

United in Multiculturalism

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In a rapidly globalizing world, will multiculturalism unite humanity's diverse cultures? Or will it only divide us further than ever before? In the 21st century, the world is more united than ever before. We are interconnected through communication, travel, migration, and international cooperation. Migration in particular spread diversity to previously homogenous countries and increase global collaboration. Yet the anachronic problems of prejudice and discrimination still exist today, either subtle like individual intolerance of others, or overt like far-right groups calling for the end of progress. The SDG goal that multiculturalism connects to is SDG 10 Reduced Inequalities. Multiculturalism is shown to benefit countries like Indonesia, Taiwan, or Japan, yet have their downsides in each respective country.

Multiculturalism has countless benefits such as: Supporting sustainable development by fostering understanding and reducing prejudice. My interview with Eva Chen from Taiwan, highlighted that Taiwan's multiculturalism is very visible in law. There are laws like the Indigenous people's basic law that guarantees political participation and cultural and land rights to indigenous people, or the Indigenous language development act that supports the official use of the indigenous language and do not require the use of the Chinese language in their identity card (Multiculturalism tracker drive). This protection of multiculturalism in Taiwanese law benefits Taiwan through fostering open-mindedness and tolerance, education of other cultures will benefit Taiwanese society because through knowledge of other cultures, they can survive in the international world (Emerald.com).

Japan has been a homogeneous country for a long time, but due to the ageing population multiculturalism is needed for Japan to survive. But backlash for conservatives and due to Japan's history, multiculturalism has still taken very young roots and is prone to resistance from reactionaries. My interview with Ami Mizuno gave me insight on the importance of improving the history of Japan taught in schools. Foreign workers give economic benefits to Japan through multilingual services and keeping the economy afloat during Japan's population (Rieti.go.jp). Tourism is a major pillar of Japan's economy, and interactions with foreigners improve the social and cultural awareness. Sustainable tourism drives economic growth in local communities and social and cultural exchanges (Amaifishingtours.com).

Indonesia's national motto is "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika" (Unity in Diversity) and the country is a good example of cultural coexistence. Multiculturalism is enshrined in

Indonesian society and education teaches us other cultures so children can tolerate and understand other cultures. Indonesia is one the most diverse countries in the world and their culture emphasizes the importance of tolerance and social harmony. Indonesia's multiculturalism stems from the Pancasila, Indonesia's national philosophy that is extremely broad, but due to its universal structure it can be interpreted in many ways, putting no restriction on multiculturalism (Pancasila).

However there are many negative impacts of multiculturalism in the world. Most concerns are about identity challenges especially in Taiwan. In my interview with Eva Chen, she said that the Japanese occupation suppressed the Taiwanese people, while modernizing its infrastructure. However after the end of the Chinese Civil War, the Kuomintang of mainland China, escaped to Taiwan, and as of today Taiwan's political status and identity is still disputed. The identity in Taiwan are divided between the Kuomintang and its allies who prefer to maintain the Chinese identity and reunification with China, while the Democratic Progressive Party and its allies want to create a separate Taiwanese identity and independence of Taiwan. This identity crisis overshadows multiculturalism because without a national identity, multiculturalism cannot take root (Emerald.com).

Japan has been facing a population crisis and due to that, they need foreign workers to keep Japan's ship afloat. However Japan's history is revised and misrepresented in education, because of nationalists that want to keep Japan clean and the honour culture is prevalent. Japan for all its existence was a homogenous country, but after WW2 Japan became less militaristic and more open to other cultures. Yet from my interview with Ami Mizuno, foreign workers are discriminated against, because multiculturalism is a very new thing to the Japanese since their isolation a few centuries back. Foreigners have difficulty learning Japanese but it is a widely used in Japan and that causes communication issues and conflict (apjff.org).

Indonesia, although a great example of multiculturalism is still not free from the tensions between cultures. There were many conflicts within. Indonesia, but after the fall of Suharto, it exploded like a powder keg. Examples of full-scale ethnic conflicts in Indonesia are: the Aceh insurgency, Papua conflict (still ongoing), Maluku conflict, Madura conflict, May 1998 riots, and the G30SPKI movement and the ensuing instability and massacres that lead to the overthrow of Sukarno. These conflicts were caused by economic inequality and repression by the government. Indonesia is so

diverse that stereotypes can form easily and it can be long-lasting. Throughout Indonesia's history there are many cultural conflicts, this highlights the fact that diversity alone does not guarantee unity (thediplomat.com).

Multiculturalism may cause issues, but there are ways to effectively mitigate the negative impact of multiculturalism. For example in Taiwan the government can improve legal protections for migrant workers so they receive fair treatment and accessible support systems. When laws are enforced consistently, discrimination can gradually decrease. In Japan, the first step involves shifting societal attitudes by promoting public awareness and campaign that highlights the contributions of foreigners and encourage positive cultural exchange. Labor requires reform, especially as foreign workers are the lifeline of Japan during its time of need. Companies should support mental health services to prevent self-killings, and flexible approaches that acknowledge cultural differences instead of demanding total conformity to Japan's culture. In Indonesia can reduce ethnic and religious tensions by prioritizing dialogue between communities, disproving stereotypes in social media, promoting peace and education, and strengthens programs that teach students about unity in diversity. Local and National governments should prevent disinformation from spreading and fuelling conflicts (ijassjournal.com).

In conclusion, although Multiculturalism is shown to benefits countries, but it still has its negatives. However we can minimize and reduce these negative impacts to fully reap the positive results of multiculturalism. Multiculturalism if implemented properly, will reduce entrenched global inequality. Overall, multiculturalism will guide us to the stars and beyond.

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