

From Liberal Multiculturalism to Muscular Liberalism: Changes in the Official Discourses of Multiculturalism in Australia¹⁾

SHIOBARA, Yoshikazu

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Introduction

While multiculturalism is broadly defined as a variety of principles, movements and policies that recognize the existence of culturally diverse people in a national society, and seek a fair society where they can all live together (Shiobara 2012), understanding the concept and implications of multiculturalism has been a controversial topic of academic and political debates in many countries. In the early 2010s, European political leaders such as David Cameron, Angela Merkel and Nicolas Sarkozy proclaimed the “failure” of multiculturalism. Highlighting the increase in the Muslim population and “home-grown terrorism” in their countries, these political leaders insisted that multiculturalism is a “laissez-faire” concept that overemphasizes the cultural rights and self-determination of immigrants and inhibits the social integration of immigrants into mainstream society. Therefore, according to this criticism, multiculturalism eventually erodes the principle and institutions of liberalism and creates “parallel societies” in nation states (Joppke 2017:44-45). Alternatively, many European politicians and

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intellectuals argued for the enhancement of civic integration (Adachi 2020), recognizing the cultural diversity of individuals rather than ethnic groups, promoting intercultural communication and cultural diversity based not on rights and dignity but the economic productivity of migrants and introducing migrants to liberal values (Joppke 2017: 43-75; Cattle 2012). Thus, British Prime Minister Cameron emphasized the promotion of “muscular liberalism” instead of “state multiculturalism” (Joppke 2017: 44). However, as Christian Joppke argues, in many European countries, state-level multicultural policies that emphasize the maintenance of group rights and cultural identities have never existed, and therefore, the logic of highlighting the “failure” of multiculturalism was a discursive strategy used by people who wanted to emphasize the importance of liberal values for dealing with anti-Muslim public sentiment (Joppke 2017: 74-75).

On the other hand, objecting to arguments about the failure of multiculturalism in Europe, Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard stated in 2010 that multiculturalism in Australia is quite a different from the “multiculturalism” policies enacted in Western Europe, and Australia definitely “succeeded” (Sekine et al. eds. 2020). As argued later, the “alternatives” of multiculturalism supported in Europe, such as intercultural communication, the economic utilization of diversity and civic integration, are actually considered to be important principles of multiculturalism in Australia that have been pursued since the 1970s.

The formation of policies and discourses of official multiculturalism in Australia from the 1970s to the 1990s have been examined in some previous studies (Shiobara 2005; Sekine 1989; Hage 1998, 2003; Lopez 2000; Moran 2017). The authors argued that official multiculturalism in Australia does not involve the principle and policies that aim to unlimitedly recognize cultural differences and the self-determination of ethnic minorities, which could compromise the social integration of Australia as a nation. Rather, as Ghassan Hage argued, multiculturalism has been practised as a way of integrating the Australian nation while maintaining the supremacy of “White” majority people by controlling the cultural differences of minorities and promoting an image of Australia as a nondiscriminatory and liberal democratic state making a break

with the past of White Australia (Hage 1998). According to Masami Sekine, the official principle of multiculturalism in Australia presupposed the promotion of national interests and social integration from the very beginning. Under this precondition, Australia recognizes the cultural diversity of “all Australians”, including immigrants, and guarantees economic and social equity. Multicultural policies in Australia have been developed in various policy areas, such as 1) settlement assistance and the facilitation of social participation of immigrants, 2) the maintenance of minority cultures and languages, 3) the promotion of intercultural communication, and 4) the awareness of cultural diversity in mainstream public services (Sekine et al. eds. 2020: 130-131). Since the 1990s, the logic of “productive diversity”, which emphasizes the utilization of cultural diversity as a source of economic productivity and creativity, has emerged (Shiobara 2005). As Geoffrey Levy insists, since its introduction in the 1970s, official multiculturalism in Australia has been typical “liberal multiculturalism (Kymlicka 2001)” that aims to recognize the cultural diversity of minorities within the frame of liberal democracy while revising the assimilationist model of the nation state (Levy 2013). Since the 1980s, multicultural policies in Australia have focused on “welfare multiculturalism”, which facilitates the social inclusion of ethnic minorities as citizens through social policies founded on the principle of welfare states (Shiobara 2010).

However, like other European and North American countries, discourses of exclusionism and associated movements, mainly targeting Muslim migrants, emerged in the 2010s (Shiobara 2019). In the conservative Coalition (Liberal Party and National Party) government that has been operating since 2013, the influence of the principle of multiculturalism has drastically decreased, and the word “multicultural” tends to be used in terms of supporting programs for ethnic minorities and disadvantaged people rather than as an ideology of national integration (Sekine et al. eds., 2020: 145-158). While the Coalition government has not abandoned multiculturalism, as argued later, it increasingly emphasizes the importance of “sharing liberal values” for national integration and is more likely to support “muscular liberalism”, which was proposed by Cameron in 2010. In this article, I analyze the change of the discourses of official multiculturalism in Australia and examine the question of whether trends from liberal welfare

multiculturalism to muscular liberal multiculturalism imply a fundamental change in the ideology of liberal multiculturalism or it is a logical consequence of liberal multiculturalism.

Liberal Values: Alternating between “Sharing” and “Coercion”

Canadian political theorist Will Kymlicka argued that the principles of liberal multiculturalism and liberal nationalism both involve “liberal culturalism”.

Liberal culturalism is the view that liberal democratic states should not only uphold the familiar set of common civil and political rights of citizenship which are protected in all liberal democracies; they must also adopt various group-specific rights or policies which are intended to recognize and accommodate the distinctive identities and needs of ethnocultural groups (Kymlicka 2001: 42).

According to Kymlicka, unlike illiberal nationalism, liberal nationalism does not enforce a particular form of national identity on people who do not share the ideology, permits “political activities aimed at giving public space a different national character”, and maintains more inclusive forms of the principles of a nation and national identities that are not limited to a particular race, ethnicity and religion (Kymlicka 2001: 39-41). David Miller also argued that liberal nationalism promotes tolerance for cultural differences and the social inclusion of ethnic minorities to redefine the national identity, but he also emphasized that the national identity should be based on the majority’s culture and society (Miller 1995).

The assumption of the supremacy of the majority and its culture in a tolerant and inclusive state was present in the early periods of official multicultural discourses in Australia. For instance, in *Australia as a Multicultural Society*, an opinion paper of the Australian Ethnic Affairs Council submitted to the Australia Population and Immigration Council in 1977, the supremacy of the majority’s “fundamental values of the dominant Australian culture” was assumed while the importance of dialogue among different cultural

groups was emphasized.

Because of differences among minority cultures themselves and also because some minority values are totally inconsistent with fundamental values of the dominant Australian culture (e.g., the norm that the family takes the law into its own hands to redress a wrong done to one of its members), it would be nonsense to say that multiculturalism means that every culture is equally valued and equally legitimate (AEAC 1978: 16).

In discourses about official multiculturalism, it has been taken for granted that the majority people in Australia are Anglo-Australian (or Anglo-Celtic) people whose mother language is English. On the other hand, the term “ethnic groups” implied “non-English-speaking background (NESB)” people in documents written in the 1970s and 1980’s (Shiobara 2005). As a result, the logic of binary opposition between the majority Anglo-Celtic people and the minority “NESB” people was constructed and enhanced. Based on this binary opposition, multicultural policies in Australia intending to promote liberal welfare multiculturalism aim to promote the “liberal values” of the majority to ethnic minorities by encouraging “tolerance” toward cultural differences and facilitating the equal participation of ethnic minorities through social policies.

The “tolerance” that British Prime Minister James Cameron blamed in his public speech in 2010 referred to the implementation of a hands-off policy for cultural differences. He insisted that to defend British society from the threat of Islamic extremism and “home-grown terrorism”, “state multiculturalism” that overruns the common values of British society with the unlimited acceptance of Islamic culture should be abandoned. Instead, he argued that “muscular liberalism” that requires Islamic individuals to assimilate liberal values is necessary (Joppke 2014). As Joppke suggested, however, the idea that “liberal values” should be forced onto ethnic minorities is never liberalism because liberalism is based on defending individuals’ freedom of thought and beliefs. In contrast, the logic of muscular liberalism essentializes liberal values as a “culture of majority people” and forces minorities to assimilate these values. Therefore, when it is connected to discourses on Orientalism that essentialize minorities

(such as Muslim people) as people who will never share Western liberal values, muscular liberalism turned into a logic for legitimizing exclusionism to the detriment of minorities.

Nevertheless, the line between liberal multiculturalism/nationalism and muscular liberalism is not clear. As Hage suggested, the logic of “tolerance” constituted the core of liberal multiculturalism, presupposing that unequal power relationships exist between tolerant people and people to be tolerated. Tolerant majority people, therefore, have the power to become intolerant at any time, and they also have the power to freely decide the “limits of tolerance” (Hage 1998). In these asymmetric relationships, the distinction between a request made by majority people to ethnic minorities to respect liberal values and the coercion of ethnic minorities by majority people to accept liberal values is fundamentally unclear. Therefore, the theoretical distinction between liberal multiculturalism/nationalism and muscular liberalism that is likely to be argued by more conservative political camps is also unclear. In this article, I analyze policy documents related to multiculturalism in Australia and suggest that the official discourse of multiculturalism that has requested Asian immigrants to accept liberal values since the 1980s and after the 2000s, has wavered between “sharing” and “coercion” in terms of how ethnic minorities should assimilate liberal values. As a result, official multicultural policies in Australia enacted in the late 2010s could be called “muscular liberal multiculturalism”.

Policy documents are not actually policies but rather the summaries of actual policy programs enacted by a state. Therefore, to understand the details of the change in multicultural policies in Australia, we need to examine the policy-making process from various viewpoints and materials. However, it is difficult to grasp the complex body of policy on multiculturalism in Australia. As the “access and equity” principle was institutionalized in the 1980s, appropriate treatments for cultural diversity are required for the whole policy planning and implementation processes. As a result, in addition to the provision of settlement services for newly arriving migrants, the principle of multiculturalism was inserted into policy related to various public support programs such as multilingual public services, employment, education and training, housing, health, public transportation, civic participation, family

support, and justice. The federal government and state, territory and local governments develop multicultural policies. As many public services are outsourced, many contracted service providers provide support for immigrants (DSS 2016, Shiobara 2017). Due to the difficulty of grasping the complex policy processes and discourses, in this article, I focus on official policy statements about multiculturalism in Australia. While these documents can be examined as first-hand policy materials, an analysis based on policy statements might be insufficient because it would not involve an examination of the performance of policy-based programs. However, there is a benefit to analyzing policy statements, as the analysis of the critical discourse analysis by using official documents can reveal the ideology and logic used to legitimize policies (Wodak and Meyer eds. 2016).

In Australia before 2000, vigorous debates on multicultural policies were carried out during the policy-making processes and by mass media, and many policy documents, including opinion papers by migrant support organizations and other stake holders were published. In some of these documents, some key concepts were formed and reformed, such as “multiculturalism for all Australians”, “access and equity”, “community relations”, “harmony”, and the “economic contribution of cultural diversity (productive diversity)” (Shiobara 2005). While most of these concepts have been continuously used in official documents after the 2000s, I focus on changes in the key concepts to understand the evolution of the official discourse of multiculturalism. In the first half of the Howard Coalition government’s term, the official discourse of multiculturalism focused on “individualization” and “nationalization” (Shiobara 2005), implying that the liberal nationalism of Australian multiculturalism would “de-essentialize” ethnic groups and share common liberal democratic values with immigrants as culturally diverse individuals. On the other hand, since the 2000s, the influence of neoliberal norms of self-reliance/responsibility on the practical implementation of multicultural policy programs has increased (Shiobara 2010). In this paper, I examine policy statements about multiculturalism from the 1970s to the end of the 2010s and explain how official discourses have changed since the 2000s.

The Discursive Formation of Official Multiculturalism

The principle of official multiculturalism in Australia was established in the 1980-1990s, when there was an increasing population of NESB residents. As described above, it was liberal multiculturalism in essence that has a principle of “tolerance” toward different cultures as well as it expected ethnic minorities to share liberal values. However, the Coalition and Labour Parties, two major parties of Australian national politics, are different in terms of how liberal values, the cultural norms of majority people and the principle of multiculturalism are combined in official discourses.

Multiculturalism for All Australians was a report published by the Australian Council on Population and Ethnic Affairs (ACPEA) in 1982, the last years of the Malcom Fraser Coalition government. This document highlighted some “typical features of the Australian scene”:

- A unique mix of peoples, derived from all parts of the world and including the descendants of the original inhabitants of Australia, the Aboriginals
- An open society, capable of accommodating within itself many different groups, and a resultant blend of cultures
- Social attitudes that combine, in a special Australian way: matter-of-fact egalitarianism, dislike of privilege and snobbery and ‘tall poppies’, suspicion of patronage, pragmatic disregard for rhetoric and abstract ideologies, propensity to criticize but an ability to accept criticism, masculine emphasis on mateship, and a tolerant ideal of ‘a fair go’ for all (ACPEA 1982: 5).

Liberal values such as “an open society,” “egalitarianism,” “tolerance” and “a unique mix of peoples” were emphasized as “typical features” of Australian society. This publication indicated that the discourse of official multiculturalism in Australia in the early periods already assumed that these liberal values were included in the culture of the majority people in Australia. At the same time, however, this report emphasized the particular cultural traditions of Anglo-

Celtic Australia, such as “the bush” and “the outback”, “Australian beaches”, “Australian brand of English”, and “Australian popular culture, art and literature”. In particular, this report emphasized “masculine emphasis on mateship” in Australian society, indicating that masculinity was incorporated into the earliest discourses of multiculturalism (ACPEA 1982: 4-5).

In 1997, the National Multicultural Advisory Council (NMAC) of the John Howard Coalition government published *Multicultural Australia: The Way Forward*. This opinion paper emphasized that Australian multiculturalism is based on the “core values” of Australian society, such as the ability to have a “fair go”, mutual respect, egalitarianism, parliamentary democracy, the rule of law, freedom of religion and expression, equal opportunity, and the rejection of bigotry and prejudice (NMAC 1997). In the final report of the NMAC, *Australian Multiculturalism for the New Century: Towards Inclusiveness*, it was argued that “Australian Multiculturalism” is built on the “core societal values” of Australian society (NMAC 1999: 36). This report stated that the “core Australian principles and values” include the following:

- Commitment to Australia
- Freedom
- *A fair go*
- Democracy
- Rule of Law
- Tolerance
- Mutual Respect
- Political Equality
- Equal Opportunity
- Non-discrimination (NMAC 1999: 42)

This report emphasized that Australian Multiculturalism has “been built on our free democratic system” (NMAC 1999: 38), and the purpose of multicultural policies should be “inclusiveness” for all Australians, including NESB immigrants and indigenous peoples, into democratic Australian society (NMAC 1999: 47-48). After accepting the many recommendations of the NMAC final

report, the Howard government published *A New Agenda for Multicultural Australia* published in 1999 (Commonwealth of Australia 1999). In this way, the Coalition's discourse on multiculturalism in the 1990s was explicitly developed as liberal nationalism.

Similarly, in discourses of official multiculturalism in the Bob Hawke and Paul Keating Labour government from 1983 to 1996, the importance of liberal values was emphasized, and multiculturalism was seen as a method for disseminating these values. However, unlike the discourses of the Coalition government, it did not tend to see liberal values as equating to nationalism based on the Anglo-Celtic majority. For example, in 1986, the "Jupp Report" argued that "All members of Australian community should have the right, within the law, to enjoy their own culture, to practice their own religion, and to use their own language, and should respect the rights of others to their own culture, religion and language" (DIEA 1986: 325). In addition, this report explicitly claimed that the laws and institutions of Australian society are deeply influenced by "dominant cultural values", and therefore, it is not possible that every cultural value is treated equally (DIEA 1986: 80). Logically, these statements mean that to treat every cultural group as equal as possible, Australian laws and institutions should be independent of the influence of the dominant culture as soon as possible. Of course, the discourses of Labour governments recognized the central status of the Anglo-Celtic majority and assumed that this culture does not necessarily contradict liberal values, but these discourses also implied that liberal values should be treated separately from the cultures of particular groups, including that of the majority people. As a result, the logic of the "limits" of multiculturalism emerged as a principle arguing that multiculturalism that recognizes the differences in particular cultures, including the majority's culture, should be considered as liberal laws and institutions.

Other important policy documents generated by Labour governments included the universal/cosmopolitan interpretation of "liberal values". For instance, in 1988, the "Fitzgerald Report" stated the following:

Immigrants will be required to respect the institutions and principles which are basic to Australian society, including parliamentary democracy, the rule

of law and equality before the law, freedom of the individual, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of religion, equality of women, universal education. Reciprocally, Australia will be committed to facilitating the equal participation of immigrants in society (CAAIP 1988: 22)

In 1989, in the preface of the *National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia*, the “limits” to multiculturalism were clearly declared:

- Multicultural policies are based upon the premise that all Australians should have an overriding and unifying commitment to Australia, to its interests and future first and foremost;
- Multicultural policies require all Australians to accept the basic structures and principles of Australian society – the Constitution and the rule of law, tolerance and equality, Parliamentary democracy, freedom of speech and religion, English as the national language and equality of the sexes; and
- Multicultural policies impose obligations as well as conferring rights: the right to express one’s own culture and belief involves a reciprocal responsibility to accept the right of others to express their views and values (OMA 1989).

The logic that there are “limits” to multiculturalism” clearly highlights the difference in the official multiculturalism discourses of the Labour and Coalition governments. In the discourses of Labour governments, but not those of Coalition governments, the logic of the “limits of multiculturalism” tends to be emphasized because multiculturalism is carefully distinguished from the majority’s traditional culture (“English as the national language” is an important exception). The principle of multiculturalism accepted by the Hawke-Keating government had a cosmopolitan aspect by making the particularity of majority culture open to liberal values. For instance, The NMAC’s first report, *Multicultural Australia: The Next Step*, was published in 1995, the last years of the Keating government. In this report, the authors, including some leading

authors of Australian multiculturalism studies from cosmopolitan perspectives, aimed to redefine multiculturalism as a cosmopolitan form of national identity. According to the report, “the traditional ethos of ‘a fair go’, once applied only to members of the dominant culture, retains a freshness and appeal to which most Australians aspire. Indeed, it is now seen as a unifying aspiration which influences the perceptions of the rights and responsibilities of all groups in Australia” (NMAC 1995: 7). Then, this report introduced the ideas of indigenous right movements into official multiculturalism. By emphasizing a closer relationship between Australia and Asia, it was suggested that Australia’s future population would be an “exciting and unique mix of ethnic and cultural groups”, and therefore, Australia should become “a society in which all its residents are comfortable in their dual roles as both Australian and global citizens” (NMAC 1995: 9). Here, multiculturalism was reinterpreted as an intent to establish a cosmopolitan citizenship that includes immigrants and indigenous peoples into the tradition of a “fair go”, which was historically enjoyed by only Anglo-Celtic majority people.

The Labour government’s multiculturalism intended to separate liberal multiculturalism from the dominant majority culture, but it was unrealistic to neglect the role of the ethnic tradition of the Anglo-Celtic majority in social integration. Therefore, as a compromise, multiculturalism should be “limited”. In contrast, the official multiculturalism discourses of the Coalition governments presupposed that the traditions and culture of Anglo Australians are liberal; liberal values are interpreted as the “essence” of the majority culture. Therefore, the role of Australian Multiculturalism was to make ethnic minorities who were not essentially liberal share “Australian” values. According to the Coalition government’s discourses, multiculturalism need not be “limited” because more it is thoroughly conducted, and the cultures of minorities are more assimilated into the majority culture (Shiobara 2005).

In this way, while official discourses of multiculturalism before 2000 basically focused on liberal multiculturalism that promoted national integration by making people share liberal values; however, the implication of “sharing liberal values” differed in the documents published by the Coalition and Labour governments. For the Coalition governments, multiculturalism was more overt

liberal nationalism aiming to include ethnic minorities into the dominant culture, which referred to the culture of the Anglo Australian majority people, and the majority people are assumed to intrinsically have liberal values. In contrast, the Labour governments pursued, at least partly, cosmopolitan nationalism that sought to transform both the majority's and minorities' culture into a cosmopolitan identity that was more open to liberal values. This difference in the logic used by the two major parties affects the changes that occurred in official multiculturalism discourses after 2000.

Changes in the Official Discourses of Multiculturalism after 2000

As mentioned above, multiculturalism was a controversial issue in Australia until the 1990s. Various government and parliament committees were organized, and many opinion papers and recommendations were published for the public, and these became the foundation for several policy statements (Shiobara 2005). However, after the reports published by the NMAC in the late 1990s and the Howard government's response, *A New Agenda for Multicultural Australia* in 1999, active debates on multicultural policies were not observed at the federal level. While some scholars might consider the lack of active debates as evidence of the decline of Australian multiculturalism, public policies based on the concepts derived from multiculturalism, such as access and equity, harmony, and cultural diversity, and the related economic benefits are still enacted by the federal, state, and local governments and service providers. As argued later, in the federal government's multicultural policies enacted since 2000, these key terms are emphasized, and it has been stated that the multicultural policies enacted in Australia are successful and sustainable. Therefore, the decrease in public arguments might mean that the official definitions and evaluations of multiculturalism generated by the federal government are fixed and no longer need further political debates (Shiobara 2011).

Multicultural Australia: United in Diversity (2003)

Multicultural Australia: United in Diversity (hereafter called the 2003 statement) aimed to update the 1999 *New Agenda* and therefore has many things in

common with it. The principle of “Australian Multiculturalism” and “inclusiveness” were defined as its purpose and were inherited from *A New Agenda*. On the other hand, the difference between these two statements is that in the 2003 statement, multiculturalism was situated as an aspect of antiterrorism after the 9.11 incident in 2001 and Bali Bombings in 2002. That is, the 2003 statement suggested that Australia is the most harmonious community in the world, but it is challenged by the international environment of terrorism, and community harmony and social cohesion are crucial because they make Australians available to fight against terrorism and defend Australian domestic society. Therefore, the 2003 statement emphasized that the Australian government believes that multicultural policy provides a coherent ethos for a diverse Australia, strengthening national security (Commonwealth of Australia 2003:10). Therefore, in the name of social cohesion and to “advance Australia fair,” the commitment of the federal government to the multicultural policy “for all Australians” was confirmed (Commonwealth of Australia 2003). The coexistence of the freedom to express and share cultural values and a shared “civic duty” was required, and all Australians were required to support the “basic structures and principles of Australian society”: the Constitution, Parliamentary democracy, the freedom of speech and religion, English as the national language, the rule of law, and acceptance and equity. In addition, the importance of the “Australian values of equity, democracy and freedom” was emphasized (Commonwealth of Australia 2003: 9).

The People of Australia: Australia’s Multicultural Policy (2011)

While John Howard was known for his negative stance on multiculturalism, Kevin Rudd’s Labour government that succeeded Howard’s in 2007 did not publish its major statement on multiculturalism. Julia Gillard, who took over from Rudd, announced *The People of Australia: Australia’s Multicultural Policy* in 2011 (hereafter called the 2011 statement). This Labour government’s statement was published in a period during which some influential European politicians highlighted “the failure of multiculturalism” (Joppke 2017). Consequently, the 2011 statement played a role in emphasizing the differences in and success of multiculturalism in Australia, unlike the European versions.

Interestingly, in this 2011 statement, the logic of the “limits” of multiculturalism was emphasized. As described above, this logic was appeared on statements in the *National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia*, which was published by Bob Hawke’s Labour government in 1989; however, this logic was not included in the 2000 *New Agenda* and the 2003 statement made by Howard’s Coalition government. In the 2011 statement, terms such as “Australian values” and the “basic structures” of Australian society were not used, and multiculturalism was logically separated from the “shared values” implied in the liberal nationalism of the Coalition’s discourse, indicating that the principle of multiculturalism in the Gillard government can/should be limited within “the law and free from discrimination” in the liberal democracy (Commonwealth of Australia 2011: 2).

This difference between the 2003 and 2011 statements sharply reflects the usage of the political term “harmony”. This term was originally introduced by the Howard government as a substitute for the term “community relations” that implicates antiracism policies based on the United Nations’ legislation. That is, the change from “community relations” to “harmony” meant a change from the concept of promoting antiracism and antidiscrimination toward minorities to the principle of celebrating the social cohesion of the national society (Shiobara 2005). In addition, in the 2003 statement, where multiculturalism is connected to antiterrorism, the term “harmony” refers to the social cohesion needed to fight against “enemies outside.”, while a description of antiracism was not provided. In contrast, in the 2011 statement, there are many descriptions of antiracism, while antiterrorism is minimally described, indicating that in this statement, discrimination and the division of the majority and minorities within Australian society were more emphasized than the threat of external enemies. This usage of “harmony” was, however, temporary, and after the return of the Coalition government, “harmony” was again connected to national security.

Multicultural Australia: United, Strong, Successful (2017)

The Tony Abbot Coalition government came to power in 2013 and enacted draconian policies against asylum seekers. The Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) was renamed the Department of Immigration and Border

Protection (DIBP) in 2013. Abbott was replaced by Malcom Turnbull as a result of internal struggles in the Liberal Party in 2015. *Multicultural Australia: United, Strong, Successful - Australia's Multicultural Statement* - was published by the Turnbull government in 2017 (hereafter called the 2017 statement). This document confirmed a "a firm commitment to a multicultural Australia (Commonwealth of Australia 2017: 15)"; however, the terms "multiculturalism" and "multicultural policy" were not mentioned in the texts. This "Australia's Multicultural Statement" was quite different from the previous 2003 and 2011 statements on this point, and the 2017 statement evokes John Howard's disuse of the term "multicultural" in the late 1990s (Shiobara 2010). However, many of the key concepts, such as harmony, access and equity, and the economic benefits of cultural diversity, mentioned in previous documents were included in the 2017 statement.

The 2017 statement was basically an updated version of the 2003 Coalition government's statement, and unlike the 2011 Labour government's statement, the importance of social harmony for maintaining national security was again emphasized (Commonwealth of Australia 2017: 11). However, the 2017 statement focused more on the element of nationalism for strengthening unity among culturally diverse Australians than the 2003 statement. The term "shared Australian values (shared values)" was defined as follows: 1) Respect, 2) Equality, and 3) Freedom (Commonwealth of Australia 2017: 9, 15). In addition, in the 2017 statement, the commitment and loyalty of Australian citizens to shared values were emphasized in the statement, "practices and behaviours that undermine our values have no place in Australia" (Commonwealth of Australia 2017: 9). In this way, multiculturalism as a principle of "inclusiveness" for ethnically and culturally diverse people was transformed into logic for excluding people who were seen as not sharing Australian values. Arab/Muslim residents in Australia were strongly required to accept shared values and loyalty for Australia because they were perceived as "threats of the national security", although the Turnbull government statement never explicitly suggested this. The binary opposition of Anglo-Celtic and NESB people mentioned in the official discourse of multiculturalism before 2000 changed to the binary opposition of "people who share liberal values" and "Muslim people who cannot share liberal values".

Some previous studies noted the vitalization of anti-Arab and Islamophobic sentiments and movements in Australian society during the same period the 2017 statement was published (Shiobara 2019). The 2017 statement, of course, did not aim to exclude Arab/Muslim Australian citizens. It rather focused more on the importance of intercultural/religious dialogues than the previous 2003 and 2011 statements. The 2017 statement suggested that through dialogue, prejudice against different religions and cultures is mitigated, and cross-cultural understandings, a sense of belongings, and mutual trust among different ethnic and religious groups are enhanced (Commonwealth of Australia 2017: 15). As argued above, mutual respect for others is still included as a part of the shared Australian values mentioned in this statement. Nevertheless, this 2017 statement has had a very limited impact on reducing prejudices and discrimination against Arab/Muslim residents because anti-Arab/Islamophobic discourses originally included the assumption that these individuals essentially do not/cannot share “our values” (Hage 2003). Therefore, far from resisting this notion, the 2017 statement implicitly justifies the exclusion of Muslim people who are seen as not sharing Australian values. For instance, in his speech in the U.K. in July 2018, Alan Tudge, the Minister of Immigration and Citizenship for the Turnbull government, emphasized that multiculturalism in Australia is different from European variations because it can be called “integrated multiculturalism” and succeeded in making people share liberal Australian values. He stated that the Australian government needs “muscular ongoing promotion of our values” (Tudge 2018: 3-6).

In this way, the official discourses of multiculturalism in Australia in the late 2010s included the logic of muscular liberalism that aims to force liberal values as “shared Australian values” and exclude people who are seen to refuse these values from the national space. Therefore, official discourses on multiculturalism become discourses of social division. While conventional arguments about “the failure of multiculturalism” insist that multiculturalism is divisive because it does not enforce common values on the diverse population, muscular liberal multiculturalism is divisive because it enforces common values on the population. The serious problem is that the majority (non-Arab/Muslim) of Australians are assumed to hold the power of judging who does not accept

Australian values. It is unclear whether the intercultural/religious dialogues that the government promotes can have an effect on changing this unequal power relations.

Neoliberalism in Muscular Liberal Multiculturalism

The logic that cultural diversity contributes to the Australian economy was explicitly introduced into the official discourse of multiculturalism during terms of the Keating Labour government in the early 1990s (Shiobara 2005). While the 2003 Coalition statement inherited the concept of “productive diversity” from the 1999 *New Agenda*, it was more emphasized in the 2011 Labour government’s statement. In that statement, immigrants and cultural diversity were closely connected with economic national interests, as they help the Australian economy become more competitive in the global economy (Commonwealth of Australia 2011: 5).

In the 2017 Turnbull Coalition government’s statement, the contribution of immigrants and cultural diversity to economic national interests and global competitiveness was also emphasized (Commonwealth of Australia 2017: 13). However, this statement strongly implied that the economic contribution of immigrants was due to the self-motivation and resources of the immigrants. Columns inserted into the document recount the personal histories and experiences of some first- and second-generation immigrants. These individuals were depicted as self-reliant individuals who inherited the virtue of diligence from the culture of their home country or parents, were educated in Australia, made continuous efforts, and achieved economic success and social prestige. These “model minorities” in turn advised newly coming immigrants to work hard, contribute to the Australian economy in gratitude and repay the Australian society. For instance, in one column, a middle-aged Syrian women was featured. She came to Australia as a refugee and had been an English teacher in her home country. After arriving in Australia, this woman made an effort to obtain an Australian academic degree and teacher’s license, and she started to teach English to other refugees. She gave her students the following advice: “first, learn English. Second, study or look for job. Finally, I tell them to

become an active member of the community.” (Commonwealth of Australia 2017: 14). Her case was treated as an example of many refugees and immigrants who had professional training, skills and experiences.

In this way, in the 2017 statement, the economic contribution of immigrants and cultural diversity to Australia was reinterpreted as the self-reliance and self-responsibility of immigrants. Immigrants are expected not to depend on government social support; they are expected to study, train themselves and repay to Australian society. The individual life stories provided in the official statements in the federal government policies have two implications. First, the message of the multicultural social policy that focuses on the support programs for newly arrived immigrants (DSS 2016) indicates that these programs were not intended to make these individuals “welfare dependent” but rather to act as a transitional support to help immigrants become economically self-reliant. This neoliberal interpretation of the support programs is a response to the public criticism of support policies for immigrants, particularly humanitarian entrants. Second, this message implies that the economic success of immigrants is evidence of their acceptance of Australian values because they must appreciate Australia and want to “repay” it as active citizens. In other words, immigrants are required to “repay” their debt to Australia to illustrate their shared Australian values. In this way, the neoliberal norm of self-reliance/responsibility intersects with the logic of the economic contribution of immigrants and muscular liberalism.

Conclusion: Moving toward a “Multiculturalism of Associations”

The emergence of the logic of muscular liberalism in the conservative government’s discourses of multiculturalism in the late 2010s is not a disconnect from the previous official discourses of multiculturalism in Australia. Since the introduction of multiculturalism in the 1970s, the request for NESB immigrants to engage in sharing liberal values based on the culture of Anglo-Celtic Australian majority people was already included in official discourses of multiculturalism. The sharing of values was formulated as a principle of liberal multiculturalism by the end of the 1990s, and the logic has been increasingly

emphasized since the 2000s in Anti-Arab/Islamophobic discourses. Consequently, the illiberal logic of “forcing them to share liberal values” was introduced in official discourses of multiculturalism in the late 2010s. While the logic of muscular liberalism has more in common with the Coalition government’s official discourses of multiculturalism, which is viewed as liberal nationalism, the Labour government’s discourses of multiculturalism as cosmopolitan multiculturalism retain the purpose of sharing liberal values because it must compromise with the dominance of majority culture in Australian society. The logic of “limits” of multiculturalism is a byproduct of the compromise. Therefore, the Labour government’s discourses of multiculturalism may also involve enforcing liberal values on ethnic minorities. To differentiate from the Coalition government’s policies, the Labour government had to legitimize the promotion of multiculturalism from the point of view of economic national interests. The Labour government consequently permits the exclusion of migrants who are not beneficial but become a financial burden or risk to Australian society. In this way, in 2013, Rudd’s Labour government could insist on policies excluding asylum seekers that were stricter than the Coalition government’s policies without abandoning multiculturalism altogether (Shiobara 2017). It appears that migrant groups who do not share liberal values and are not economically or socially beneficial for Australia should not be recognized and can be excluded from official discourses of multiculturalism. The Coalition government’s 2017 statement disclosed the hidden implication of official discourses of multiculturalism.

The analysis conducted in this article, therefore, confirmed that the line between liberal multiculturalism and muscular liberalism is vague both theoretically and in policy processes, indicating that in the age of the emergence of exclusionist populism in the contemporary world, it seems that it will be difficult for liberal multiculturalism to remain a theoretical breakwater of exclusionism because it inevitably presupposes the logic of sharing liberal values and therefore necessarily promotes muscular liberalism that forces some to adapt liberal values and excludes others who are seen not to share them.

This dilemma might be solved by overcoming the idea of social integration that presupposes the importance of “sharing values” in society. Bruno Latour

has criticized cultural pluralism based on a theory he proposed, Actor Network Theory (Latour 2005). From this perspective, the concept of liberal multiculturalism can be criticized because it is based on the standard sociological theory, “sociology of the social (Latour 2005: 9)”. It presupposes the existence of “liberal values” as a priori and sui-generis independent factors in society prior to the arrival of migrants. Considering the “sociology of associations”, Latour called, what actually happens in everyday practices and places, including Australia and Japan, is not the arrival of others to a “society” already filled with “values” but the creation of “assemblages” (Latour 2005) through encounters, conflicts, negotiations and compromises with others. When “values” are reimagined not as a priori elements to be shared by a society but as a product of the new associations created by encountering others that create a new form of society, multiculturalism can be extended to the concept of “cohabitation (Butler 2015)”, where people live in different and multiple realities (Hage 2015).

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