Bertelsmann Stiftung, Migration Policy Institute (eds.)

Rethinking National Identity in the Age of Migration

The Transatlantic Council on Migration

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Table of Contents

Introduction

Demetrios G. Papademetriou, Jörg Dräger

Globalization has been rewriting more than just the rules of economic behavior among nations. It has also created and nurtured the conditions for greater human mobility, with unprecedented levels of diversity transforming communities and challenging closely held notions of national identity. The Transatlantic Council on Migration, an initiative of the Migration Policy Institute with policy support from the Bertelsmann Stiftung, convened in Berlin on November 16 – 18, 2011 to examine the role migration plays in the social unrest seen in societies on both sides of the Atlantic. The Council's goal: help shape a new vision for social cohesion that harnesses diversity's potential benefits for all elements of society.

While a consensus may be emerging as to what has *not* worked well in the realm of immigrant integration (albeit with some misunderstanding, such as the role of multiculturalist policies), less thought has been given to proactively articulating a new "social contract" to bring immigrants and natives together in pursuit of shared goals. This volume – the Council's sixth edited volume – contributes to the debate by offering ideas for the next generation of policies that can build more inclusive civic identities. The book, which contains in-depth analyses and policy recommendations, builds on the Council's prior

volumes: *Delivering Citizenship* (November 2008); *Talent, Competitiveness and Migration* (April 2009); *Migration, Public Opinion and Politics* (November 2009); *Prioritizing Integration* (April 2010); and *Improving the Governance of International Migration* (November 2011). The resulting collection deepens the evidence base on the complex migration and integration issues that challenge transatlantic societies.

The volume opens in Section One with the Council's statement on "Rethinking National Identity in the Age of Migration." Demetrios G. Papademetriou and Ulrich Kober distill the main themes and recommendations that emerged from the Transatlantic Council's meeting in Berlin on how to mitigate the disorienting effects of rapid societal change. The authors dissect the roots of society's anxiety about immigration and put forward ten innovative policy ideas that can help create the conditions for cohesive societies. They argue that the key to fostering greater cohesiveness is to involve *all* citizens in the process of shaping the new "we."

Section Two, "Managing Diversity in Challenging Times," offers in three chapters three perspectives on the perceived "failure" of integration models in many Western democracies. Will Kymlicka begins this section with his chapter on "Multiculturalism: Success, Failure, and the Future." His analysis challenges four powerful myths about multiculturalism and discusses the factors that can either facilitate or impede its successful implementation.

In Chapter Two, Cas Mudde focuses on the complex relationship between migration and the rise of radical-right political parties in three industrialized regions: North America, Western Europe, and Central and Eastern Europe. Titled "The Relationship Between Immigration and Nativism in Europe and North America," this chapter charts the uneven success of far-right parties in these regions and

analyzes the diverse state responses. The author shows that the relationship between immigration and extremism is not as clear-cut as is often assumed.

Christian Joppke is the author of Chapter Three, "The Role of the State in Cultural Integration: Trends, Challenges, and Ways Ahead," which examines how different European approaches to cultural integration have converged in important ways. Many liberal states have constitutional restrictions on state intervention in sensitive identity issues, which are for the individual and not the state to decide. A second commonality, for over a decade now, is "civic integration" policies that seek to bind newcomers to majority institutions and culture by requiring them to learn the host-society language and acknowledge basic host-society norms and values. This chapter concludes with recommendations on how governments may achieve a mode of civic integration that is restrained enough to respect the moral autonomy of immigrants and aggressive enough to further a more cohesive and integrated host society.

Section Three, "Country Perspectives," contains eight case studies on national identity in the age of migration. It examines the lessons that can be drawn from different approaches to immigrant integration and diversity in North America and Europe, looking specifically at Canada, France, the United States, Germany, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Spain, and Norway.

In Chapter Four, Irene Bloemraad takes an in-depth look at the Canadian approach to pluralism. She asks whether Canada is truly an outlier in terms of being able to deflect anti-immigrant sentiment and opposition to multicultural policies directed at immigrants and settled minority groups. In her piece on "Understanding 'Canadian Exceptionalism' in Immigration and Pluralism Policy," Bloemraad concludes

that immigrant selection policy and geography are not sufficient to explain why Canada is more open to and optimistic about immigration: The Canadian view of immigration as a nation-building exercise is also a key factor.

Patrick Simon examines France's controversial public debates on national identity in Chapter Five, "French National Identity and Integration: Who Belongs to the National Community?". Concerns that the split allegiances of "foreigners" might weaken social cohesion in France are examined systematically using the findings of the "Trajectories and Origins: a Survey on Population Diversity in France" (TeO) study. The author strongly challenges the perception that ties to another country automatically undermine individuals' commitment to France and argues that restrictive definitions of national identity can be counterproductive.

Chapter Six, "Contested Ground: Immigration in the United States," is by Michael Jones-Correa. As immigration to the United States has increased and spread to new regions, there have been growing concerns that it has negatively impacted the US economy and altered the social fabric of society. This chapter analyzes the roots of American anxiety about immigration – particularly illegal immigration – and the policy responses implemented over the past 50 years.

Naika Foroutan is the author of Chapter Seven on "Identity and (Muslim) Immigration in Germany." Germany is already a diverse country and will become increasingly so over time. One-fifth of the population is comprised of immigrants or the children of immigrants and, in many of Germany's largest cities, a majority of children under the age of 6 have a so-called migration background. However, while Germany has become a country of immigration during recent

decades, a still dominant perception in media and public discourse is that of a homogenous German society in which those with a migration background cannot fully belong. Muslims have become a focus of public debate despite comprising only 5 percent of the population, and German public opinion contains some of the strongest anti-Muslim sentiments in Western Europe. This chapter concludes with recommendations on how policymakers can combat negative stereotypes and develop a new national narrative reflective of Germany's demographic reality.

In Chapter Eight, "The Netherlands: From National Identity to Plural Identifications," Monique Kremer analyzes the highly politicized issue of what it means to be "Dutch." A new dialogue in the Netherlands has marked a departure from multiculturalism and a turn toward "culturalized citizenship" – the idea that being Dutch means adhering to a certain set of cultural and social norms and practices. Immigrants now have to "become Dutch," not only through language acquisition, but also in a cultural and moral sense. Kremer concludes that accepting the existence of plural national identities can be beneficial for social cohesion.

Shamit Saggar and Will Somerville are coauthors of Chapter Nine titled, "Building a British Model of Integration in an Era of Immigration: Policy Lessons for Government." This chapter analyzes developments in integration policy over the past 15 years in the United Kingdom, dating from the election of the Labour government in May 1997 until the present day. The analysis focuses on whether policy has influenced (or has been perceived to influence) national identity, immigrant integration outcomes, and neighborhood cohesion. The chapter draws conclusions about the future direction of integration policy in the United Kingdom.

Chapter Ten, authored by Joaquín Arango, is titled "Exceptional in Europe? Spain's Experience with

Immigration and Integration." In just a decade, Spain's foreign-born population increased from less than 4 percent of the total population to almost 14 percent. Fewer than 1.5 million immigrants resided in Spain in 2000, compared to 6.5 million in 2009. But, unlike other European countries, Spain has not seen a significant backlash against immigration, even amid an economic crisis that has hit the country hard and led to extremely high levels of unemployment – especially among immigrants. There is evidence, however, that this could be changing. This chapter concludes that Spain's exceptionalism is in danger and that economic stresses will be a key determinant of social cohesion in Spain. Yet, given the influence that politicians have on societal attitudes, the new government would be well advised to continue with policies that foster integration and promote the idea that immigration benefits society.

"Immigration and National Identity in Norway" is authored by Thomas Hylland Eriksen and comprises Chapter Eleven of this volume. Debates about integration, immigration policy, multiculturalism, and national identity have flourished in Norway in recent years – particularly in light of the atrocities of July 22, 2011. Although less than one-third of immigrants in Norway are from predominantly Muslim countries, it is Muslim immigrants who are the object of the greatest political and social debates. Looking ahead, Eriksen finds that a society that has historically been very ethnically and culturally homogenous faces a key challenge: adjusting to its increasing diversity. In order for the nation to instill solidarity and cohesion, a number of steps need to be taken, including strengthening unity and citizenship, promoting diversity within a framework of Norwegian values, and ensuring representation of diversity in the public and private sectors.

The appendix of this volume includes a resource section, information about the Transatlantic Council on Migration, biographies of the authors, and acknowledgments.

With this book, the Transatlantic Council on Migration – together with MPI and the Bertelsmann Stiftung – hopes to deepen the level of knowledge and policy deliberations on migration on both sides of the Atlantic.

Section I:

The Transatlantic Council on Migration

Council Statement: Rethinking National Identity in the Age of Migration

The seventh plenary meeting of the Transatlantic Council on Migration

Demetrios G. Papademetriou, Ulrich Kober

Introduction: The Roots of Society's Anxiety over Immigration

Large-scale immigration has led to unprecedented levels of diversity around the globe, transforming communities in fundamental ways and challenging long and closely held notions of national identity. In recent years, this rapid demographic transformation has coincided with a set of deeper challenges – first and foremost among them the most severe economic downturn in decades. Political leaders thus find themselves having to navigate a tangled web of complex policy dilemmas – from how to respond to economic insecurity to how to continue to draw benefits from (and make the political case for) globalization, to coming to terms with hybrid identities – all challenges that have caused enormous anxiety and even social unrest.

In the last few years, the backlash against immigration has manifested itself in increasingly vocal criticisms of "multiculturalism." A chorus of European leaders has claimed that the very policies that aimed to weave societies

together have instead split them apart, emphasizing difference rather than building community. And as people fear that the social fabric of their communities may be fraying, they have tightened their grip on the things they hold most dear – their identity, language, culture, and values. In response, many countries have narrowed the rights to residence and citizenship and attempted to more rigidly enforce cultural conformity, taking steps whose (predictable) effect has been to isolate – or, in some cases, penalize – those who fall outside these norms.

The seventh plenary meeting of the Transatlantic Council on Migration brought together high-level officials from Europe and North America in Berlin in November 2011. The Council meeting focused on what policymakers can do to mitigate the disorienting effects of rapid societal change – especially change tied or *perceived to be tied* to immigration – in order to create stronger and more cohesive societies. For governments, both the challenge and opportunity has become to create a new definition of "we" based on a more inclusive idea of national identity and belonging, and to convince the broader society that investing in integration is an investment in shared futures.

Skepticism about immigration – and, in particular, negative public reactions to it – does not always dovetail with the arc of large-scale immigration: Extreme reactions have occurred in places *without* large or sudden increases in the immigrant population. The opposite is also true: Not all places with sizeable or unexpected inflows of immigrants have experienced social disorder. Nor is illegal immigration the main culprit across societies. In fact, anti-immigrant expressions in some countries (e.g., the United States) continue to flourish even in the face of evidence of 40-year lows in illegal flows.

For example, the foreign-born population in the Netherlands has increased by less than 2 percentage points in the past decade, yet the Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD) has become the third-largest in the country while campaigning on an anti-Muslim platform.[1] In the same vein, the Swiss referendum to ban minarets passed by over 50 percent in a country with a Muslim population of less than 6 percent (Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life 2010). And, in the United States, the state of Alabama, whose immigrant population hovers under 4 percent,[2] recently passed one of the country's most restrictive immigration laws. This may be evidence of the fact that it is the pace of change and composition of a flow, not the magnitude, which has the greatest effect. Though the state's immigrant population of 168,596 ranked it 33rd among US states in 2010, Alabama experienced the fastest rate of growth in its foreign-born population in the United States between 2000 and 2010 – with 92.1 percent growth compared to the national average of 28.4 percent. More than half of the state's immigrant population is Hispanic, with a sizeable number undoubtedly illegally present.[3]

Elsewhere, however, unprecedented rates of growth in immigration have not given rise to the kinds of anti-immigration reactions one might have expected. In Spain, the foreign-born share of the population soared from 3.6 percent in 2000 to 14 percent in 2010 (Migration Policy Institute Data Hub n.d.; Papademetriou, Sumption, and Terrazas 2011); and, in Ireland, it increased from 7 percent in 1995 to 12.8 percent in 2010 (ibid.). Yet, despite rising, if isolated popular reaction to immigration, neither country has produced a political party with an anti-immigrant platform on the national stage.

Finally, immigration itself is typically not the only, or even the most prominent, driver of the anxiety, social unease,

and occasional unrest in our societies today, although it is often a contributing factor. More properly, immigration's effects on society are best understood as they interact with several different frames at once:

- *A cultural frame:* the sense of loss of control of the markers of one's identity, namely language, cultural norms, and a basic societal ethos
- *A social frame:* the relative costs to social "constancy" and familiarity that large influxes of newcomers – especially the visibly different – entail and fears that neighborhoods cannot quickly adapt to new needs
- *An economic frame:* concerns over the redistribution of public goods and resources, and over the high perceived costs of immigration and integration
- *A political frame:* the public's loss of confidence in the political classes as well as the sense of loss of sovereignty to supranational bodies, such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) or the European Union (EU)
- *A security frame:* the fear that society's newest members are not committed to their new country and might contribute to social unrest, illegality, crime, and even terrorism.

It is how these different concerns interact with one another – and become *activated* in specific national contexts – that fuels the anxiety that often surrounds immigration and contributes to extremist political views. In this context, immigration has become a visible target over which to exercise control in a time of great uncertainty.

The Five Principal Drivers of Anxiety

1. Culture and Loss of Identity

Many fear that the shared norms and values that bind societies together are weakened when newcomers do not adapt to the host-country language, culture, and identity – and, worse, if they harbor and practice illiberal cultural practices. On both sides of the Atlantic, the perceived cultural and/or linguistic homogeneity of "newcomers" (e.g., Muslims in Europe or Latinos in the United States) are seen as more of a challenge – and more likely to result in emphasis of a subculture rather than integration into the mainstream – than would be the case with a genuinely multiethnic wave of immigrants. Visibly and religiously different newcomers are thus thought to undermine closely held notions of who the "we" is in society, even when they comprise small portions of the foreign-born population.[4]

2. Rapid Pace of Social Change

Many feel that too much change has occurred too fast, with negative consequences for neighborhoods and entire cities, especially for their overburdened education, health, transportation, and public-safety systems. Countries that had very small foreign-born populations two decades ago (e.g., Spain, Ireland, or Greece) became massive immigration destinations seemingly overnight, with inadequate and/or uneven legal and institutional preparation. And even in countries more accustomed to immigration, workers settled in areas that had not experienced much new immigration for many decades. As suggested earlier, anxiety about immigration is typically associated less with the *absolute numbers* of newcomers than with the *speed of change* and its geographic concentration. As the second generation comes of age in these societies, the question of *who gets to define* societal norms is paramount. While certain mechanisms exist to

compel the newly arrived to adapt to the host-country culture and identity (e.g., civic integration and citizenship tests), the ability of the second and third generations to "redefine" the national ethos cannot be impeded.

3. Economics and Inequality

Unease over the unequal distribution of public goods and resources – especially in the face of sometimes grossly uneven outcomes between the "winners" and "losers" of globalization – have placed new strains on communities, particularly those unaccustomed to accommodating immigrants and minorities. A critical driver of public opinion about immigration is whether immigrants are seen as economic assets or liabilities. But while it is almost impossible to quantify all the economic contributions of immigrants, fiscal costs can be counted more easily – and they frequently tend to be confused with economic effects. Immigrants are often depicted as a financial burden on the host society, contributing to greater unemployment and wage depression, and straining the welfare state – in other words, taking more out of the system than they are contributing to it. Further, publics feel they shoulder not only the short-term costs of immigration, but also the long-term costs of *integration* – and lose sight of the totality of long-term benefits, which are almost always very significant.

Policymakers thus find themselves straddling two contradictory and highly emotive migration debates. One revolves around the economic importance of labor migration – which for countries with long-term low fertility is often stark – and the other around the cultural "costs" of past migration. While little can be done about the latter (other than focusing strongly on education, training, and investment in the civic engagement of the progeny of

earlier immigrant waves), the former goes to the core of economic growth and competitiveness, especially in terms of creating a "welcoming culture" that can attract the better-skilled immigrants that competitive economies require.

4. Politics: Low Confidence in Government and Loss of Sovereignty

With hardly any exceptions, there is extraordinary dissatisfaction with the government elites on both sides of the Atlantic. Even publics with favorable views of immigration in general have negative views about those in charge of managing it, who are seen as either unaware of or indifferent to the effects of immigration on local communities – and on those who globalization leaves behind. The fact that, as a rule, politicians are deeply reticent to hold regular conversations with their publics about immigration – only engaging the issue when things go wrong – leaves the impression that no one is in control. Finally, the steady loss of sovereign control over the issue to seemingly "unaccountable" supranational bodies with a growing reach on immigration decisions further fuels popular distrust, at least in some quarters.

5. Security and Social Unrest

Publics want to believe there is a steady hand holding the reins of the immigration system. What is most destabilizing is when public expectations of how much – and what kind – of immigration to expect diverge from reality, which in turn leads people to perceive the immigration system as "out of control." Highly publicized and often inflated accounts of illegality are brandished by opportunistic politicians,

especially on the far right. Meanwhile, hard data demonstrating the success of enforcement efforts tend to fall on deaf ears. Immigration's perceived link to crime – and, even more worrisome, to terrorism – completes the circle of fear and anxiety. Trust in the system can only be restored if everyone in society can see and understand the rules governing immigration *and* be confident that they will be enforced.

Conclusions: Creating the Conditions for Cohesive Societies

Integration will have "succeeded" when immigrants and their children have equal opportunities to compete for the same economic outcomes and can participate in civic and political life on the same basis as their native counterparts. To achieve this, states must invest in both targeted and mainstream policies in the two most important loci of integration: workplaces and schools. But there is also an intangible factor in all this: the *feeling* of belonging. States, working closely with civil society, have the responsibility to lay the foundation for immigrants to be seen as important contributors to society and to consistently and systematically reinforce this message; to create level playing fields in which everyone is treated equally and no one faces barriers to school or work; and to identify and reinforce shared values and norms.

   In pursuing these ends, states must think and act strategically, using a surgeon's scalpel rather than a butcher's cleaver: Efforts to legislate cultural practices or suppress objectionable views often backfire, further triggering the impulse to reject mainstream values. States should instead strive to be active facilitators, providing factual information and resources to create the virtuous

cycles of desirable behavior. When tensions in society inevitably erupt, the state must protect free speech and encourage a robust debate: Efforts to suppress people's ability to voice their real fears and anxieties will only foment extremism.

Ten Steps for Fostering Greater Cohesiveness

1. Leaders must listen to and demonstrate that they understand the concerns of their electorate

Policymakers and politicians must listen carefully to the legitimate concerns and fears of their electorate. While some apprehensions about migration – particularly those concerning jobs and loss of national identity – may be overstated, policymakers will only work to further entrench these anxieties by ignoring or dismissing them. Governments have to take anxiety about immigration seriously and communicate thoughtfully and on an ongoing basis with their publics – in an honest, direct, and fact-supported manner – about how immigration is affecting everyone's lives – and what policymakers are doing to address its downsides. At the same time, however, leaders must actively engage the public and lead the discourse about the value of a well-conceived and -executed immigration policy.

2. Build a sense of "ownership" in the integration process

Rapid change can be destabilizing for communities, especially when people feel they have little control over

things that greatly influence (or are *perceived* to greatly influence) their daily lives. Chief among these is the fear that large-scale immigration, and the resulting expansion of who the "we" is in society, are chipping away at the markers of national identity to which people have become accustomed. One way of assuaging this concern is to involve *all* citizens in shaping the next generation of cultural norms and values, giving them a sense of ownership over the integration process. This will become ever more important as the second generation comes of age in new countries of immigration, yielding a new pool of citizens who will contribute to molding and redefining social and political life.

3. National identity is now more than ever about becoming rather than being

Countries, such as Canada and the United States, that emphasize a process of belonging and "becoming," rather than a static sense of "being," are better able to embrace, "digest," and benefit from diversity than societies whose very actions betray a fear that newcomers will dilute a nation's core identity. In a world that is changing as fast as it is, such fears – whether openly expressed or clearly implied through governments' public policy choices – foster the very forces of "exclusivity" that undermine social cohesion and prevent newcomers from being accepted by the host community. Such forces, in turn, become the real barrier to immigrants' social and political participation, especially for the visibly different and those who practice certain minority religions.

Immigrant integration cannot succeed unless national identity is redefined in an inclusive way, focusing on shared values and on experiences that bind people together –

including work – rather than on exclusive characteristics (e.g., shared ancestry) that newcomers cannot possibly acquire. Articulating a dynamic nation-building narrative – and an inclusive national identity – that incorporates immigrants is critical to creating a pragmatic definition of "we." This should be reinforced in the public square, through school curricula (telling the story of minority contributions, as in Canada), and in the narratives of leaders of public and private institutions so that immigrants see themselves as accepted by the society's institutions and those who lead them.

4. Acknowledge the reality of and eliminate barriers to the coexistence of multiple identities

Efforts to restrict plural identities are counterproductive. Empirical studies in Canada, France, and the Netherlands show that strong ethnic ties and national pride are not mutually exclusive: 47 percent of immigrants to France, for example, say they "feel French" despite maintaining ties (and even citizenship) to their country of origin (Simon 2012). This indicates that the choice to have dual citizenship is more of a practical consideration than evidence of split loyalties. The same French study finds that 90 percent of those found to have a "minority identity" (that is, who say their ethnicity is an important feature of their identity) say they "feel at home in France," pointing to a robust new generation with "hyphenated" identities. Evidence further shows that policies circumscribing the expression of these identities produce the opposite effect: "Symbolic" ethnic ties become more salient precisely *because* they are restricted. The conclusion of this and similar studies makes the compelling case that immigrants

integrate most smoothly when they are able to *combine* their ethnic identity with a new national identity (as opposed to having to choose between them).

5. Create clear pathways to permanent residence and citizenship – and implement them impartially

The existence of a clear *pathway to permanent residence and citizenship* that is applied dispassionately is critical. Even if not all immigrants will become citizens, the fact that they are viewed as *potential* permanent members of society after an initial (but finite) period in the migration process can serve as a powerful incentive for greater engagement in community life on the part of both natives and newcomers alike. The government should also find ways to encourage publics to picture a shared future with their neighbors. Doing so successfully will make both parties more likely to make long-term investments in building community.

6. Offer practical, nonpunitive integration assistance

States should provide robust, subsidized integration mechanisms (e.g., language classes) to help newcomers negotiate their new environment more effectively and develop a stake in the future of the community in which they settle. Canada's successes on this front make a strong case that language and civics courses that are voluntary, free, and not punitive in intent (i.e., not tied to continuing access to residency or social benefits) are most successful. However, this does not mean that there are "no strings attached" in terms of the host society's expectations of

newcomers. Both Canada and Australia have insisted on shared liberal values by formally defining the range of "legitimate cultural traditions" in their constitutions. Moreover, ensuring that integration and naturalization processes are meaningful (e.g., by asking immigrants to demonstrate their knowledge of host-country language, civics, and values) exist alongside efforts to assist applicants in successfully meeting these requirements. Governments must thus strike an often delicate balance between requirements that are so lenient as to become meaningless and those that are so stringent as to be exclusionary.

7. Focus integration efforts on the places where integration takes place most naturally: workplaces and schools

While some immigrant groups seem to succeed everywhere they go (e.g., university-educated Asian immigrants often outperform natives on both sides of the Atlantic), far too often the story is one of integration failures. Many immigrants (and their children), as well as longstanding minorities, lag behind their peers in educational and labor-market attainment. In several countries, immigrant unemployment rates are close to double those of natives, and the poor outcomes of some groups (e.g., certain Turkish, North African, Caribbean, or Southeast Asian immigrants) stubbornly persist across generations. Even though some of the "fault lines" of the identity crisis may point to cultural differences, the *solution* may not be cultural. At the core of most failures in integration lie social and economic breakdowns. It is thus more useful (and less controversial) to emphasize investment in practical areas, such as employment or education, than to legislate norms