programmes. These reasons are: to enhance adaptability and flexibility in a rapid changing marketplace, to attract and retain the best talent, to reduce cost associated with turnover, absenteeism and low productivity, to increase return on investment (ROI) from various initiatives, policies and practices, to gain and keeping new market share with an expended diverse customer base and, to increase sales and profit.

CSR Asia report points to the risk of having an overly homogeneous workforce. As such, a company, led by a board and management team comprising very similar people portrays a picture of similar skill sets life experiences, thereby lacking the different perspectives instrumental in guiding a company in the long term.

Conversely, encouraging diverse workforce, management teams and boards would ensure companies' access to different skill sets that are gained from employees' varying life experiences, which ultimately could help in innovating new products and services and responding to different customers and community needs (Bursa Malaysia 2007:16).

As 1Malaysia, a concept which impinges on the need for Malaysians to continuously promote harmony amongst all the ethnic races, more and more, becomes a key pressure force in Malaysians' consciousness, PLCs which do not make an effort to address the issues of diversity would eventually lose out to those PLCs which do so.

Butt (1994) sees that in pursuing diversity company is providing services to the community. It is argued that diverse workforce will create sense of trust and understanding between community and service provider (in Johns and Jordan 2006). Hence, increased diversity would ultimately bring innovation and will position the business in closer touch with its wider market (Darby 2003). Where Malaysia's ethnic diversity within workplace environment is concerned, social conditions within the localized business environment would require companies to be sensitive towards all issues such as poverty, poor education, health, and other recurring social problems related to unemployment amongst particular ethnic groups. There is a need for companies to integrate a formal ethnic diversity policy within its corporate strategy and CSR programmes. When materialized, *shared value* principle could be observed: harmonious integration between societal needs and business needs.

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Trends and Challenges in Sustainable Pluralism within Malaysia's Higher Education: a Foresight Perspective in Social-Organizational Transformation

Ellisha Nasruddin, Reevany Bustami, Ng Sen Fa

Introduction

"Ten men can be at a table eating, you know, dining, and I can come and sit down where they're dining. They're dining; I've got a plate in front of me, but nothing is on it. Because all of us are sitting at the same table, are all us are diners? I'm not a diner until you let me dine. Then I become a diner. Just being at the table with others who are dining doesn't make me a diner" – Malcolm X's speech in 1965 as quoted in Safire (1992).

Within the higher education system worldwide, efforts have been made towards promoting awareness in, and proactiveness towards inculcating sustainable development as part and parcel of curriculum and training[1]. Nevertheless, the scope within which sustainable development is discussed and researched is still highly centred towards the environment and consumption issues. Social concerns are normally interpreted within a narrow scope of community well-being needs. Pluralism and re-

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[1] It is through UNESCO's efforts in the Education for Sustainable Development (EfSD) that universities play a role in developing curriculum that is oriented towards training, research and teaching on sustainable development issues which interface with the surrounding communities in multidiscipline, which ultimately is aimed at nurturing civic leaders, amongst university students. (Hopkins, 2005).

lated discussions on cultural preservation and ethnic diversity while discussed in some limited manner, are seldom seen as part of the sustainability paradigm.

This article discusses the challenges for sustainable pluralism within Malaysia's higher education (specifically, the public universities) with a "foresight" perspective. The article specifically will highlight the emerging trends that would have an impact upon the future of Malaysia's higher education, and the implication on sustainable pluralism in Malaysia's future higher education.

The application of foresight in understanding pluralism requires an important discussion here. Within the foresight perspective, the past is history, the future of higher education is yet unknown, only the present is valid. Be that as it may, although predicting the future accurately is not within human's capability, "fore-sighting" provides one with a prudent evaluation of the current paradigms of knowledge on higher education, based on appropriate futures tools (Wagar, 1992: xvii). Ultimately, the aim is to provide a guided direction in constructing desired organizational change for sustainable pluralism within Malaysia's higher education

In short, foresight aligns current day-to-day living with the preferred future, permitting the possibility of a social and organizational transformation angle to be infused. Foresight essentially allows an engagement in the discussion of pluralism to be contextualized from a standpoint of allowing a social capacity to mould the future (Inayatullah & Gidley, 2000).

As pluralism is discussed within the foresight lenses, futures studies methodology is being applied (Hicks & Slaughter, 1998). Such being the case, we will lay out some critical trends within higher education[2] (with respect to public universities which are government-funded). Fol-

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[2] In foresight, studying trends is considered to be important as it allows one to understand the emerging issues surrounding certain variable(s) in question, in this case, pluralism. The trends discussed here is drawn upon and further examined from previous research on developing scenario alternatives for the Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) (Universiti Sains Malaysia, 2007).

lowing that, a social-organisational transformational framework which is based on a futures method—causal-layered analysis (Universiti Sains Malaysia, 2007; Inayatullah, 2005) will be discussed.

Trends influencing future direction of Malaysia's higher education

<u>Public universities highly networked with industries</u>

Increasingly, much discussion has turned towards responding to the issue of poor linkages between universities and industries. The challenge put forth to the universities is to find outlets for commercialization of research outputs. Universities which focus on expertise that complement and strengthen the government's economic agenda cultivate certain niches and build strong links with the state government within which it is located. Growth of regional development corridors (eastern, north, east Malaysia, south, central regions) and new universities within each state, allows incentives for new industries to grow and many possibilities for university-industry linkages to develop. Research laboratories sponsored by particular industries are part and parcel of the growth of such linkages. More and more, as activities between universities large businesses with high stakes in R&D will dominate the partnerships with the universities. Research areas such as biotechnology, brain science, agriculture and tourism are new specializations which have garnered much attention. New niche areas for research clusters are to be identified in order to strengthen our positions as leader in selected areas. Ground-breaking inventions and findings are firmly grounded on extensive teamwork and concentrated, incessant effort. Disorganized, piece-meal work will not lead to success.

In the midst of this university-industry linkages, public universities are pressured to continuously meet the government's need to provide employment for Malaysian graduates; thus, university-industry cooperation ranges from collaboration in Human Resources Development (HRD) to development of academic curriculum which are heavily skewed towards skill-based rather than theory-based, student-industrial training and graduate placement within industries. Such cooperation will further break down glaring divide between private and public sec-

tors, which is often assumed or interpreted to mark the Bumiputra versus Non-Bumiputra gap.

Autonomous public universities

The demand for competitive and world class university in Malaysia has brought about the devolution of political affiliation between public universities and the (state) government. Such administration autonomy is expected to bring about a corresponding openness and academic autonomy that lay the solid ground work for academic independence, a prerequisite to provide conducive environment to nurture the best brains and critical thinkers.

Cutting ties with the government would require public universities to be either competition-conscious or collaborate better amongst themselves; thus, either fast -reacting or fast-responding to the ever-evolving societal needs. Distancing the public universities from political influence means the universities now must play by the rules of market mechanism and sourcing from the private sectors for both funding and administrative governance.

The darker side of capitalism can creep in as profit and marketing effort reign supreme over other sustainable issues or ethics rationality. University becomes diploma mills that generate graduates with the least cost and maximum return when profit-making becomes the basis of decision amongst the available choices open to the higher echelons of leadership. Possibilities for the much-criticized 'McDonalization' of education practiced within the private educational institutions to be simulated within the public institutions will be on the increase. The situation impacts negatively on diversity management, for example: disproportional students from certain ethnics admitted to certain colleges (both private and public). They are likely to come from already deprived backgrounds, receiving inferior quality tertiary education that do not equip them with competitive edge, practically defeating efforts to address social inequality.

However, the benefits of public universities such as established history, the advantage of a nurturing culture, emphasis in academic and thinking skills could also flourish without constraints from government's

bureaucratic rules and regulations, consistent with pluralistic paradigm. Rebranding and repositioning the university with its unique cultures and values would be timely.

Separation of research from teaching in universities

Most of Malaysian universities are generally recognized as teaching universities. However, recent developments have shown that there is a pressing task to juggle on top of teaching quality, as the society places high hopes on the university to produce high quality research. Issues such as citation index, teacher-students ratio, internationalization, research funding and peer review score that were once neglected are being brought to the academicians' attention now.

Following a series of worldwide university ranking such as The Times Higher Education (THE) Ranking and Shanghai JiaoTong University Ranking, universities are subsequently engaged in accelerated competition frenzy to improve their positions. In Malaysia, the relatively limited population count and resources necessitates concentration of effort and resources to promote a key university.

This effort at improving the quality of higher learning institutions has led to the creation of an APEX (Accelerated Performance for Excellence) award for a university with the foremost potential to achieve world-class quality, beginning 2008 by the government. A university with such award recognition will receive a tremendous boost of funding from the government for the purpose of spearheading its performance, in line with the top universities in the world. Ultimately, the aim is to nurture few quality top Malaysian public universities where the key performance indicators are not necessarily based on upon the rubric delineated by the West as the sole parameter to gauge a university's quality.

The status quo of public university is challenged, as the focus is shifted from teaching university to research competition. Teaching would be complementing the needs of research in key strategic areas deemed to have an impact, especially more so, as academic recognition at international sphere would pressure academics to aim for the Nobel Prize laureate. Being in the knowledge forefront becomes a key priority and

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having the research expertise in strategic research areas is fundamental. However, a coin has two sides; quality tertiary education is deemed a valuable resource for nation-building, especially in the context of re-structuring proportional racial distribution in society. Teaching and leadership should be given due recognition too on top of research quality since nurturing and transforming the minds to appreciate and recognize pluralism should be a core competence of higher education.

University with social responsibility

Increasingly, as information and knowledge become an important strategic tool as well as a form of independence, corporate and private sectors and well as political organisations are seeing the importance of providing educational assistance to the stakeholders. Alternative forms of education driven by multiple motives such as political, social-welfare, corporate needs and affirmative action will soon become commonplace. The educational centres run by political parties are meant to improve knowledge, provide vocational skills and support ethnic-based groups while corporation-initiated universities emphasize job-related skills. These alternative forms of further education marks a continuous challenge for universities to attract younger generation towards attaining pure academic training within proper university environment. Given the array of choices on offer to our younger generation, the issue of availability or attaining tertiary education qualification would eventually dissolve.

The main challenge with such educational centers is that human capital investment is not just about dissemination of knowledge and skills. Academic knowledge does not necessarily bring about self-understanding, maturity, and sense of responsibility. The inculcation of ethics, moral values, civic leadership and a passion for improving our society should be elevated to equal importance in parallel with knowledge transmission. An educational system that plays down the importance of character building will eventually face the backlash at much severe social cost later. Building and nurturing proactive younger generations as stakeholders of change, is thus of utmost importance. In the context of Malaysia, the idea of academic excellence is only attainable if talents are nurtured to understand their role as young leaders with

high moral and ethical values, who will lead business and non-business organizations.

Malaysian universities will realize more and more their distinct role in improving the societal conditions and prioritise social responsibility and sustainability studies as part and parcel of their particular core competences. The study of sustainability becomes an academic research agenda and would be included as core curriculum of every university student. The subject is oriented towards advancing knowledge to alleviate social & environmental related problems. Key issues related to pluralism in Malaysia (such as poverty, equity, religion, culture, social justice) will need to be recognized as part of the triple bottom line—economic, environment and social dimensions—agenda of the study of sustainability. Sustainability science becomes a discipline that is considered as practical since the sciences converge with the arts/humanities/social sciences For example, students would learn environmental management techniques to solve particular societal/ethnic group social plight. Hence, students are taught the vigor of sciences methodology and the critical thinking skills of arts discipline. Such transdisciplinary and knowledge convergence will ensure versatile and wholesome next generation that can learn to foster creativity and out-of-the-box solutions to a multitude of pluralism-related issues presented to them.

Challenges to transformation in higher education: enculturing sustainable pluralism

The trends above are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Rather, each focuses on particular thrusts and may be interlinked and convey common key elements. Regardless, taken together, these trends bring forth three key areas pertinent to the development of sustainable pluralism in terms of student and faculty admission, interdisciplinary cooperation, roles and functions of university (teaching, agent of transformation, research, independent entity, just to name a few) within higher education. Universities' ability to continue to be the intellectual beacon of hope that could manage and respond to issues within these areas would determine the nature and direction of sustainable pluralism within higher education.

The first area corresponds to the highly networked and research-oriented university trends: the development of indigenous-based research oriented towards building rich knowledge in regional cultures and local medicine or herbs; building databases and documentation on unique business practices of ethnic communities; fostering cultural pluralism and preservation of forgotten communities (such as Peranakan); inculcating stakeholder engagement with regards to inter-faith or inter-cultural dialogue and open discussion on ethnic conflict; managing and solving cultural stereotypes (e.g. negative perception of particular ethnic group and religious practices) that would lead to social-ethnic conflicts.

The second area is pertinent to the autonomous and social responsibility trends emerging within higher education: stakeholders within university engaging in renewed form of social reconstruction within the university environment as well as with the surrounding communities, such that open and transparent intellectual discussion on current ethnic related issues are nurtured consciously by the new generation of civic (student) leaders.

The third area is pertinent to all the trends: ensuring equitable access to education for all and alleviating economic plight of marginalized ethnic groups through choices available in further education. Ultimately, maintaining a fair ratio of student intake amongst all ethnic groups where equality of opportunity and not just equality in end-results is practised: intervention should be provided to curb the root cause such as head-start program to assist socially-deprived children of certain backgrounds. In addition, avoiding racial segregation must be an important agenda within the higher education environment.

Challenges and process of Transformation

These three key areas above highlight the need for social-organisational transformation to take place within higher education in order to ensure sustainable pluralism is not sidelined due to internal and external constraints. No doubt, numerous challenges prevail when engaging in the process of transformation; however, this article will highlight three set

of critical challenges. The first involves the shared vision itself. The second pertains to stakeholders' involvement. The third is the challenge of progressively moving forward.

Challenge 1: From lack of vision or weak vision to a principle-centered vision

The first challenge is challenge of building a vision of sustainable pluralism amidst the trends. In this challenge itself, there are many layers of complexity. The first layer is the existence of multitude of worldviews on pluralism stance and policies. The remake of a "new brand of sustainable pluralism" will meet with entrenched differing opinions, feelings, and experiences among pressure groups within society and university management as well as other stakeholders including the government and even the faculty members themselves. This particular challenge also includes other constraints such as unresolved cultural conflicts among and differing practices regarding diversity management, from either internal or external stakeholders to higher educational institutions. The other layer of complexity involves the idea of pluralism and, beyond which, sustainable pluralism. More intricately, the idea of sustainable development and respect for pluralism is based on sharing different world views and seeking common grounds out of the differences. Pluralism transcends well beyond the perspective of strategic positioning to manage challenges, as it is rooted into matters of principles and social values which bind university and society with a sustainable social-cultural as well as economic development. For these reasons, developing a shared vision is not merely a matter of pragmatic position, but a matter of principle. In essence, if well-founded ethics are not incorporated into the core philosophy of sustainable pluralism, the idea will not hold water for it needs to sustain ideological and paradigmic attacks from various fronts. The more the idea of sustainable pluralism is embedded in strong ethical foundations, the more likely it will withstand antagonistic rationalities. The core philosophy of the shared vision needs to be principle-centered. It needs to answer what kind of pluralism should be promoted in and by higher education. In other words, sustainable pluralism within higher education needs to be reimagined and ownership needs to be felt by the stakeholders within and without .

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Challenge 2: Addressing zero-sum contestations of stakeholders with differing worldviews

The second challenge is a more pragmatic one, yet no less arduous. While the challenge of building a transformational vision is being dealt with, factions of different worldviews may want to engage in "contestations" as different groups may define the ideal future of pluralism for a university differently. The question to be answered is how to continuously retain various stakeholders' engagement, while not sabotaging the principle-centered vision. This is a challenge that can take various forms. The contestation may emerge between the perspectives of wanting to benchmark western standards in academia versus that of bringing out the soul in higher education in Malaysia's own mould, which may also be drawing from some chauvinistic or extremists' positions. For example, if competitiveness continues to be the underlying criteria for a western universities' performance, then Malaysia universities must decide on whether a collective consciousness to promote localization and thus, different key performance indicators, are more appropriate for Malaysian universities. There are also advocates who argue that universities be made more relevant to the industry; hence, practical curriculum and pedagogy that make graduates more employable should take precedence over the other more 'theoretical' or 'prescriptive'. Viewed through this standpoint, pragmatism is often valued more than idealism. Yet, often agendas such as pluralism, cultural enrichment, integration and long-term sustainability may be marginalized in favor of the short-term solutions. Contestations from diverse stakeholders and pressure groups can be positive in that they open up space for debates and deliberations. However, a zero-sum conflict is usually detrimental and not sustainable. When a monopoly instead of a synthesis of worldviews emerge from these zero sum contestations, those who are sidelined may pose as future source of problems. Indeed, different sides of worldviews oftentimes, although not always, have their merits that are worthy to be incorporated into the long-term framework of transformation. In light of this, pluralism within higher education should be seen from such an inclusive perspective. This applies to all forms of pluralism or diversity, be it ethnic, religious, gender, able-bodied persons or persons with disabilities, age and class pluralism. This challenge, therefore, is a practical and political challenge in the engagement process, vision-implementation and the ongoing 'public-relation' arenas. In the course of negotiation and compromises, what is really in jeopardy is of-

ten the vision itself. For these reasons, it can prove to be even more try-ing, and potentially more damaging.

Challenge 3: Achieving Progressive Equilibrium-isation
Given the likely scenario whereby stakeholders' contestations will most certainly occur and will like in one way or another adversely af-fect the ideal vision, the so-called preferred scenario with the principle-centered vision hence will not be realized in the short-term. In such a case, the forces at work will push the process and politics in ways that will probably eventuate in a less than desirable equilibrium. Here in lies the third challenge. The challenge is whatever the state of affairs is, how can higher education ensure that the equilibrium keep on moving progressively forward towards better and better visions of sustainable pluralism. This challenge is undoubtedly not new, but an ongoing one and at times evolving. The equilibrium is achieved as the resolution of contrasting worldviews brings about a transformation as the new state of affairs. Potential conflicting views can be assumed for issues such as ethics-centered versus market-centered curriculum; or developing indi-genously-based key performance indicators (KPIs) versus externally-based 'world-class' KPIs.

'Equilibriumisation' (the process), as opposed to 'equilibrium'(a state), is coined to describe this challenge to indicate the process of transfor-mation. The challenge of a good process of progressive equilibriumisa-tion is, thus, whether there are new standards regularly introduced which will transform status quo policies and practices towards a new apex of performance. In the context of pluralism, the real question tran-scends whether Malaysia are merely achieving *ethnic* diversity in the public and private higher education. Instead, the acid test is whether Malaysia's higher educational institutions reflect the various social groups within the society, whereby there is pluralism or diversity vis-à-vis ethnicity, gender, religion, class, marital status (to be inclusive for single mothers) and physical ability (to be inclusive for persons with disability) and the likes. When such a pluralistic state is achieved, eth-nic pluralism is but a part of it.

Consequently, the implications for higher education is that its role may no longer be about education within its own boundaries but also to-wards its stakeholders, such that the ongoing sharing of knowledge and

discussions with them can lead to a shared mental understanding of the whole picture and a deep appreciation of the interconnectedness of the society's socio-ecosystem, which includes in it ethnic diversity and various forms of pluralism. The higher education environment plays a significant role in managing achieving the equilibriumisation especially when differing worldviews are part and parcel of achieving sustainable pluralism.

Conclusion

The preceding discussions have led to the conclusion that the current trends of higher education open up three key pertinent areas on pluralism that need attention so that amidst the excitement of universities directing its strategies and plans following the emerging trends, sustainable pluralism is not lost and forgotten within the university environment. The university needs to respond rather than react to pluralism issues related to the trends. For example, maintaining the balance between meritocracy and affirmative action in accordance with the objectives of a research university which demands only the best minds to be part of it, remains a critical issue. More so, the higher education institutes are the key for social transformation and reconstruction process. Redistribution of resources should be emphasized to focus on the 'bottom of the pyramid' to ensure the economically deprived social groups are not unfairly disadvantaged, while particular goals set by the trends are being met. This idea of redistributive justice should also be re-examined to foster fairness in accessibility, opportunity and equity. Hence, the three challenges relating to the development of sustainable ethnic pluralism that will come with university transformation into the future, will be an important journey for universities in Malaysia.

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Integration and Plurality: Socio-ethnic Stratification in Some Malaysian Churches

Göran Wiking, Th D

1. Scope, objective and problem formulation

This paper is an attempt at analysing the phenomenon of free charismatic churches in Malaysia. The perspective is given by the theme for the current seminar, *Identity and Pluralism*, leading to the particular angle chosen. The questions to be addressed are thus (i) whether it can be maintained that a shift from mainline (old fashioned) to free charismatic (contemporary trend) church style implies a departure from universal values by virtue of an increase in socio-ethnic stratification, and (ii) whether such a trend should be welcomed as a positive strengthening of identity or not.

There is an important difference between *free charismatic* and *mainline* in Christian parlance. Christianity's Western branch forks into Catholic and Protestant with the 16th Century European Reformation as decisive watershed. While this may be household knowledge to many, the subsequent development of Protestantism is harder to trace. Suffice it to say that a more liberal stream is represented by the many denominations with membership in the Geneva based World Council of Churches (WCC), while an often staunchly conservative and Bible oriented stream – decidedly critical of WCC – is termed Evangelical.[3] Unlike the WCC members, Evangelical churches have a strong mission

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[3] For a good and comprehensive introduction to the multitude of Christian denominations cf. David Barrett etc, *World Christian Encyclopaedia,* Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.

ferment with key concepts like *Church Planting[4]*. Two such churches make up the subject matter of this paper and define delimitations and scope. The reason for focussing on this group is its important role in middle class, suburban non-Malay communities of Malaysia today, with examples drawn from Petaling Jaya and Ipoh.[5] Mainline churches is a familiar aspect of Malaysian religious life and do not change much over time. Free charismatic congregations, on the other hand, are fairly new entrants on the scene which often enjoy swift growth – with mainline churches as one important recruitment base – thus motivating a closer investigation.

In terms of objective, this paper will seek to demonstrate that in academic theory as well as in practice, there are within the Charismatic churches occasional efforts to stave off integration, as it were, and promote socio-ethnic stratification to the benefit of the important concept of *Church Growth.[6]*

2. Current Theories on Church Growth

2.1 Donald McGavran's Seminal Work

A sub discipline to Church History is that of Mission History or Missiology. Sweden's two major universities with roots in medieval times, Lund and Uppsala, both have chairs in Missiology. Within missiology, a period of perhaps two centuries is commonly termed as the *Protestant Missionary Enterprise*, reckoned to be inaugurated with the arrival in India of William Carey in 1793.[7]

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[4] For an introduction cf. Donald A McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 1970

[5] See also Ackerman, Susan E and Lee, Raymond L E, *Heaven in transition, non-Muslim religious*
innovation and ethnic identity in Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur: Forum 1990, an acclaimed investigation of the type of churches discussed in this paper.

[6] Peter Wagner, *Your Church can Grow*, Glendale:GL Publications 1979, p. 12.

[7] David J Bosch, *Transforming mission: paradigm shifts in theology of mission*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis
Books, 1991, p 280

While uncounted sums of money as well as staggering numbers of human lives in terms of perished missionaries have been the price for this enterprise, it was only rather recently that empirical data was used towards defining a workable theory on effective mission. Ground breaking research was done by Donald McGavran.

McGavran served for 17 years as a missionary to India for the organisation *Disciples of Christ*. He was involved in educational work, leprosy relief, hospital work, famine relief, rural reconstruction, and evangelism. This gave him an opportunity to work with India's mass caste movements and he was able to focus his attention on the way these societies, tribes and castes became Christian. McGavran was concerned as to how a society which marries within its own social unit could become Christian without leaving that unit and joining another – the church. Over the years this concern was articulated and is now called the homogenous unit principle (HUP) – people *like to become Christians without crossing racial, linguistic or class barriers.* [8]

McGavran's empirical approach stirred great interest and yielded such organisations as the Institute of Church Growth at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, and the British Church Growth Association.

2.2 Impact on Mission Work

The *Pangkor Treaty* with its division of religion and state resulted in a *modus operandi* for Western missions whereby the Malays were never targeted for mission.[9] Instead, all efforts were directed towards the Indian and Chinese groups, of which the latter in particular has been receptive.[10] Religious affiliation, and the change of it, is by and large not contentious amongst the Chinese, and family cohesion does not appear to be disturbed when some individual members change religion. This is rather contrary to the Malay and Indian cultures, where cases of reli-

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[8] McGavran, D, *op.cit*. p 223

[9] Andaya, Barbara Watson and Andaya, Leonard Y., *A History of Malaya,*.London: MacMillan 1982, p 155

[10] For a good overview of Christian growth amongst the Chinese in South East Asia, cf Green, Michael, *Asian Tigers for Christ, the Dynamic Growth of the Church in South East Asia*, London: SPCK 2001.

gious change (conversion) typically result in a total break-down of family cohesion.[11]

Mainline churches[12] with their associated mission organisations saw their work prosper in the era inaugurated by William Carey, i.e. from the 19th Century onwards. In strongly simplified terms it can be argued that this work passed its noon time high before the close of the Second World War. The post war period saw a transition from proclamation and a zeal to win converts towards predominantly social and relief oriented work. The WCC General Assembly at Uppsala in 1968 epitomized this new orientation with its motto *The World Setting the Agenda for the Church.*[13] It is no secret that there was often a strong tension between the proponents of the *social gospel* with its critical view on "proselytization" and more conservative forces.[14] Subsequently the entire idea of spreading Christianity has all but died out in mainline circles with current concepts like inter-religious dialogue taking over an ever shrinking agenda.[15]

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[11] Paul Monash, Malay Supremacy, a historical overview of Malay political culture and an assessment of its implication for the non-Malays in Malaysia, Auckland: Maygen press 2003, p 238.

[12] Cf the WCC reference above; mainline typically refers to the major national churches in Europe, e.g. Anglican (English), Lutheran (German, Swedish), Presbyterian (Dutch, Scottish).

[13] Bosch, D, op cit pp 382 f

[14] Trying to bridge this gap was the highly influential Scottish mission bishop Lesslie Newbigin. For an interesting presentation of the mood at Uppsala in 1968 see Newbigin, Lesslie, Unfinished Agenda. An Autobiography. Geneva: WCC, 1985. Uppsala [1968] was in many ways a shattering experience. The plenary sessions were dominated by the realities of economic and racial injustice. The mood was one of anger. The well-drilled phalanx of students in the gallery ensured that the emotional temperature was kept high. It was a terrifying enunciation of the law, with all its (proper) accompaniments of threat and wrath. … How, I couldn't help wondering, could such a group be so easily brainwashed? op cit pp 231 f

The debate between the opposing camps can be followed in the International Review of Mission, e.g. July 1968 issue.

[15] Church of Sweden Mission, inaugurated in 1874, has now formally ceased to exist with a continuation in the aid and relief centred international association Action of Churches Together, ACTS. Information about this has been disseminated to members by letter; for reference cf. http://www.svenskakyrkan.se.

Naturally, the new movement with a total dedication to church growth, introduced by Donald McGavran, appeared as a reaction to the waning interest in mission in mainline circles. The mission initiative today is no longer with the mainline churches but more with the conservative *evangelical,* and also with the church in the south with Korea as the country which with all probability sends out the highest number of missionaries for global mission.[16] Mission in this context has resulted in numerous independent churches with strong socio-ethnic homogeneity. It is argued here that the HUP concept is an important reason for this departure from the universal principle of mankind's unity enshrined in all world religions in general, and certainly in the biblical evidence.[17]

In conclusion we see, then, that the *homogenous unit principle* fostered a thinking and practice resulting in socio-ethnically homogenous, or with another word isolated, churches springing up particularly in the last quarter of the 20th Century. While these churches have now matured and grown spectacularly to achieve *mega status,* it is also true that the HUP in response to internal criticism has been toned down and is not much talked about any more.

3. The Malaysian Scenario

3.1 Two Examples

The most common type of church established in the last quarter of the 20th Century onwards appears to be "free charismatic". As examples here are cited *Renewal Lutheran Church, RLC,* at Jalan 222 in Petaling Jaya,[18] and *Thaveethin Kudaram, TK,* in Buntong, Ipoh.[19] Both are of

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[16] Scholars suggest that the dichotomy between conservative churches in the South and liberal in the North may lead to a break on a similar scale as the Reformation in the 16th Century. See Philip Jenkins, *The next christendom: the coming of global Christianity*, Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.

[17] Christian theology probably draws more on the apostle Paul, with 13 letters in the Bible, than on actual utterances by Christ himself. Central to the critique of the HUP is Galatians 3.28: *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus*.

[18] http://www.oasisofcare.org

the free charismatic type, where "free" refers to a congregationalist form of church government, i.e. no association to any larger body such as a synod or diocese, and "charismatic" refers to a reliance on such things as healing and divine revelation – conspicuously absent in main-line churches.

Renewal Lutheran Church

As the name indicates, this independent mega church[20] traces its roots to the Lutheran Church of Malaysia and Singapore (LCMS) – a typical mainline denomination introduced on the Malayan scene by American missionaries from 1953 onwards.[21]

The RLC is a break-away from the LCMS, started in humble circumstances in the late 1980s by pastor Joshua Yee. It however soon enjoyed spectacular growth and within a few years allegedly came to eclipse its entire "mother denomination", the LCMS, in terms of membership. A huge industrial building on the brink of the federal highway close to the Jln 222 intersection was acquired at high cost (RM 23 million according to web page) with Sunday worship on several floors in different (Chinese) languages, children ministries, fellowships etc and the main hall filled and overflowing during the service in English medium.

The RLC is a good illustration of a conscious application of McGavran's HUP. The initial orientation of the American mission had been to set up ministries such as dispensaries and the like and to work among the poor and socially disparate groups that had been forced by the British into small fenced-in and guarded enclaves, the Chinese New

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[19] http://www.thaveethinkudaram.cjb.net/

[20] *Mega church* refers to numbers in excess of 1,000 in terms of members and/or worshippers, in stark contrast to most Christian congregations where 100 may be considered a good number. The ultimate mega church is *Yoido Full Gospel Assembly* in Seoul, South Korea, considered the world's biggest church with a regular worshipping body in excess of 100,000.

[21] Duain Vierow, *Lutheranism in Malaysia*, D Miss Thesis, Pasadena: Fuller Theological Seminary, 1976

also Lau, Warren, *A Heavenly Vision. The Story of the Lutheran Church in Malaysia and Singapore*

1952–1991. Singapore: LCMS 1993

Villages, of no more than 1,000 dwellers each. Many New Villages were virtual camps and the criticism would probably have been stronger had it not been for their effectiveness in almost stamping out the Communist threat of the 1950s.[22]

How was it possible for the RLC to grow from nil, or very few, to several thousand members in just a few years? To be sure, these thousands are not all fresh converts from other religions; some indeed come from the mother church LCMS while others come from other Christian denominations or the Roman Catholic Church where they, for various reasons, have not been comfortable or satisfied. Others again are, of course, new arrivals, i.e. persons who previously were either Taoist-Confucian or Buddhist, often of rather secularised type.

While there is a tiny sprinkling of Indians, the absolute majority are Chinese. The Chinese of Malaysia come from many different areas of China and hence do not share a common language (dialect). With the application of the HUP, RLC displays a socially strikingly cohesive group of suburban middle or upper middle class using English as their *lingua franca*. Joining the RLC as a subculture within the multifarious fabric of modern Malaysia, they not only manage to keep intact what McGavran had seen about not having to leave one's social unit, but even at times find a venue for a new de facto social unit defined primarily by ethnicity, language and profession. A new identity is born, as it were.

Thaveethin Kudaram

While RLC above is Chinese, we are here talking of a distinctly Tamil grouping. Again, we encounter a mega church with roots in a familiar mainline denomination, in this case the Anglican. Menon Manasa was an ordained priest who found it difficult to minister within the confines

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[22] According to the *Domino Theory* South East Asian nations would become communist one after the other. With several terrorist attacks against the British in the post war period, the British launched *Briggs' Plan* to eliminate communism. It entailed the setting up of some 500 *Chinese New Villages,* CNV, with around 1,000 dwellers each. The villages were fenced in and guarded with strict curfew enforced. See e.g. Andaya & Andaya, *op cit* p 259

and discipline of the Anglican church of West Malaysia.[23] A swift development followed the general pattern, as described above, with humble beginnings in rented premises and the eventual purchase of a huge building – in this case an awe inspiring sports complex in the Indian dominated Ipoh suburb Buntong.[24]

For natural reasons, people high and low and of various ethnicity have over the course of more than a century come to make up the membership of the Anglican church. A continuing challenge has been which language should be used. English has remained the official medium while there are individual congregations using various Chinese dialects or Indian (Tamil).

A smaller stratum of Indians in Malaysia is made up of elite members of society e.g. doctors, lawyers etc. Tracing the statistics in the consecutive issues of the Malaysia Plans, one can see how almost 40 percent of the country's lawyers once were Indians with similar over representation in medical, veterinary and other elite professions. Due to "brain drain", i.e. migration overseas, Indians are today seldom over represented amongst professionals.

In summary we can see how the Anglican membership is most variegated both in total and in terms of Tamil ethnicity alone. There is no obvious place for a suburban middle class to feel at home.

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[23] This is the official term of the Anglican Church in the country, which is part of the province of South East Asia, which again is part of the world wide Anglican Communion with its primate in Canterbury, England. For an exhaustive account see Kalai, John, *Anglicanism in West Malaysia*, Kuala Lumpur 2004

[24] Indians were very deprived under the British, many imported from India as virtual slave labour. Even today this community is often dubbed "third class citizens", a perspective that however veils the occurrence of a substantial group of successful, well-to-do, well situated middle class Indians to which TK caters. Gripping account in *Sucked Oranges, The Indian Poor in Malaysia*, Kuala Lumpur: INSAN 1989. See also the important contribution by the late Daniel, J Rabindra, *Indian Christians in Peninsular Malaysia*, K Lumpur: Tamil Annual Conference Methodist Church, Malaysia 1992. Interestingly the country's richest man happens to be Tamil – Mr Ananda Krishnan with a personal fortune in 2003 of RM 8.77 Billion. Ref New Straits Times 18/2 2003.

Thaveethin Kudaram, Tamil for "David's Tabernacle", is also a good example of application of the HUP. Much of what has been said about RLC is true also here in terms of members with recruits from other churches as well as converts from Hinduism making up the new body.

4. Reflection and discussion

To go into a deeper reflection on the vacillation of Western governments between forced integration and an openness to pluralism would be to stray beyond the scope of this paper. Suffice it to state that ambiguity is part and parcel of this discussion.

Meanwhile, the entire HUP concept seems to fit uncomfortably with efforts to build a Malaysian identity. As has been demonstrated above, the many new mega churches represent a departure, at least in terms of ambition, from a more integral and overarching concept celebrated by mainline churches towards increased stratification or compartmentalization so descriptive of the mega churches.

Having stated this, it may however be pertinent to challenge such an assumption. In societies characterised by a low degree of social cohesion with weak and/or variegated identities, such as Malaysia, the creation or strengthening of one particular and salient characteristic or identity could very well bolster motivation, self confidence and even sense of belonging in the individual, thus countering detrimental alienation.

Mainline societies can be notoriously difficult to penetrate for outsiders, e.g. immigrants. This is often said of traditional Sweden and contrasted with e.g. USA. The dominant Malay society, with its peculiar *adat*, is not a serious option for some kind of Malaysian nation hood. But shattered societies such as suburban Kuala Lumpur (Petaling Jaya, Subang Jaya etc.) do not provide good blocks for nation building. Conversely it can be argued that strong and cohesive blocks or subcultures like the mega churches cited here by instilling a strong identity and self confidence amongst its individual members in fact serve the greater common good better than more universal mainline churches. Or at least equally well.

4.2 Ex course
Inter-religious dialogue: Reflections on Western and Eastern Concepts

Western scholars often lament the absence of inter-religious dialogue in Malaysia, a country which, admittedly, stands in the forefront of the world's nations in terms of population mix. The term *melting pot* is often used with reference to how separate pure metals are melted to form a stronger and more useful alloy, such as brass which is constituted of copper and zinc. Some have dubbed Malaysia "the melting pot that refuses to melt", surprised at the low degree of intermarriage and common cultural manifestations between the three main component groups Malay, Chinese and Indian.

It may be true that Malaysia cannot boast of any inter-religious institutes as can e.g. India, Pakistan, Hong Kong, Japan and other Asian nations. Taking two examples, it is however curious that Western initiative is so often behind such efforts. At Hyderabad, India, there is the Henry Martin Institute[25] for dialogue while Hong Kong has its Tao Fong Shan and Areopagus dialogue institute. Neither has sprung up as a result of local initiatives.[26]

In Malaysia, the German *Konrad Adenauer Foundation* (KAS) has been instrumental in several inter-religious dialogue exercises in more recent years.[27] While the results have been exciting with important statements and encouraging resolutions, no lasting or more far reaching impact seems to come out of such efforts.

The World Council of Churches, WCC, has been mentioned above. Even at its central office in Geneva there is a desk for inter-faith issues and dialogue.[28] However, members from Asia have felt misunderstood

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[25] http://www.hmiindia.com/

[26] For an incisive treatment of Tao Fong Shan, cf Rolv Olsen, *"Prevailing Winds", an analysis of the liturgical inculturation efforts of Karl Ludvig Reichelt,* Lund: Centre for Theology and Religion 2007. Cf also http://www.tfscc.org/

[27] Two out of three current book titles published by KAS in BM deal with religion. Cf http://www.kas.de/proj/home/home/66/2/

[28] For an introduction to WCC positions, see Wesley Ariarajah*, Not without my neighbour: issues in interfaith relations*, Geneva: WCC Publications, 1999

when westerners point to the small number of dialogue institutes or manifestations in Asian countries. It has been said, in response, that the real dialogue is a *dialogue of life*, of *praxis*, not of professional swivel chair experts.

Here, we can only broach the subject and grant that there is certainly a dialogue in Malaysia between its people from different walks of life. But the elusive goodwill, so essential to nation building, is in Malaysia manifested in neighbourly partying at the religious festivals, not in an intellectual quest for common ground for faith statements. When Germany through the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, probably thanks to the research of a Western scholar, with great delight manages to trace *the golden rule* to all major religious books such as the Bagavad-Gita, Tripittika, the Bible, the Quran etc, and has quotes printed on umbrellas to be given away for free, this puts in a nutshell the entirely different approaches to dialogue of the Western and the Eastern mind.

5. Conclusion

We have in this paper seen how small and vulnerable subcommunities can be vitalised and strengthened by a clearer definition of identity. For some, joining a particular religious group, can even serve to build a personal identity, foster civic consciousness and ultimately consolidate the Malaysian society.

The question has also been intimated where the lines of a given subculture and that of the national society at large intersect in a hypothetical diagram. Obviously there must be a point where the particularistic eclipses the general and vice versa. In the cases presented here, the question remains just how much stress should be given to such a tool as the *homogenous unit principle.*

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Challenges to Malaysian Pluralism – the Policy of Affirmative Action

Göran Collste

Introduction

Malaysia is characterized by its ethnic and religious pluralism. There are many different ethnic groups: Malays, Chinese, Indians, *Orang Asli*, Caucasians etc. The religious diversity is as large: one finds Muslims, Buddhists, Taoists, Hindus, Sikhs, Catholics, Protestants, indigenous and many more. It is a great achievement that the nation after more than 50 years still is integrated in spite of the profound diversity.

Malaysia is both a Muslim and a multi-religious country. Islam is an essential element of the nation's identity and an integral part of the culture. Islam is taught as a compulsory subject in school and prayers are broadcasted on all government run media. Hence, in spite of its religious pluralism, Islam has a hegemonic role in the Malaysian society.

In Malaysia, the political relations and the framework of religious pluralism is the result of a historical compromise including two elements. First, Malaysia is on the one hand a political democracy with regular elections, individual voting and political parties competing for power. On the other hand, Malaysia is an Islamic monarchy with Sultans whom among themselves elect the king. The dominant political parties are also ethnically based associations. However, in the election in March 2008 the ruling front, Barisan Nasional consisting mainly of the dominant Malay party UMNO, a party for Chinese (MCA) and a party for Indians (MIC) was challenged. They remained in power but were severely weakened.

Secondly, Malaysia has according to the constitution religious freedom. On the other hand has Islam a dominant role and, thus, Malaysia is officially a Muslim state. Article 3 in Malaysia's constitution says: "Islam is the religion of the federation but other religions may be practiced in peace in any part of the Federation" and Article 11 states that: "Every person has the right to follow and practice his religion".

Since independence 1957 a kind of *modus vivendi* between the ethnic and religious groups has been established. However, recently a number of initiatives and incidents show that the stability is fragile. From an outsider's perspective, tensions based on religious differences seem to have intensified the last 5-10 years.

In this article I first give an overview of some current incidents that illustrate recent social and religious turmoil in Malaysia. Then I discuss one aspect of Malaysian political pluralism; the policy of affirmative action. Affirmative action is favoring Malays and to be Muslim is one of the requirements for being beneficiary of affirmative action. Finally, I briefly point at some problems for the policy of affirmative action in a time with increased religious tensions and an increased emphasis on religious affiliation as identity marker.

Recent initiatives and incidents

Incidents of religious conflicts, for example conflicts over controversies regarding conversions, form the background of the founding of the Interfaith Commission (IFC). To find institutional ways to solve issues of this kind an inter-religious council was taking form from 2001 and onwards. NGOs from different religious and political sectors stood behind the initiative. Even the Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi called for "…a concerted effort to initiate interfaith dialogue" in a speech to the World Council of Churches meeting in Kuala Lumpur in 2004 (MIC, 2008, p.29).

In the final draft of the Interfaith Commission of Malaysia Bill in February 2005, religious freedom, human rights, mutual respect, dialogue and universal values were stressed. The Commission should "…inquire into any allegations of infringements of religious harmony" (MIC

2008, p. 281 ff). The chairperson of the steering committee Malik Sarwar pointed at two main aims: to create a forum for interfaith dialogue and to create mechanism for the shaping of coherent interfaith policy in Malaysia. Today, Sarwar argued, the only methods to solve issues of this kind are legal actions in the courts (MIC 2008, p. 387).

However, the initiative was soon opposed by some Muslim groups. IFC was accused of being "anti-Islam" because of addressing cases of conversions. (MIC, 2008, p. 55). The commission was also accused of interference in the affairs of Muslims. The Islamic party PAS' Secretary General argued that dialogue on faith is not helpful because questions relating to Muslim faith are affairs only for Muslims.

According to Muslim critics, the Interfaith Commission Bill made no distinction between Muslims and Non-Muslims, which for the Muslim would imply that law governing the practice of Islam is not the Sharia "but international norms", Bakar writes. And he continues: "In an Islamic state, Islam is one above others – not first among equals, let alone one among equals" (Baharuddeen Abu Bakar, in MIC 2008, p. 365, p. 381).

The critique from Muslim groups led the Prime Minister Badawi to abandon his sanctioning of IFC in February 2005. Although still favoring religious dialogue he said that it would be meaningless to have a commission "…which continues to receives criticisms from the community". (MIC, 2008, p.318)

Parallel to the Interfaith Commission in 2004, a coalition of different NGOs formed the so called Article 11 Coalition. The name referred to Article 11 in the Malaysian constitution that reads: "Every person has the right to profess and practice his religion…(4) state law may control or restrict the propagation of any religious doctrine or belief among persons professing the religion of Islam".

The aim of the coalition was to ensure the freedom of religion as well as respect of freedom of thought and belief and to "ensure that Malaysia does not become a theocratic state". In 2006 the coalition handed an open letter to the Prime Minister Badawi with 20.000 signatures. The

initiative had limited success and there were no response from the Malaysian authorities (Aliran, 12/2007).

Another source of controversy was the accusation by Malaysian authorities against some Christian institutions for using the word Allah for God. The specific targets for the prohibition were the Evangelical Church of Borneo that wanted to import Christian books in Bahasa Malay and the Catholic magazine The Herald.

According to the Malaysian government the word Allah can only be used by Muslims. However, while Allah literally means God in Arabic it has been used by Christians in Malaysia and also by Christian Arabs for long time. It was for example used by Arabic Christians before Muhammad and in translations into Bahasa Malay (Malay language) in the 16th Century. The directive of the government arouses protests from different Christian groups. At the 31st of December 2009 the Malaysian High Court ruled to overturn the government ban. This decision was followed by violent attacks on Christian churches.

Indian resentments at being socially and economically deprived led at the 25th of November 2007 to a big demonstration outside the British embassy in Kuala Lumpur. It was organized by the newly formed Hindraf organization, which stands for Hindu Rights Action Force. The background of the so called Hindraf-rally was manifold. Although the specific target was British authorities responsible for taking Indians to Malaysia for semi-slavery work during colonial times, the protest seems also to be targeted against Malaysian authorities. The leaders of the rally accused Malaysian authorities to have destroyed Hindu temples, the above mentioned cases of disputed conversions were also an issue but the main issue seems to be the present social and economic situation of Indians in Malaysia. After the demonstration, five of the Hindraf leaders were jailed for two years without trial according to the Internal Security Act.

Reasons for turmoil

How, then, can we interpret these conflicts? What are the background conditions? It seems as there is a blend of social, ethnic and not least religious resentment behind. Regarding the Interfaith Commission one

can distinguish between three points of possible disagreements. The first, concerns the legal status of Islam in Malaysia. The IFC was (wrongly according to the commission itself) accused of questioning the legalities regarding conversions from Islam. Thus, the first disagreement concerns if there should be special laws for conversion applicable to Muslims or if there should be common law for all.

A second and related issue concerns the equality of religions in Malaysia. A presupposition behind IFC is that all religions should be treated equally. A tacit condition for dialogue of this kind is that no partner has a privileged position. This presupposition was questioned by at least some of the opponents, arguing that Islam should be given a special status. Hence, the second point of disagreement concerns the view of the other. Is it possible to enter into a dialogue as equals or not? The same controversy is behind the conflict on the use of the word Allah for God. The reason behind the government's position seems to be a need of marking the exclusiveness of Islam. However, it is for theological reasons questionable to make a distinction between the God of Islam and the God of Judaism and Christianity in this way. Few would deny that the God of Judaism, Christianity and Islam is the same, although interpreted in different ways. In Islam this sameness is illustrated by the references to prophets in the Old as well as the New Testament.

A third point of disagreement concerns the purpose and aim of dialogue. Do we enter into a dialogue in order to handle practical matters, to discuss constitutional issues, to discuss questions of values and norms, to discuss religious beliefs or for any other purpose? And what does a dialogue imply regarding the relation to the other? Does it mean to state one's own position or also to listen and learn from the other? If it implies the second option, the assumption is then that one's own view is not definite and final. Thus, disagreement may also relate to the reason to enter into a dialogue and the attitude towards the partners engaged in dialogue. On the one hand, an "inclusivist" position, shared by the individuals behind the IFC, implies a willingness to engage in a dialogue about a whole range of issues with an attitude of openness and willingness to learn from others. An "exclusivist" position on the other hand, represented by some Muslim opponents, implies reluctance to discuss more than a few issues and a belief that there is no reason to listen to others because one already knows the truth.

There are signs that Malaysian pluralism is questioned from within and many people are dissatisfied with the present order. The historical compromise seems to be challenged. How, then, can one explain the present turmoil?

In the following, I will focus on two interrelated issues at the centre of the controversies. The first concerns the policy of affirmative action introduced to enhance the social and economic conditions of *Bumiputras* (Malays). The second concerns the seemingly increased role of religious affiliation as identity marker and the privileged role of Islam.

Affirmative action in Malaysia

Affirmative action in Malaysia implies that Malays are given special privileges. These are already granted in the constitution from 1957. Article 153 provides a scheme of preferential treatments of Malays (and the natives of Sabah and Sarawak) implying access to positions in federal public service and scholarships and places in institutions of higher learning (Faruqui 2005, pp 34-36). The term "Malay" refers to persons who meet the following four criteria:

> 1) profess Islam
> 2) habitually speak the Malay language
> 3) must confirm to Malays custom
> 4) must have roots in the country by way of birth or descent.

Thus, the criteria for affirmative action are based on ethnicity. Ethnicity is indeed a vague concept, referring to different group traits. According to Encyclopedia Britannica, an ethnic group is

> a social group or category of the population that, in a larger society, is set apart and bound together by common ties of race, language, nationality, or culture.
>
> (In Encyclopædia Britannica. Retrieved December 17, 2008, from Encyclopædia Britannica Online: http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9033136)

In the Malaysian case ethnic affiliation, and as a consequence the policy of affirmative action, is based on religion, language, custom and geographical descent. These four criteria form the necessary and – together – the sufficient conditions for being included in the group benefiting from affirmative action. This imply for example that an Indian whose ancestors have lived for a long time in Malaysia, who speaks Malay language and who confesses Islam is included in the Malay group, while an Indian who meet the criteria except being Hindu is not included. Hence, Malay privileges are partly based on religious affiliation. What is exceptional with the Malaysian policy of affirmative action is that it favors a majority population group with some constitutional political privileges.

The policy of affirmative action got an impetus due to the racial clashes with outbreaks of violence in 1969 and a number of political and economic initiatives to enhance the living conditions of *Bumiputras* (Malays) were introduced as part of the so called New Economic Policy. The Chinese population had a much better economic and social position than the Malays and was dominating the economy[29]. As Orifin Omar writes:

> The core of the policy was to ensure preferential employment of *bumiputeras* in the professional and industrial sectors and to break the colonial mould of confining the Malays to rice farming, fishing and other low income jobs (Omar, 2005, p. 23).

One target of the policy was to achieve that in 20 years, 30% of the corporate wealth should be in the hands of Malays. The instrument was to give companies owned by Malays favored governmental contracts, low interest loans and Malay students were awarded government schol-

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[29] In 1970 of the Malaysian households earning $1-199/months, 70% were Malays (constituting around 60% of the population) and 15% Chinese (constituting around 30% of the population), while of those earning $1500 and more, 55% were Chinese, and only around 13% Malays (Omar, 2005, p.21). Furthermore Malay's owned in 1969 1.5% of the share capital and 22.8% and owned by Chinese (whereas 62.1% by foreigners) (Gomez, 2005, p. 68).

arships for studies abroad. Furthermore a quota system for public employment and student intakes was also introduced.

Are then the goals of policy for affirmative action achieved? Although a Malay middle-class has appeared, the goals are far from being achieved (Hng, 2005, pp 155-165). The policy is still in practice in the Ninth Malaysia Plan launched in 2004 by the Prime Minister Badawi.

Affirmative action – ethical aspects

There is a prima facie duty of a government to treat its citizens equally and any plausible political theory today has equality as an ultimate value (Kymlicka, 2002, p.3). Hence, a policy of affirmative action favoring special groups needs a justification. What then is the meaning of affirmative action and how can such a policy be justified?

Affirmative action is a conscious governmental policy to enhance the conditions of a specific disadvantaged group through favored actions like subsidies and quotas. In a formal and general sense affirmative action means that agent A practices a policy to help the target group T in order to get access to the goods G in order to achieve the objective O (Roth, 2004). In the Malaysian case, the Malaysian government (A) practices a policy to help the Malays (T) to access education and loans (G) in order to raise their economic and social position (O).

There are different morally relevant reasons for introducing a policy of affirmative action. First, affirmative action is a way to compensate for earlier discrimination or suppression. For example, one motive behind affirmative action benefiting the black population in the United States was the historical fact that the black population had been taken to the country by force and used as slaves, and the racial segregation that followed (Boxill and Boxill, 2003). In this sense, affirmative action is a case of rectificatory justice. Preferential treatment of groups that earlier suffered from suppression is a way to make good for past wrongs.

A second reason is to use affirmative action as a means of achieving social, economic, cultural and political equality. The aim is then to

raise the position of a disadvantaged group. Then affirmative action is an instrument for distributive justice. For example, affirmative action might be justified by John Rawls's so called "difference principle", stating that "Social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are…to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged..." (Rawls, 1971, p. 302).

Thirdly, the aim of affirmative action is to promote economic development. Then, the idea behind the policy is that the existence of disadvantaged groups in the society is an obstacle to economic progress. For example, in a knowledge-economy, economic development is conditioned by a well-educated population. If some population groups fall behind the whole economy is hampered. This is a welfarist or utilitarian justification of affirmative action. It is justified by its overall utility gains compared to alternative policies.

Fourthly, an indirect consequentialist motivation for affirmative action is to see it as an instrument for preserving a desired balance of interests between different ethnic groups.

Finally, affirmative action may also be a means for some other desired social goal. For example, one may allocate quotas, i.e. a kind of affirmative action, for underprivileged groups to educational programs. In order to improve the relation between the police and immigration groups there might be a need for policemen with an immigrant background. Then, allocation of quotas is an instrument to achieve the goal to recruit more policemen with immigrant background.

Which of these motives lay behind the Malaysian policy? In Malaysia, it seems that primarily the two last reasons for affirmative action are relevant. It does not make sense to see affirmative action as a way to compensate Malays for earlier discrimination or suppression. Indeed, it is true that the Malays suffered from suppression during the British colonial rule but this was also true for other ethnic groups in Malaya at the time. Hence, this is no reason for a policy of affirmative action to the benefits of Malays only.

To promote economic development seems to be a motive behind everything the Malaysian government does so probably even behind the pol-

icy of affirmative action. Thus, a tacit reason behind the policy is to avoid that the underdevelopment of the Malay population hampers overall economic progress.

However, the main reason behind the Malaysian policy of affirmative action seems to be to achieve equality between the Malays and other ethnical groups in the country. Is then the policy of affirmative action in Malaysia morally justified? It has created a lot of resentment among the non-Malays in the country. There seems to be a common experience among Chinese and Indians of being unfairly treated and wide spread feelings of humiliation. This is in itself a reason to cast doubts on the policy. When large parts of a population question the fairness of the governmental policy this will in itself cause alienation and unrest and these feelings are probably one factor behind the present day turmoil.

But are there good reasons for these feelings of unfairness? As we saw, the motives behind the policy are to improve the economic and social situation of the Malays. Thus, the policy is built on two pillars; economic and social inequality on the one hand and ethnicity, including religion on the other. Assuming that equality is desirable and a morally justified goal, then affirmative action is also morally justified as a means for achieving the goal. If *only* Malays, and if *all* Malays were disadvantaged compared to other ethnic groups, then the moral and ethnic reasons would overlap. But that is not the case. There are Malays who are wealthier than some Chinese and Indians and there are Chinese and Indians who are poorer than some Malays. Hence, affirmative action in Malaysia suffers from, what Brian Barry calls, under-inclusiveness as well as over-inclusiveness (Barry, 2001). It is under-inclusive while there are others than Malays who suffer from deprivation. Hence, poor Indians or Chinese might have a justified belief of being treated unjust as a consequence of the Malaysian policy of affirmative action. But the policy is also over-inclusive. There is a growing number of Malays who belong to the upper class and are not deprived at all. Why should they be benefitting from affirmative action? In order to avoid these shortcomings, some restrictions regarding family income could be added to the rules for affirmative action.

As a consequence, if it is the economic and social inequality that provides the moral ground for affirmative action, the policy should not be restricted to Malays only. Instead, affirmative action should be based on economic and social criteria rather than ethnic. However, this argument could be raised against all cases of affirmative action, whether its purpose is to benefit the group of black population in the United States or the group of women in Sweden.

On the other hand, if there is an obvious relation between group membership and socially underprivileged position, as in the cases of blacks in the United States and historically women in Sweden, preferential treatment of members of this particular group might be a valuable tool to achieve equality. This argument might also be relevant in the Malaysian case, considering the economic and social differences between Malays and Chinese. If there are also other underprivileged ethnic groups, for instance Indians, the policy of affirmative action could also favor them.

However, one could by referring to the specific circumstances in Malaysia object to the argument above and insist that ethnicity plays a legitimate role. If the comparison of economic and social position is based on ethnic group rather than on individuals one could argue that the Malay group – as an ethnic group - is economically and socially below the other ethnic groups and, hence, according to a principle of *equality between ethnic groups* the Malays should be benefiting from affirmative action.

This argument of group equality presupposes an ideology emphasizing group interests rather than individual interests. This would be in line with Asian communitarianism in contrast to Western individualism. If our identities are bound to ethnicity and group membership it makes sense to see a policy of affirmative action as basically related to ethnic groups rather than to individuals. However, a problem with this argument is that it is not the group that experiences poverty, suffering or inferiority, it is individuals. While it is the individuals who suffer and are underprivileged it is also on the individual level that the comparison of living standards should be made. Furthermore, the argument presupposes a simplistic view of the differences between a Western and a communitarian Asian perspective. A view emphasizing individual

rights might very well be coherent with a view emphasizing stronger ties with kin and fellow group members (Sen, 1999).

It seems then that the basic motivation for affirmative action in Malaysia is to preserve a balance of group interests. According to this consequentialist argument, affirmative action will improve the conditions of the Malays in relation to other ethnic groups. This will, it is assumed, avoid unrest based on ethnicity and preserve a peaceful coexistence. Social stability is then the ultimate end of the policy. However, the recent turmoil could be a sign that this justification no longer holds.

Religious identity and pluralism

So far, I have argued that the basic motive behind affirmative action in Malaysia is to achieve equality between Malays and other ethnic groups. I have also noticed that religion plays an important role in the policy of affirmative action. To be a Muslim is one necessary condition for being beneficiary of the policy.

Malaysia is a vibrant religious society. Religious activities are noticeable everywhere. Mosques, temples and churches are common features in the townscape, the *muezzin* is regularly heard all over Malaysia when calling for prayer and religious processions are common. Most Malay women follow the Muslim dress code wearing the *hijab*. Hence, religion plays an important role as identity marker for many Malaysians.

To be identity marker is one of the functions of religion. Religious belief often concerns the most important parts of the personality, relating to the meaning of life, basic values etc. Hence, as an identity marker it is for many people more important than other identities, like professional identity, age identity etc. This function of religion tends to have a polarizing role in a religiously plural society. The identity formation is done in contrast to the others. This implies that differences are emphasized; the distances increases between followers of different religions and attitudes of "we against the others" become prevalent.

When religion function as the primary identity marker the conflicts may be more difficult to resolve. To promote another, complementary

strong identity could be a way to achieve harmony in a society were religious differences are emphasized. In Malaysia, to be a Malaysian could have this harmonizing role. Being a Malaysian is then an identity that would unite the different ethnic and religious groups. However, a policy of affirmative action that is based on religious affiliation would then be detrimental to the development of a common Malaysian identity. The recent turmoil is an indication of such a discontent among the ethnic groups that are disadvantaged by the policy. In addition, the favored groups have an interest in maintaining the ethnic divide.

Malaysia is a culturally rich country. It encompasses all of the world's religions. In spite of its diversity it has managed to achieve a stability and peaceful coexistence. However, it seems to stand at a crossroad. Either the present *modus vivendi* will be prolonged and the borderlines dividing different religious and ethnic groups will be increasingly cemented, or the country will take a new direction with more of dialogue and interchange between different religious groups. The ethnically based associations together with religious affiliation will in any case also in the future play an important role for formation of identity and for political stability. The challenge is for the associational society to offer equal rights for all its citizens in line with a principle of reciprocity. In this perspective, affirmative action favoring one ethnic and religious group is counterproductive.

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Beyond Passive Acceptance: Openness to Transformation by the Other in a Political Philosophy of Pluralism.

Peter Gan

Introduction

It would be fairly accurate to say that the lowest mark on the yardstick of harmonious coexistence in plural societies would be one that indicates the absence of full-blown interethnic violence, even though seething animosity lurks in the subterranean springs. There are nations that would heave a sigh of relief if only the meniscus in their social order and cohesion barometer would reach this mark. Others generally aspire to a climate of passive acceptance or tolerance of one another's culture with its many idiosyncrasies. Just as peace is not solely the absence of war, interethnic amity is not just the absence of strife and hostility. The word "tolerance" carries a number of negative connotations. We ordinarily do not ask "how much happiness or pleasure can you tolerate?"; rather, the likely question would be "how much suffering or pain can you tolerate?" In a relationship of tolerance, a tension exists between the subject tolerating and the object being tolerated. The object tolerated is unpleasant and reluctantly endured. Within such a relationship, especially in the context of a plural society, it is possible to conceive of an implied self-righteousness on the side of the tolerating subject. The other culture is perceived as, at best, inferior in value to one's own culture, and at worst, morally and aesthetically wanting in its tenets and practices. However, for the sake of a conflict-free existence, each culture *tolerates* the other which it views as inferior. It is very unlikely that we use the word "tolerate" to refer to our relationship to a culture that we admire and intend to emulate. It is the intent of this paper to

craft a political philosophy of pluralism that professes to underpin a framework of social cohesion in plural societies beyond merely passive tolerance. The proposed particular type of pluralist philosophy is that of mutual transformation and its edifice can be neatly sketched as a cohesive structure of related pairings: self-other, dialogic-dialectic, and metadiscourse-discourse.[30]

Self-Other

The issue of the relation to the *other* has been and will continue to occupy the minds of many thinkers. Philosophies that have grappled with this knotty though intriguing theme include: Edmund Husserl's confrontation with the problem of intersubjectivity, Søren Kierkegaard's notion of individuality and its dialectical relation to community, Martin Buber's thesis of the I-Thou relationship, Jean-Paul Sartre's being-for-others and the "Look," Martin Heidegger's treatment of *dasein* ("being-there") and *mitsein* ("being-with")*,* and Emmnauel Levinas' ethics of alterity. The nature of the self-other relation takes various forms, but if placed along a spectrum, then this spectrum's ends would represent the privileging of either the self or the other. Incidentally, the concept of 'self' can be expanded to include the generalized self or a collective self representing a particular cultural community. Consciousness, whether individual or *collective* (in an attenuated sense as referring to the possession by a group of its communal beliefs and values), is an essential component of the self. Let us assume that the end of the spectrum that excessively privileges the self, postulates a self-other relation as ultimately determined by the consciousness of the *self.* This, we shall call it a restricted phenomenology of consciousness, would find it excruciatingly difficult to reconcile ontological exteriority with epistemological substantiation, and such a framework is commonly harassed by the problem of solipsism. One attitudinal consequence of this post-

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30 "Pluralist" in philosophy has several senses, including its application in ethics, referring to a metaethical standpoint of basing the evaluation of moral issues upon a variety of normative ethical theories. In this paper, "pluralist" refers to the state of a nation whose population is composed of a diversity of ethnic groups.

ulate is: "since my only experiential contact is the content of my consciousness and I have no way of confirming the independent existence of other things and other selves, then the most optimal orientation to the other is the reduction of the other to my own experiential constructions." Submitting the other to the self is antithetical to the formulation of a theoretical scheme that embraces diversity within plural configurations. The contrast to the above orientation would be something like a Levinasian ethics of *alterity*. For Levinas, the other calls me from a height and there is a primordial ethical responsibility to the other which is originary to all other human thinking and acting. He writes:

> Calling me from a height this naked face demands
> to be given everything because
> he is deprived of everything. He puts my freedom
> into question; my freedom that
> states that I am able to possess anything I want.
> (1961, 1969, p. 79).

In interpersonal relationships, the other person is not just a body but also consciousness. By virtue of the exteriority of the body and the infinite interiority of consciousness, the other cannot be subsumed into the self. It must be admitted that Levinas' "face-to-face" relationship that demands the self to give utterly, untiringly for the other, seems utopian. If mutual transformation is to undergird interethnic relationships within a plural society, the moral imperative above disrupts the coequality required for mutual exchange and debilitates the impetus for a willingness to be transformed by the other. (More on this later).

The locus of our philosophy of transformative pluralism is somewhere between the above two poles. Phenomenology's contention of knowledge being anchored upon the experiences within the self, dictates that coming to a realization of the needs of another person requires some awareness of our own needs. The initiation for magnanimity does not issue *solely* from self awareness and regard. Nevertheless, this sort of initiation necessarily requires self awareness, with the addition of a dilated vision that is able to see beyond one's own selfish inclinations and values in order to incorporate future and other persons' viewpoints and values. This additional ingredient depends upon one's capacity for vicarious imagining and feeling from another's viewpoint. There is no privileged status of the "I". That being moved by imagining a sufferer's

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viewpoints does draw me towards his goals is sufficiently shown by my instinctive impulse to shrink from imagining because of the incurred pain and the possibility of being drawn against my own interests. Graham (1992, pp. 22-27).[31] The relevance of this reference to the self in terms of awareness and imagination enjoins us to not categorically dismiss this orientation when conceiving the factors that come to bear upon the predispositions to transformation by the other. The tenability of a viable ethical theory for plural societies or for any ethical theory for that matter, will be seriously impugned if the theory jettisons this fundamental orientation to the self. However, self-referencing, though necessary, is insufficient to engender the multilateral transformative exchange in a plural milieu. The complementary determinant of *respect for the irreducible other* comes into play when establishing the essential condition of possibility for receptivity to transformation from the other. Accepting the other as transcending all my subjective reductions into the self, again be it an individual or generalized self, serves as a buttress against any party pursuing exclusively the fulfillment of its narrow, selfish interests. A pattern of selfish one-sidedness is not strictly transformative but instead, is reflective of a consumptive relationship. A consumptive relationship is founded upon the utilization of an object by another being of superior status and capability. This is how we relate to *things*. Although undeniably salutary for the subject engaged in utilization, "transformation by *the other*" suggests intersubjectivity whereby the other is not treated as a thing. When one party dominates and utilizes another, the reciprocal exchange of respect between them is absent. Respect or the positive regard *freely* accorded to another being is a precondition for the operation of this form of transformation. In other words, a transformative principle can only be sustained by a matrix of symmetric nexus of intersubjectivity. When this breaks down, the *utilized* becomes a commodity divested of the interiority of a person, and hence, lacks respect. By reducing the other to a thing, the consumer or *utilizer* has stripped the other of any capacity to freely render this positive regard and so, he as utilizer is also deprived of receiving respect from the other.[32] In this sense, we can see how Le-

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[31] Graham argues for the plausibility of building ethics upon spontaneity and awareness.

[32] Hegel's (1807, 1977, pp. 111-126) intriguing "Lord and Bondsman" allegory attempts to capture this dynamic relationship. However, Hegel's presentation

vinas' asymmetric relation of the self infinitely obligated to give to the other, is inherently problematic. This is because by postulating the necessity of the self's obligation to the other, free will, which endows the status of a "person" to the giver, is seriously undermined. Just as the utilized other is divested of the status of a free person, at the Levinasian end of the spectrum, the self as obligated giver is also divested of the status of a free person.

Another possible orientation to one another is apathetic tolerance, which generally signifies a dismissive attitude, not transformative openness. Superficially, a willingness to be transformed by another might appear to be a disguised species of utilizing another for my own transformation. But this is not so. To be transformed by another is not to consume the other because in the process of mutual transformation there is a positive evaluation of the other and a willingness to *submit* to transformation *by* the other. By and large, *difference* more so than sameness, underwrites the capacity for transformation by the other. The different other challenges the self to extend beyond the self's boundaries. Essentially then, an approach of mutual transformation can only emerge from an infrastructure of symmetric intersubjective relationships. Herein resides the opportunity for vibrant exchanges of beliefs and values held by one another.

Dialogic-Dialectic

How are we to configure the ideal internal dynamics of mutual transformation? The multilateral interchange that transpires among ethnic groups is contingent upon dialogue. Dialogue here is taken in its broadest sense, stretching beyond verbal exchanges to encompass the dialogue of action and the apparent paradoxical conveyance of meaning and intent in silence. It is incumbent upon us to craft a methodological instrument that is deployable for our purposes here. The premise of the dialogic process is that each meaningful utterance is embedded within a context of references.[33] Engagement in this process then entails a vigi-

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mirrors a relationship that is conflict-ridden and terminates in what he labels as the unhappy consciousness.

[33] The concept "dialogic" is often associated with the ideas proposed by Mikhail Bakhtin (1981) in the *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. While mono-

lant dialogue with other sources, be it contemporaneous or historical. The dialogic enterprise is challenging as it is rewarding. Communication that traverses along the synchronic as well as the diachronic axes affords its participants an environment that is intellectually enlightening and existentially transformative. Interestingly, dialogue with the past is not unidirectional. In dialoguing with the past we come to realize that the past not only informs the present but the present, in a qualified sense, informs the past. Actual historical events as objective facts are irreversible, but, the interpretation of those events by the subject is not irreversible. And, it is interpretation that has currency value when it comes to communication. The idea of the present informing the past may not be so far fetched when we think of the case of history books being amended for political reasons. Furthermore, with religious belief, historical facts and faith interpretations mutually bear upon each other. The claim of the historical events behind scriptural figures and narratives are not free of interrogation and sacred texts like many other types of texts, tend to open themselves to varying interpretations that are susceptible to change.

The dialogic method can be deployed alongside of the dialectic method. Although dialectic has a rather extended intellectual genealogy in the Western tradition, stretching from the preSocratics to Theodor Adorno's negative dialectics, and beyond, its distinct pervasive attributes can be distilled. Dialectic's etymological root word, "conversation," is cognate with "dialogue." In the main, dialectic is a method of discourse. Its varied formulations include the *elenchus*[34] (Socrates/Plato), hypothetical with ascent-descent series incorporating intersecting contexts and subcontexts (Plato), collection-division of defi-

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logism revolves around a discourse that tends to issue predominantly from a single authoritative source, diaologism operates via multiple authoritative sources and discourse frames.

[34] The Socratic method of *elenchus* (refutation) was a reworked form of the Zenoan paradox. Plato depicted Socrates as engaging in debates with interlocutors and via skillful means of cross-examination, convinces his opponents into refuting their own conclusions. The aim of the *elenchus* was mainly to refute held assertions rather than proving the assertions' antithesis. For a sample of its application see Plato (1961, pp. 169-185), *Euthyphro,* trans. Lane Cooper.

nitions of categories[35] (Plato), a mode of argumentation founded on commonly accepted rather than necessary truths (Aristotle), a transcendental dialectic of metaphysical deliberations beyond strict empirical evidence (Immanuel Kant), a dynamic correlation of opposing concepts with sublated resolutions (G. W. F. Hegel), and a form of argumentation that allows for tentativeness of conclusions and hinting at gaps along the boundary of knowledge where the unknown leaves a trace (Adorno). The methodological tool that makes up the constitutive and regulative principles of our transformative philosophy can be synthesized thus: its *form* is dialogic while its *content* is dialectic. The dialogic form categorizes the parties involved in the dialogic process that stretches across the synchronic and diachronic axes. The content of dialectic is the assemblage of discourse styles from Socrates to Adorno, possessing a flexibility of application depending upon the particular nature of the transformative interchange. Although some of the dialectical modalities can be put to function in a partisan and nonegalitarian fashion, this tendency can be averted by the dialogic form which serves to regulate the web of dialogues according to the ideals of mutual transformation.

Metadiscourse-Discourse

Thus far, I have attempted to argue for two related ideas in working out a theoretical scheme for a transformative philosophy. One is the fundamental premise of symmetric intersubjectivity. The other is the instrument of dialogic form with dialectic content. We now proceed to the object of dialogue, that is, the *discourse*, and more importantly perhaps, the *metadiscourse* that implicitly informs the discourse, sometimes, without the awareness of its interlocutors. In the *Sophist,* trans. F. M. Cornford (1961, 260a ff., pp. 1007ff.), we find Plato elucidating the relation between speech, thought, discourse, forms (essences/ideas), and being (existence). Discourse concerns the blending of forms and this can take place either through dialogue in speech or in thought. After all, says Plato,

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[35] Mortimer Adler's (2002) *Dialectic* provides a good exposition of the dialectic as delineating contexts, subcontexts, postulates, and theorems (propositions drawn by implication). See especially pp. 147-174.

> thinking and discourse are the same thing, except
> that what we call thinking is, precisely, the inward
> dialogue carried on by the mind with itself without
> spoken sound. [*Sophist* (263e, p. 1011)].

Discourse as inward thinking is an indispensable factor in the whole equation of intersubjectivity. There may not always be a coincidence between thinking and overtly expressing. Interethnic dialogue operates along multiple levels depending upon the theme and surrounding circumstances of the interchange. A permeating current that shapes the content and pattern of dialogue is what is known as the metadiscourse, that is, the underlying perception, be it shared or individual, of what constitutes dialogue and discourse. The metadiscourse is not the overriding theme of the discourse upon which all other subthemes can be placed beneath it. That would simply be a discourse with a larger context, but a discourse nonetheless. All internal processes, conscious or unconscious that refer to the notion of discourse and dialogue per se pertain to the metadiscourse. As an illustration, in an interreligious dialogue, besides the doctrines that become the subject matter of discussion, the participating representatives of the various religious traditions would possess internal processes relating to: their expectations and apprehensions about a dialogue of this sort, anticipations of other participants' perceptions of the dialogue session, the shared definitions and implicit norms that operate in this interactive exercise, and the explicit rules that govern the whole proceeding. All of these would constitute the metadiscourse and it is something which is fluid, meaning that there is always the possibility of it changing as the process of dialogue is underway. This metadiscourse functions with such subtlety that participants in a dialogue may not be aware of its impact, positive or otherwise, upon them and the proceedings of dialogue. Those who are consciously aware of the metadiscourse that operates within interethnic dialogue would be predisposed to facilitate a more enlightened, sympathetic, and genuinely receptive dialogue session.

Before discussing the content and structure of discourse, there is a fundamental standpoint that relates to the domain of the metadiscourse. This fundamental standpoint or posture is what I would call, to borrow a term from Kant, the *critical* attitude. When it comes to dealing with

discourses surrounding beliefs and values that are predicated upon nonverifiable premises, the critical attitude is imperative. For Kant (1787, 1934, pp. 208-212), ideas conceived and deliberated upon by pure reason are so far removed from verification by sense intuition that he labels them as residing within the purview of the transcendental dialectic.[36] The critical attitude meanders between the unhealthy stances of dogmatism, skepticism, and indifferentism. Kant (1787, 1934, pp. 1-3). Indifference to metaphysical matters forfeits the opportunity to constructively grapple with ideas that Kant says would be difficult to ignore. Skepticism would ill-serve the intentions of mutual transformation because it stymies confidence and trust in oneself and in the other. Moreover, extreme skepticism is self-refuting. Since matters pertaining to God, free will, immortality of the soul, are so far removed from empirical verification, there is no justification for adopting the dogmatic stance. The ideal attitude would be the critical approach to dialogue on such metaphysical matters. Such a critical posture inclines the parties involved in dialogue to be more open to change and transformation by the other.

Discourse that revolves around metaphysical matters may not be susceptible to empirical and mathematical proofs, but a high premium is placed upon them. These beliefs define us as who we are, as beings who are not reducible to the mechanical determinations of nature. Adopting the critical stance towards our own ideational discourses and towards those of others should lead us to recognize and permit the voices of others to be heard. The decree of dialogism enjoins us to pay attention to not just the voices that are contemporaneous with us but also the voices of the past. Dialecticism is most coincident with the criti-

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[36] The fascinating thing about Kant's view of dialectic is that, while it is a method of reasoning that employs conceptions way beyond empirical justification, this form of reasoning is unavoidable (p. 6). Kant describes the transcendental dialectic as the "logic of illusory appearance" (pp. 208-209). We are predisposed to enquire into matters that exceed the boundaries of possible experience, matters that touch upon the existence of God, the immortality of the soul, the possibility of free will and morality, and the infinitude or finitude of the universe. The purpose of Kant's searching investigation into transcendental dialectic is to unravel this susceptibility to illusion and delineate the perimeters of sound thinking thereby mitigating this illusion by cautioning the dialectician against any dogmatic pronouncements.

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cal posture discussed above. An unmistakably unique character of dialectic is its open-endedness and what some may label as aporetic (stimulating more questions than offering answers). There is also an immense fluidity in dialectic. There are infinite ways of approaching, navigating, and expanding a particular discourse. In fact, contending parties in an interlocution can avail themselves of the dialectical functions and dynamically define, redefine, clarify, analyze, synthesize, and shift contexts in such a way as to achieve some kind of tentative resolution of their dispute. The tentativeness of the resolution follows from the fundamental regulating principle of dialectic, which dictates that further oppositions inevitably arise from the shifting contexts.[37] As regards the theory of truth, the dialectical enterprise incorporates both the *correspondence* theory of truth where something is true if it corresponds with factual reality, and the *coherence* theory of truth, a proposition is true if it fits snugly into a body of propositions with a code governing their relations. When and where a particular theory of truth has relevance has to be justified, again, dialectically. From the above we can infer that the structure of the dialogue is very complex, with discourses running along several levels: the principal discourse material at the intellectual and scholarly level (for instance, the attributes of divine reality); the historico-traditional discourses that have an impact on the present discussion; the possible political elements that impinge upon this principal discourse (particularly pertinent in interethnic dialogue) and its own scheme of discourse; the affective parameter that comes to bear upon discourses that concern life values;[38] and the level of discourse within each party that deals with the extent to which presented statements reflect common beliefs or are in fact the statements of just a

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[37] Dialectic being a dynamic activity of argumentation and seeking resolution, allows for alterations in the tapestry of intersecting contexts and hence, one arrived solution unveils further oppositions.

[38] Many dialogue scenarios tend to focus upon the unfolding of deliberations and arguments along the intellectual plane and not enough attention given to matters concerning emotions, which actually play a crucial determining function. Certain beliefs and values are influenced by and impact upon affective responses and this reciprocal correlation can be mapped to produce its own corresponding series of discourses. Adler (2002, p.11) brings to light the error of restricting the notion of thinking to pure intellectualism. One opposition to thinking as solely intellectualizing would be the discipline of psychology in general and the school of psychoanalysis in particular.

few.[39] It is all but impossible to exhaust the levels of discourse within a scheduled session, but participants who are made aware of them have more to bring into the dialogue. Additionally, there is also the dialogue of action, from a simple gesture of invitation to another ethnic group to share in a meal, to a large scale program of rendering welfare assistance in times of emergencies. Positive dialogues of action have a lot to offer in terms of healing wounds and opening up fresh relationships.

The dialogic and dialectic process does not harbour an overriding design to collapse intersecting subcontexts into one grand context or theory. An attempt to do so may ride roughshod over component systems of discourse that play a significant role in forging the identity of a group. When this is applied to political administration of plural societies, *accommodation* and *assimilation* may be the dominant modes of operation.[40] The main defect of the accommodation/assimilation approach is that in formulating a framework for intercultural existence, this approach assumes that the cultural dynamic is a unidimensional and unidirectional course. It seems to cast a blind eye upon cultural processes that are multidimensional, multilateral, and prominently mutual. The dialogic-dialectic method within the ideals of mutual transformation, allows for differences to exist without forcing them into a homogenous mold. It is possible to conceive of a multicultural approach to political administration that embodies a fundamental orientation to take into consideration the uniqueness of each cultural group. I am aware that when it comes to actual implementation of administra-

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[39] In the religious dialogue, interpretations of sacred texts are crucial to understanding and relaying doctrines of faith. Problems abound as to what passes muster as authoritative interpretation. Also, does communal interpretation imply a single consensus of interpretation or a number of interpretations from a single community? Within the structure of scriptural interpretation is a crisscross of dialogue among the text, the individual, and the community.

[40] Accommodation refers to the "process whereby individuals adapt to situations of racial conflict, without resolving the basic conflict or changing the system of inequality." Assimilation on the other hand, pertains to the cultural absorption of a minority group into the dominant group via a modification of attitudes and /or behaviours of minority group in order to fit into mainstream culture. There are however, contesting theories that argue for a bilateral adjustment of cultural values and practices in order to arrive at an agreed upon common culture. Abercrombie *et al.* (1994, pp. 1, 22).

tive policies, the multicultural approach may encounter immense challenges.[41] There is no easily wrought answer to the complexities inherent in plural societies. This paper however, attempts to construct a philosophy of mutual transformation predicated upon a dialogic and dialectic method, which it hopes to contribute to a better understanding of the interethnic processes that operate in plural societies. It might be contended that to be consistent, the whole system of dialogic form and dialectic content above is itself a metaphysical construct and therefore assailable. However, since this proposed system is not susceptible of logical and empirical proofs, the only way to assail it would be by dialoguing in the dialectic. If the very act of refuting something entails the employment of the essential components of that thing, then absolute self-refutation would be impossible. The general form of the dialogic-dialectic method cannot be refuted but its specific form as advocated for mutual transformation can be vulnerable to criticism.

In the dialectical discourse involving different ethnic groups, it is not uncommon to arrive at an impasse, where it seems that no mutual agreement can resolve the divergent points of discourse. Note, if it is a purely intellectual and axiological matter of consideration, there is always a way to arrive at an agreement, permitting some fruitful opportunities for mutual exchange, and yet respecting the differences. In dialectic, when systems of discourse confront each other, it is possible to find concepts or ideas principal to one system to be large enough to have intersecting borders with another system's large idea. A simple example might illustrate. The nontheistic orientation of Theravada Buddhism may not be totally irrelevant to the theistic systems of say Christianity, Hinduism, and Islam. The Buddhist teleology of nirvana as the extinguishment of all conceptualizations and attachment to self-centered drives resonates with the negative theology of theistic religions. The terminus ad quem of union with God is the instant where all categories of existence, nonexistence, separation between finite soul and infinite reality, and its nonseparation, break down on account of the nature of a reality that has infinity and transcendence as its attributes. Hence, although the network of series of premises and implied theo-

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[41] In Diane de Anda, ed. (1997), *Controversial Issues in Multiculturalism* are arguments for and against the multicultural approach to public administration in plural United States.

rems for each faith differs, there are features that are open to common acceptance.

If on the other hand, the impasse concerns practical matters within the socio-political sphere, it would be much more formidable to work out a happy resolution. The landscape of systems of discourse is highly intricate when political policies and measures impinge upon the involved parties and where one or more parties feel that they have been unjustly dealt with. Systems of discourse occur at many levels for this form of conflict: historical development of cultural norms, evolution of political policies, arguments for defending the need to preserve group identity, dialectical tension within the group in terms of disagreement among members and their underlying arguments, and the cognitive-affective relation that comes into play especially when political force is seen as curbing one group's freedom. Awareness and understanding of these multilevel discourses can go a long way towards unraveling the skein of socio-political forces that led to the impasse. Often times, instead of exploring the multiple dialogical avenues, interethnic, intraethnic, historical, and so forth, a quick resolution is sought and more often than not, a 'resolution' that comes at the end of the rod of political administration. Tensions continue to seethe creating more negative series of discourse, be it intellectual or emotional. There is then no way to breach the impasse. It is important to note that there is a difference between series of arguments presented by a group in defense of their actions and the objective validity of these arguments based on issues of justice. Circumscribed within the realm of practice, are the injunctions of morality, particularly justice. Shoring up all manner of rationalizations around one's unjust actions does not render those actions just. No doubt, the impasse arrived at in a dispute signals a deadlock in the dialogue of discourses subjectively held by individual parties. However, within the compass of objective moral principles, this impasse may be broken though it may exonerate one or two parties while incriminating the others. The difficulty with this solution is the challenge of proving the validity of the rule of assessment employed in the arbitration. Jean-François Lyotard (1983, 1988, p. xi) takes the stand that the rule presented to make the ultimate judgment is still *relative* to an individual or

group.[42] If this is the case, in the absence of an impartial and objective judgment, finding a redress for a victimized party against whom a flagrant infraction of justice has been committed is near impossible. Nonetheless, this impasse does play a role in jolting us to reassess our schemes of discourse and prod us to find or create new solutions to interethnic conflicts. At this juncture, perhaps it is important to reiterate the foundational premise of symmetric intersubjectivity. "Subject" here refers to the person, whether individual or collective representative. Being a political philosophy of pluralism, the chief reference point in this framework of mutual transformation is the person, not the doctrine. What I mean is that it would be a violation of intersubjectivity if the self prescinds in its mind the theoretical system upheld by a group of people from that group itself; respects the system but abhors its adherents. Avowals like, "I love that religion but hate its followers in my country," veers far from the symmetric intersubjectivity precept. "Subject" as theme is distinct from "subject" as person. The initiative for openness to transformation by the other may come from pure doctrine or person, but at its base, intersubjectivity and its mutual conferment of positive regard, cannot be compromised. Hence, the dialogic-dialectic of discourses comprehensively extends across the idealities of belief and the materialities of society and custom.

Conclusion

As an alternative to tolerance in interethnic relations, a philosophy of mutual transformation proposes to offer a theoretical framework upon which a more enriching relationship in all its relevant dimensions can be enacted. It does not profess to be a success-assured programmatic approach to foster harmonious ethnic relations. It has a normative intent with a set structure that can be deployed to elucidate the intricacies

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[42] Lyotard calls a "*differend*," a conflict that cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of the parties embroiled in the conflict on account of the absence of a rule of judgment agreeable to all parties. Silence and the feeling of the inability to articulate the intractable conflict are the responses. For Lyotard (§ 22-23, p. 13.), this silence signifies gaps in human language and rationality and is an opportunity to create new means of verbalizing the *differend*.

of interethnic relations. This framework can probably be the infrastructure upon which practical measures can be formulated to nurture the process of active multilateral acceptance and willingness to be transformed by the other. At the ground of this framework lies the premise of a symmetric self-other relation. Any attempt to subsume one side to the other dislocates the nexus of intersubjectivity because the giving and receiving of positive regard (respect) requires that the self and other are treated as persons in possession of interiority and autonomy, and not as a commodity to be consumed. The instrument to facilitate mutual transformation is the heuristic device having dialogism as its form and dialecticism as content. In essence, while the dialogic traverses the synchronic and diachronic axes, the dialectic weaves an intricate matrix of intersecting discourses. The dialogue of discourses operates along multiple levels and an implicit pervasive current beneath these levels is the metadiscourse. Embedded within a metadiscourse that facilitates the whole operation is the critical posture and a realization of the nature of dialectic as organic and resistant of dogmatic definitives.

Malaysia's plurality has a unique complexion and history. Despite the saliency of occasional interethnic conflicts, harmonious coexistence has generally prevailed. Considering that heterogeneous societies encounter challenges quite distinct from that encountered by their relatively more homogeneous sisters, there is no taking for granted when it comes to interethnic relations. Communal antagonisms that have recently (circa 2007-2008) surfaced, namely, the Hindraf (Hindu Rights Action Force) demonstrations, and oppositions to what is perceived as infringement upon religious freedom, issue from voices that demand to be heard because of a sense of being disenfranchised. It is quite likely that a serious lack of dialogue among the involved ethnic-religious groups is partly responsible for precipitating those clashes. Unfortunately too, when confronted with such challenging situations the line of least resistance is a quick reaction that again rarely springs from concerted efforts at dialogue, but instead, hurries into the punitive measures of social control. Emotional reactions are frequently at the fore in these forms of tension, resulting in initiations for dialogue (if they do occur at all) that are highly prejudiced. The dialogic-dialectic binary is never easily implemented in crisis situations but it is precisely in such situations that this structure becomes crucially imperative. Considering that the above communal conflicts encompass matters pertaining to the Malaysian Constitution, critical events during the birth of the country's indepen-

dence and perhaps prior to that, a dialogue across history is required to help unravel the lines of discourse that relate to religious doctrine and praxis, political deliberations and negotiations, and a mix of other socio-cultural factors.

Five Hindraf leaders are currently detained under Malaysia's Internal Security Act (ISA) which authorizes detention without trial for the sake of national security.[43] ISA's moral basis is frequently challenged but it does have its own discourse script that intertwines with concerns of justice, historical origins of the implementation of ISA in Malaysia, the justification of retaining it presently, definition of national security, the moral dilemma involved in civil disobedience, which in turn is tied to the social contract normative ethical theory. Since religion is thrown into the dock amidst the parties embroiled in the controversy, faith discourses ought not to be neglected. This means that enmeshed within the dialogue of dialectics are discourses that stretch across time, and concerns both conceptual theory and concrete practice. An honest and impartial reassessment of the involved web of discourses ought also to be included. It would be insincere to come face to face with obliquities within one's own discourse and yet strive to conceal it through dissembling. This reassessment could possibly lead to a discovery of a problematic contradiction within one's own system. Sometimes it can be easily missed that the indictment of sedition casts upon alleged subversive groups may in fact be rightly thrown back to the measures undertaken by state authorities. Sedulous and enlightened dialogue is never easy but then again, communal conflicts are never truly tractable to facile solutions.

Dialogue along the theoretical doctrinal plane need not conduce to a universal concept that is acceptable to all. The dialectical nature of the discourse does not deny differences and it does not intend to collapse all differences into a unity even if it means a forced unity. As example,

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[43] "Five Hindraf leaders detained under ISA (final update)," *The Star Online,* 13 December 2007, viewed 16 May 2008 http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?sec=nation&file=/2007/12/13/nation/20071213144228

in a Muslim-Christian dialogue it would not be right to say that Islam has to adhere to the Christian definition of the deity and vice versa. Samir (2008). To do so, they each would have to seriously compromise the consistency of their own theology. But the fact of their devotion to a God that they perceive as loving and merciful constitutes something that mutually reinforces their beliefs and devotion. It is most unfortunate that salient 'performances' of religion in the political sphere have a tendency of imprinting in people's mind erroneous stereotypical perceptions about particular religions. There is so much diversity of interpretations and practices within each religion that it does not warrant hasty generalizations that misrepresent their valuable teachings. Ideally too, mutual transformation ought not to be restricted to mutual reinforcement of one's own beliefs and practices. It is when the other challenges the self to go beyond established and secure assumptions that the transformative principle inaugurates the impetus for self-transcendence.

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A Secular State?

Marcus Agnafors

Variations on the concept of "secular" make up an entire family. However, this family has no clear meaning (Dallmayr, 1999; Swatos & Christiano, 1999; Taylor, 1998). It stems from the Latin *sæculum*, meaning an age, span of time, or generation. In the early Christian context it signified the time stretching from the Fall to the παρουσία, the return of Christ. This period was seen as a time during which the worldly was interwoven with the divine. Hence, the *sæculum*, in its original theological sense, was not devoid of any divine dimensions.

Today, the variations on "secular" denote a *worldly separation* of religion and some particular phenomenon. The modern *sæculum* family includes, among others, three often-used concepts; each indicating some kind of distance or distancing from the large and complex phenomenon called "religion".[44] I propose the following definitions:

X is *secular* $= _{\text{def.}}$ *X is* (in some way) distanced from religion.

Secularisation $= _{\text{def.}}$ The process by which *X* is *becoming* secular.

Secularism $= _{\text{def.}}$ The view that *X should* be secular.

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[44] For a discussion of the basic uses of "secular" and "secularization", see Bader (2003), Sommerville (1998), Swatos & Christiano (1999) and Yamane (1997). Religion, since difficult to define in a non-controversial way, will here be used *without* definition. Instead, I will rely on paradigmatic cases of religion, such as the common perception of Christianity, Islam, Judaism and Hinduism. Whether my arguments can be applied to other alleged religions is a question I will leave unanswered.

However, the idea of a secular state – an instance of (1) – has escaped a thorough analysis. Nonetheless, it holds a privileged position in the rhetoric of many politicians and scholars. A widely held belief is that states not only are, or are on the way to becoming, secular, but actually *should* be secular; a normative view I will refer to as *state secularism*.[45] Furthermore, the normative claim of state secularism is often formulated in a strong form, claiming that being secular is a *necessary* requirement for a modern democratic state. For instance, Charles Taylor (1998) writes that "(…) secularism in some form is a necessity for the democratic life of religiously diverse societies." (p. 46) Jürgen Habermas (2006) claims that "(…) the secular character of the state is necessary though not a sufficient condition for guaranteeing equal religious freedom for everybody." (p. 4) Steve Bruce (2005) argues that "[e]ssential to the liberal democratic character of western European polities is the fact that they are secular." (p. 18) Such claims are instances of the strong normative claim which I will call *the secular democratic state thesis*, or the *SDS thesis* for short.

It is important to note that the SDS thesis concerns only *democratic* states. By "democracy" I will be referring to a state which derives its internal legitimacy from the consent of the majority, through free and fair elections in which all citizens can vote, and where there are multiple political parties. Moreover, I will add *freedom of beliefs* and *basic political rights*[46] to the list of characteristics of the kind of democracy I have in mind here. While there are plenty of marginal cases of alleged democracy, I will not discuss them here.

A Model of the State

Before investigating in what sense a state can or should be secular, we must acquire a decent understanding of what a state is. Below, I will borrow and to some extent develop Barry Buzan's (1991, pp. 65-67)

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[45] Sommerville (1998, p. 251) dates the birth of the concept "secularism" to 1852, then signifying an "ideology organized to counter religious loyalties". Burleigh (2006, p. 252) dates the concept to 1851 and the English radical George Jacob Holyoake.

[46] By "basic political rights" I will be referring to a set of individual rights including, among others, the rights to life, to basic education, to vote, etc.

model of a state in order to gain a workable – not a complete – taxonomy. The model uses three components: *the physical base of the state*, *the idea of the state*, and *the institutionalised expression of the state*.

The physical base of the state, as here defined, includes the citizens, the territory and the objects within it. Also, included are the practices, habits and beliefs of the citizens.

The idea of the state includes traditions, basic values and common norms. Here we find, for instance, the idea of democracy, a basic moral system and a theory of government. The idea of a public reason, which I will discuss below, also belongs here.

The institutionalised expression of the state harbours a mix of different expressions which can be summed up under two headings: *law and policy* and *confession*. In the category of law and policy we find criminal laws, institutionalised political rights and liberties, laws and policies regarding culture, economy, education, and so on. In short, the law and policy category covers every institutionalised rule, regardless of subject. The category of confession is harder to delimit, and it is likely to overlap the category of law and policy. However, I suggest that institutionalised expressions of religious or non-religious adherence belong to this category. For instance, the first article of Iran's constitution, which explicitly claims that Iran is an Islamic Republic, is a clear example of institutionalised expression of adherence. Moreover, official symbols (such as flags, national insignia and creeds) and institutionalised cooperation with religion (such as having a national church) would sort in this category.

I suggest that we call the three areas for the state's *domains*.[47] Having these domains in mind, we can map the notion of secular onto a more fine-grained notion of state, and thus gain a more nuanced picture of what "secular state" might mean. An interpretation of "secular" referring to the physical domain will be labelled a *physical interpretation*. Likewise, in the domain of the idea of the state, "secular" can refer to the society's tradition, its political ideology, its moral values or all of

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[47] The three domains, however, does not *define* the state; in order to have a decent definition, further characteristics must be added.

the above. I will call an interpretation of "secular" pertaining to this domain an *idea interpretation*. In the institutionalised expression domain, "secular" can refer to law and policies, or to institutionalised adherence. I will call such interpretation of "secular" an *institutional interpretation*. Moreover, the institutional interpretation concerning laws and policies will be called a *policy interpretation*, and the institutional interpretation concerning institutionalised adherence a *confessional interpretation*. While this simple taxonomy is not as nuanced as it can be, it provides a decent starting point.

The Physical Interpretation

Clearly the physical base of a state includes many different aspects. First, we can talk of the citizens' *beliefs*. On such an interpretation a state is said to be secular to the degree (qualitatively or quantitatively) that its people believe in some god. We might also distinguish between different beliefs: a religious person typically not only believes in some god, but also has religious beliefs concerning life after death, the authority of the tradition and the church, and so on. While such beliefs are difficult to measure, they make up an important part of what it is to be religious.

Second, we can refer to the *practices* of the citizens. This category includes not only church attendance, but also practices such as praying, donations to faith-based organisations, and reading holy texts.

Third, when discussing the physical base we might also refer to the *values* of the citizens. By "values" I here refer to personal *moral values and convictions* – views regarding human dignity, capital punishment and distributive justice.

Fourth, a state can be said to be secular in respect to the citizens' *knowledge*. By "knowledge" I mean knowledge of facts and theories *about* religion. If a state is secular in this respect, its citizens lack basic knowledge of different religions.

Fifth, the physical base can be secular in regard to religious *artifacts*. This broad category includes not only buildings for worshipping, such

as churches and mosques, but also public art, commercials, TV-shows, newspapers and public expressions of faith by means of crucifixes or veils.

Sixth, we have what I call the *geo-historical* aspect of the physical base. A physical base being secular in this sense means that it lacks geographic locations historically associated with religion: places such as the Red Sea, the holy mountain Machhapuchre and the river Ganges.

The different meanings of "secular" related to the physical base do not easily translate to secular*ism* however. Per definition, the sub-domains described above lie, to a considerable extent, outside the institutional sphere. This means that if we want to *do* something in the way of political actions to help secularisation on its way, we must discuss policies or confessions.

A second thing to note is that the premise of democracy, as defined above, effectively bars many interventions into the physical base of the state. For instance, policies intending to secularise the beliefs of the citizens are simply ruled out because of the freedom of beliefs. However, arguably no state can allow *every possible* religious practice or expression, and thus we need to allow room for some state intervention – but such room need not be formulated in secularist terms. The boundary between public and private is arguably the main battleground today, and this is obviously a conceptual pair which does not necessarily involve secularism of some sort. What needs to be emphasised is that where to draw such boundary is determined by considerations internal to the *democratic* – not secular – framework suggested above.

A common claim that deserves to be mentioned at this point is that a non-secular physical base is detrimental to democracy, and thus needs to be constrained. A religious society, it is claimed, is a recipe for a failed democracy. While common, this argument suffers from several shortcomings. First, arguably a democracy must allow even the elements which are claimed to undermine it. Second, it must be asked to what extent the claim is empirically true. In fact, it appears rather a-historical. There is ample evidence that the Protestant Reformation was one of the major causes (although unintentionally so) of modern democracy (Bruce, 2005; Minkenberg, 2007); to claim Christianity to be

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detrimental to democracy thus seems somewhat premature. The case against Islam has often been regarded as somewhat stronger: studies have shown that the Muslim states are lagging behind when it comes to democracy (Fish, 2002). However, the cause of the democratic deficit is not obvious. A survey done by Norris and Inglehart (2004) showed that

> (..,) there were no significant differences between the publics living in the West and in Muslim religious cultures in approval of how democracy works in practice, in support of democratic ideals, and in approval of strong leadership. (p. 146, italics in original)

Where they *did* found a real difference was regarding gender equality; the Muslim populations generally did not embrace substantial gender equality. This has been argued as an important cause of the democratic deficit (Fish, 2002; Minkenberg, 2007). While it is difficult to argue that the gender inequality has no connection to Islam, it is important to note that such connection constitutes an argument only against a certain interpretation of Islam, not against the whole set of Islamic theologies. Moreover, another recent study has indicated that the democratic deficit is not so much a Muslim problem as an Arabic problem, hence tied to regional rather than religious considerations (Stepan & Robertson, 2003; for critical discussions of the study, see Ghalioun, 2004; Lakoff, 2004; Stepan & Robertson, 2004).

At this point some sociological evidence must be taken into account. It is commonly assumed that since the people of modern democratic states are increasingly secular, this equals a widespread preference for state secularism. Now, this is clearly a *non sequitur*: just as a religious citizen may prefer a secular democratic state, the secular citizen may very well and for different reasons prefer a *non-secular* democratic state. Nevertheless, the people's religiosity (or lack thereof) is likely to have bearing on which design of the public sphere they will prefer.

In the early 20th century Max Weber and Emile Durkheim laid the foundation of what would later be known as *secularisation theory*. Weber claimed that the rise of modernity would soon demystify religion and eventually put it to rest. Durkheim argued much the same result, al-

though from different considerations: the functions earlier fulfilled by organised religion – rituals, ceremonies, health care, education, and so on – were about to be taken over by the modern institutions of the state. With no social purpose left, religion was about to pass over to greener pastures. Weber's and Durkheim's prediction quickly became regarded as a well-established truth. As predicted, during the later half of the 20th century religion in Europe experienced a rapid decline (Bruce, 2002; Davie, 1999; Jenkins, 2007; Norris & Inglehart, 2004). Nietzsche had earlier proclaimed the death of God: now God's entourage was dying.

But while Nietzsche remains dead, God has made a remarkable come-back. Today, secularisation theory is itself struggling for survival. Peter Berger, one of its early proponents, now says that it is "essentially mistaken" (Berger, 1999, p. 2). Secularisation, another author writes, is one of the "fairy tales of our time" (Lilla, 2007, p. 6).

Empirical facts seem to fail secularisation theory. On the international scene Islam is on the rise, and so – to an even greater extent – is Pentecostalism, thus putting any claims to global secularisation in doubt (Berger, 1999, pp. 7-8; Pew, 2006b). In the Western world, United States shows a remarkable religious vitality: church attendance in the United States even went slightly up in 2001 as compared to 1981, from 43 to 46 per cent regular attendants (Norris & Inglehart, 2004, p. 74). The Americans' belief in God seems unshaken by modernity: in 1947, 94 per cent of the Americans believed in God; by 2001, the percentage remained the same (Norris & Inglehart, 2004, p. 90).[48]

In Europe, the former communist states are showing signs of a budding religiosity (European Commission, 2005, p. 11; Stark, 1999, p. 266). Moreover, the total percentage of Europeans who believe in God is about 52 per cent according to a recent poll; add to that another 27 per cent who believes in "some sort of spirit or life force" (European Commission, 2005, p. 9).

While some attempts to resuscitate secularisation theory have been done (Bruce, 2002; Norris & Inglehart, 2004; Yamane, 1997), they

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[48] Moreover, 32 per cent of the Americans believe that the Bible should, compared to the will of the people and when in conflict, be the more important influence on U.S. legislation (Pew, 2006a, p. 2). The same poll also showed that 42 per cent believe Israel to be given to the Jews by God (p. 20).

come across as somewhat *ad hoc*. Religion, far from being dead, even seems to be on its way to strengthen its position. Religion of today, perhaps in a more individualised form, seeps into the wealthy sphere, the educated sphere, the political sphere, the already secularised sphere, causing what has been called a *post-secular* era. The physical base even in Western states thus appears not to be as pervasively secular as usually perceived. This also has the implication that, given our democratic premise, the SDS thesis may not be as strongly supported as is sometimes assumed.

The Institutional Interpretation

Within the institutional domain, I distinguished between what I called a *confessional interpretation* (i) and a *policy interpretation* (ii) of "secular state". The former interpretation identified a secular state as a state having institutionalised non-religious adherence. A secular state in this sense could be a state which explicitly calls itself agnostic, secular, or even atheistic, which lacks a state church, lack religious elements in its official symbols and practices, and so on. Obviously this means that a state being secular is a matter of degrees. Exactly *where* to draw the boundary separating the secular state from the religious state is difficult to draw: such boundary is likely to vary depending on context.

The reasons advanced for avoiding institutionalised expressions of religious adherence are plenty and I will therefore limit my discussion to a few common arguments:[49]

(i) a   No religion should be confessed by the state since the central claim of any religion, the existence of a supernatural being or power, is simply false or unreasonable. I call this *the epistemological argument*.

(i) b   No religion should be confessed by the state since the citizens wish to have a non-religious state. Not having a non-religious state

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[49] The arguments listed below are, in most cases, not exclusively tied to a particular interpretation of "secular state". However, for analytical purposes I will treat them in connection to the interpretation which appears most suitable.

would be undemocratic; this I will call *the argument from democracy*.

(i) c   No religion should be confessed by the state since every religion causes harm. I will call this *the argument from harm*.

While no doubt common arguments, they are nonetheless flawed. Beginning with (i)a, its epistemological claim is questionable. While there certainly are strong opinions on this question, the jury is still out and is not coming back in any time soon. Therefore, claiming secularism as the only reasonable option is quite an epistemological stretch. Also, even if (i) a *would* be theoretically sound, it could come into conflict with (i) b.

(i) b is a strong argument – indeed, I have already stipulated democracy as a premise for the discussion – but clearly an appeal to democracy can end up supporting a non-secular state. If the people are religious enough, then a democratic argument in favour of emptying the institutionalised sphere of religious elements seems somewhat risky.

(i) c is probably the most persistent argument. Lately, this claim has been made, in colorful language, by a number of bestselling authors, such as Sam Harris (2004), Christopher Hitchens (2007) and Richard Dawkins (2006). While often believed to be a sound argument, the evidence backing it up is often weak. First, *what religion*? Treating all religions as one and the same is clearly a fallacy; still, this is common practice in anti-religious rhetoric. Religion is frequently identified as the Christianity of George W. Bush or the Islam of Sayyid Qutb. Arguably such controversial theological beliefs are not shared by the majority of Christians or Muslims.

Second, even if we grant that a state cannot differentiate between different religious groups and beliefs, but must (say, for practical reasons) treat all religions as one, the question if religion *generally* causes harm is far from settled. To begin with, the argument from harm is, as it is usually formulated, a *non sequitur*: even if religious beliefs are generally harmful on the individual level, it does not follow that religion on state level is. But assuming that there is a connection, the evidence still fails the conclusion: the role of religion in conflicts is arguably much

lesser than it is usually believed, especially if we assess the harmful effects in lights of the prevalence of religion (for various studies on the subject, see Ellingsen, 2005; Fox, 1998, 1999, 2004a, 2004b; Fox & Sandler, 2005; Martin, 1997; Nielsen & Fultz, 1995; Pearce, 2005; Seul, 1999).

Third, even if religion would be generally harmful, the cure might not be *no* religion, but *better* religion (Wallis, 2008, p. 12). Another way to exercise religious hygiene, although a risky tactic, is to institutionalise a state religion, thereby gaining control over it. A less radical way is to provide funds for religious moderates and their education.

Fourth, even if assuming that religion in general is harmful and that no better religion is possible, in order to establish the warranted conclusion one must show that the rejection of (all) religions is a *better* alternative. This is not easily done. Such a comparison must consider not only the alleged evils of religion, but also its positive sides, as well as the negative and positive sides of the secular. Needless to say, religion provides positive effects on both the individual and the community level. These are well-known, and I will therefore not attempt to provide a list. Moreover, non-religious states have not been common through history; the track-record of such states is too short to provide any conclusive evidence in its favour. Also, the states which have confessed themselves to be atheistic have little to brag about: Stalin's Russia and Mao's China rank high among the deadliest states in modern times. If looking at religion and armed conflicts, the evidence is ambiguous at best (see references above), indicating that conflicts would thrive regardless of religion. Often religion seems to provide the alibi for, not the motivation behind, a particular conflict. Miles (1996) makes a useful distinction between *sacralised politics* and *para-theology*: in the former case, religion is seeping into politics, but in the latter case "(…) politicians empower themselves with the halo of the divine." (p. 527) Conflicts, it can be argued, tend to be the result of para-theology rather than sacralised politics.

The support for (i) thus seems meager. Let us move on to what I called *the policy interpretation* (ii). The two main versions of the policy interpretation are *the impartial state* ((ii)[imp]) and *the neutral state* ((ii)[neut]):

$(ii)^{imp} =$ def. A state which through laws and policies treats reli gion R and religion R' equally.

$(ii)^{neut} =$ def. A state which through laws and policies treats R-belief sets and non-R-belief sets equally.

The former denies special treatment to a certain religion (R) vis-à-vis *another* religion (R'); religious beliefs *qua* religious beliefs are here viewed as a sufficient ground for special treatment such as exemptions from military service. The latter version denies special treatment to *any* religion (any R-belief sets) in comparison to other non-religious worldviews (non-R-belief sets). In the case of exemptions from military service, religious and non-religious reasons would both be, *prima facie*, valid (or invalid). Laws, in short, should be "religion-blind". However, on the neutrality interpretation, while a law or policy must be without discriminatory *intent*, it might still have – legitimately – discriminatory *effects*. For instance, a secular state in this sense could legitimately legislate against child marriages, intending to protect the children, while knowing that such a law will *in fact* only affect certain religious groups.

Beginning with $(ii)^{imp}$, there are two arguments that frequently appear in the debate.

$(ii)^{imp}a$ Impartial treatment prevents conflicts. I will call this *the pragmatic argument*.

$(ii)^{imp}b$ Religions are incommensurable. This is what I will call *the incommensurability argument*.

The first argument, $(ii)^{imp}a$, is not, it should be noted, the same as the argument from harm previously discussed. The pragmatic version claims that conflicts are most successfully avoided if the state adopts a neutral stance, regardless of whether religion actually causes or fuels conflicts. In order to prevent conflicts, the state should be secular in the impartial sense; $(ii)^{imp}$.

I believe this argument to carry some weight. But a few qualifications need to be added. Stability can be reached in several ways. While not

wanting to propose a Hobbesian solution as the best pragmatic response, it should nevertheless be noted that as a goal-driven argument, $(ii)^{imp}a$ rests on empirical claims concerning what measures are conducive to that goal. One should here remember the notion of *civil religion*, stemming from Rousseau's *Contrat Social*. The core idea is that a society needs a spiritual – loosely defined – foundation which ensures its cohesion. Moreover, the argument from democracy previously mentioned could clash with $(ii)^{imp}a$ in cases where the majority is content to risk conflict over having their will suppressed.

$(ii)^{imp}b$ argues that religions are not commensurable, and therefore we have no choice but to treat them equally. In one sense, this is true – in so far a religion constitutes the outer frame of a symbolic universe, then *per definition* it cannot be rationally compared to another religion. Nonetheless, a community often has a dominant epistemological and moral standard according to which different religions can be compared. So while religions R and R' cannot objectively be compared to each other, they can be assessed by using the prevalent standard in the democratic community. Moreover, the claim to incommensurability can also come into conflict with the democratic standard itself: not every religion would accept the democratic framework to the same extent.

Turning to $(ii)^{neut}$, the argumentative support is, I believe, somewhat stronger.

> $(ii)^{neut}a$ Neutrality prevents conflicts in society. This is a version of the pragmatic argument mentioned above.

> $(ii)^{neut}b$ Religion belongs to the private sphere. I will call this *the private domain argument*.

> $(ii)^{neut}c$ Giving special treatment to religion would impair institutionalised democracy. This is an instance of what I call *the argument from successful democracy*.

The first argument is intuitively sound. Since religion is an important identity-marker, it is likely to trigger a dramatic response when threatened. Staying neutral concerning religion in general is then, presumably, a good way of avoiding unnecessary conflicts between either dif-

ferent religions or between religion(s) and the secular. However, as already mentioned, the alleged connection between violence and religion is not beyond criticism. Moreover, (ii)^{neut} clearly hinges on the characteristics of the society in question. As Charles Taylor (1998) notes (although not drawing the same conclusion as I do):

> (..:) what the unbelieving 'secularist' sees as a necessary policing of the boundary of an common independent public sphere, will often be perceived by the religious as a gratuitous extrusion of religion in the name of a rival metaphysical belief. What to one side is a more strict consistent application of the principles of neutrality is seen by the other side as partisanship. (p. 36)

There is, whether we like it or not, a *Kulturkampf* between the secular and the non-secular. Having this in mind, a secular state in the sense of neutrality, necessarily adopting some non-religious standard for arbitrating in law and policy, could prove to be an igniting spark rather than a having a cooling effect; a fact I will return to below.

(ii)^{neut}b is a well-known argument stemming from John Locke's *A Letter Concerning Toleration*. It claims that religion is essentially private and therefore should be kept within the private sphere. But while such view is attractive in the eyes of many modern individualists, it is not a view firmly entrenched in the history of religions. As Stephen Carter (2000) points out, "[a]s any serious student of religion knows, religion has no sphere. It possesses no natural bounds." (p. 72) While religious faith is usually described as *personal*, it is seldom private. The distinction is important, since "personal", in contrast to "private", does not necessarily stand in opposition to "public". Moreover, if religion is closely connected to our identity, and our identity is in turn socially dependent, then the privatisation of religion will border on the oppressive.

Last, we turn to (ii)^{neut}c. Note that this argument does not claim that religion is intrinsically harmful, but simply less beneficial for a certain ideal: (ii)^{neut}c is an argument from perfection, not harm. If we are serious about democracy, the argument claims, we should try to rid ourselves of as many obstacles to ideal democracy as possible; hence the

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state should be secular in the sense of (ii)$^{\text{neut}}$. This argument has an intuitive appeal. A multitude of different (and sometimes conflicting) religions will probably make democratic life more difficult. Adopting a neutral stance in policies and laws is seen as a way not to add fuel to the difficulties already existing in the sometimes chaotic public life of a democracy. I concede that this argument has some force. But that said, it should also be noted that such an argument is sound only if the neutrality is indeed beneficial for democracy. First, (ii)$^{\text{neut}}$ can come into conflict with the democratic premise: if so, neutrality is to be overridden. (ii)$^{\text{neut}}$c is a second-order argument, having force only when the democratic premise is already fulfilled. *Democracy*, in short, is prior to *democracy functioning well*. Second, it is also a question of empirical nature whether or not non-neutrality generally impairs the functioning of democracy. Arguably democracy could sometimes suffer more from a religion-blind state, than from a biased state.[50]

The Idea Interpretation

Last, we have the interpretation of "secular state" which refers to the *idea of the state*. In the idea of the state we find the blueprint for what a legitimate state should look like – a blueprint describing political values, traditions, and so on. The SDS thesis is itself an idea found within this domain. Exactly what kind of interpretations we might come across in this domain is not known *a priori*; nor can any ideas, short of inconsistency, be *a priori* excluded. Hence, what is of interest here, I believe, is what *combination of different ideas* that make up the *Grand Idea* of a particular state. All ideas cannot, empirically or theoretically, be combined: this fact makes it urgent to investigate what kind of secularism that can be allowed, given other premises. The premise for this discussion has been a rough idea of democracy, which means that an idea in conflict with democracy should be rejected. It is from this very narrow outlook I will begin my analysis below.

I will focus on a particular idea in the domain of the idea of the state: *public reason*. Public reason is one of the most discussed aspect of the framework surrounding policymaking in a democratic state. Its core

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[50] For instance, Bader (1999) argues, among other things, that strict neutrality is a recipe for failure.

meaning is, quite obviously, a *reason* – or *reasoning* – which is *public*. The purpose of public reason is usually regarded as justificatory; that is, public reason is invoked to provide justifications for, broadly construed, political action. Moreover, and most important for our present discussion, public reason often involves what is known as a *doctrine of restraint*: a doctrine claiming that the citizens engaged in public deliberation should constrain themselves (or be constrained) from using arguments stemming exclusively from their own non-public worldviews. In particular, the doctrine of restraint usually involves a claim saying that religious arguments should be kept out of the public political discourse: I will refer to this view as a *secular doctrine of restraint* (SDR). In short then, a secular state, on this interpretation, is a state the idea domain of which includes an SDR.

An SDR has been defended by several prominent scholars: Robert Audi (1989), Jürgen Habermas (2006) and (to some extent) John Rawls (1997), to name a few. Their versions of SDR vary and build on different justifications, but they all – explicitly or in consequence – function as to bar religious arguments from playing a direct part in the political discourse. Usually the SDR is portrayed as a moral requirement and as applying only to organised discussions and/or directed to the holders of various political offices. I will not discuss the particular merits of each version here; instead I will focus on some of the most common arguments for an SDR. While many of the arguments already mentioned certainly will reappear when debating an SDR, the following arguments tend to be more closely associated with SDR in particular.

First we have *the argument from respect*, which claims that accepting an SDR follows from the respect owed to one's fellow citizens. As formulated (and later criticised) by Christopher Eberle (2006):

> (..,) if she [the citizen] is to respect her compatriots as persons, she must be committed to providing them with reasons that *they* find, or at least can find, acceptable. (p. 209)

This argument is also found in John Rawls' account of reciprocity, echoing his insistence that the citizen must provide other citizens with arguments that she reasonably thinks they will reasonably accept

(Rawls, 1996, p. xliv). However, the argument seems flawed. "Respect", as "reasonably", is an evaluative concept. This means that its meaning is tied to a certain worldview (a comprehensive doctrine in Rawls' terms). To see that this is the case, ponder a recent Swedish example of alleged hate speech. A Pentecostal pastor preached that God hates homosexuality; a claim which enraged many Swedish homosexuals (as well as many non-homosexuals). What caused the uproar were divergent interpretations of "respect": the pastor, whose theological views included a God who loves the sinner but not the sin, saw his own sermon as a way of paying loving respect to the homosexuals by trying to save them from God's wrath. The homosexuals, on the other hand, had little understanding for the pastor's separation of person and sexual orientation, and subsequently interpreted the pastor's sermon as a blatant personal attack. Clearly both camps, from their own point of view, were correct: respect entails different actions and constraints depending on worldview. This means, however, that the argument from respect in favour of an SDR is potentially question-begging, since assuming the secular interpretation of "respect" to have priority.

The second argument is *the argument from community*. The community is here assumed to have a value *qua* community, and the claim here is that the absence of an SDR is conducive to the breakdown of community. Without an SDR, religious arguments are believed to fragment the community in its very heart; the political deliberation. The idea is that by excluding religious arguments from the political sphere, the fragmentation stays within maintainable limits (the argument, the reader might note, is similar to the private domain argument previously discussed).

But the argument rests on a rather dubious conception of the role of the political. If there are differences within the community, is not the idea that through public deliberation such differences can be worked out or at least mitigated? Indeed, if the community is already fragmented on the informal level, what community is there to be preserved on the political level by barring religious arguments? Allowing religious arguments in public and formal deliberation here becomes a way to *build* and *consolidate* community, not to cover up latent conflicts. Moreover, keeping debaters armed with religious arguments outside (but not within) public and formal deliberation can arguably lead to further fragmen-

tation of the community: suppressing strongly held views from being taken seriously (formally and in public) is seldom a recipe for stability.

Also, there are considerations stemming from the democratic premise that must be considered. If certain arguments are prohibited from entering the public discussion, does not this mean that the citizens relying on them are thereby excluded from the political deliberation? Rawls attempted to solve this problem by introducing a proviso. According to Rawls' proviso, arguments from a comprehensive doctrine can be introduced in the public deliberation at any time, *provided* that a "translation" is presented in "due course" (Rawls, 1997, p. 584). The details of the proviso, according to Rawls, must be "worked out" in the particular social context (p. 592). That sounds reasonable, but the question of whether or not a religious argument is at all *possible* to translate into non-religious terms must first be answered. It seems to me that an argument is not just a string of facts or the voicing of opinions, but a proposition that, in virtue of its content and architecture, claims to have persuasive power. If this is the case, then it is not at all obvious that an argument saying that something should be prohibited "because it is against the will of God" can be translated into a non-religious equivalent without losing its characteristics and persuasive force. So, if translations are impossible, or imperfect at best, the SDR will clash with the democratic premise.

Last, we have *the argument from justification*,[51] which suggests that any democratic justification presupposes a common ground. Moreover, such common ground, it is claimed, happens to be non-religious. This seems to be the opinion of Rawls, who does not explicitly prescribe a *secular* doctrine of restraint, but who nonetheless seems to believe that most religious arguments will in fact be excluded.

But the argument is clearly contextually dependent. As already shown, the secular, not the religious, is the exception. If, as according to a recent poll, 72 per cent of the Americans think that it is important that their President believes in God (Pew, 2008, p. 9), then it can be

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[51] A similar argument, under the name "the argument from public discourse", is formulated and criticized by Eberle (2006), pp. 212-215.

doubted that the most widely shared ground in the United States is secular.

There are also worries that different restrictions will impede development and education of the public: we learn and develop through confronting views contrary to our own, and by excluding competing views our reflective capacities and critical thinking on particular issues will degenerate. In addition, there are positive arguments for an *agonistic* version of public reason; that is, a public reason which lacks restrictions on what kind of arguments is allowed. However, I will not discuss them here.

There are, no doubt, plenty of other arguments in favour of adopting a SDR. However, as my discussion intended to show, some of the common arguments against religion in the domain of the idea of the state is questionable and, at best, context dependent.

The Post-Secular State

I began by presenting a common claim which I labeled the SDS thesis; the claim that a democratic state ought (in a rather strong sense) to be secular. I then went on to examining different conceptions of "secular state" and discussing the argumentative support for the various conceptions' normative status.

On the conceptual side, I distinguished several interpretations, all of which involve degrees of distance from religion. This means that a state can be secular in one of the senses and so to a certain degree, or secular in all the senses, and so to a certain degree. If secular in all three domains, and to a very high degree, we have an instance of a *strictly secular state*. These distinctions call for a more nuanced use of the concept "secular state".

Under each interpretation of "secular state" I discussed several arguments in favour of the SDS thesis. The arguments could obviously be invoked in favour of several interpretations, not just one, but my criticism tends to follow them around. While I make no claims to have rebutted the secular state as a political ideal once and for all, I have tried

to show that the SDS thesis is indeed highly questionable and must be subjected to both principal and contextual considerations.

That said, it can be argued that some pluralist states *do* need to be secular to a high degree for both contextual and democratic reasons. I will not argue against such a claim; the question needs to be settled in reference to detailed knowledge of local contexts and history. What I will argue against, however, is the use of the *term* "secular state". If considering what secularism is believed to deliver, one will arrive at a set of values and functions not inherently connected to religion *or* non-religion. At the core of such set, my guess is that we will find "neutrality", "deliberation", "common ground", or something similar. The "secular" only has a role to play *if* the secular denotes a way to provide the wanted values and functions. But the problem seems to be that the concept does not deliver. The reason is, in short, that "secular state" and "secularism" no longer point to – if they ever did – *neutral ground*. In common discourse, as well as in the works of many scholars, there is a conflict between the religious and the secular. In traditional Western liberal discourse, the secularity of the state has often been perceived as the empty space left after religion had withdrawn to the private sphere. But this previously uninhabited neutral domain now has inhabitants: atheism and general disbelief have come to occupy the previously believed-to-be empty space. Hence, I claim that we need to rethink our categories and tactics, ridding ourselves of the concept of "secular state" and instead focus on what is more basic: democracy.

Insofar "secular state" intends to signify a neutral political space or political point of view it fails. And, to make matters even worse, "secular state" comes with a distinct Western tone. As Charles Taylor (1989) correctly notes, "(…) 'secularism' is an invention of this [European] civilization, and by implication, that is [sic] doesn't travel well (,..)" (p. 31) Demands for states to be secular are therefore troubling not only because of the non-neutral character of "secular state", but also since perceived as a tool of neo-colonialism. Of course, we might question the correctness of such perception, but the mere fact that secularism *is* perceived as a Western phenomenon devalues its actual conduciveness to peace and democracy in pluralistic societies. The term "secular" can be seen as a provocation, bound to alienate more citizens than it includes. So while democracy contextually may *sometimes* need policies

resembling those of the secular state, it does best, I conclude, to leave the concept "secular" out of the picture. Democracy is strong enough on its own.

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Cultural Trauma, Ritual and Healing

Anne-Christine Hornborg

"Consciousness is in the first place not a matter of 'I think that' but of 'I can'," says Merleau-Ponty (1962, p.137). A loss of agency must, according to this statement, be a fundamental assault on our experience of self and identity (Giddens 1984). Loss of agency is not necessarily an individual physical injury; it can also be tied to the plight of living in a hegemonic society and being subjected to such power relations. The effects of losing agency is one of the reasons that in 1958, *The Encyclopedia of Canada* described the Canadian Mi'kmaq Indians thus: "There has been so much white intermixture that they retain relatively few Indian characteristics and give the effect of being a depressed white community" (*Encyclopedia Canadiana. The Encyclopedia of Canada* 1958:68).

In my chapter I will discuss the effects of agency loss, cultural trauma[52] and healing, by focusing on the impact the boarding schools, the so called residential school, had and still has on contemporary Canadian Mi'kmaq Native identity, drawing on interviews from one of my fieldworks conducted on the island Cape Breton, Nova Scotia. In the 1930s, there were about 80 residential schools in Canada and one of them, Shubenacadie residential school, was located on Nova Scotia, aiming to separate the Mi'kmaq from traditional lifestyle and educate them into a new life as Canadian citizens. A report in *The Casket* (28 Aug. 1941) is full of optimism about the project:

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[52] Cultural trauma is a concept developed by Ron Eyerman (2001). He has applied the theory of a cultural trauma on the formation of the African-American identity. The trauma is a collective memory (in this case slavery), a pervasive remembrance that grounded a people's sense of itself.

At Shubenacadie there is a school that in neatness, in equipment and a balanced education program stands out from any other in Nova Scotia. But, white children cannot attend it. It is for the descendants of a race whose national sport less than 150 years ago was looking for white men's scalps.

The Shubenacadie Indian Residential School is a marvel of efficiency. Acquiring a knowledge of the traditional 'reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic is only one side of the story. When students leave this institution - and they all leave at 16 - they are armed not only with knowledge but with several years of good practical training in how to make a living.

The organizers of the schools and the education agenda, and with these days view of culture and education, maybe had the best intention and ambition to find a way to assimilate the Mi'kmaq. But nearly every Mi'kmaq, who went to Shubenacadie, very soon did not come to share this optimism. For almost everyone, the residential school education did not lead anywhere. When they did not see any future in modern society, many of them felt deprived of their childhood and lost in a no-man's land, where ties to the former generation had been cut off. Some of them also felt ashamed of their Mi'kmaq heritage, since Native traditions were meant to be replaced by white men's culture. This could be one explanation for *The Encyclopedia of Canada's* 1958 reference to the Mi'kmaq community as a "depressed white community".

My chapter will discuss the negative side of cultural meetings, when dominant society applies a kind of "aggressive assimilation" in education. The failure of the residential school, and the harsh criticism from all First Nations in North America, eventually resulted for the Mi'kmaq in a statement from the government in June 11, 2008. Prime Minister Stephen Harper gave an official apology for the government's past policy of supporting the residential school system and separating thousands of Native children from their homes and relatives. The federal government had already in 2005 promised a $2-billion compensation package (the Common Experience Payments) for the Natives who had been sent to residential schools. The payment would include $10,000 for being a former student at the schools, and then followed by a sum

of \$3,000 for every year they stayed there. If a former student had reahed the age of 65, they could had an advance payment of \$8,000 (http://www.cbc.ca/canada/story/2008/05/16/f-faqs-residential-schools.html).

Money is one way of compensating the Mi'kmaq, but unless Canadian Society recognize the full extent of the cultural trauma that many of them have suffered, finding the means to an appropriate way for addressing effects of cultural abuse will be hard. This treatment includes the Mi'kmaq way of healing suffering and traumas, which differs from the Non-Native clinical ways of treating mental illness and physical pain.

"I lost my talk" – Loss of agency

The colonization of North America did not only mean a deliberate attempt to force a Western hegemonic ideology into the mind of Native Americans; it also brought restrictions on how to practice their traditions, including bodily practices. We can read between the lines of the missionary reports as early as the 18th century about the suffering and depression of Indian children in school. The missionaries had difficulty understanding why the children became depressed, since they were taken good care of, were provided with nice clothes, plenty of food and clean beds. But what the missionaries failed to understand was the children's bodily otherness; the children were not used to classroom discipline. Marie de l'Incarnation writes about the children received by the Ursulines that they "cannot be restrained and if they are, they become melancholy and their melancholy makes them sick" (Marshall 1967, p.341, cf. Jaenen 1976, p.94). Documents from the Jesuits, the Ursulines, and the Recollets all tell the same story about attempts at educating the Amerindian children: they became depressed, disoriented and ran away to find their parents (Jeanen 1976, p.95).

When the Mi'kmaq finally lost in the war against the English at the end of the 18th century, they were forced to submit to the new colonial masters. In 1911, the education system was still resisted by the more conservative among the Mi'kmaq: "The natural way...is the Indian way" (Wallis & Wallis 1953, p.24). The older generation considered educa-

tion to be at the root of the split between generations and looked upon a person who could read and write as someone to be distrusted rather than respected. In 1920, school became compulsory for Mi'kmaq children, but it was to the residential schools the government put their hope to assimilate the children of Native Americans into new societal and cultural contexts. Two thousand young Mi'kmaq would be "white-washed" in Shubenacadie residential school, Nova Scotia, during the years 1929-1967 (Prins 1996, p.185, Ralstone 1981, p. 484, Hornborg 2001, p.195-208, also 2008). It was run by a religious organization, the "Sisters of Charity" and a Catholic priest was the headmaster of the school (*Atlantic Insight* Feb. 1988, p.21). The headmaster and the nuns were from the Roman Catholic Ecclesiastical Authorities in Halifax (*New Maritimes* March/April 1992, p.8).

The Mi'kmaq Isabelle Knockwood has written in *Out of the Depths* (1992)[53] about her experiences as a pupil in Shubenacadie school. She and some of her siblings were put there in September 1936. They had a difficult time acclimatizing to these completely different conditions, like being strictly forbidden to speak the Mi'kmaq language. In the instructions to teachers, printed on residential school registers, this is clearly pronounced:

> Language: Every effort must be made to induce pupils to speak English and to teach them to understand it. Insist on English during even the supervised play. Failure in this means wasted efforts (Knockwood 1992, p.47).

Knockwood was not initially negative to school, but her hopes for a good education were eventually dashed to the ground and replaced by despair. For most of the Mi'kmaq youth, education did not lead anywhere and when they did not see any future in modern society, many of them felt deprived of their childhood and lost in a no-man's land.

Thus colonization was not only about education the Mi'kmaq children; it included a new bodily orientation. In the 18th century it was still possible for the children to run away into the forest and join their parents

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[53] The title is from a prayer the children had to learn in school: "Out of the depths I have cried unto thee O Lord. Lord hear my voice."(Knockwood 1992, p.101).

and kin groups, but the residential school made it harder to escape. It was often a long distance from Shubenacadie and their home, and the Indian agents often found the children and forced them back to school. As in the missionary schools, one of the tasks of the residential school was to train the Mi'kmaq children to behave in a British manner, including what food to eat, working at the school's farm, wearing Brittish clothes and so on. In the subject ethics, the instruction was:

> In the primary grades, instill the qualities of obedience, respect, order, neatness and cleanliness. Differentiate between right and wrong, cultivate truthful habits and a spirit of fair play. As the pupils become more advanced, inculcate as near as possible in the order mentioned, independence, self-respect, industry, honesty, thrift, self-maintenance, citizenship and patriotism. Discuss charity, pauperism, Indian and white life, the evils of Indian isolation, enfranchisement. Explain the relationship of the sexes to labour, home and public duties, and labour as the law of existence (Knockwood 1992, p.47).

From now, Mi'kmaq had to adjust to different bodily habitus. The new way of being in the world was not only an experience of mental oppression; it was simultaneously an experience of bodily alienation. How difficult though it is, it seems like a change in values and ideas is not as invasive as a change of bodily habitus.

The residential school became in time a symbol of colonial oppression and a cultural trauma which continue to have an effect on the Mi'kmaq and the experience of the personal Self. References to the institution are found in all kinds of contexts: poems, political speeches and as explanations of dysfunctional behavior ("Shubie, you know"). Murdena Marshall, Assistant Professor of Mi'kmaq Studies at the University College of Cape Breton, writes (Inglis, et.al. 1991, p.19):

> When an identity crisis is experienced by an individual, his spiritual, mental and physical well-being is bombarded with feelings of doubt, anxiety, confusion and uselessness. … as a result of our

> loss of identity, Mi'kmaq are more apt to experience psychological illness.

A Mi'kmaq who becomes physically ill will, naturally, use modern Canadian hospital care to recover or to access the proper medication. But when it comes to mental illness and psychological suffering, there is a great reluctance to use non-Native therapy methods. They say the possibilities for them to heal with the help of modern secular therapy methods become limited, because of dominant society's reluctance to acknowledge the importance of spirituality as a way of resurrection.[54] When the Mi'kmaq Lottie Marshall examines Native depression (1991, p.70), she distinguishes spiritual illness from other forms of depression: "For this form of illness, there are no pills or professional help for the depressed Indian". The clinical treatment is one way of dealing with pain, anxiety and suffering, including using medical treatment, but existential problems are rarely addressed, and spiritual matters is not at all in the domain of medical care.

It is not so much a loss of identity that bothers the Mi'kmaq, and of course, there are no such things as an "essential" identity, not even a "cultural essence". Both cultures and identities are parts of dynamic processes, and as such, always parts of changes. But the Mi'kmaq have to deal with two ways of being-in-the world, dependent on contexts. Since these contexts and are poorly matched and incompatible, the Mi'kmaq Self becomes caught in a web of power relations, where some take precedence in effecting the Mi'kmaq identity. There are hegemonic discourses that both frame the Mi'kmaq world and that are the underlying text of the conditions in everyday life at the reserves. Thus, the feeling of alienation suffered by the Mi'kmaq today is not only with regard to Canadian society and culture; it could also in some context cut right into the Mi'kmaq Self, making the individual a stranger to him- or herself. Also, we should not underestimate the challenge of

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[54] Although today heavily criticized for his view of religion, it could here be mentioned the founder of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud (1907 [1996]:216), who degraded religion to the status of an obsession and drew parallels between obsessive actions and religious practices: "In view of theses similarities and analogies one might venture to regard obsessional neurosis as a pathological counterpart of the formation of a religion, and to describe that neurosis as an individual religiosity and religion as a universal obsessional neurosis."

knowing the body as a locus for the political interplay of different habitus. The Mi'kmaq poet Rita Joe writes (1996, p.55):

> I lost my talk
> The talk you took away
> When I was a little girl
> At Shubenacadie school.
> You snatch it away:
> I speak like you
> I think like you
> I create like you
> The scrambled ballad, about my word.
> Two ways I talk
> Both ways I say,
> Your way is more powerful…

Voices to be heard

I will now show how the residential school stills effect the contemporary Mi'kmaq. When I visited Whycocomagh reserve, Cape Breton Island 2000[55], I got involved in a discussion with a Mi'kmaq couple about how their children experience school and how they resolve disagreements between them and their teachers. Before long, my Mi'kmaq friends bring up residential school:

(I will refer to the interviewed Mi'kmaq as (M), and to myself as Interviewer (I):

(**M**): Now we have to go back. We came from a very violent social structure coming out of the residential School in the 1960s and the way things happened in the 1970s, it was really violent, like it was really down, it was down. Now in the year 2000 I find that the children are learning to be argumentative, that violence doesn't have to play a part in disagreement – I can disagree with you but I still love you – that kind of philosophy has to enter now and it does enter into the system. I've seen it, because these youth are not so violent anymore.

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[55] I would here thank Uno Otterstedt Fund for their contribution to my fieldwork 2000.

People starting to realize this, don't be afraid to speak out your opinion, but don't get violent, don't get physical. You can express your opinion and whether people accept it or not, it is their right.
(I mention Isabelle Knockwood's book and how she had experienced her time in residential school).

(**M**): Now there are different reactions of persons, you have to talk to the individual how they react. I know that out of the residential school situation there was a lot of people that got hurt, and they were young, they were let us say ten-eleven-twelve years old. When they became adults they still carried that hurt in them. They could not unleash that hurt, but they became parents, they became parents of another generation, but they kept on losing this anger and violence. And then they were drinking, trying to forget all the physical and sexual abuse that they had gone through. And the children would receive the non-love that was supposed to take place in these families.

Now we go another decade, we go to the 1980s. Children start talking to me: "What's wrong with our parents?" They were the one that were questioning their parents: "What's wrong with our dad? Why is he drunk all the time? Why can't we talk to him? This is our dad; we are supposed to be able to love him, why can't he love us? Why is he chasing us away?"

And the families broke up, so now we are faced with broken up families with alcoholism and sexual abuse and there's a lot of pain, and there's a lot of silent pain that exist in the Mi'kmaq community. And how do you handle pain? I can't take that pain away from you, because you lost your loved one. I can try to understand the pain; try to understand why these things happen.

So if alcohol is the product of the real problem, let's move to the root of the problem, let's get back to how it all started, why we react this way. I spoke to a lot of residential school people, and a lot of them were crying in front of me in this

room…There's no trust, because these people don't have trust in authorities. Who's gonna do something, and who's gonna undo the pain they gone through?

(**I**): There haven't been ceremonies, healing?…

(**M**): We have gone through the Royal Commission of Aboriginal people, after this commission we took it into a broader context, a broader situation, and we used that to the Royal Commission and they came up with 800 or 500 recommendations. How do you implement 800 recommendations when you can't implement 88 or 82? So what I'm saying is that it is so complex that where do you start from to heal?

(**I**): Has there been therapy or psychoanalysis?

(**M**): What is psychoanalysis?

(**I**nterviewer explains psychoanalysis and add): it seems what you've been doing in a community basis, you're going back to the root of the problem, you dig into your parents generation and perhaps you understand why they are acting the way they do.

(**M**): Let me play the Devil's advocate here. I came from residential school.

(**I**): You were there?

(**M**): No, it's just a case. I came from residential school, I was sexually abused, physically abused, psychologically abused. Now you're saying you have this analysis, you say it is psychoanalysis. In my mind I will say he is saying I am crazy. And I am not crazy (I'm just playing the Devils advocate, OK). He's saying I'm crazy, I'm not crazy. Why am I being victimized again? Why can't they just hear me say: "I was abused" and accept that. Instead they try saying I'm crazy. Now, we live in two different worlds, I know you are an academic

and the discipline that you have, of course you gonna use the word psychoanalysis because it is an acceptable term in that kind of thinking. But I never entered into these kinds of disciplines; I never entered into these academic worlds. I just have grade six, that's all I got. You are using "psycho", you have to be careful with these people on the terminology that you use, because that's where all these disciplines are making their mistakes. They use all these disciplinary words. Like I said about complex, I thought complex was complicated…

(**I**): But you use a lot of complicated words, too.

(**M**): So if I used these words here it could be complicated. Do you remember when N.N. and N.N were here? I used words they would not understand.

(**I**): Were they offended by that?

(**M**): No, but that's why they didn't say anything, because they were listening to the terminology that we were using. And they wanted to be in that discussion with that terminology but they had to be careful because they have that limited education. And we would've intimidated them saying we are better than them, that's why he didn't shake your hand, that's part of intimidation, that's part of psychoanalysis. He was a residential school survivor. You don't know what these people felt or what they've gone through or whether they want to reveal what they gone through, because they might say – and I've heard this before – "Don't take me back there, don't take me back there, I'm going to lose control." They don't want to remember, "cause if you take me back there, I'm going to lose control". That woman would say, "I would piss myself"- literally.

(**I**) refers again to psychoanalysis: Once you talk about the problem, let go of it, you become free.

(**M**): We shouldn't stop at that level; we shouldn't

just make that person feel just that, we should help them to regain confidence in society. That's what my goal is in the Mi'kmaq Nation, first to listen, to understand their problem, what the problem is in my analysis.

And one area I have found that has done that kind of healing was Alcoholics Anonymous and the only way that it was really effective was because it was anonymous. Nobody has to use their name or be judged… Hospital is the last resort for us, you talk to a friend first.

Like the Christian philosophy says: I can only carry that cross so long before it makes me stumble, so I need you to be there to pick it up when it crushes me, to lift it up and help me at least until I regain my strength to get it back.

Cultural trauma – spirituality and healing

It is obvious that the older generation's memories and experiences from the school effects the younger generations. To be a parent implicates that you have experienced parenthood, and many of the Mi'kmaq who were brought to residential schools, stayed there for years with hardly any contacts with the parents. Both the far distance from home and the hard restrictions to get even short-leaves from school contributed to this lack of contacts. The loss of a lap to sit on, a warm hug before bedtime, and the care of an extended family were replaced by hard class-room discipline and unfamiliar bedroom halls.

When the Mi'kmaq revitalized their traditions in the 1970s, ritual became a central means of not only culturally and mentally adopting the Mi'kmaq practices but also of facilitating a bodily resurrection. But how do individuals respond to ritual acts and put them to use when creating meaning and wellbeing in their lives?

Meredith McGuire (1990, p.285, 1996) prefers to speak of a mindful body and "then spiritual responses may be simultaneously part of the mindful-body responses to pain and illness. Thus, we can better under-

stand the impact of rituals on the body itself, not just on ideas about the body". The ritual praxis includes agency of the body, in the Mi'kmaq case still suffering from a cultural trauma, seeking to negotiate a way to make life more endurable. From a Mi'kmaq perspective, spirituality involves body, mind and soul simultaneously, and rituals appear to address and simultaneously accommodate all three levels (Boddy [1988] 2002, p.405, McGuire 1996, p.101, Crapanzano 1977, p.11).[56] Rituals do not reflect passively on or merely symbolize societal structures, instead they actively negotiate with and rework the individual's lived world (Bell 1997, p.80-83, Comaroff 1993, p.xxi). Recent studies by scholars call attention to the ritual as a creative process (Hornborg 2005). McGuire says that when body metaphors and symbols are ritually realigned or reconnected, the sick person may experience a body/mind/self transformation culturally identified as wholeness or healing (McGuire 1996, p.108, see also Csordas 1990, p.5, 1993, p.138, and Kovach 2002, p.952). Meaning could verbally be discussed, explained and negotiated, but in the rite, meaning is inacted in a more multidimensional way.

Hence, it seems that the revitalization of traditional rituals has been an effective way of reworking a new embodiment and identity, thus making the individual body corresponding with the new self-esteem. To move your body in a proud manner is an experiential matter and ritualization becomes a way of embodied learning. It works as redemptive "medicine" since it opens the way to weeding out destructive patterns unconsciously or consciously embedded in their bodies (Salomonsen 2003, p.2, see also Bell 1997, p.81). The new orientation in life is simultaneously affirmed and legitimized in a social context (McGuire 1996, p.109).

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[56] For a cultural comparison, see Boddy (2002, p.405), who examines possession (*zar*) among Hofriyati women in Northern Sudan: "For the *zar* in Hofriyat is a holistic phenomenon; it penetrates every facet of human existence. Consequently it defies analytic reduction to a single constituent dimension, psychological, medical, or social, with which members of Western cultures might feel more at home.

Conclusion

It is evident that the residential school has had a great impact on the Mi'kmaq community which continues even today. There is also among the Mi'kmaq a reluctance to individualize the problems arising from school experiences, which is why it is more correct to speak of a cultural trauma. The unwillingness to use non-Native therapy could be that it is not the appropriate Mi'kmaq way to process their experience. To attribute the problem to the individual is seen by the Mi'kmaq as once again accepting victimization. Since they think of the problem in terms of a cultural trauma, it is important that the solution be rooted at a community level. They prefer to involve friends and the community in the healing, not to isolate the individual or have individual therapy. It is not easy to live with painful experiences and for many Mi'kmaq the memories are so traumatic, they cannot allow them to surface again. But if they do, and when they manage to speak out, there must be a readiness in dominant society to listen to what they have to say.

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