

# 18 Concluding thoughts

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Dear Reader,

By now you have read several chapters describing and debating how national values are being transmitted to newly arrived refugees and immigrants in nine European countries. Various countries prioritize different values, but all countries argue that instilling ‘shared values’ in newcomers facilitates immigrant integration and social cohesion. While the idea of shared values as a benefit to society has recently become quite popular among European governments, the question remains: Is there convincing evidence that focusing primarily on shared values facilitates integration? Before answering this question, let’s briefly recount some of the examples of value transmission, and the priority certain values are accorded.

France focuses on the ‘values of the Republic.’ They are part and parcel of the ‘civic turn’ (Mouritsen & Jørgensen 2008) in immigration and integration policies implemented in a variety of European countries from the late 1990s onwards (Hachimi Alaoui & Pélabay, this volume). The emphasis on ‘shared values’ is consistent with the directives of the European Commission and the Council of Europe (Pélabay 2011), as well as with the various civic education policies dedicated to the inculcation of the values shared by ‘good citizens’ (Kostakopoulou 2010). Adherence to the ‘values of the Republic’ is certainly thought to be a pre-requisite to successful integration into the French society.

In Germany, public debates about social and political cohesion have intensified since the terror attacks on the United States on 11 September, 2001. These debates, especially in conservative circles, have centered around the term *Leitkultur* (defining culture). The term was originally developed in an essay by the Syrian-born German academic Bassam Tibi (1996), who argued that Europe should define itself around core Enlightenment values *vis-à-vis* incoming migrants. With the recent migration of refugees to Germany, some Christian conservative politicians have revived the debate on *Leitkultur* (De Maizière 2017), while others have argued that ‘shared values’ (Zimmermann 2017) or ‘*Heimat*’ (lit: home) would be more neutral terms around which to center debates on the aims of integration. Still others have held that integration should not be understood in terms of shared values or

cultural aspects at all, but should instead exclusively focus on social, economic, and political participation (Kipping 2017; Özoğuz 2017). It is noteworthy that the German government, at least in some instances, tries to distance themselves from the cultural connotations of *Leitkultur*. The government has increased funding for civil society initiatives focused on immigrant integration and has encouraged migrant-led organizations to get involved in integration, and to facilitate dialogue between incoming refugees, and the larger German society. It remains to be seen, however, whether Germany's new emphasis on shared values can avoid the assimilationist connotations it developed in the original *Leitkultur* debate (Herrmann, this volume).

In Italy, concepts such as deservingness and the community of value frame the debate about refugees in Italy (Marchetti, this volume). In order to gain access to certain rights, refugees have to prove that they deserve to receive refugee status and permission to remain in Italy. Only then they will be able to enter the 'community of value.' 'Communities of value' are imagined and socially constructed as communities populated by 'good citizens, law-abiding and hardworking members of stable and respectable families' (Anderson 2013: 3). Unlike the Others, these ideal citizens share values and patterns of behaviors, form 'the legitimate us,' and may therefore receive rights. Terms like 'immigrant, 'foreigner,' and 'asylum seeker' do not simply refer to immigration status, but are value laden and have negative connotations. As Aihwa Ong explains in her seminal study on Cambodian refugees in the US: to 'become "good enough" citizens, newcomers must negotiate among different forms of regulation, and be taught a new way of being cared for and of caring for themselves in their new world' (Ong 2003). In order to remain in Italy, refugees must acquire certain skills and prove that they understand what kind of values they need to adhere to in order to gain access to the 'community of value.'

'Swedish values' is a vernacular phrase used both by politicians and the general public. Explicitly tasked with conveying the country's values to newcomers, many providers of integration courses however are uncomfortable framing values and norms in cultural terms. Instead, they suggest that national legislation and international conventions on human rights are better suited to promote Swedish core values. Politically, the government has radically shifted its immigration stance. In order to ward off 'the crisis,' the government abandoned its previous quite open and humanitarian approach and replaced it with a more inward-looking approach. However, the Swedish civil society responded very positively to the asylum seekers arriving in Sweden in the fall of 2015. The civil society organizations enacted the values of solidarity, hospitality, equality, and compassion that form the basis of their ideology and activities (see Scaramuzzino & Suter, this volume).

Poland and Hungary are true outliers among the countries under study. The Polish Constitution guarantees asylum seekers a right to asylum, but this right has been severely curtailed by the current government. Both

Poland and Hungary, under the respective rule of the Law and Justice and Fidesz parties, have criminalized migration and presented refugees and asylum seekers as a threat to the security of Europe (Nagy 2016). Both countries emphasize that in order to preserve and protect ‘European values,’ admission of refugees, particularly Muslim refugees, is not desirable as values enshrined in Islam are not compatible with Christian European values (Goździak & Márton 2018). Additionally, both countries feel threatened by liberal values promoted by the European Union, such as gender equality and respect for diversity. In Poland, both the Catholic Church and the government invoke the need to protect ‘traditional family values’ and see gender equality and respect for LGBTQ communities as an imminent threat to the country’s national identity rooted in Catholicism. As Klaus (this volume) shows, Poland might not want refugees, but it needs labor migrants and has been quite open to migrants from Ukraine who seek employment in the country. Ukrainians are perceived by the Polish government as culturally close to Poles and therefore easier to integrate.

Pondering these examples makes one wonder whether the strong focus on shared ‘European values’ is as essential to immigrant integration as policy-makers in Brussels and elsewhere believe. As we already discussed in the introduction, the term ‘European values’ has been contested. Even before the expansion of the European Union (EU) into Central and Eastern Europe in 2004, scholars have deliberated who and what counts as ‘European’ (Wagner 2005; Jeffrey 2008). A familiar binary – the making of the ‘European’ Self and the casting out of a ‘non-European’ Other is at the heart of such identity formation (Fleming 2003; Kuus 2004; Kuusisto 2004). With increased migration, these debates have intensified despite the fact that Europe has always been a diverse continent in which Christian, Muslim, Jewish, and secular traditions have been present for centuries (Goździak & Main, this volume). The diversity of these traditions is what makes the cosmopolitan Europe vibrant and worth preserving, doesn’t it?

Moreover, presenting shared ‘European values’ as rosy ideals and failing to acknowledge violations of values in the host society makes the value transmission efforts disingenuous. Additionally, in many countries the values presented as ‘national values’ are in fact liberal democratic values. Care needs to be taken not to conflate the two; otherwise the value transmission programs are nothing else but a top-down imposition of ‘elite’ values biased towards social and cultural norms of the majority. The challenge European policy-makers face is how to define values in non-ethnic and inclusive ways to signal to refugees and immigrants from day one that they are part of ‘us’ and an important element in ensuring social cohesion (Banulescu-Bogdan & Benton 2017). Values based on ethno-cultural practices do not lead to positive integration outcomes in diverse societies (Hachimi Alaoui & Pélabay, this volume). There is a need to engage newcomers in a thoughtful dialogue to identify what values they want to impart on their children as the second generation grows up in Europe. We might be pleasantly surprised at how much we all have in common.

At the expense of sounding trite, we also want to emphasize that immigrant integration is affected by many factors (Goździak & Martin 2005). Traditional immigration countries such as Australia, Canada, and the United States have always emphasized the importance of economic self-sufficiency. Therefore, providing refugees and immigrants with equitable access to the labor market even before they learned English had always been a number one goal of integration efforts. Ideally, newcomers would also receive a thorough orientation to the social mores, laws, and legal systems of their new country but understanding these traditions is not a substitute for decent employment, vocational training, and opportunities for upward mobility. Most of the countries under study include employment programs in their integration packets. It is important to provide refugees and immigrants with work permits as early as possible and integrate them into the labor market. Economically, opportunities for upward mobility represent a crucial incentive for newcomers to integrate themselves. Investment and professional advancement beyond ethnic businesses not only promote linkages with the host society but also help newcomers build foundations for their children. And finally, labor force participation not only provides migrants with sustainable livelihoods but also prevents social isolation.

While rights-based immigration and integration policies at the national level are important, action at the community level where the web of local relationships determines the immigrant experience, is equally if not more valuable. Experiences at local levels shape not only immigrant attitudes toward their new country but also the cohesiveness of the neighborhoods, towns, and cities they adopt as their new homes. In many different countries, local actors, including the newcomers themselves, have found novel ways to assume this responsibility and foster the incorporation of newly arrived immigrants into broader society. There is a need to increase participation of refugees and migrants, and ethnic community organizations in the decision-making processes in Brussels, in the capital cities, and in local municipalities. Local organizations need the support of national governments but they also need the opportunity for self-determination. The populist tendencies to present refugees and immigrants as a threat to 'European values' and traditions of tolerance, freedom, and democracy are misplaced. There is a need to change misperceptions that members of the host society and newcomers have of each other. Bridging the gaps that separate different groups would strengthen communities, mitigate divisive social tensions, and, of course, position immigrants to participate more effectively in the wider society.

The news media significantly influence the popular perception of refugees and immigrants, reinforcing stereotypes in some cases while empathizing with the foreigners' experiences in others. Particularly in areas with little previous ethnic diversity, the arrival of newcomers has attracted substantial news coverage, magnifying their presence. Newcomers' status – real or imagined – frequently influences the tone of the media's treatment. When asylum seekers are portrayed as 'irregular' or 'illegal' migrants or miscategorized as labor

migrants, conflicts and accusations of greed and the desire to take social benefits from European citizens arise.

Regrettably, media coverage of immigrant issues frequently concentrates on moments of conflict between natives and newcomers, particularly in the aftermath of terrorist attacks. It is important to counter these misperceptions and inform the general public that most of the terrorists that launched attacks on European cities were born and raised in Europe. This begs the question: why were they radicalized? Perhaps they were easily lured by terrorist organizations because we failed to provide them with opportunities to thrive in society? In the context of the 'war on terror,' warnings against disenfranchisement of newcomers have taken on new resonance. Detentions of foreign-born residents are a high-profile example of what many have called a widespread erosion of immigrants' civil liberties. It is also important to support – with EU, national, and local programs and funds – media coverage of situations of cooperation and beneficial coexistence of migrants, refugees, and natives, based on individual narratives and academic research. There are many stories that could be written, films that could be made, plays that could be performed about thousands of positive, daily encounters when values are shared, discussed, learnt, and practiced.

Integration depends on the empowerment of immigrants for participation in the wider community. In both social and economic terms, it is important to stress opportunities and obligations as much as rights and entitlements. One of the largest obstacles to this goal is that mediating institutions such as local governments, schools, and mainstream civic organizations often overlook the newcomer voice. This condition is largely because of immigrants' lack of familiarity with their new communities. Links of incorporation within newcomer groups and with broad society remedy this condition over time, but initiatives undertaken shortly after migrants arrive in a particular locality have the potential to accelerate this orientation. We need to involve sports clubs, scouting organizations, faith-based and civil society organizations to lead by example and make integration as seamless and painless as possible.

The European Commission has scope to provide financial resources and non-monetary support to these kinds of initiatives. In particular, the Commission ought to strategize how to support refugee and immigrant youth as well as children of refugees and immigrants to ensure their civic and political participation in their respective countries. The tendency to see children of refugees and immigrants as growing up in migrancy is dangerous. Lena Näre (2013) views migrancy as 'the socially constructed subjectivity of "migrant" ... which is inscribed on certain bodies by the larger society in general and legislative practices in particular.... Very often the inscribed subjectivity of migrancy is not only attributed to those who have migrated' but also to children of immigrants, children who have never moved away from their place of birth. Increasing numbers of the world's children are growing up in this space, not because they are migrants themselves, but

because their parents or even grandparents once were. We need to show these children that we value them and that they are part of us, not part of the foreign Others.

And finally, we want to call for an evidence-based approach to integration policy. There is a need to support robust and independent evaluation research focused not simply on outputs and to a certain extent outcomes of value transmission programs, but on long-term impacts. Participation of immigrants is important but bean-counting and box-ticking is not sufficient (Larruina & Gorashi, this volume). The European Commission needs to find resources to support applied research, especially community-based participatory research where newcomers work hand-in-hand with academics in designing and implementing studies that will be useful to the refugee and immigrant communities, and thereby the whole society.

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