Confusions about multiculturalism

Author/s: Jan Pakulski  |  Year: 2014  |  Publication type: Journal  |  Peer reviewed:  |  Topic area/s: Ethnicity, Integration, Immigration

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Research aim:
This article aims to outline the principles of Australian multiculturalism, identifies its theoretical foundations, and highlights some of the popular confusions about its meaning, focus and objectives.

Results/Conclusion:
The confusions are likely to grow with multiculturalism torn by two trends. On the one hand, its key principles have been accepted in ‘planning for diversity’; on the other hand, it has been drawn into culture wars triggered by anti-immigration movements and social pathologies of mal-integration.

Implications:
In order to assess the overall ‘record of multiculturalism’ in a fair and accurate way – a task that is not undertaken here – we must start by clearing the confusions. When this is done, critics will realise that they have to do much more than pin the well-known problems and pathologies that accompany mass migrations on multiculturalism. Any fair assessment has to start by clearing the confusions, but then continue with a wide comparative analysis: monitoring the levels of social integration/cohesion, comparing the outcomes in societies embracing multiculturalism with outcomes in societies that embraced rival policies; and comparing the outcomes before and after the introduction of multicultural strategies. Criticisms based on confused interpretations of multiculturalism are not able to do that.

Cultural Group(s):
Refugees

Location of study:

Age group:

Number included in study:

Type of participants:

Research approach:

Type of data:
Mixed

Secondary data sources used:

Specific scales or analytical techniques used:

Implications/ Recommendations:

Notes: