a set of complex organisational issues. To think it through – a project only just beginning – we need to attend to both dimensions. The elements of equality and universality associated with the idea of 'the citizen', and the diverse and particular requirements of different groups which have to be met if they are to enjoy 'free and equal' status, demand that the Left clarify, more profoundly than it has so far, both the principles of the politics of citizenship and their institutional requirements. What is at stake is nothing less than reformulating socialism to take better account of 'citizenship' and the conditions and limits this imposes on state action and political strategy.

28

THE HOLISTIC AMBITION

Social cohesion and the culturalization of citizenship

Yngve Lithman

Abstract

Policy-making in Europe with respect to migrant population problems builds on an integration–citizenship–social cohesion nexus representing a holistic ambition where each nation state manifests its own presumed national–cultural order as normative. Migrant-related issues thus become couched in idioms focusing on culture, ethnicity and identity. The shortcomings of this approach are discussed with reference to the shape of immigration-related social issues. The article also indicates how the representation of problem issues through the integration–citizenship–social cohesion nexus opens for conflicts, not just between migrants and autochthonous, but also between segments in the host populations. A main argument is made to the effect that we need a much better understanding of how the receiving countries' national and other contingencies shape migrant lives.

Introduction

The late American social critic Mencken once quipped that 'there is always an easy solution to every social problem – neat, plausible and wrong'. No-one can complain about the huge range of neat and plausible solutions that have been put forth to solve problems presumed to beset our societies as a result of migration-related changes in the population of the western European states. Those dominating present-day discourse can virtually all be said to relate to a new emphasis on social cohesion and citizenship issues. Citizenship is then, of course, understood in the wide sense, as signifying co-others in a harmonious and collaborative political community. In this normative stance in its present-day migrant-related permutations, citizenship

issues deal both with the person, the immigrant – as it were – having to strive towards becoming a 'citizen', and, in a complementary vein, society also has to strive for 'inclusion'. It is noteworthy that this citizenship idiom is fairly recent. Twenty years ago, integration issues were generally couched in a much more immediately pragmatic vein, stressing the importance of labour force participation and training, the educational achievements of the second generation, etc. The present-day underlying notion is different: once the immigrants realize that they have to become 'integrated', 'citizens', and the society is 'inclusive', we will have 'social cohesion', and the problems related to integration will have disappeared.

There are some shared underlying sentiments in western Europe with respect to how integration issues are framed in the public sphere, e.g. newspapers and political debates. Some of the prominent among these are:

1   Somehow, integration has failed. This argument has been made with increasing stridency in this millennium, and manifests itself both in scholarship and policies. The denouncing of the multicultural option in Denmark and the Netherlands can be given as examples, as can the politically initiated debates over *Parallellgesellschaften* (parallel communities) in Germany, the inflamed rhetoric in France presuming to be a defence of republican values as it attaches itself to the headscarf debate, the socioeconomic inequality manifest in the Swedish immigrant-dense suburbs, the concern with immigrant gender issues in Norway, etc.
2   The cataclysmic fervour – integration is seen as an issue profoundly affecting the destiny of our societies. Warnings about the 'Muslim threat' to reshape Europe is no longer confined to the extreme fringes of European political life, as manifest in election campaigns in Austria, Denmark and Switzerland (among others).
3   Integration issues have *increasingly* become shaped to be a bi-polar phenomenon. The debates now manifest a receiving society as a specific national and cultural, or even ethnic, make-up, to which the immigrants have to conform. Concomitantly, the migrant populations are seen as Others representing a fundamentally different order. The issue, indeed, is primarily how to make immigrants give up their cultural/national/ethnic baggage and conform. Implicit in this perspective lies, of course, the statement that immigrants are defined by their background. This ethnification and culturalization is crucial to note in order to make sense of many of the things we see today, and is, of course, also related to a re-definition of who the migrants are – today, the term in European parlance refers to people of non-European non-white, including Turkish and Muslim, backgrounds.
4· A curious lack of a more reflective class analysis dimension in discussing integration. It is quite true that there is a wealth of studies purporting to show unemployment and income levels, etc., but these standard of

living studies rarely, if at all, depart from a focus on individuals, rarely if at all are they placed in a discussion of the structure of our societies.

The holistic ambition

So what are integration, social cohesion, and citizenship all about – those qualities that are supposed to be characteristics of a society that functions and where the inhabitants are citizens? What makes societies work is of course one major strand in social science theorizing, but it is not really this theorizing that at least on a surface level concerns politicians or researchers in the integration debate. At the most general level, it is now commonplace for politicians, and many researchers, to claim that immigrants have to embrace liberalism, democracy, the rule of law and human rights, and that this is what the integration–citizenship–social cohesion nexus is all about. The notable, not to say vacuous, nature of this statement immediately reveals itself, however, when reading the integration debates from various western European countries. One is then struck by how varied, and different, the actual issues are that integration is supposed to deal with, and also how national they are (see, e.g. point 1, above). The interpretations that are given to social cohesion, including the ills it is supposed to cure, are strikingly country specific. In fact, the debates attach themselves to specific and fundamental self-understandings about what each of these countries really is, and what each country should strive to be in the future. The social cohesion debates are thus in many ways best seen as proxies in debates about national self-understandings rather than as significant vehicles towards improving the lot of actual people or, for that matter, reflecting some European-wide consensus about what is important in actual social life.

The western European countries and their idiosyncrasies thus present themselves in the social cohesion debates, and a notable feature is that the national has in fact become an increasingly prominent feature of political debates about immigrants. It is, however, much more doubtful if this is also true for popular opinion. It can be suggested that the realities here are rather contrary to the argument that is often heard, that it is the elites who are too liberal and who don't understand the dangers and the frustrations in the general population with immigrants. In fact, for at the very least some western European countries, the opinion polls do not support this contention. It is notable how accepting a clear majority of the receiving populations in most European countries are with are with respect to immigration. Furthermore, these acceptance levels do not vary with rates of foreigners, unemployment or wealth, nor is there is significant correlation with immigrant density in the residential neighbourhood (cf. Kehrberg, 2007; Sides and Citrin, 2007). It is also notable that the figures with respect to tolerance have been fairly unchanged over time in, for example, the Norwegian and Swedish data material, where easily comparable time series data exist (see

Blom, 2006, for Norway and e.g. Mella and Palm, 2009 and Westin, 1984 for Sweden).

Nevertheless, we can see over several years, and especially in this millennium, a political-institutional entrenchment of the distinction between migrant/non-national and autochthonous. This is true even on a European level, as exemplified by the fourth principle in the European Union (EU) statement on immigrant integration policy, claiming that 'basic knowledge of the host society's language, history and institutions are indispensible to integration' (EU, 2005a). We see the same sentiments reflected in national language tests, citizenships tests, citizenship ceremonies, etc. So, we have a quaint and at least in some sense paradoxical situation here: the desire to diminish difference in fact entails an emphasis on difference. The new emphasis on public rituals of symbolic citizenship seems to be embraced by both right and left – clearly indicating, for example, that the days when national flags were banished from labour movement celebrations are passé.

This increased prominence of the national expresses the holistic ambition with respect to the western European nation states. In its most developed form, it aims at recreating the ideal type version of the nation state as a social, cultural and moral universe shared by all its inhabitants. In Europe, the holistic ambition is present in several different, and not necessarily conjoined, ways. In one strand, we have the desire to maintain/restore/invigorate the cultural and ethnic dimensions of the nation state. Here we find the famous episode when the former Dutch minister of the interior demanded that people should speak Dutch in the streets of Amsterdam in order that autochthonous do not feel 'unheimisch' (ironically, *unheimisch* is actually a German and not a Dutch word), as well as the Danish education minister's 2008 statement about enhanced teaching of Christianity in the schools. Not quite the same argument, but with similar results, is that we should not accept immigration from what are 'culturally remote' (in e.g. Norwegian: 'fremmedkulturelle') parts of the world, i.e. primarily from Africa and Asia. Yet one strand in the holistic ambition is represented by what presents itself as a kind of pragmatism. The EU quote earlier illustrates the point: in order to live in a country you have to know its history, culture, language, etc. – a specific social and cultural order, that of the host country, is given normative status. This has become expressed in a variety of tests mandated by citizenship acquisition laws in several countries.

If a straightforward national–cultural argument is one expression of the holistic ambition, the other, while pragmatically argued, in its execution nevertheless ties itself to the same ambition – immigrants have to be properly trained in order to have reasonably successful lives, they have to have the skills to navigate society. No-one would deny that there is some considerable truth to this. Whoever doesn't know that a red streetlight signifies 'stop' is likely to get killed in a traffic accident. From this insight concerning the necessary tools to live a reasonable life in society, however, many western

European states, if not all, have embarked on an engineering task, where they claim to have defined the attributes necessary to achieve a good life. Importantly, these efforts are also claimed to help integration and social cohesion. The national–cultural (protect the national–cultural) and pragmatic (help and support to the immigrants) arguments are made to join in what are presumed to be the necessary vehicles for integration – and with not insignificant sanctions attached to those immigrants who do not wish to engage in this re-engineering of their social and cultural personae.

To make the picture more complete, it should be added that there is also an emphasis, in the rhetoric perhaps more than in substance (e.g. effective lawmaking), on anti-discrimination legislation. Such legislation is usually attuned to employment and housing issues, while a more obscure human rights approach provides a vague and much more difficult to judicially pursue avenue to redress also other forms of discrimination. In Europe, there is really no effective equity legislation of the kind that has at the very least been occasionally effective in Canada and the USA.

To sum up the European trends, the recipe goes like this: make citizens of the immigrants, equip them with the tools to function in society, legislate against discrimination, and we have the instruments in place to promote social cohesion. When we look at the realities of the situation, as well as its ideological and political underpinnings, we may, however, have to come back to Mencken's statement questioning neat solutions to social problems.

Is diversity the problem?

Given the present emphasis on the national–cultural adaptation of the immigrants, it is reasonable to ask: if migrants represent a social problem, what is the shape of this problem? Further: are the causes of this problem reasonably well defined? And, finally: are the approaches taken to solve this problem well suited for their purpose?

Is there is a social problem of the socially disruptive kind? Usually, this question is answered in the affirmative simply with reference to a general notion that diversity in itself represents a social problem. If so, however, the unqualified affirmative answer must be doubted. Anecdotal evidences to the contrary are easy to find. Buenos Aires, at the beginning of the last century, had a situation where for 40 consecutive years 60 percent of the adult population was born abroad – and they created one of the jewels of urban South America and a rich and democratic state. This is not really just a historical curiosity. Today, the foreign-born population in Toronto, a wonderful city by any standards – and much safer than most other cities – is working itself up to the 40 percent. Incidentally, Canada as a whole is a more immigrant-dominated country than any in western Europe. Explanations for the Canadian paradox, as it appears to Europeans, cannot be explained by the Canadian quota system. A common guess is that only about one

quarter of the immigrants to Canada came through the 'hard tracks' of the immigration system (i.e. admitted primarily because of their professional or vocational qualifications). In Sweden, diversity is certainly seen as a far less dramatic issue than in Denmark (and incomparably so at least until the last couple of years), which has roughly half the relative number of immigrants of Sweden.

If immigration as a whole is not a necessary but contingent problem, what is? It would be foolish to presume that there are not issues related to the presence of immigrants that need reflection by scholars, politicians and the general public. What about housing segregation, what about educational facilities, what about gender equality, what about host populations' reactions to foreigners, etc.? A few comments about how at least a couple of these issues relate to the main thrust of this article may be in order.

Immigrant housing segregation is an obvious fact, and has been accorded a causative role in a wide variety of social ills. A catalogue of these would include, for example, what car burnings in French suburbs signify, that they create obstacles to participation in the wider society and under-performing schools because of the cultural and linguistic diversity of the student populations, that concentrations of economically fragile or impoverished populations threaten the tax base for common services (including schools), and, more generally, that the presence of non-autochthonous population concentrations generates divisions in society and counters attempts to create social cohesion.

However, immigrant housing segregation has to be understood at several levels of analysis. As stressed by, for example, Bauman (2005), it is the manifestation of global processes, not least of inequality and violence, resulting in issues to be dealt with at the local level. Moving to the specifics of particular countries or cities, we find complex multi-factorial causes, dynamics, as well as consequences, that are hard to pinpoint, and we can not presume that we are dealing with the same generative and sustaining mechanisms in every country (cf. e.g. Lithman, 1999). Indeed, the same mechanisms may not be at play in different areas of the same country.

As a result of the way in which we produce our statistics, we may have some notion about the segregation career of housing areas, but usually we cannot produce information about the housing careers of those individuals and families who at any specific time live in or have lived in highly immigrant-dominated housing areas. The basic conflict over the generative issues with respect to housing segregation has been formulated already in the debate following Rex and Tomlinson's (1979) book. Is segregation an expression of a confluence of class, (colonial) history, and discrimination, or does it reflect a desire on the part of the immigrants (one fundamental premise in the present notion of parallel societies)? That people's desires are used to explain social phenomena leads to a voluntaristically based sociology, celebrating human agency, rarely permits an analysis of the structuration principles of society. At the same time, Rex and Tomlinson's argument clearly does not

provide for an understanding of the variations and multiplicity of issues (including agency) that confront us when we try to untangle the processes that generate the immigrant-dense neighbourhoods. A great example is given by Hiebert (2009), who shows that in Rosengård, the large and paradigmatic immigrant-dense neighbourhood in Malmö (Sweden), there is a variation between almost no social assistance recipients in one subdivision, and over 60 percent in another. His conclusion is clear – we must in large measure abandon the level of aggregation that we usually deal with, and we have to develop much more fine-tuned measures and analytical tools in order to understand what, for example, immigrant-dense neighbourhoods are. There is not one Rosengård, but many. And to believe that there is one 'remedy' for housing segregation, if one is needed, is simply to delude ourselves. Looking over time, however, one can see one clear trend emerging over the last decade.

The problems with, as opposed to the causes of, residential segregation issues used to have two clear foci, one being how it affected migrants' life chances in a Dahrendorffian (1981) sense of providing options and ligatures, the other being strains on local authorities with respect to schooling, tax base, etc. Now, however, in the integration–citizenship–social cohesion paradigm, residential segregation has become an emblematic threat issue to our societies, it is made out to represent parallel realities. It is difficult to see that this change over time in defining what is the problem with housing segregation reflects a better based understanding of causes and consequences. The 'parallel societies' notion first gained prominence in German right-wing politics in the early 1990s, and provides a straight line between causes (the immigrants want to be separate) and consequences (parallel societies and the fragmentation of the nation state). However, the variations in how residential segregation displays itself in different countries, or even within the same country, suggest that this is an untenable argument. The quality and distribution of housing stocks, access to work, the structure of labour markets, class positions, immigrant cohort and generational features, government immigrant/refugee geographical distribution policies and discrimination in housing are but some of the factors that combine, with varying forces in specific instances to create patterns of residential segregation. National and local contingencies must be given full weight in a explaining this phenomenon.

What about education? In the early 1990s, I had reason to look at educational statistics in Sweden. Even if the findings now are historical, they will tell us a story of caution, or at least warn us about the validity of some of the claims that are being made that immigrant children have a cultural or linguistic background that makes it difficult for them to handle school. Then, among the five worst-performing immigrant categories in Sweden, sorted according to mother-tongue, basically a proxy for parents' home country, were Finnish, Danish and Icelandic kids. Should we believe that Nordic

culture (in other countries than Sweden) is an impediment to successful education, or should we believe that we see a reflection of class – that children of working-class parents manifest a working-class pattern in educational pursuits? There were other findings in this work that were interesting as well. For example, in grade 9 (15-year-old students), the highest performing identifiable category in Södertälje, a massively immigrant-dense city just south of Stockholm, were female students of Turkish extraction.

The long and the short of my observations regarding educational success was that there was a bimodal distribution, a lot of migrant kids doing as well or rather better than their statistical twins of Swedish extraction, and a much smaller number doing less well, and many times very much less well, than their Swedish counterparts. The same conclusion must be drawn here as with housing segregation – to understand what we see in the educational arena, we have to be much more careful than we often are. In particular, we can also learn from international comparisons (such as the excellently conceived TIES project in Europe) that national–cultural arguments are discredited by the fact that 'the same' immigrants have differential success rates in different receiving countries.

There is a somewhat ironic twist to the political dimensions of this argument. It is sometimes argued that the European welfare states attract low-educated, low-skill, or otherwise poorly prepared, immigrants, and that this poses a significant and serious problem when their children enter the schools. This, not a concern with cultural sustenance, was a significant factor in what caused the Swedish government in the late 1960s and 1970s to embark on special support programmes for schools with immigrant children, where the 'home language instruction programme' was a prominent part. This programme has since become an internationally often quoted example of the Swedish 'multicultural policies'. In fact, it was a thoroughly pragmatic attempt to cope with pupils with specific preconditions, and its only 'cultural sensitivity' aspect was that communication in Swedish was insufficient. This example ties well with Kymlicka's observation (2007) that while 'multiculturalism' has been chastised in Europe, specific multicultural policies are usually left in place. The conclusion is of course that these policies usually represent pragmatic attempts to solve real problems in the everyday workings of society, and are not designed to create separateness.

Are the causes behind the social problems reasonably well known? Here, immigrants of Somali background provide an interesting case. In Sweden and Norway, these are seen as an emblematic immigrant problem. They are Muslims, they have abysmal employment situations, they exist on social assistance to a very considerable degree, their children are not doing well in school, and so on. Not only do they represent the immigrant problem in its starkest shape, but they are also being used as illustrations of the paradigmatic explanations of immigrant failures. In short, their culture – alien, Muslim, clannish, traditional, patriarchal – is what destroys their chances of a good life

in the countries of western Europe. Then, however, there is a really interesting comparison to be made (Carlsson, 2006). In the Minneapolis area in the USA, there is a significant Somali immigrant presence. In terms of background characteristics and immigration history, they are similar to their countrymen in the Scandinavian countries (even including some émigrés from these countries). However, in the US context, they are examples of immigrant virtue. They are fairly successful economically. Their children are doing well in school. They have started an incredible number of successful businesses, and are looked upon as the entrepreneurs par preference. That their lack of success in one country, and success in another, are both to be related to background factors seems convoluted compared to a suggestion that an intervening variable, the shape of the country to which they came, has something to do with it. However, the story does not quite end here. Even more surprisingly, perhaps, are the highly successful Somalis in Vinje in Telemark, a small, remote village community associated with skiing, taken to be at the heart of Norwegian identity. The Somalis have prevented the local community from collapsing both in social and economic terms.

The lesson to be drawn here, as with respect to most of the issues touched upon in this discussion of immigrants as creating social problems, is that there is a huge array of complex contingencies to deal with when we try to understand what is called immigrant integration.

Are the approaches to the immigrant-related social problems suitable for their purposes? The holistic ambition resting on the integration–citizenship–social cohesion paradigm defines a cultural Other, and proceeds from this. Being culturally separate means that 'immigrants' (nowadays, then, non-European non-whites but including Turks and Muslims) value other things than what characterizes the peoples in the western European states, and therefore do not want to join the societies to which they have come. They see themselves as apart, and want to stay that way, according to this logic.

A reaction to this perspective on culture is also clearly manifest. A large number of, for example, scholarly studies attempt to de-essentialize culture, to make us re-imagine culture as less gripping, as less determinative. Much popular culture, from movies to books to music, give us the same message about celebrating hybridity, transgression, fusion. Nevertheless, especially perhaps in political discourse, the last decades have seen a massively increased emphasis on cultural identity and ethnic belonging as major features of existence, and arguably as the basis of political communities.

Culture, ethnicity, identity

It is important to note, though, that although many scholarly authors use these concepts, they can be lodged in very different theoretical realms. We now have a post-Herderian development in western Europe, increasingly reflected in the stress on national identities as well as, and supposedly un-problematically,

the recognition or emergence of a European identity. The latter is a prominent EU activity (see e.g. 2005a, 2005b). Very different are the visions of writers such as Gilroy (2003) and Young (1990), who – in varying ways – see difference as the dissolution of national normativity and welcome the emergence of de-centred collectivities, from the Black Atlantis to the Hispanic presence in the USA. Here we find visions that presuppose a completely different understanding of, for example, the relationship between identity and citizenship compared to what we usually imply. Young's (1990) famous argument about 'togetherness in difference' specifically aims at outlining a vision of social justice without nation state based normativity. Similarly with the more regular 'social constructivist' approaches, stressing the contingent nature of culture, identity and ethnicity. However, these and other alternatives to the more reified post-Herderian understandings are barely noticeable in the realm of politics, and while important in scholarship, their forceful utilization in migration-related research (such as in Fog-Olwig 2009 as an excellent example) is still in large measure to be seen. There is some irony to the fact that the EU has imported what is clearly a Young-inspired slogan in its work on identity, 'unity in diversity', and then embarks on what can only be described as a straight post-Herderian elaboration (see the link above, e.g., or the task given to, rather than the results from, the 'Prodi Reflection Group' on 'the spiritual and cultural dimension of Europe' (EU, 2005b)). In short, the EU documents have notions about creating a European identity of the kind associated with Herderian determinations about nation states, while at the same time recognizing national identities. The slogan, if taken seriously, actually attaches itself to a multicultural claim that a political community can show unity while its constituent parts are diverse.

The non-essentializing alternatives have done nothing to stem the furore over multiculturalism, seen as the antithesis to the holistic ambition (for a perspective on the European debate from a Canadian vantage point, see Ley, 2007). The notions of culture, ethnicity and identity, and their relationship, as expressed in the calls for the dismantling of multicultural policies in Europe, were exactly premised on the way these concepts are elaborated in the national–cultural emblematic: culture and ethnicity encompass the individual in a totalizing tendency, and express themselves through the individual's identity.

What the ethnographies about migrant life show is fundamentally the capacity of individuals and collectivities to adjust to or even thrive in new circumstances. Following upon this, a more fruitful view of culture is to see it as potentialities, potentialities in terms of thinking and acting. These potentialities can be envisaged as a knowledge tool-box, constructed in collectivities but also lodged in the individuals as tools for thinking and acting. Facing situations in which to act, the individual makes choices, choices between what tools and combination of tools to apply. If the situation is routine, routine choices of tools take place. When new situations emerge,

individuals will apply what they think of as perhaps the most appropriate tool or tools to apply. An important dimension here is that the results of actions in new situations will be collectivized. The individual who had the experience will talk about it with others, and the various parties to this discussion will add their experiences, and, at a more or less concrete level, new tools will constantly be forged, old tools will be discarded, new combinations of tools applied in new situations. This view of culture as continuous learning and relearning negates cultural fixedness, and is thus in stark contrast to how culture is usually thought about in, say, European discussions of multiculturalism.

Such potentialities will also, of course, be foundational for what is usually called identities. This means that identities will have the same potential for change. A major obstacle to our understanding here, however, is what can be called the 'individualism romanticism'. In our egalitarian ideologies (in the Dumontian, 1986, sense), the individual is made the supreme value. In this, we presume that the individual's identity is properly characterized by closure and one-ness. Since long, however, not least the migration literature tells us that a more fruitful perspective is to be found in classical role theory. The individual acts in a variety of contexts, with respect to migrants often with very different qualities. The acting itself is determined by the classical elements of role theory, situational interpretations, perceived goals and constraints for the interaction, mutual expectations, etc. Such a perspective allows for an understanding of how the same individual can appear very different in different situations, and does away with an identity perspective where the individual's identity fixity becomes determinative (cf. e.g. Lithman, 2006).

So where does this, then, leave ethnic belonging. Isn't that the continuous manifestation of culture and identity? Maybe this argument would have some validity if ethnic belonging was constant, in the sense that as a person belonging to an ethnie, you would always do the same thing. A way of looking at ethnicity that allows for much more dynamism, however, is to see ethnicity as what can perhaps best be called a meta-contextual idiom. Such an idiom stands above each and every situational context. It defines a category of people who have the potential capacity to become co-actors. The ethnie can persist, regardless of whatever 'cultural' or situational changes the members of the ethnie experience. To translate the ethnic belonging into the specificities of modes of thinking and acting therefore always presupposes a mediating process. This mediating process will contain, as the case may be, findings of the order that 'as we are X, this is how we should behave'. The literature is, of course, full of examples of how this works, for example, the studies of 'reactive ethnicity'. The point, though, is that all ethnicity is reactive, at the very least in the sense that all ethnic manifestations require a mediating process whereby the ethnic belonging claim is conjoined with modes of action and thinking in a specific situation.

Social cohesion and multiculturalism

The multicultural 'option' as a policy goal is now in tatters or abandoned in parts of western Europe, with perhaps Denmark and the Netherlands in the vanguard. In these developments, then, multiculturalism is seen as founded on the same understandings of culture, ethnicity and identity that underpin the holistic ambition expressing the integration–citizenship–social cohesion paradigm. However, there has always been another understanding of multi-culturalism, perhaps most prominently expressed in Sweden and Canada.

The once-upon-a-time celebrated goals for Swedish immigration policies were, since the early 1970s, 'freedom of choice' – you could choose your identity, 'equality' – immigrants were to have the same life chances as autoch-thonous, and 'collaboration' – immigrants and Swedes were to collaborate in society. These pretty liberal orientations were translated into the Swedish multicultural policies, a conglomerate of pragmatically and instrumentally argued vehicles best seen as providing a kind of remedial assistance to migrants and their children, hence the mother-tongue options in schools, language and literacy classes, vocational training efforts, etc. The support to immigrant associations was seen as a vehicle to build communication with migrants and learn about their situations. Nowhere did the 'classic' Swedish multicultural policies open for multiculturalism in the sense of support for the creation of apartness, today the mainstay accusation against multi-cultural policies. How is the present situation in Sweden? It has roughly twice the relative number of immigrants that Norway or Denmark has, and its population has the most liberal attitude to migrants and migration of any western European country (cf. e.g. Kehrberg, 2007). In terms of immigrant participation in society, it is significantly a success story – but everything is, of course, far from great.

It is, in fact, very tempting to suggest that there are significant similarities between the Swedish and Canadian policies, not necessarily immediately obvious on a superficial level. However, both the Canadian and Swedish policies were founded on a basic acceptance of the Other, not even putting the Other as an opposite to Us. Whatever integration was to happen, would basically be the result of choice on the part of the immigrants. The parallel developments in Sweden and Canada, seen in the light of what has been presented above, suggests that the more common European trend towards the uni-dimensional construction of the stranger as a culturally separate and in large measure fixed entity has led us astray, both in research and in policy-making. A proper understanding of the dynamics of culture, identity and ethnic belonging would give a better chance to appreciate that the immigrants' modes of existence in our countries is not the result of non-adjustment, but the best result the immigrants imagine in their collective culture-building.

How does the approach taken in this article relate to the 'liberal nationalist' position (Miller, 1995 is a foundational text), that diversity reduces 'national

identity', which has to be built on interpersonal 'trust', with potentially disastrous effects for modern welfare states? In spite of its shortness, an elegant critique of this approach, both in terms of theory as well as empirical findings, is provided by Johnston et al. (2009). Discussing the partly counter-intuitive findings from a Canadian survey, they stress the importance of state institu-tions, and how the history and shape of each country has to be taken into account in order to elucidate how contingent national narratives structure a population's attitudes to national identity, trust, redistribution, etc. Their stress on how different state activities (health care, pensions, etc.) get or do not get coded into a relationship with national identity is compelling in terms of how tenuous the liberal nationalist argument is.

The significance and understanding of the role of the state, stressed by Johnston et al. (2009), importantly including what may be seen as loyalty to the state, will serve to enhance our understanding of the differences between different countries. Sweden was previously a fairly homogenous country that now has a relatively large immigrant population. It is generally described as having multicultural policies, and also, by and large, the most positive attitudes to immigrants in Europe. The ethnic interpretation of Swedishness was extremely marginalized from the 1930s onwards, during what was in fact a 40-year social democratic reign. What came with this was an understanding of Sweden as a country where the future was to be built (and the traditional ethnic dimensions of Sweden were used as illustrations of the things that should be done away with). This programme was also programmatically and openly against person-to-person solidarity as a vehicle for welfare, as this was to be handled through the mediation of the state, 'cradle-to-grave-socialism' in the words of its detractors. An enormous economic success, presumably helped by being outside the ravages of the Second World War, provided, in the Swedishness narrative, the proof that identity or interpersonal trust was not important. To have modernity, also in the shape of the welfare state, was.

This state legitimacy in combination with a virtual consensus about immigrants and immigration is important to understand the Swedish case. All parties in parliament have embraced immigration as an economic necessity or, in the case of refugees, a moral obligation. However, there is some resurgence of the traditional ethnic Swedishness narrative, and for one parliamentary period a populist right-wing party managed to get MPs elected.

Given the contemporary developments on the political scene in European states with respect to the role of immigrants, and its attendant ethnification of Self and Others (cf. Gingrich and Banks 2006), the liberal nationalist argument may in some studies seem more valid than is actually the case. We may rather observe the consequences of parallel contingent developments in several countries, not reflections of general premises for what makes societies work. Supporting such a hypothesis are also the notable variations between countries in virtually all the factors tied to the liberal nationalism thesis.

Conclusion

It is no problem to add further complications to the debates about social cohesion. For example, the Somali in Scandinavia and the USA do have at least one thing in common – from both categories young men have gone back to participate in Jihadist activities. Several comments can be made about this, such as, for example, that Jihadism has no immediate relationship to a particular socioeconomic status. The most important point, however, may be that it gives such a clear illustration of how transnational realities can manifest themselves. One of the important nation-building premises was that the person was controlled through the control of the body, and circumscribed by the nation. The transnational person is not fixated by his or her body; the transnational person exists in several spheres of belonging, not just as way-stations on a migratory trail but very effectively also as important distributed belongings, not contained, nor containable, within the nation state. This represents a major challenge to the social science legacy from the nation-state ideology, the methodological nationalism (cf. e.g. Lithman, 2004; Wimmer and Glick Schiller, 2002), manifesting itself in specific notions about integration, citizenship and social cohesion, and their geographical determinations.

The day this is written, 30 November 2009, the *International Herald Tribune* reports that Switzerland in a referendum has forbidden the building of minarets. An Amnesty spokesperson describes the decision as 'grotesquely discriminatory' and 'shocking indeed', not least because it represents a massive human rights violation. The Swiss government, to its credit, also was against the prohibition. So the rifts in society do not necessarily emerge between migrants and autochthons, but between different notions of decency and generosity. In the same paper, there is a news headline from France: 'Many see politics behind Sarkozy's focus on French national identity.' The article goes on to discuss if Sarkozy's activities are simply tactics related to benefiting from xenophobic sentiments in the upcoming elections.

The European situation is complex and varied. To suggest that the holistic ambition with its emphasis on integration–citizenship–social cohesion (in their customary elaboration) actually promotes social cohesion is at the very least a contentious statement. In fact, it builds on presumptions that may well be seen to induce conflicts.

References

Bauman Z. (2005) *Liquid Life*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Blom S. (2006) *Holdninger til innvandrere og innvandring* (Attitudes to immigrants and immigration). Oslo: Statistisk Sentralbyrå.

Carlsson B. (2006) *Somalier i Minneapolis. En dynamisk affär* (Somalis in Minneapolis: a dynamic case). Stockholm: Zufi förlag.

Dahrendorff R. (1981) *Life Chances*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Dumont L. (1986) *Essays on Individualism: Modern Ideology in Anthropological Perspective*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

EU (2005a) Statement on integration policy. Available at: eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52005DC0389:EN:NOT.

EU (2005b) *The Spiritual and Cultural Dimension of Europe* (EUR 21360). Brussels: European Commission.

Fog-Olwig K. (2009) A proper funeral: Contextualizing community among Caribbean migrants. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 15(3): 520–537.

Gilroy P. (2003) *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Gingrich A. and Banks M. (eds) (2006) *Neo-nationalism in Europe*. New York: Berghahn Books.

Hiebert D. (2009) Parallel Lives: The social cohesion debate. Paper presented at the The Politics of Social Cohesion conference, 9–2 September, Copenhagen.

International Herald Tribune (IHT) (2009) 'Swiss Ban Building of Minarets on Mosques', 30 November, p. 1.

Johnston R., Banting K., Kymlicka W. and Soroka S. (2009) National identity and support for the welfare state. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, 3–6 September, Toronto.

Kehrberg J. E. (2007) Public opinion on immigration in Western Europe: Economics, tolerance, and exposure. *Comparative European Politics* 5(3): 264–281.

Kymlicka W. (2007) *Multicultural Odysseys: Navigating the New International Politics of Diversity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ley D. (2007) Multiculturalism: A Canadian defence. RIIM Working Paper Series 07-04. Available at: www.riim.metropolis.net/research/working/2007.html.

Lithman Y. (1999) Spatial concentration and mobility. In: Hjarnoe J. (ed.) *From Metropolis to Cosmopolis*. Copenhagen: South Jutland University Press, 135–162.

Lithman Y. (2004) When researchers disagree: Epistemology, multiculturalism, universities and the state. *Ethnicities* 4(2): 155–184.

Lithman Y. (2006) McJihad: Globalization, radical transnationalism, and terrorism of the diaspora. In: Sicakkan H. G., Lithman Y. (eds) *What Happens When the Society is Diverse? Exploring Multidimensional Identities*. New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 149–173.

Mella O. and Palm I. (2009) *Mångfaldsbarometern* (The diversity barometer) (Occasional Paper). Uppsala: Uppsala University Department of Sociology.

Miller D. (1995) *On Nationality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Rex J. and Tomlinson S. (1979) *Colonial Immigrants in a British City: A Class Analysis*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Sides J. and Citrin J. (2007) European attitudes toward immigration: The role of interests, identities, and information. *British Journal of Political Science* 37(3): 477–504.

Westin C. (1984) *Majoritet om Minoritet* (Majority opinions about minorities). Stockholm: Liber Förlag.

Wimmer A. and Glick Schiller N. (2002) Methodological nationalism and beyond: Nation-state building, migration and the social sciences. *Global Networks* 2(4): 301–334.

Young I. (1990) *Justice and the Politics of Difference*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.