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ABSTRACT

This discussion paper, reviews and examines the status of ethnic minorities in relation to their educational needs in Australia. The report outlines cultural relations in Australian society and gives brief definitions of some of the key terms and issues which are used and discussed throughout the paper. This section is followed by a consideration of the participation of ethnic minorities in the education process and the equity of the education they receive. The situations in the United Kingdom and the United States are compared with those of Australia and descriptions of government intervention in these countries are discussed. Research findings about the factors restricting access and affecting outcomes of education among ethnic minorities are then discussed. This is followed by a description of the problems which limit educational participation in Australia and a critical analysis of the Australian Participation and Equity Program (PEP). In conclusion, the report recommends some further areas for research; suggests the initiation of pilot action research programs; recommends that PEP reassess their program and organizational guidelines; and cites the importance of pre-school education in determining the outcomes of education, recommending that more attention be given to this area. A five-page list of references concludes the report. (CG)

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NACCME

National Advisory and Co-ordinating
Committee on Multicultural Education

EDUCATION AND ETHNIC MINORITIES — ISSUES OF PARTICIPATION AND EQUITY

DISCUSSION PAPER No. 1

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**EDUCATION AND ETHNIC
MINORITIES --
ISSUES OF PARTICIPATION
AND EQUITY**

Prepared by Andrew Jakubowicz, Department of Sociology, University of
Wollongong, September, 1984 for the National Advisory and Co-ordinating
Committee on Multicultural Education.

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FOREWORD

This Discussion Paper is the first of several which the National Advisory and Co-ordinating Committee on Multicultural Education has commissioned relating to multicultural education in specific areas such as participation and equity, community education and the rationale of multicultural education in Australia.

Andrew Jakubowicz has produced a thought-provoking paper. His definition of many of the key concepts frequently invoked by writers on multicultural education should help to clarify the context in which debates on these matters are conducted.

It is from papers such as this that NACCME, with the help of responses from interested groups, will be in a position to advise the Government on specific measures it might take to achieve some of the proposals outlined.

Susan Ryan
Minister for Education

PREFACE

The National Advisory and Co-ordinating Committee on Multicultural Education (NACCME) was established in 1984 to provide the Commonwealth Government with policy advice on needs in multicultural education at the national level and across the full educational spectrum. NACCME has interpreted multicultural education broadly to mean educational policies and practices *in and for* a multicultural society. Within this definition it has identified the following areas as being in need of review and assessment:

- a) Educational needs of ethnic minorities, especially those relating to participation and equity.
- b) Community education including intercultural understanding.
- c) Language issues, particularly ESL and community languages.
- d) Information exchange.
- e) Rationale for multicultural education.

NACCME has commissioned several papers from scholars and educationists with special expertise in these areas to examine critically relevant issues and identify needs and propose strategies for future action.

In this context NACCME is pleased to release as a discussion paper a report prepared by Dr Andrew Jakubowicz of the Department of Sociology, University of Wollongong, entitled: "Education and Ethnic Minorities — Issues of Participation and Equity". Dr Jakubowicz was commissioned by NACCME to review and examine the status of ethnic minorities in relation to their educational needs.

NACCME is seeking reactions to the substantive issues raised in this paper and comments on the implications which the paper may have for possible policy changes in the field of education.

It is hoped that the response received as a result of the wide dissemination of this Discussion Paper will enable NACCME to formulate and recommend to Government relevant and desirable policy changes.

Laksiri Jayasuriya
Chairperson
NACCME

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Cultural Relations in Australian Society

Cultural relations are essentially relations between different social groups, and thus must raise questions of access to and control of socially valued resources. Power relationships in Australian society concerned with the accumulation of wealth have always involved issues of conflict between cultural collectivities. One of the central and continuing concerns of governments has been the management and containment of those conflicts. Australian history reflects the main thrust of this process in a concern to impose and then sustain the rule of a cultural minority — a ruling class that was predominantly Anglo-centric and male. It assumed that its system of values and behaviour would retain its pre-eminence, that the culture of the charter group would effectively encompass the aspiration of all the society. While that culture has been dominant, it has not been unresisted, and that resistance has not been lightly subdued. The Aboriginal experience provides the most stunning demonstration of that process at work — genocide, land theft, cultural humiliation and destruction. Australian society has created aboriginality as a marker for an excluded and controlled black caste.

In the past, cultural conflicts and power relationships have been resolved through the imposition by government of programs that attempted group extermination — the deportation of Melanesian workers from Northern Australia after the end of "black-birding", (i.e. the forced recruitment of cane cutters from the South Pacific), or the effective ban on the immigration of Chinese women after Federation. The tension between an English Protestant cultural and economic elite, and a significantly Catholic Irish working class was resolved in the important sphere of cultural reproduction — the education system, with a tri-partite arrangement of elite ruling class (mainly Protestant) schools, a Catholic diocesan school system, and a government (non-denominational) school system. Early programs of autonomous schools, outside the framework of the negotiated model which utilises English as the language of instruction, did not survive the Empire chauvinism of the Great War (e.g. German Lutheran schools were closed in South Australia).

Thus the education system has been a focus for cultural conflict and struggle in the nineteenth century by the working class against middle class monopolisation of education resources. More recently cultural minority groups have sought to assert their own integrity. Conflict exists between those who seek in education a possibility for personal development and autonomy and those who require that the system provides saleable labour force skills to its participants. There is also an over-arching social expectation — that the education process should introduce children to the "best" that society can offer. A central element of cultural struggle is the determination of *what* is "best".

In addressing the issues affecting the education of children of minority collectivities it is important to specify the content of the terms being used, and the context within which they are applied.

1.2 Key Concepts

1. *Race and Racism*: "Race" is a biological term which refers to physical characteristics of a group — it has no power to explain social behaviour. However, the false belief that biological differences cause social differences, lies at the heart of "racism". "Racism" usually implies a belief in a rank ordering of "races" in which the higher orders are inherently superior. More recently, "racism" has extended to encompass beliefs that "racially distinct" groups are culturally antagonistic (Barker 1982, p.4).
2. *Ethnicity and Ethnocentrism*: "Ethnicity" has been defined as that quality of group life which is carried in a self-perceived sense of shared traditions, of historical continuity and common ancestry and origins, and is *not* shared by the others with whom group members are in contact (de Vos 1975, p.9). Thus "ethnicity" cannot *explain* social behaviour, but is rather the outcome of other relations of social power, in which those differences are signified as being important. An "ethnic collectivity" may contain groups or classes which are in conflict — the concept of "ethnic community" implies an intra-collectivity *consensus* of values. "Ethnocentrism" is an ideology which ranks ethnic collectivities by their cultural attributes and accords inherent superiority to the ethnic collectivity with which the individual identifies.
3. *Migration and Migrants*: "Migration" refers to the movement of people from one place to another; it carries no necessary social correlates, though in Australian discourse it normally applies to a process which results in settlement in Australia (c.f. guest workers). There are certain psychological and social processes associated with migration independently of the ethnic collectivity involved (Liffman, 1981). Post-war Australian industrial growth has been built on the active recruitment by industry and government of migrants — mainly from the British Isles, but also from eastern and western Europe, southern Europe, the eastern Mediterranean, south America and South East Asia. During that period, the occupational destinations of groups have been rather different, with English language skills a key variable in outcomes. Australian discourse tends to use "migrant" as a label for all N.E.S. foreign-born workers (Birrell and Birrell 1981; Jakubowicz, Morrissey and Palser 1984).
4. *Culture and Multiculturalism*: "Culture" is normally taken to designate a whole and distinctive way of life, with rather rigid and unchanging characteristics. More recently this approach has been challenged by a view of culture which sees it as the signifying system used by social groups and classes in their struggle over what constitutes the social order. Culture contains often competing partial ideologies and world views, articulating the different interests and life experiences of groups. Thus the "dominant culture" sustains those values and ways of life which benefit the dominant groups or classes in society, however much these may change or be resisted, or lead to negotiated resolutions (Williams 1982, pp.10ff). "Multiculturalism" is a public policy perspective which has its roots in a pluralist model of society. It has been advanced during the past twenty years as a strategy which prevents structural fragmentation of society by supporting the "cultural" aspirations of minority groups — particularly those based on ethnic collectivities, within a commitment to the contemporary political and economic order (ACPEA

1982). Australian "multiculturalism" contains four themes — social cohesion; cultural identity; equality of opportunity and access; equal responsibility for, commitment to and participation in society (ACPEA 1982, p. 12). "Multiculturalism" uses the more traditional notion of culture with its emphasis on society as consensual values.

5. *Minority*: While "minority" usually refers to a numerical concept, it has more recently also been taken to refer to a power relationship. It has been used interchangeably with "subordinate", and this coloration now affects its use in discourse. Thus an "ethnic minority" is usually taken as a group whose subordination is predicated on constraints which utilise "ethnic" markers. While "ethnic minorities" need not be culturally or materially dominated by "ethnic majorities", the term is used in that context, e.g. the English settlers in the 1840s were culturally dominant over the Aborigines through the utilisation of advanced technologies of control, although they were still a numerical minority.
6. *Class*: Concepts of "class" operate within three distinguishable paradigms in the social sciences. Simply put, "class" can be used as a labour market/economic concept, and refers to the lifechances such a location allows in a particular society; the location has no necessary connection with consciousness or social status (Wild 1978). "Class" is also used as a synonym for socio-economic status or occupational location, with no prescriptive characteristics of any sort — it is a label given to a particular social variable, and the categorisation is often drawn from the ranking of occupations on a prestige scale (Broom and Jones 1976). Most potently, "class" identifies a relationship of exploitation, of domination and resistance, of struggle and conflict, in which the fundamental dynamic of capitalist societies is the inevitable tension between the owners of capital and the sellers of labour power (Connell et. al 1982).
7. *Gender*: "Gender" refers to the social status, behaviour and relationships prescribed for the biological sexes in a society. "Gender" is thus socially defined and constructed, is subject to challenge and change, and delineates a major and significant power cleavage in most societies. Explanations of gender differences, and in particular, the experience of women, are at the centre of many debates about the nature of social inequality (for example in Summers 1975). These explanations range from perspectives which locate the primary oppression of women in the historic structures of patriarchy, to those which seek to combine an understanding of the interaction of patriarchy with capitalism.
8. *Exclusion and Closure*: "Exclusion" describes a social process through which social groups define their boundaries in such a way that entry is restricted. Thus early European society in Australia practiced the exclusion of blacks. "Closure" refers to the relative permeability of group boundaries and the likelihood or possibility of inter-group mobility. Thus the ruling class in Australia exhibits a relatively high degree of closure through the utilisation of methods of exclusion, compared to the middle classes (Wild 1978).
9. *Participation*: The concept of "participation" carries heavy emotive overlays that are not usually specified. Social scientists regard involvement in economic, social and political relations as criteria for assessing the level of closure between social groups. "Participation" has high social value because it reflects the degree of consensus about the social order and the possibilities for social mobility and social

change (Plant 1974; Low-Beer 1978). The Commonwealth Schools Commission defines participation as "the general concept of engagement in formal educational activity" (1984:6), which it sees to be "intrinsically valuable" (1984 p.18). Processes of exclusion operate which limit participation and constrain or close off opportunities for members of particular groups — "girls, students from disadvantaged socio-economic groups, Aborigines, students from non-English speaking backgrounds" (1984 p.19).

10. *Equity*: "Equity" contains notions of overcoming relative deprivations, disadvantages, and inequalities in social relations — particularly where the provision of services by government is concerned (Troy 1981, p.9). As a social principle, it "requires that schools and systems will treat all children fairly, and as far as practicable, will avoid policies and practices which advantage some social groups and disadvantage others" (Commonwealth Schools Commission 1984, p.13). However, there is confusion in most discussion over whether equity concerns access to education, performance *within* education, or outcomes *from* education.
11. *Selection and Credentialling*: "Selection" is a central element in the operation of processes of exclusion and closure in the education system. Individual characteristics of pupils, often ascribed to them on the basis of their membership of a social category, e.g. gender, ethnicity, class, are utilised to channel them into particular education pathways which either intensify their deprivation or increase their advantage (Commonwealth Schools Commission 1984, p.7). "Credentialling" refers to a major social function of the existing education system, namely the ranking of merit of participants according to their supposed capacity and skill level. However, as Ashenden and Costello have convincingly argued, the focus of the education system on credentialling leads to counterproductive outcomes in relationship to the reduction of inequality, cultural formation and education (1984, p.21). In particular these effects include increases in the extent and intensity of competition and the disguising of important social inequalities behind explanations based on individual merit.

2. PARTICIPATION AND EQUITY

2.1 Issues

The issues affecting immigrants and their children in the education system have too often been allowed to become engulfed by a concentration on issues of culture and language to the exclusion of structures and processes which prevent fair access and equitable outcomes. While numerous studies have identified schools as loci of social power within which wider social relations are created, contested, reinforced or transformed (Connell et al 1982; Green 1981; Marjoribanks 1980; Mortimore and Blackstone 1982; Ramsay et al 1983), government policy and programs have tended to avoid these issues. For instance, the Review of Multicultural and Migrant Education (AIMA 1980) did not attempt to examine the relationship between the Disadvantaged Schools Program and the educational experience of immigrant children. The review also failed to conceptualise education questions which might have different implications for working-class children compared to the children of middle class immigrants,

or for girls as against boys. The particular experience of disabled children of N.E.S. parents were not considered by either the 1980 or 1982 reviews.

Indeed the field of education for the children of N.E.S. immigrants in the period 1976–1983 in terms of Federal Government policy and programs was limited effectively to:

English as a Second Language
Community Language Teaching
Ethnic Studies

The conceptualisation, planning and delivery of these programs has been limited to differentiation by ethnic group and length of residence. Gender, class and disability simply were not included as issues of significance.

It is important to recognise that the conceptualisation of disadvantage along the dimensions of "race", gender, ethnicity, class and disability should not allow a blinkering of perception within each dimension. The most difficult and therefore most pressing problems lie where these dimensions intersect and reinforce one another. These pressures give rise not only to many different types of educational needs, but also to many potential responses.

2.2 Inequality and Disadvantage — U.K. and U.S.A.

British data since 1972–73 does not allow any useful national conclusions on the relationship between ethnic background and educational attainment. However, Essen and Ghodsian (1980) found that "immigrant" status explained very little of the divergence of test scores between immigrant and indigenous children in the National Child Development Study 16 year old sample: rather more important were factors of gender, locality of residence, social class, family income, housing quality and the language of family communication. More recently, the Rampton Inquiry concluded, on the evidence presented, that the causes of underachievement by West Indian children were:

- i) unintentional racism by teachers including stereotypical or patronising attitudes, particularly towards girls
- ii) inadequate day care and pre-school provision
- iii) inappropriateness of the curriculum, books and teaching materials
- iv) a narrow and inflexible examinations system
- v) low expectations by careers teachers
- vi) employment market discrimination
- vii) gulf between the culture of parents and the culture of the school
- viii) a failure of initial teacher training
- ix) the lack of ethnically-based statistics and the cover-up of the situation that this allowed to continue.

(Rampton, 1981:70–72)

The Rampton Report concentrated on the school/family cultural relationships and their crucial impact on achievement and failure, but demonstrated the central importance of understanding the interaction of structures of racism with the experience of gender and class inequality.

The established pattern of differential achievement in the U.S.A. is related to "ethnic group" membership, but not determined by it. Jencks has shown that the best predictor of income levels is father's occupational status or years of formal schooling undergone — primarily class and gender factors. However, due to black and Hispanic concentration in families with low parental occupational status (working class) one result of racist structures in society has been that poor achievement and lowered social mobility has been argued to be "caused" by either the biological or cultural characteristics of the groups (Jencks 1972; Green 1981, pp.43-76), rather than by patterns of discrimination against members of cultural minority groups.

2.3 Inequality and Disadvantage — Australia

The concept of an "ethnic group" has already been criticised for its implications of uniformity of culture and behaviour. The concept of "migrant" has very little utility in characterising significant social difference, though English language skills *are* important factors in educational achievement and occupational ability. Thus a study by Broom, Jones et al, has demonstrated that in Australia non-English speaking migrants and the children of low status workers receive less education — and in Australia too, length of education is an important factor in determining social mobility. There is evidence of discrimination against such immigrants, but once their children learn English and manage to stay at school for extended periods, their possibilities of social mobility increase. They do not however, approach the opportunities for Australian-born male children of professional, property owning families (Broom and Jones 1980).

However, most studies of the educational participation, achievement and outcomes of Australian school children do *not* address in a systematic way the experience of culturally distinctive, gender-distinguished and class-identified children. That is, we can say little of use about how these factors interact in the particular context of the Australian education systems.

The identification and specification of ethnic participation and performance in education depends on a very sparse range of research with restricted applicability. Poole (1981) identified four dimensions to be taken into account — cognitive style, identity, aspirations and performance.

Cognitive style refers to a pattern of processing information, and Poole suggests that it is useful to consider cultural or group differences in style. While some studies tend to reflect differences between particular groups, her overall argument suggests that migrant status or ethnicity are of only minor importance compared to socio-economic status factors. However, the dynamics of the family learning environment are identified as an area in which very little is known. The major study in this area, by Marjoribanks (1980) concludes that there are different family learning environments depending on the particular "ethclass" — ethnic socio-economic status group — in question. The relationship between the family learning environment and the longer term participation in education is however unclear, though the limited achievement of lower "ethclasses" has an effect on the support parents are willing to give their less successful children. Marjoribanks suggests the effect of this is to make parents more indifferent to the education system and its previously perceived benefits.

However, Marjoribanks' utilisation of "ethclass" as a category for the development of his typology (drawn from the work of Milton Gordon, 1964, an ardent proponent of the cultural pluralism school of social cohesion), fails to examine the power relations that underlie class relations. Thus class location is perceived as a potential locus of attitudes, without any attempt being made to examine the way attitudes, as ideology, are constructed by power relations. The credentialling process in education, skewed as it is to recruit academically proficient students into the elite occupations, necessarily requires the failure of the less proficient. The evidence suggests that the likelihood of pupil "failure" is increased by the powerlessness of the parents to play a creative and supportive role in the education process.

The devaluation of the child's self-concept is also an important process which is affected by the process of migration — children of parents recruited as industrial workers with the possibility of return to the country of origin live in a different domestic environment to the children of refugees for whom this is not an option.

One crucial issue concerned with self-concept is that focused in the family, according to Poole. Tension between peer group and familial expectations creates a sense of dual identity, usually when children do not have the native language skills to discuss their educational experience with their parents. The problems of identity integration may have quite profound effects on educational participation, though there is little research available to explore this relationship.

Educational aspirations are closely tied to participation. Poole indicates that *overall* ethnic children and their parents have higher educational and occupational aspirations than their Australian counterparts, and tend to stay at school longer. However, longer schooling does not necessarily result in high scholastic achievement. The ethnic parents in many surveys were distinguished by a strongly expressed concern for the disciplinary role of the school (Jakubowicz and Wolf 1980). However, the utility of a distinction such as ethnic/Anglo is very low, and has little explanatory value.

The question of performance, or educational outcome, is probably the most controversial finding in Poole's review. She concludes that "access to educational systems and outcomes do not show major areas of immigrant disadvantage, except in areas of language-related performance . . . To the extent that obstacles to educational opportunity exist in Australia, the causes are more likely to be found in the class structure than in ethnic origin *per se*" (Poole 1981, p.274).

However, there are some real problems with the existing data base, and larger scale studies. There is currently no national data base which allows an assessment of participation rates, performance and educational career path choices of ethnic minorities.

The study by de Lemos of children from three schools in Melbourne, contrasting Australian children, English-speaking migrant children and N.E.S. migrant children, concluded that English language based tests were the only useful discriminant, and they only distinguished performance between English speakers, (indigenous and immigrant) and N.E.S. children. However, the research did not examine differences due to class or gender factors (de Lemos 1975).

Another 1975 ACER study of literacy and numeracy shows significant differences on key items between children from English-only households and those from Southern European language households, which suggests lower performance on linguistic competence items. The controversial 1980 National Assessment Study recorded but did not process data by ethnic groups and language spoken, so no comparison with 1975 is currently available (Bourke et al 1981). Resistance to processing this data came from "the systems representatives" for whom "politically, breakdowns by ethnicity were unacceptable" (Power et al 1982, p.25). The data was not made available to AIMA in its Evaluation (AIMA 1982, p.104) though Vlahanassiou has used some of the data which show significantly low levels of reading and number mastery by 14 year old Italian and Greek children — overall mastery of reading was 83 per cent and numeracy was 86 per cent, compared to 60 per cent for Italian and 50 per cent for Greek students for mastery of both tests (1981).

Other major studies are those by Martin and Meade, culminating in a comparative report on the experience of Queensland and Sydney students (Meade 1984). The methodologies employed varied between the studies, particularly in the use of IQ as a variable in the Sydney study only. There are major problems with the use of IQ test results as variables (Rose and Rose 1979; Green 1981). The main thrust of Meade's work is the proposition that it is possible to discern six "consistency" groups, the characteristics of which can be identified. The groups are defined by the relationship between three variables: IQ (high/medium); aspiration to Higher School Certificate (yes/no); gain Higher School Certificate (yes/no). Meade accepts that the IQ measure is culturally biased, and points out the role of IQ levels in legitimising the institutional ideology of the school. He also qualifies the general statement about "migrant attitudes" to education, by indicating the important differences between ethnic groups, and within ethnic groups between socio-economic status groups.

The data on which the current perception of migrants as generally "making it" in the Australian education system is based contains major gaps. Current knowledge does however, point to the central role of class and gender factors in determining the relationships of children of ethnic background to the education system. A recent DEYA report concludes that:

policies and programs in Australian education for non-English speakers in full-time primary and secondary education therefore seemed to develop without the benefit of adequate data on the number of students, age, educational achievement and background, education and employment expectations, or the rate at which they might acquire competence in English. (DEYA 1983a, p.16)

While the evidence on "migrantness" and "ethnicity" suggests that these categories tell us little about participation, achievement and outcomes from education *per se* for children from ethnic collectivities if class, gender and specific national origins are not delineated, the same cannot be said for aboriginality. That category continues to delineate an experience in Australian society which *per se* does disadvantage children (Western 1983, pp.212-217).

2.4 Government Intervention — U.K. and U.S.A.

Given the influence in Australia of the British and American response to social inequality, it is important to be aware of the rationales, strategies and outcomes they have adopted. A major British response to the apparent closure of social mobility for the children of working class families was developed through a program of Educational Priority Areas. These E.P.A.s worked on a model of cultural deprivation in the home, arguing that the cultural skills necessary to "crack" the intergroup (particularly class) boundaries would have to come from schools. The E.P.A. projects emphasised both pre-schooling and the development of community schools which would institute "community oriented curriculum change" (Halsey 1974, p.135). Such initiatives would therefore seek to reverse the process whereby the 'deprived' child had been prepared not for learning and achievement, but for almost certain failure and early withdrawal from formal education. However, Bernstein (1974, p.111) has shown that the implicit concept of "compensatory education" — the school needing to overcome the deficiencies created "at home" — devalues and renders insignificant the images, symbolic representations and "spontaneous realisations of their culture" within the family. Halsey concluded that whatever model of "disadvantage" was used, the

E.P.A. school is impotent except in the context of a comprehensive organisation of social services in the community . . . [and] no amount of success with work on either the cultural poverty of the home or the educational poverty of the school will result in anything but frustration if socialisation cannot be translated into opportunity at the end. (Halsey 1974, pp.135-6)

Mortimore and Blackstone have noted in their discussion of the relationship between social and educational disadvantage that the limited resources made available for compensatory projects (in the U.K. and the U.S.A.) have been grossly insufficient to have any long lasting or significant effect on the most disadvantaged. Indeed, referring to Bronfenbrenner's (1974) "ecological" response to educational disadvantage which would attempt to improve all aspects of living conditions of disadvantaged families, they conclude that compensatory education would require vast resources, which might more usefully be devoted to changing the social conditions and power relations which constrain personal development.

Mortimore and Blackstone (1982) also argued that one-off, small-scale programs which are not part of the mainstream of education and are not fully supported by the education system managers are unlikely to succeed in overcoming disadvantage. They point out that strategies to overcome educational disadvantage should incorporate a number of key factors including pre school provision, home/school links and continuing education.

The educational development of the child takes place at school and at home, so that *both* parents and teachers are participants in that process. The interaction between school and home is therefore one crucial locus around which policy must be developed. The compensatory schemes which have treated the parents as "deficient" and the domestic culture of the child as a hindrance to "appropriate" educational behaviour have had particularly unfortunate consequences for many ethnic children. In particular, the divorce between "child-care" and "pre-school education" has consigned many children of ethnic background to comparatively low quality or unstimulating day-care environments, while the more creative and progressive environments are appropriated by the more privileged parents for their children.

Thus the U.S. program, Operation Headstart, which sought to operationalise "cultural deficiency" models by providing intensive pre-school support was marginally successful, but overall did little to affect the pattern of social opportunity. In discussing such programs, Green has noted that:

equalising opportunity is precisely not 'compensatory'. Compensatory education would consist in the devotion of massively greater amounts of educational and social resources to children from backgrounds conducive to poor intellectual performance than to children from intellectually privileged backgrounds (1981, p.39).

More recently, U.S. educational authorities have introduced programs which operate from arguments of cultural pluralism — that different groups have a right to have education processes which respect and reinforce "minority" cultures on the basis of being different but equal. Similar concerns have been identified by the U.K. Rampton Inquiry, and contested on the grounds that the central problems in education lie in the power structure of a racist society, not primarily in the schools (Carby 1982). The operation of schools which teach in Spanish, has been made more viable in urban centres where the millions of Hispanic Americans have a dense and complex social realm. However, such a Hispanic pupil can reasonably expect to survive with minimal knowledge of English. Moreover, such an approach avoids questions of mobility for smaller minorities in lesser concentrations, where English language skills remain vital in manipulating the symbols and attaining the benefits defined by the dominant value system.

2.5 Government Intervention — Australia

An assimilationist model of ethnic relations dominated education well into the 1960s. This approach assumed the immigrant child was effectively indistinguishable from any other child and would become "Australian" through a natural process of acculturation (Martin 1978). Similar and closely related assumptions also dominated government attitudes to Aboriginal children — that their Aboriginal identification and cultural experience would disappear "naturally" if they were ignored (Watts 1976). For the children of immigrants, this process would require the conscious abandonment by parents of their own cultural histories (Dovey, 1960).

As elsewhere, the assimilationist strategies proved consistent failures in responding in particular to the language learning needs of N.E.S. children, and the inter-generational cultural aspirations of their parents. The first formal recognition of this failure at the Federal level was the Child Migrant Education Program in 1971. The CMEP provided a more sophisticated strategy to advance similar assimilationist ends, though by the early 1970s this integrationist perspective which allowed the parents to retain elements of their culture was coming under critical question from a position that is now labelled "multicultural".

In simple terms the multicultural position, at least as argued by Smolicz (1980), AIMA (1980) and the Committee on Multicultural Education of the Schools Commission (1979), subsumes a functionalist account of education. Education becomes an avenue to social cohesion, through which individuals are equipped with the range of basic social skills and knowledge necessary to survive, the capacity to interact socially, and occupational skills.

It was not until the late 1960s that Australian education debates had begun to consider seriously the question of group disadvantage, in the wake of the U.S. War on Poverty (e.g. Operation Headstart) and the Plowden Report and its proposals for Educational Priority Areas in the U.K. (Bennet 1982). As Martin (1978, p.119) has argued, the first stage in this recognition was of migrants as a social problem. Their children were disadvantaged by their learning problems, which were essentially those of limited capacity in English.

The mid 1970s marked the transition period to a recognition of multicultural education perspectives, in which Martin (1978, p.125) identified five issues — teaching English, bilingual education, community languages, multicultural education and ethnic schools. These perspectives, had they been incorporated into an overall analysis of the natures of educational inequality in Australia, might well have permitted the development of a more comprehensive educational project, one which addressed the complex reality of educational exclusion and failure.

The particular nature of "ethnic" inequality exposed in the mid 1970s (Jakubowicz et al 1984) included a new understanding of the economic and social role of immigrants recruited for industrial growth. A segmented labour market, in which lower-paid, dangerous and dirty jobs consistently went to N.E.S. workers, indicated a pattern of disadvantage which presented a challenge to the myth of an equal and open society. Thus inequality of occupational opportunity became compounded by poor housing, poor health services, minimal welfare and social security provision and over-stressed an often apparently insensitive educational provision. However, just as the multicultural project began, the Federal Government started to wind down its commitment to education reform, so that what became the multicultural project disguised its refusal to address structural inequality. The rationale produced by government was that immigrant status and ethnic origin should not *per se* be allowed to interfere with the "normal" operation of the education system, including its reproduction of class and other inequalities (Jakubowicz et al 1984; AIMA 1984, pp.13).

The development of policy and programs designed to provide education for students of ethnic origin have each been based in either an implicit or explicit set of assumptions about the causes of their inequality. The CMEP effectively assumed that the problem was one of English language learning, and that *that* should be the focus of government action. The Schools Commission Multicultural Education Program of the mid 1970s recognised the debilitating effects of the concerted denial of the legitimacy of the migrant child's experience on his or her capacity to acquire skills and develop individual potential (Schools Commission 1975). With that breakthrough, linked as it then was to equality of opportunity of *access* to education, the recognition of the wider needs of the child was institutionalised.

However, the Multicultural Education Program consciously rejected problems of social disadvantage which affected educational performance and personal development (this program is currently under review for the Schools Commission). It did not cover racism in education nor support projects which sought to bring about more general social change. The involvement of parents was limited to providing cultural input, and projects which sought to contest the power structures of schools were not generally supported.

2.6 Factors Restricting Access and Affecting Outcomes

The range of research and institutional responses to the presence of ethnic and racial minorities in the education system suggests a number of factors are important — though some are drawn from competing and in places virtually incompatible theoretical models.

Social inequality is continued through the education system in a number of ways. The debate over what processes occur and how they should be understood has been detailed by Foster (1981, pp.109–137), Edgar (1981), Connell et al (1982, pp.15–34). In summary, the theoretical perspectives relevant to education for ethnic minorities include:

- i) Innate individual differences form the basis for unequal performance and outcomes, and thus education should build on the specific strengths of the individual. See Green (1981), for a discussion of this view in the work of Jensen.
- ii) The home culture of the child may be either better or worse suited to the requirements of the education system, and may require compensatory action by the school to ensure the child is equipped to compete. If the child fails, this is due to his/her "cultural" incapacity and "poor" attitudes to education. See Halsey (1974) for an exposition and critique of this view.
- iii) The school operates to fit certain wider system demands and reinforces behaviour "appropriate" to those demands, while stigmatising "inappropriate" behaviour — "inappropriate" children learn to fail (Halsey 1974; Brown and Madge 1982).
- iv) Schools are diverse and reflect the class structure of society; middle class families utilise the market to provide education for their children, while working class families relate to education through the state. There are distinctly different sets of power relations at work depending on the class background of the child (Connell et al 1982).
- v) Schools function to maintain the power of dominant groups in society, and select prospective members of the elite through meritocratic competition, while assigning those who do not perform effectively enough to more routine and less powerful social locations (Bowles and Gintis 1976).
- vi) Educational participation and attainment is related to self-concept, self-confidence and a firm sense of identity and purpose. Culturally diverse backgrounds equip students with a variety of cognitive "weapons", many of which may not be recognised as suitable by the education system. These skills may be systematically devalued, thus eroding both self-concept and potential attainments (Bernstein 1975; Carby 1982).
- vii) The training of teachers has not included compulsory exposure to issues particularly relevant to the experience of pupils from minority groups. It has also not necessarily involved an exploration of how curricula which are relevant and which facilitate access to wider educational opportunities can be developed and implemented (Rampton 1981; Carby 1982).
- viii) Deeply embedded assumptions which are racist, and which assume that the "average" working class child of non-English speaking origin (particularly

girls) is destined for "failure" may be part of the hidden curriculum of working class schools. Learning to fail may become part of a self-fulfilling prophecy. Institutional racism is particularly important in explaining the experience of Aboriginal children, and some ethnic groups at particular periods in some parts of the country. (Watts 1976; Young et al 1980).

Many of these processes clearly interact with and compound each other, but little research is available which casts light on how this compounding process operates. Clearly disadvantages suffered due to gender, class, ethnicity or disability cannot be mechanically added together as if in competition for the "most oppressed" category. Rather, the reality of the individual's experience is caught by the way these social processes are enmeshed in each other.

2.7 Processes of Selection and Credentialling

The complex combination of "economic hardship, language difficulties and cultural differences" (DEYA 1983a, p.12), contributes to the process by which many migrant children learn that they are not destined to attain the heights of academic success their parents had hoped for. Part of the reason is that the education system "fails" those who do not meet very specific and limited criteria — those necessary for university and C.A.E. entry. It fails them through its insensitivity to their educational experience. Its inability to respond effectively to the range and extent of the English language skills they require in order *not* to fail is a consistent implication of studies by Meade (1984), Marjoribanks (1980), Young et al (1980), Young et al (1983), and Spearritt and Colman (1983).

Another major conclusion, supported by these studies, by Jakubowicz and Wolf (1980) and Hannan and Spinoso (1982), is that the power relationship between the school and the parents can have a very debilitating effect on educational participation by students. Thus where parents do not understand the educational practice of the school, there may be a strong push for more traditional forms of education, and a demand that the school produce a well disciplined and socialised student who has learned vocationally useful skills. Jakubowicz and Wolf argued, for instance, that while

Port Kembla schools were prepared to innovate . . . and explore the potential . . . implicit in multicultural education . . . [they] resisted . . . attempts to develop ideas and programmes which extended beyond the school walls, and which would change or restructure the pattern of authority and decision-making within schools (1980, p.66).

The power relationship operates not only through the institutional ideology of the school system, but in the day-to-day definition of valued behaviour and experiences. Thus the DEYA (1983a) discussion of transitional education needs of immigrant and refugee youth reflects on the "lifelong problems for immigrant children whose education and English language needs are not met by the school" (1983a, p.14).

The home educational environment is also strongly affected by the economic circumstances of the family. Overcrowded housing makes study difficult, while economic pressures and the real costs of schooling, including wages or the dole foregone, form a heavy burden for working class families. If the school is seen to be failing the child, this burden may be seen as unbearable.

The concentration on factors associated with a multicultural model of ethnic children's educational behaviour has diverted research and policy attention away from questions of access and participation. However, it can be theorised that non-participation in education is a function of the following processes, which are enmeshed in one another.

- i) Gender-related processes may minimise and devalue the life experience of girls, and reduce their aspirations. Sex-role stereotypes held by teachers and parents may be imposed on children, but these may vary significantly by social class and within and between ethnic collectivities (Connell et al 1982; Poole 1984).
- ii) Class-related processes constrain options for working class children. These include lower expectations of academic achievement, an experience of schools which tend to be rather more rigid and hierarchical in organisation, and conflict between the recognition of the importance of education and the difficulties in "succeeding" at school. Working class parents are likely to feel rather more powerless in relation to the schools their children attend. Working class children develop ways of coping with educational experiences which can be alienating, and these strategies of survival can intensify reactions of exclusion by school authorities. Again, these experiences are rather different for girls compared to boys, and may vary according to experiences of institutional racism, English language skills and parental attitudes (Connell et al 1982; Marjoribanks 1980). Connell et al do not discuss ethnic differences in their analysis of class, gender and educational inequality. Social classes are also expressed spatially and expose intra-ethnic differences (Poulsen and Spearritt 1981).
- iii) Ethnic-related processes may limit educational options in a number of ways. Some relate specifically to the problems children have with English — not only in comprehension but in fluency and conceptual development. The use of the parental language at home for domestic communication and English at school may result in some difficulties in the development of conceptual skills requiring language. The child's self-concept may become ambiguous and irresolute as an outcome of experiencing continuing assimilationist pressures in the mainstream cultural system. However, these constraints are intensified by class and gender factors such as overcrowding, poor conditions for home study, comparatively rigid working class schools in which cultural and language differences further restrict the potential for parent involvement. Attitudes to the different education appropriate for men and women may also affect access to education.

Evidence of comparatively high parental aspirations (Marjoribanks 1980; Jakubowicz and Wolf 1980) for working class children may indicate significant family tension and pressures for children facing less supportive school environments.

Thus a critical interface lies with working class girls and boys whose parents are in occupations which allow little autonomy and control of the labour process. Their parents speak little or no English, have a deep desire that their children do not repeat their experience of unskilled factory work, and expect the education system to provide that mobility — lack of success will be seen as the "fault" of the child (Marjoribanks 1980).

It should be clear that there is an interaction of factors from family to school to the wider society that establishes the context for educational attainment. As Connell et al note,

the school is an institution that is, among other things, a power structure, and is felt as such by its students. It is capable of intimidating and grinding people down, and it often generates resentment and resistance (Connell et al 1982, p.107).

Experience of that type of education can be most alienating and lead to a sense of personal failure because the high value placed on education as a way out is not matched by actual achievement. Thus while entry to basic education is fairly open, the processes of closure and exclusion seem to operate rather rapidly. Evidence on participation, retention rates and outcomes for particular ethnic collectivities suggest gender and class factors are the major determinants (Poole 1984).

The recent DEYA working party posited that the factors limiting participation in education included:

- i) cost of education.
- ii) inadequate student assistance, particularly for refugees.
- iii) lack of information about educational options and assistance.
- iv) cultural or class factors, such as:
 - illiteracy or semi-literacy in home language
 - lack of previous education, especially for Indo-Chinese
 - interrupted previous education
 - age status and definitions of adulthood
 - co-educational schools inappropriate
 - young male resistance to female teachers
 - low valuation of education by parents
 - suspicion of education as indoctrination
- v) parental lack of understanding of Australian education.
- vi) teachers' ignorance or misunderstanding of student backgrounds.
- vii) teachers' prejudice and cross-cultural insensitivity.
- viii) attitudes of teachers, teacher organisations, teacher educators, school administrators (and education policy-makers).

The working party concluded that major information gaps existed including:

- i) non-English speaking background as a factor in school achievement
- ii) relative effectiveness of the different systems of teaching English as a second language
- iii) the needs of adolescent immigrants, particularly 15 to 19 year olds in transition between schools and work
- iv) the development of counselling for ethnic children.

Ashenden et al (1984) have argued that the process of credentialling may exacerbate difficulties in utilising education resources for members of groups already constrained in some significant way.

2.8 The Participation and Equity Program and Ethnic Minorities

The Government has conceived of P.E.P. as part of an overall strategy of response to the social crisis of Australian society in the face of major technological and structural change and its impact on youth. The program is framed by a concern for the comparatively high proportion of young Australians who do not utilise the education services available to them, and the loss of creativity that this represents. The Government has recognised that the education system has unfairly allocated benefits to groups already privileged. The system tends to operate in such a way that the less powerful groups in society receive an inequitable share of those benefits. P.E.P. distinguishes between "migrants" in general, and those particular groups who have been under-represented in education — a circumstance most likely in working class N.E.S. communities and among some young migrant women.

Yet P.E.P. appears to take exactly that mechanically additive approach to disadvantage and exclusion that has made overcoming the processes of closure so very difficult in the past. While the program indicates some awareness of the possible areas of interaction between dimensions of discrimination — for instance the identification of differing cultural definitions of appropriate sex role behaviour in relation to education and the problems of school/community relations — it does not consider wider structural questions. For instance, the continuation of dangerous, low paid and alienating occupations filled by successive waves of N.E.s. immigrants, and to an increasing extent by their children, receives no consideration. Yet the E.P.A. programs (and indeed the Australian Disadvantaged Schools programs) may well have failed because they did not pay attention to those types of factors. As a consequence they were blamed for not achieving ends of participation, retention and social mobility that could not possibly have been achieved (Ashenden et al 1984). Although there must clearly be some intergenerational mobility for the children of immigrants, given the importance of English language skills as a determinant of inter-group mobility (Brom and Jones 1980), the lowest level of the working class which is heavily "ethnic" still includes one of the two most closed social strata in Australia over two generations. The other is the "ruling class" which remains comparatively inaccessible to outsiders (Wild 1978).

As suggested in 1.2.1, 1.2.2, 1.2.9 and 1.2.10, the Government has used the concept of participation to refer to increasing numbers in education, and equity to refer to ensuring previously excluded groups actually participate. There are few leads or indications that the concern for multicultural education perspectives such as those covered by Martin (1978) (see 2.5 above) have been incorporated. Indeed there is some implicit criticism of that pluralist cultural perspective which might assign members of ethnic minorities — particularly working class individuals — to educational pathways which restrict their access to the "best" of the dominant culture (Ashenden et al 1984). The contradiction lies here, in the following process:

- i) social mobility depends on access to extensive education
- ii) unhindered access to social mobility is highly valued, particularly among minority collectivities
- iii) the current system of credentialling appears to guarantee mobility to those who succeed, at the expense of those who fail
- iv) the current system of education makes access to extensive education most difficult for those who are most disadvantaged and this reinforces disadvantage

- v) failure may ensure for the disadvantaged a repetition of the previous generation's social experience
- vi) to make education more "culturally relevant" may raise retention rates but may not equip minority participants with the skills necessary to ensure social mobility.

The Participation and Equity Program appears unwilling to address this contradiction and the policy directions which must flow from it, in particular the reintroduction of the concept of inequality and questions of equity into the debate on multicultural education.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 Concepts and the Data Base

While this review of the situation has not been exhaustive, it is possible to define the major gaps in our knowledge and understanding of the participation of ethnic children in education, and the equity of the outcomes. There is *no* sound national data base — only the 1980 Australian Studies in Student Performance project (Bourke et al 1981; Power et al 1982), which is methodologically problematic, with its sample somewhat damaged and critical parameters of class and ethnicity not currently available. The larger studies such as those by Meade (1984) are of limited use, as they do not encompass cohorts who have dropped out of school, or who have pursued non-school educational programs. Other studies are suggestive rather than conclusive, and the overall sense is one of ethnically differentiated behaviour, the quality of which is not much above folk stereotype. A pilot survey in 1983 of Year 9 students in 100 NSW schools sought to collect data which could later correlate class placement in English/Maths with languages spoken at home, birthplace and length of time in an English speaking school. The data from this survey has not yet been released, but it will be required in future as part of the annual ethnic affairs policy that the Department of Education will be required to lodge with the Ethnic Affairs Commission.

The use of terms such as "migrant" or "ethnic" as though they were meaningful social categories has led to a messy and not very rigorous assessment of the current situation. In particular, there are few ethnographic studies which explore the way in which ethnicity, class and gender intermesh, and the distinctive effects these processes produce, particularly in the realm of social consciousness — self concepts, aspirations, attitudes and behaviour (Anthias and Yuz?-Davis 1983; Fetterman 1984).

3.2 Proposals

1. *Research Requirements:* The overall implications of research to date indicate two complementary directions. The first is a national data base which allows understanding and analyses which can examine the "categorical" relationships between ethnicity, class, gender, and disability (for instance, the apparent over-consignment of "ethnic" and Aboriginal children to the various versions of slow learner classes), in retention rates, school educational pathways and choices, and post-school educational pathways. The second direction suggests the development of intensive ethnographic studies which will link the experience of

structural constraints and opportunities to the social consciousness of participants in education.

2. *Pilot Action Research Programs*: The discussion of school/community links (Halsey 1975; Marjoribanks 1980; Jakubowicz and Wolf 1981) tends to support an active involvement by parents in school decision-making. However, participation may be difficult and may result not in the empowering of ethnic working class parents, particularly working mothers, but in their exhaustion and control. NACCME, in co-operation with the Multicultural Education Program of the Schools Commission should explore the development of pilot programs of action research to test the way in which the constraints which develop to prevent an effective input by parents may be overcome. In particular, issues of institutional racism should be addressed.
3. *P.E.P. Decision-Making*: The national and state P.E.P. implementation committees should reassess their program and organisational guidelines to ensure that the particular contradictions identified by NACCME are addressed, and that ethnic policy targets can be developed and implemented.
4. *Pre-School Education*: The current division between the Office of Child Care and the Department of Education at the federal level is replicated in the states, with consequences which bear directly on the future educational attainment of ethnic working class children (Sweeney and Jamrozik 1984). The importance of effective pre-school education for the future attainment of children is a common finding of British, American and Australian studies (in terms of extending the period of education). NACCME should initiate discussions with the Department of Education and the Office of Child Care in the Department of Social Security to examine the pre-school educational environments that can be developed for children from ethnic working class families, and the effect of such projects on the educational pathways of children, and the continuing educational options of parents, particularly mothers.

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