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New Europeans, New Identities

Reflections on Europe's Dilemma

Richard Lewis

IES WORKING PAPER 1/2008

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New Europeans, New Identities
Reflections on Europe's Dilemma

Richard Lewis

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines issues relating to the integration of immigrants, particularly Muslim immigrants, into European societies. It first contemplates whether a true European identity really exists. Building on the different conceptions of (European) identity, the paper claims that a sense of belonging is crucial in helping immigrants integrate into Europe. The paper also argues that identity is, actually, most relevant when it is under threat. The paper therefore looks at the nature of Muslim society in Europe and some of the reasons for disaffection in that population. While doing this, the paper compares the various models of integration in, for example, the United States, Canada and Israel with the attempt by a number of EU Member States to find satisfactory integration strategies. Also, the efforts of the European Commission to forge an acceptable integration framework through the principles elaborated following the Hague declaration in November 2004 are discussed. The paper concludes that integration is best approached by creating cohesive communities and loyalties at the local level.

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1 THE CURRENT CONTEXT OF IMMIGRATION—IDENTITY DEFINED

There are two factors which profoundly affect thinking on the issue of immigration in Europe. The first is that it is a complex subject frequently simplified to the point of misunderstanding in the media. One only has to ponder the causes and effects of migration (poverty, war, to cite but two) to realise the nature of this assertion. The second is that Europe is a neophyte in the handling of immigration compared with other countries and is therefore feeling its way in dealing with it.

This paper looks at just some of the factors involved and focuses especially on considerations of identity. The essence of this is whether and how recent immigrants to European countries, and especially Muslim immigrants, can retain the best of their culture but at the same time feel that they are an integral part of their new countries. I believe that correctly handled by policy makers (whether at European, national or local level), a framework can be created which enables this to happen. For example, by enforcing existing or, if necessary, new legislation to combat discrimination.

Nevertheless, my contention will be that most of the issues lie at local level and should be solved at the level with the participation of immigrants and the indigenous population. The absence of community cohesion (which can be used as a synonym for a sense of belonging) was noted by Jayaweera and Choudhury¹ as a factor in the riots in northern England in 2001. Conversely, the presence of a strong *local* identity in Marseille seems to have been an element in saving that city from the riots in the French banlieues in 2005.²

The attacks on the United States on September 11 2001, although they did not take place in Europe, shocked Europeans in a number of ways, and also caused the reflection in Europe that it could happen here. It could and it did, in Madrid and London to say nothing of other foiled terrorist attempts.

However, in some ways, the attacks in these two European cities seemed worse than in America. The reason for this is that the perpetrators were born and educated in Europe, a continent which prides itself as being at the origins of the Enlightenment and liberal democracy. Then came the riots in France and the hand-wringing began. How could people nurtured in the womb of European welfare caring societies commit such acts? Are they so alienated from their respective societies that they do not identify with the populations of origin?

These events engendered reflections on how to approach these issues and the nature of European and national identities. Clearly, if you launch bombs at innocent citizens, you cannot be said to identify with their interests. Thus the integration of immigrants - creating a sense of citizenship and belonging - became a mantra chanted by policy makers throughout the Western world. It is an attractive and indeed valid concept especially in the post 9/11 context. In Britain there was sense of disbelief that British citizens, born and raised in the broader culture of the country and apparently leading productive lives could

¹ 2008.

² BBC 2008.

commit such acts. It is not constructive to blame the Islamic madrassas for these ills; there are more pertinent reasons why alienated individuals commit such horrors and we are bound to look at our own societies closely before holding others responsible.

There does, however, seem to be what some commentators have called “the globalisation of grievance” at work. By this I mean that the grievances of individuals who commit terrorist acts are not necessarily related to their views of the society in which they live, but rather their reaction to wider issues of foreign policy and perceived aggression against people of their kind. Thus the views of the perpetrators can be said to be based on conflicts that are flashed around the world in an instant in a highly reduced and often editorialised form.

The question, then, is whether and how the creation of a specifically European identity or if not a European identity, at least a series of identities, European, national, regional or local, which are productive and benign, can be achieved. In the case of European identity, we need first to determine what we mean by European and what we mean by identity. Being European can be defined in many different ways.

First, can we Europeans be defined by geography? If you consider the political gymnastics of determining where Europe begins and ends (for example in the case of Turkey, Ukraine or Belarus), even this is not clear. Then you might consider European values as a criterion. Here we may be on safer ground because there are certain fundamentals which are common to our thinking and I will return to this later. Then there is the cultural element. Perhaps there is a European identity for high culture in art, music and literature, but in an everyday understanding of culture as to how we live, we are all very different. Take language for example. There are now 23 different official languages in the EU alone so the term “lost in translation” begins to take on a new meaning. In addition, in relation to language, recent research seems to show that people who speak different languages actually reason in different ways. According to Professor Henny Bijleveld, a neurolinguist at the Université Libre de Bruxelles,³ each language is so differently structured that it influences our comprehension of the other. It is not simply a question of translation but a manner of thinking. If this hypothesis holds good (and there are opposing views) then this makes language as an identity marker even more important.

My contention, therefore, is that there is not one European identity, nor indeed one national identity. Indeed, the motto “United in Diversity” was coined to reflect this very issue, although in the context of the immigrant integration debate, it is but a neat encapsulation of an ideal. In reality we are all, as individuals, made up of a patchwork of identities. These consist of our gender, our language, our education in the broad sense, our religion and our rituals which, using the term loosely, can include dance, cuisine and ceremonies. We are not even aware of these aspects of our lives that are interwoven into our personalities, families and friends in a relatively seamless way. How do we know that we share certain identities with others in our entourage? AJ Ayer⁴, the founder of logical positivism, gives us a clue.

“Each of us has good reason to suppose that other people understand him, and that he understands them, because he observes that his utterances have the effect on their actions which he regards as appropriate and that they also regard as appropriate the effect which their utterances have on his actions; and mutual

³ La Libre Belgique 2007.

⁴ 1971, 142.

understanding is defined in terms of such harmony and behaviour... Each of us, although his sense experiences are private to himself, has good reason to believe that he and other conscious beings inhabit a common world”.

The key to understanding a common identity is the expression of a mutual understanding of the world and the way people interact in it. It is not surprising therefore that when someone blows up a train and thereby loses his own life in the hope of obtaining immortality, we say that is “beyond our comprehension”. It is almost as if that person were speaking another language. “The limits of my language mean the limits of my world,” wrote Ludwig Wittgenstein.

One of the first questions you ask someone you meet for the first time is what they do for a living. Many, if not most of us identify with our work. We are doctors, lawyers and so on, and we either identify with those professions or the organisations for which we work. We may consciously or unconsciously try and preserve that domain for ourselves, excluding minorities or the opposite sex, for example. Even though the law does not permit us to do this, the fact that minorities often find it difficult to access the world of work which appears to be so important in the hierarchy of society shows, not that the law is wrong, but that law cannot cure all. It is always subject to interpretation. Attempts have been made to rectify this phenomenon by positive discrimination. However, as Stephen Pinker⁵ points out “by pitting one group against another, such policies may cause each group to brew stereotypes about the other that are more pejorative than the ones they would develop in personal encounters”.

Take another example of the identity process, which might by a leap of the imagination be linked to the sense of being European. I am referring to sports politics or more specifically football politics. Identifying with a local football team becomes almost a fetish and the outbreaks of violence between supporters are witness to the view that football is a barely disguised substitute for war or at least regional rivalries. Europe’s internecine wars are being replayed on the field and in the environs of the stadium. Regional and national identity issues have not disappeared but simply re-surfaced in a different, and it is hoped, a more benign form.

Having reflected on the nature of identity, consider further the nature of what it means to be European. Gerard Dulanty writes:

“To speak of Europe as an invention is to stress the ways in which it has been constructed in a historical process... (it is) in fact a historically fabricated reality of ever-changing forms and dynamics. Most of Europe is only retrospectively European... Defining Europe is then fraught with problems, for Europe is a protean idea and not something self-evident. It is erroneous to regard Europe as merely a region for the simple reason that it means different things to different people in different contexts”.⁶

Some of the nineteenth and indeed twentieth century ideas of uniting Europe have a less than glorious past. Thus, the vision of Europe “uniting in diversity” as seen from Brussels might be viewed with scepticism by the citizen or immigrant and might prove to be an unattractive model. From Bismarck to the defeat of fascism in 1945, the “idea of Europe” became closely associated with the notion of MittelEuropa,⁷ originally as an issue of

⁵ 2002.

⁶ 1995, 3.

⁷ Ibid., chapter 7.

economic unity in the mid-nineteenth century. Fascism was after all a supra-national ideology. With the accession of the new Member States of the EU and the inevitable shift of gravity eastwards, Germany once again will become not only the economic but also the political centre of gravity of the Union. As a consequence, the Eurosceptics may once again raise the spectre of a German Europe as opposed to a European Germany. Germany, however, appears to be anchored in a thoroughly European and democratic future. But we have to be aware that old antagonisms can rise to the surface as a result of history.

However, like the protagonists of MittelEuropa, it seems inevitable that the force of economics will prevail in Europe as a reaction to the inexorable economic competition from China and India and that this above all will dispel the notion that the European nation-state can “go it alone”. As Eric Hobsbawm wrote:

“(History) will inevitably have to be written as the history of a world which can no longer be contained within the limits of ‘nations’ and ‘nation-states’ as those used to be defined either politically or economically or culturally or even linguistically. It will largely be supranational but even infranationality whether or not it dresses itself up in the costume of some mini-nationalism, will reflect the decline of the old nation-state as an operational entity”.⁸

Let me summarise my thoughts on both identity and its European credentials. Identity is an amalgam. It is not by acquiring a passport that one becomes a productive citizen, although that is one element. Identity is a fusion of common understanding among groups and a host of local loyalties - family, work, region, language and so on. A European notion of this identity, whether it is political, cultural or based on values, can be foisted on an unwilling audience. But the decline of the nation-state or the rise of the Brussels institutions, will probably not make a substantial difference to the way individuals feel about who they are. In due course this might happen; but a European identity will not be created in the space of decades, more in the perspective of several centuries. Much more important in the short term are the developments and policies at the local level.

As already stated, the immigration discourse has been stirred up by recent violent political events. *Indeed, my first contention in this paper is that war and terrorism cannot be curtailed in the future except by creating a positive sense of belonging and community among new immigrants as well as disaffected parts of the population as a whole.* By this I mean a gut feeling that “this place is home where I can bring up a family and make a positive contribution through employment or otherwise”. A sense of belonging means a common interest in the welfare of all members of society at various levels.

My second contention is that identity is not that vital, except at the moment when it is under threat. In order to avoid conflicts it is therefore crucial to alleviate any perceived threat to identity. In the case of former Yugoslavia what became important was the protection of the group (in this case the individual ethnicities in the former Yugoslav state) and its history and symbols; there were few immediate advantages in the dissolution of Yugoslavia except the notion of independence from Serb domination.

Building upon both of these contentions, my overarching claim in this paper is that local policies are crucial for securing a safe and prosperous Europe.

⁸ 1990.

2 EUROPEAN AND NORTH AMERICAN PERSPECTIVES

Some thoughts on the nature of European ethnicities and migration and comparisons with countries of long experience in this field are instructive. The nature of ethnicity in Europe in contrast to North America is very different due to the historical context of each. Superficially, if you walk down a street in London or New York, you may well see similar and an amazingly diverse range of ethnic origins in each city. The question is how did they come to be there and why?

Without dwelling on the nature of American minorities, superficially you might conclude that there are essentially three groups of people who make up the population of the United States. Native Americans who constitute a tiny minority, African Americans, who for the most part are the descendants of slaves, and those of very diverse origin who emigrated to the United States largely for economic reasons first from Europe but now from many different regions of the world.

In Europe, there are no completely distinct groups of native peoples except in isolated regions where their culture has been preserved. At the beginning of the 20th century most European countries were made up of diverse groups who migrated from east to west starting at the dawn of history and continuing until roughly 500 years ago. There was, alas, slavery in Europe but it was on a mercifully small scale. Europeans simply took the profits of the slave trade. Perhaps the broad equivalent of slavery in America was the colonisation of vast tracts of the earth for the profit of the colonial powers that did not end until after the Second World War.

In the case of the United Kingdom, the dissolution of empire left a residue of rights of citizenship or residence for the people of the ex-colonies, grudgingly acknowledged and usually racially tinged. For France, the peoples of the North African colonies were as French as the citizens of Paris or Lyon and enjoyed concomitant rights. The Netherlands also granted certain rights to the peoples of its ex-colonies. This situation led to the influx of immigrants from these newly independent countries in the nineteen fifties and sixties essentially to fill the vacant low paid jobs that native British, French or Dutch did not want to do.⁹ They were highly welcome at a time of full employment and a post-war boom. In Germany, the same phenomenon took place not in relation to ex-colonies but with Turks who arrived as “temporary” guest workers.

Thus the first difference to be noted between the US and Europe in relation to immigrants of different ethnic groups is that in Europe they are almost all recent arrivals and most often from former colonies. So Europeans tend not to single out different minorities such as African-Americans who suffered huge disadvantages in the past. They are just “immigrants”, to some degree welcomed in times of high employment and resented in more austere economic conditions. Of course, not all immigrants in Europe come from another distinct ethnicity. Italians, Portuguese and Greeks emigrated in their thousands after the Second World War to the wealthier countries of northern Europe. They also suffered discrimination. The same phenomenon is repeating itself with the new Member States of the European Union.

⁹ Often called the “three d jobs”- dirty, dangerous and degrading.

This historical overview does not excuse discrimination but it does lead to the tentative conclusion that the approach to resolving the difficulties of integrating migrants are subtly different on both sides of the Atlantic. Immigrants to Europe have more of a tendency to retain an attachment to their native countries and/or cultures and are not subsumed as hyphenated Europeans in the manner of their American counterparts. This is illustrated by the large number of North Africans who return home each year or send their sons and daughters to their home country to find spouses. The United States has been a magnet for migrants for two centuries and the country had immigration almost as its *raison d'être*. Europe has mostly been dealing with immigrants for just fifty years and absorbed them initially as a legacy of colonialism. Immigrants to the US have a vocation to become Americans; immigrants in Europe in the minds of citizens decidedly do not.

The fact remains, however, that as a consequence of immigration since the Second World War, 8% of the population of Europe or roughly 36 million people are foreign born.¹⁰ Furthermore, the population of Europe, unlike the United States, is declining and will do so by 50 million people by 2050. Our demographers and the more enlightened of our politicians are therefore telling us that we need immigration in order to keep our economic competitiveness. Like it or not, there are economic imperatives favouring immigration to Europe.

¹⁰ Based on the statistics of International Organisation for Migration and Eurostat.

3 CREATING A SENSE OF BELONGING

3.1 The barriers: false perceptions and concentrated immigration populations

It is extremely important for the public to be properly informed about the nature of immigration for a successful integration strategy. The media have a responsibility for the misconceptions about immigrants that abound in Europe thus encouraging the discrimination described by the ILO. They have consistently published misleading and inflammatory reports about “bogus asylum seekers” and the like. There is certainly abuse of the asylum and immigration system. However, it is not as widespread as the media suggest and nor do immigrants usually cheat on housing lists or in the health or other social services. A study by Glover et al¹¹ indicates that migrants “are more resourceful, entrepreneurial and ambitious than the norm”. This would seem to be a contra-indication to the notion that they are “sponging” on the state. On the other hand, the same report indicates¹² that migrants are less likely to be employed than the native population. This particularly applies to refugees and asylum seekers who are respectively 42% and 68% unemployed.

A study published by the Institute for Public Policy Research, London in April 2005¹³ produced graphic figures indicating that immigrants are far from being a burden on the state:

- Total revenue from immigrants grew in real terms from £33.8 billion in 1999-2000 to £41.2 billion in 2003-4. This 22 % increase compares with a 6 % increase amongst the native born.
- In 2003-4, immigrants made up 8.7 % of the population but accounted for 10.2% of all income tax collected
- Immigrants earn about 15 % more in average weekly income than the native born.
- Each immigrant generated £7203 in government revenue on average in 2003-4 compared with £6861 per non-immigrant and
- Each immigrant accounted for £7277 of government expenditure, compared with £7753 per non-immigrant.

In contrast, a report by the Select Committee on Economic Affairs of the House of Lords in April 2008 is far less sanguine.¹⁴ The committee (which included the distinguished economists Lord Layard and Lord Skidelsky), indicated that, in their view, the economic effects of immigration are at best neutral and that, in places where there is the greatest impact on individuals (housing and schools for example), the impact can often be negative. They state, furthermore, that they can see no evidence for the benefits of immigration helping to sustain the UK’s economic growth. This presents a far less optimistic scenario than is frequently the case. This was trumpeted in the British popular press following

¹¹ 2001, par.6.11.

¹² Ibid., par. 6.24.

¹³ Srisandarajah, Cooley, and Reed 2005.

¹⁴ House of Lords 2008.

publication of the report as “proving” the case for restricting immigration even though the report was far more nuanced.

With regard to those seeking protection through the asylum system, the reasons for their relative lack of success in the UK market place are several and are partly due to the fact that, since July 23rd 2002, permission to work is only granted when refugee or humanitarian status is granted.¹⁵ In spite of this, according to a Populus poll published in *The Times* (London) in September 2003, nine out of ten voters considered that the number of asylum seekers constituted a problem and 38 % that it constituted the most serious problem that the government of the UK has to face. This is extraordinary when one considers that, at the peak, the UK was receiving 100.000 asylum applications a year and that only 6% were approved, admittedly with others staying in the country either for legitimate humanitarian reasons or sometimes illegally.

The public has been deceived into thinking that immigration in general - which is actively sought by the UK government especially in certain categories of highly skilled employment - and asylum seekers in particular, constitute a financial and security threat. In reality, studies in a number of countries show that either the migration effect is neutral or slightly positive in fiscal terms (although all researchers admit that it is difficult to measure). It is clear that the media and especially the populist national tabloid press should take a more responsible attitude towards migrants. This would go some way in alleviating the hostility towards newcomers.

As indicated above, the House of Lords report highlighted the negative local effects of immigration. This is, however, largely due to the concentration of immigrants in crowded urban areas. It is the phenomenon that I call the “Rotterdam factor” although it could just as easily be called the “Bradford or Leicester factor”,¹⁶ that is how to deal with immigrants in crowded urban environments with competition for jobs, housing and school places. In an ideal world, immigrants would not huddle in inner cities with resulting high demand for services in competition with the original inhabitants, but would spread out to other locations. Various countries have tried to encourage dispersion, Canada and Sweden among them. It does not seem work well. In both those countries migrants tend to drift back to the big cities.

In a seminar that took place in Rotterdam in March 2004 under the auspices of Metropolis,¹⁷ the Canadian inspired network of academics and practitioners, the question was posed “how is it possible for cities to influence or manage migration in such a way that socio-economic disadvantages can be diminished?” Marco Pastors¹⁸, Commissioner for Physical Infrastructure of the City of Rotterdam indicated that 46 % of the population of the city was from abroad rising to 85 % in the poorer parts. He said “We want a society that allows people in, but not one where poverty increases and where we create areas of our city that are beset by crime...there are people who have been here a long time but are not at all integrated”. One can understand his point of view. The majority language in certain areas is no longer Dutch and this affects the education process. However, the responsibility for this situation is not just on the shoulders of the immigrants themselves, but on the allocation of resources. If governments contend, as they do, that Europe needs immigrants

¹⁵ Institute for Public Policy Research 2005.

¹⁶ Both Bradford and Leicester have Muslim immigrant populations approaching 50%.

¹⁷ Round Table Discussion on Rotterdam 2004.

¹⁸ 2004.

to pay the next generation's pensions and fill skilled and unskilled jobs there are fiscal consequences.¹⁹

This view is echoed - though from the other end of the political spectrum - by Trevor Phillips, Chairman of the Commission for Racial equality in the UK. Phillips says that Britain "is sleepwalking into a ghettoised society" and cited the underprivileged black areas of New Orleans as a warning.²⁰ Although Phillips' remarks appear to have been welcomed from both sides of the political divide in Britain, his suggestion of manipulating school administration to ensure more integrated education was less welcome. "The commonly used index of segregation, which measures the number of people who would have to move to spread themselves evenly over city, shows that every large ethnic group became less segregated between 1991 and 2001".²¹ However, this fact alone did not make the integration problems disappear. Thus, the solution may lie not in less segregation, but in less poverty and by extension more social mobility. No-one talks of the "white ghettos" when describing mostly white suburbs. If people can live well, does it matter whether they are physically living together with people of other ethnicities?

3.2 Policy Options

The key issue is managing migration for the benefit of all and taking a longer-term view. Political issues tend to have a short time horizon because politicians live from one election to another. However, in this instance we are not discussing fixable social problems in a period of ten years, but a two generation perspective. Diversity is unquestionably part of Europe's future (as in other parts of the world) but the numbers have to be managed. The kind of seismic shift that Europe has undergone in the past fifty years by becoming an area of immigration will certainly cause conflict but that conflict has to be minimised.

The above chimes well with a Communication from the European Commission²² on the subject. The Commission states that: "integration is not an isolated issue. It cuts across various policy fields, such as employment, education and urban policies and needs to be reflected in a whole range of policies." A good example is the recruitment of ethnic minorities into police forces. This has been singularly unsuccessful in some countries (Belgium), and reflects difficulties in recruitment and retention in London and other urban areas of the UK. In the Netherlands, the government has financed the Police and Immigrants Expertise Centre since 1998 in an effort to recruit police officers from ethnic minorities using positive discrimination at the outset but dropping this after resentment was shown by native Dutch candidates. Recruiters go into mosques and advertise in media favoured by the immigrant communities. In Utrecht, the fourth biggest Dutch city, (population 275,000 of which immigrants are 32 %) Chief of Police Jan Wiarda has stated²³ that employing minority police officers is a part of legitimising the authority of the police force. He is aiming for 25 % of police to be from ethnic minorities - at the moment it is only 150 out of 2,700 in the Utrecht region. If this example is typical, it is an uphill struggle.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ 2005, 16.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Commission Communication on Integration 2005.

²³ The views expressed on police recruitment are based on author's discussions with the members of the police force at the Round Table Discussion on Rotterdam (2004).

Whether a common EU economic migration policy will see the light of day is still questionable. A modest draft directive proposed in 2001²⁴ fell by the wayside in the Council and the Commission has presented further equally modest proposals for a way forward.²⁵ A common immigration policy is the logical outcome of free movement of persons within the EU. However, the process has to include a strong integration element not only at EU level but a concomitant effort by national and local governments, private industry (which after all does much of the recruitment of employees) and non-governmental organisations. A European integration policy as such cannot be imposed from Brussels. Based on the experience of social services in a number of large European cities (Rotterdam and Frankfurt, for example), local initiatives backed by government but mainly in the hands of non-governmental or private social service bodies will work better than a top down government imposed approach.

So how does the immigrant “take his or her place in society”? There are two rather different groups of people, both in North America and Europe, who are the subject of this discourse. Firstly, there are those who are recent migrants, often arriving in adverse economic or social circumstances and who may need special help to find their feet. Secondly, there are those who have suffered disadvantages, usually discrimination and lack of employment opportunities, and who have been in the host country for up to three generations. The Dutch use the term “oud komers” or “old comers”. The effects may be similar if the issues are not addressed but the causes are different. There is yet a third group, namely those who come seeking asylum or other forms of protection and who, because of their experiences, may well be in a precarious state of physical or psychological health. They need special consideration both in terms of the procedures applied to their asylum application and in their integration process should their application be accepted.

With regard to recent immigrants, the Canadian approach stands up well to scrutiny. This is that the host society should make every effort to ensure that the immigrant has the right information and help in order to make his or her way in the new country. The Canadian government produces relevant documentation which is made available to potential immigrants relating to the kind visas needed, what they should do about health care, basic laws, clothing needs for the rigours of the Canadian climate and so on. Most importantly, through the *Language Instruction for Newcomers Programme*, free language training is available and immigrants are put in contact with local organisations dedicated to assisting them, mentoring programmes etc. In some EU countries efforts are being made in the same direction. In 2004, the European Commission published a booklet²⁶ outlining best practices in integrating migrants in an attempt to begin forge a European model of integration. A second edition was published in 2007.²⁷ Whilst this was a helpful initiative, with government guidance, it is probably most effective if these activities can be left to non-governmental organisations that are well placed to understand the difficulties of newcomers. Nevertheless, there are plans for EU funded so-called “European portals for immigrants”, that is a one stop shop in key capitals where the potential economic immigrant can find out about the conditions for emigrating to any EU Member State - since there are, for the time being 27 sets of conditions for migrants to deal with.

Israel is an interesting and particular case in point. The whole edifice of the country - even more so than the US or Canada - has been built on immigration through the Law of Return.

²⁴ Commission Proposal for a Directive on conditions of entry 2001.

²⁵ Commission Green Paper on Migration 2004.

²⁶ Handbook on Integration 2007.

²⁷ Commission 2007.

Indeed Israel has achieved the extraordinary feat of absorbing four million migrants from 100 countries. Former Prime Minister Levi Eshkol was architect of immigrant integration from the 1950's when there was mass migration of Jews from the former French North African colonies. He allocated funds to create development towns to avoid urban slums and encourage dispersion to prevent incursions from across borders and fulfil the socialist Zionist dream of a healthy and, at least initially, a largely agricultural economy.²⁸ The various in-gatherings in Israel's history both before and after independence in 1948 demanded an unprecedented level of government intervention and, because of the special circumstances of the country, constitutes an exception to the previous contention regarding government intervention and the role of non-governmental or local bodies. Particularly noteworthy is the adaptation of linguistic programmes to suit special circumstances (for example doubling the language training time for Ethiopian children who had arrived illiterate in their own language). Indeed, Israel is one of the few immigrant countries to tackle language and employment issues well in advance of an immigrant's arrival.

The second group of migrants, that is those who have been resident in their new country for a considerable time, present a more intractable problem for the host society. This is partly because, whilst governments have rehearsed and applied the standard arguments for immigration, they have allowed the problems of non-integration to fester. The European Commission²⁹ has analysed the trends in national policies on integration as requested by the Council of Ministers. The recipe is to mainstream immigration concerns into all policy areas. The Commission identifies a number of problem areas that need attention through its National Contact points on Integration, as well as National Action Plans for Employment and Social Inclusion. I would in fact add that the success of these national policies will in many cases depend on their proper implementation in cities and municipalities.

- Lack of access to employment is the primary cause of non-integration. The reasons are multiple. First, being in a job obliges people to conform to certain societal norms including speaking the national language. There are exceptions to this rule when a person is employed by those of his or her own language group but even there, language groups do not work in isolation from the local economy. Secondly, earning money and fending for oneself tends to create a degree of self-esteem and belonging. This is especially true when a person has hitherto been living from the welfare system. And lastly, being employed creates a degree of competitive edge and an incentive to train and advance.
- Language skills and educational attainment are generally crucial. An increasing number of EU countries are following the Canadian model and providing language courses, courses on civic education and on citizens' rights and obligations.
- Participation in the decision making process encourages the feeling of belonging in a society which is one of the essentials for immigrants. Most of the Member States of the EU have provisions for non-citizens to vote in local and, in the case of EU citizens, European elections.
- Affordable housing and crime control on housing estates are essential to those with their feet at the bottom of the economic ladder. In the estates that surround Paris and other large French and European cities, immigrant young people with few, if

²⁸ Landen and Moshe 2004.

²⁹ Commission Communication 2004.

any, educational qualifications and no jobs turn to petty crime because they have little incentive to do anything else. The result is an exodus of all who can afford to leave, a disagreeable environment for the rest and an atmosphere of fear and hostility towards the host society. In the UK, these go by the graphic name “sink estates”.

Finally, there is a panoply of EU and national laws and institutions against racism. Laws and institutions are, however, not enough; it is the discriminatory rhetoric and practices in employment and the education system that are at the heart of the problem. The International Labour Organisation backs this in its analysis of the European situation (but also in other countries of immigration):³⁰

“It was evident that migrant and ethnic minority workers face numerous problems in the labour market, and that they were in many ways at a disadvantage when compared with members of the majority or dominant population. Though low skilled irregular migrants rarely have difficulty finding “3-D” (dangerous, dirty and degrading) jobs upon entry to industrialised economies, the segmentation of the labour market precludes even marginally superior opportunities for their children and for regular migrants. Some of these problems are connected with disadvantages such as inadequate education and training, lack of access to employers, non- recognition of qualifications gained abroad or inadequate command of the host country’s language... However, ILO discrimination testing studies, in a number of countries showed significant, consistent and disturbing levels of discrimination...”

The ILO has analysed the legal remedies and found them wanting. It has recommended a significant remoulding of the anti-discrimination laws, encouragement to the media to promote positive images of migrants and multi-cultural and diversity training in educational curricula.

3.3 Distinguishing between Public and Private Spheres

The Guardian (London and Manchester) printed on 19 September 2004 an article written by a black British journalist, Gary Younge. His title was “Please stop fetishising integration. Equality is what we need”. His theme is that common sense dictates that the more you interact with others of a different origin or colour, religion or ethnicity, “the less potential there is for stereotyping and dehumanising those different from yourself”. But, even that small achievement depends on the quality and power dynamics of the contact”. Younge goes on to point out that German Jews were highly integrated into German society in the early 1930’s and that in the American South black women breastfed and raised white children from their employers’ families. This did not save them from discrimination or annihilation. Younge believes that “the value of integration is contingent on whom you are asking to integrate, what you are asking them to integrate into and on what basis you are asking them to do it”. He says that integration is not a one-way street but a subtle process of cultural negotiation.

This theme is taken up in the November 2004 EU document now known as the Hague Declaration: “Integration is a two sided process in which the full rights of residence are granted in exchange for the newcomer’s maximum effort to become an added value to society”. To put it another way “To what degree is integration the responsibility of the receiving society, social organisations and the workplace and how can it be measured?”

³⁰ Taran 2005.

(Athens Migration Policy Initiative). To this should be added the question “to what degree is it the immigrants’ own responsibility?”

Sergio Carrera indicates³¹ that there is a wide variety of interpretations of integration and asks what the dividing line is between an efficient integration policy and respect for cultural, ethnic and religious diversity. Carrera sees three different models:

- Multi-cultural - respect and protection of cultural diversities (Canada, Sweden). This model is now somewhat tarnished in the light of experience, because it is said to create parallel societies.
- Assimilationist or universalist model - equality and assimilation into the dominant culture (France).
- Separation or exclusionist - restricted immigration policy with limited access to citizenship (Germany- at least until recently - and Switzerland).

The main argument to be made is that you have to consider also the realities of living in a society when applying any classifications. There is a huge diversity even amongst native-born populations in many countries. No two families are like another in their behaviours or the way they live. The same applies to immigrant families with the added factor that they bring with them customs, beliefs and so on, that are perhaps radically different from those of the host society. One possible and more realistic solution is to divide the public persona of the immigrant family or the way they present themselves to the outside world from their private family life. In the former, a high degree of conformity is required: for example, one simply cannot choose to absent oneself from work simply because Friday is the Moslem day of worship. There may be an arrangement to be made with the employer to make up for absence but that is on an individual basis. Or, it is a perfectly valid solution to work for a Muslim employer who makes that accommodation. This was the solution chosen by Jewish immigrants at the beginning of the twentieth century. However, it has the disadvantage of being a somewhat exclusionary process where such communities keep to themselves in housing and employment.

Of course, there are areas where the public persona and private life overlap. This has been graphically illustrated by the controversy in France over the *hijab* or head scarf. The overt reason is the constitutional requirement to separate church and state but the perceived sub-text is that you cannot fully take part in school life if you do not take gym or swimming lessons. That is not necessarily the case but it is what is claimed by some and may be true in certain instances. One could have “a girls only” swimming class, but that may go against the norms of the school. Furthermore, it is claimed that from a “girls only” swimming class, it is a short step to separation of the sexes in general. It is a difficult social issue that needs to be sensitively and sensibly handled but should not be insoluble. The issue pits the freedom of the individual or group of individuals against the law and mores of the society. This has been highlighted by the debate in the U.K. early in 2007 about the demands of Catholic adoption agencies to be exempt from the anti-discrimination laws in favour of same sex couples. In February 2008, the Turkish government approved the searing of the headscarf in Turkish universities thus reversing previous policies. This was greeted by vigorous protests on the part of secularists. Whilst not questioning the secular nature of Turkish society, it is hard to see that such a move would prejudice the Kemalist tradition except that it might be used as a lever to introduce additional comparable measures.

³¹ In Schneider (2005).

Immigrants should be free to take their place in society but equally be free to follow customs that are not native to the host society in private life. Indeed if the custom involved does not impinge in any way on the public aspects of life, such the following of dietary laws, there should be no problem. There has to be a willingness to adapt on both sides. Unfortunately, on occasions, the constraints of religion can place a high burden on individuals and even lead to ruptures in families, especially between the generations.

Religion is undoubtedly a very divisive issue and often leads to a clash between the public and private personas with problems of where to draw the line. Let us take the question of ritual slaughter, which is common to Muslims and Jews. The law relating to stunning animals for slaughter has been waived in the case of both religions in order to permit the ritual slaughter to halal and kashrut standards. Circumcision remains exempt from the law of assault but female excision, which some, incredibly, claim is a religious rite, is rightly not exempt. The question is where the line is drawn with regard to religious practice.

In approaching these issues, we should try to make clear that there is a distinction between what is in the private domain and what is in the public domain as possible, whilst at the same time recognising that it is at the margins of both that there is a tendency to clash. In the public domain one should include respect for the law and other peoples' rights, gender equality, respect for the democratic process, equality in education, health and social issues and any aspect of being employed or in the conduct of public business. In other words it includes the *public persona* in relation to the receiving country. The private domain includes family life (provided that equality is respected), religion and social customs. This distinction seems close enough to the communitarian approach, which is that everyone has to subscribe to certain core values that underpin western societies. This is what Marco Martiniello³² calls "the non-negotiable core values: non-discrimination, gender equality, physical and psychological integrity of the person, respect for cultural diversity and identities." There is no room for taking the law into one's own hands on these issues whether through terrorist acts or otherwise.

3.4 Changing Attitudes through Education and Urban Policies

Where does this leave the issue of belonging in society and creating a sense of community? It does not mean that by albeit well-intentioned policy documents and social engineering, governments can create the right conditions for communities to coalesce. The main burden for this to happen lies, as I have suggested, in the home and in the educational system. Parents as well as the children of the immigrant communities need to participate in the process. Otherwise attitudes will persist from one generation to another. It is clearly not by passing anti-discrimination laws that attitudes change. The law can give the process a push but it cannot change attitudes at will.

Some Member States of the EU³³ have initiated compulsory citizenship courses including the essential element of language training. Time will tell whether this has the desired effect. Even if the element of compulsion is not ideal, the experiment is worth conducting. It may be that what comes more naturally to immigrants to the U.S and Canada - the will to become participating citizens - will have to be inculcated compulsorily into European immigrants.

³² Martiniello 2004.

³³ Austria, Netherlands, Sweden, United Kingdom.

Access to citizenship, although important in the process of belonging since it is recognition by a state of certain rights and obligations, is not the only answer. Many residents of a state are not applicants for citizenship. "People come on business visits, as tourists, as diplomats, or to buy a holiday home. Global nomads come to work but not to settle. So the process of applying for citizenship is logically separate from entry".³⁴ Bauböck³⁵ considers that acquiring nationality implies commitment since naturalisation is a different process than being born into a state. Bauböck calls it a process of "re-socialisation". The problems arise when re-socialisation does not take place. Old loyalties remain and in a small minority of cases such loyalties lay vulnerable minds open to anti-social or, *in extremis*, terrorist acts.

Attitudes to immigrants begin in early childhood in the home but also at school. With regard to education, common sense dictates that the education can be used in two ways. Education can be a great leveller and an integrating factor. Teachers, especially in inner city areas where migrants tend in the first instance to congregate, should be trained to deal with multi-ethnic classes. Children should be aware of the differences but also the commonalities that bind communities together. The process of convincing the public that the vast majority of immigrants just want to get on with their lives like the rest of the population begins in the education system. The downside is that it might take some time to achieve.

Secondly, the education system must be more open to continuing and possibly life-long learning especially for the low-skilled, both for the native population and migrants. In order to make maximum use of talent, condemning any section of the population to unskilled work for life is not an option in the competitive world in which we live.

How does this analysis relate to faith-based schools? At first glance faith-based schools seem to be the answer to problems posed by, for example, the head-scarf issue. In addition, more time can be spent on religious instruction without a disruption of the core curriculum. Politicians are faced with the dilemma that the more they push for secularisation, the more will be the demand from minorities for their own educational facilities. This route seems both expensive and divisive. Separating out children by religion seems like a recipe for non-integration when the contrary is desirable. Religion is a private affair and should be kept in the private domain.

As for the concentration of immigrant populations, France may be used as an example. Without singling out the French situation as unique, it is clear from the events of late 2005 and subsequently that there is a serious problem, which has been insufficiently addressed. France is not alone in this respect and there have been, over the years, serious racial disturbances in the UK. In both countries, relatively minor incidents have triggered riots reflecting disillusion and disaffection on the part of immigrant youngsters. In contrast,³⁶ the city authorities in Frankfurt am Main who have to address the problems of an immigrant population of 26 % of the city, have taken positive steps to avoid the problems of the *banlieues* outside France's major cities. Frankfurt city council has actively encouraged social mixing and the avoidance of ghettos. With volunteer groups, they have created a network of leisure centres and training or apprenticeship schemes. For the least skilled, odd jobs are found or created so that at least the unemployed gain experience of the work

³⁴ Jordan and Düvell 2003, 146.

³⁵ 1994.

³⁶ Le Figaro 2005.

place. Social workers go into the streets and engage in dialogue with young people without waiting for disaffection to set in. Social housing is on a human scale - not more than eight floors for each building and is within fifteen minutes of the city centre. And language difficulties are addressed with vigour.

4 ALLEVIATING THE THREAT TO IDENTITY

This brings me to my second contention, which is that, when identity is threatened, difficulties occur. This can take place in both directions, that is, the indigenous population can feel a threat to their culture and the newcomers can be threatened by denial of access to the benefits of citizenship. In the Basque region for example, hard-line nationalists are said to declare that their blood is Basque and not Spanish, so that even autonomy and cultural rights within Spain will not satisfy their political aspirations. (A similar situation obtains in the Tamil region of Sri Lanka.) The Basques feel rightly or wrongly that their identity, language and culture are threatened by “Spanishness”. The Scots may or may not set much store by their national flag but if, on a whim, a law was passed by the Westminster Parliament that the flag could not be used in Scotland, there would be a furore because this particular symbol of “Scottishness” would have been denied. This may seem far-fetched, but it actually happened before the outbreak of hostilities between the states of former Yugoslavia. This question has arisen again by the declaration of independence of Kosovo, the issue being how far it is desirable to split nation states into constituent ethnic entities to satisfy identity aspirations.

In the case of immigrants, Ted R.Gurr³⁷ lists a number of circumstances where minorities, whether citizens of the state in which they live or new immigrants, can feel excluded or rejected. These are: denial of access to positions of political authority at national or regional level, access to the civil service in positions of responsibility, voting rights (at least where they are not citizens), effective rights to organised political activity on behalf of a group, effective rights to legal protection, inequalities of income or property ownership, lack of access to higher education and limited presence in commerce or the professions. In other words, he describes what amounts to *exclusion* from the benefits of society rather than *inclusion*. Why does this impinge on identity? The answer lies in the fact that when an identifiable group, especially visible minorities, are denied access to those benefits, they consider that they cannot both be a member of their minority as well as British, French or Dutch.

In addressing the issue of threat, let me return to the “belonging to the Europe” theme. If the integration process works well, then the immigrant should feel part of society. But which society? In the natural course of events, it will be the country of settlement in Europe not the notion of “being European” across national borders, even though 25 %³⁸ of citizens of the EU say that they feel European first. Immigrants will learn Dutch or German or English not “European”. Indeed Eurobarometer indicates that only 53 % of Europeans support the EU and 16 % think that membership of the Union is a negative factor.

The discourse both in political and academic circles is about the importance of “European values”. So what importance do European citizens attach to them? Again, according to Eurobarometer, peace (with 52 % indicating that it is important) tops the list. Then comes respect for human life (43 %), human rights (41 %) and democracy (38 %). The rule of law (17 %), respect for other cultures (11 %) and religion (7 %) are way down the list. What does this say about faith-based initiatives? Even allowing for wide disparities between countries, it is unlikely that a majority would support extension of faith-based education. Indeed,

³⁷ 1993, 40.

³⁸ Eurobarometer 2006.

one of the United Kingdom's chief educational advisers, Sir Cyril Taylor has indicated³⁹ that schools dominated by Muslim children should be closed down and replaced for by "multi-faith academies" because such schools could become a security threat. Multi-faith school building and manipulating catchment areas are likely to be controversial in the U.K as similar attempts at social engineering have been in the United States. However, as already indicated, education is likely to be one of the main factors in building communities at ease with one another. Governments should not shirk from such policies provided due consultation has taken place with the local communities.

It is important not to exaggerate the importance of difference or diversity of religion. After all, in 14 of the EU 25 countries 85 % of the people are of the same religion. The issues occur particularly because most of the Muslim population live in or around big conurbations. It should be emphasised that we are only talking about 15 million Muslims in a total European population of roughly 500 million depending on how you define Europe. Don Horowitz⁴⁰ believes that there are many bonds across ethnicities and religion, between professional people, colleagues at work, officials and citizens, buyers and sellers. The problems arise when non-indigenous ethnic groups are perceived to be overwhelming the native culture. This fact needs to be acknowledged and acted upon when dealing with the concentrations of migrants in urban areas.

³⁹ Boone 2007.

⁴⁰ 2001.

5 CONCLUSIONS - GOING LOCAL

The key to the whole issue of inclusion and exclusion is that Europeans need to be educated to the fact that immigration in a globalised world is likely to be in their own interest. It is what Adam Smith called addressing not the humanity of people but their self-love, the advantages to be drawn. What draws societies together is what some psychologists and philosophers call “reciprocal altruism” or in more colloquial form “you scratch my back and I’ll scratch yours”. In other words, even though someone has a different background, you have an advantage in helping him or her because there is likely to be reciprocation.

The efforts of the European Commission to forge an acceptable integration framework through the principles elaborated following the Hague declaration in November 2004 are important. However, the local governments in particular can pursue policies which aid the process of building communities: education and urban policies are key areas for action. There is no formula that will work in all cases. Public authorities are also not the only actors and should not be. And above all, the religious bodies (and the media) have a duty to set the tone and lead their communities in a constructive dialogue.

In summary, local and national identity comes before European identity, which, if at all, will take generations to instil. European values are not necessarily universal nor are they necessarily understood rationally. There are certainly minimum standards of decency and the rule of law but how those are defined changes over the generations, witness, for example, the evolution of attitudes to capital punishment in Europe.

The political debate on immigration and *ipso facto* the integration factor rests on opposing views. There is the X attitude that says that we in Europe need immigrants because of demography and the need for skilled and unskilled labour, and that we should welcome diversity. And there is the Y attitude that states that we are already saturated, that we cannot absorb more immigrants and that is why we are having integration difficulties. Of course, the truth lies somewhere in between. If we address all of the factors outlined in this paper and draw integration of migrants into the right policy areas, we stand a good chance of escaping the worst of the tensions. Action at the local level is particularly called for. If the clash of civilisations exists, then it could well happen on our own doorstep rather than in other parts of the world.

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