The Management of Immigration Related Cultural Diversity in Federal Countries: Introduction

Marco Martiniello

Marco Martiniello : Professor, Research Director FRS-FNRS, University of Liège

The on-going global asylum crisis, the difficulty to cope with jihadi terrorism and the radicalisation of a part of the European youth, have fuelled the “social alarmism” that already existed in many countries[1][2]. These factors have also led to a further emphasis on securitisation in the debates and policies dealing with human mobility and migration. This is illustrated by the fact that many countries are constructing walls that are intended to "protect" them from the feared invasion of migrants and refugees. In such a context, issues related to cultural diversity and how to manage it have unfortunately continued to step down on the political, policy and media agendas. The process started in the 1990s and accelerated in the decade 2000-2010, which truly began with the attacks of 11 September 2001. In the immediate few weeks following the drama, its impact on inter-ethnic relations and immigration and integration policies seemed rather limited. Major problems, such as very restrictive migration and security policies, the growth of numerous forms of Islamophobia, the rise of various forms of Islamism, the persistence of ethnic and racial discrimination, and inter-group urban tensions were easily perceived. However, they existed before the attacks of September 2001 and they could not, therefore, be viewed as direct consequences of these events. Today, with about 15 years of hindsight, we can better understand the real impact of the events of September 2001 and those that followed. They paved the way for the eruption of a pre-existing groundswell, but one that had remained rather discrete until then: the discursive retreat from any form of multiculturalism and the vigorous affirmation of a post-multiculturalist or neo-assimilationist agenda as the safest way to manage migration related cultural and identity diversity. This anti-multiculturalist wave became, and still remains, dominant in Europe and the United States.

The anti-multiculturalist rhetoric spread especially in the wake of dramatic events that enjoyed vast media coverage: the assassination in 2002 of Dutch populist leader Pim Fortuyn known for his harsh positions on multiculturalism and on Islam; the Madrid bombings in 2004 perpetrated by “well-integrated immigrants in Spain”; the assassination that same year of filmmaker Theo van Gogh by a Dutch youth of Moroccan origin; suicide bombings in London in the summer of 2005 perpetrated by young British immigrants, three weeks of violence in many French suburbs in 2005, the crisis of the caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad in January 2006, the recent enrolment of young European Muslims in the war in Syria, etc.

All these events, for various reasons, have been presented as evidence of the failure and/or dangers of multiculturalism and of the impossibility of building a durable multicultural society. Specifically, ethno-cultural and religious diversity of European societies, particularly the increasing number of Muslims, has been presented as a threat to social cohesion[3]. The mobilisation of certain minorities around cultural and identity issues have been interpreted as attempts to establish a sort of dictatorship of minorities. The thesis of the Islamisation of Europe, for example, regularly feeds the columns of newspapers and Internet forums. Moreover, some of these events were presented not just as evidence of the failure of policies implemented to manage or to promote cultural diversity,

but also as evidence of the failure of any project of society inspired by multiculturalist ideas.

The current anti-multiculturalist rhetoric is not new. It claims that discourses and policies inspired by multiculturalist ideas have contributed to the undermining of social cohesion and national unity. These discourses and policies are accused of having stimulated identity and community closure. They have favoured spatial segregation. They explain high unemployment in immigrant communities. They also help explain the poor school performance of some young people with an immigrant background. All this would explain the sense of alienation and frustration among immigrant ethno-cultural minorities that in turn would lead to their more or less violent rejection of Western societies and values.

The solution to these problems would be to move back to an assimilationist policy agenda. This would mean that it would be the duty of the immigrants and their offspring to adopt Western standards, values, culture and way of life before being afforded rights. In this model, the question of recognition of cultural and religious specificity, possibly accompanied by cultural rights, becomes secondary at best. The main objective is to reach the cultural conformity of immigrants and their descendants.

This anti-multiculturalist rhetoric is not devoid of ambiguities and apparent contradictions. First, the suspicion of cultural diversity coexists with the discourse highlighting the need to resort to foreign immigration both for economic and demographic reasons. Migration certainly being an important facet of the cultural diversification of societies, the question then arises as to how cultural diversity can be reduced on the one hand, while taking the risk of increasing it on the other hand. Would a solution be to select new migrants based on cultural and/or religious conformity with Western standards? It seems difficult to imagine and to put into practice because it explicitly goes against the philosophy of non-discrimination that is supposed to inspire policies in most Western democracies.

Secondly, the coexistence between a suspicion of cultural diversity and the emergence of a public discourse focused on the virtues of diversity as a goal in institutions and as a value to promote may seem contradictory. Diversity labels are awarded to firms that are working to diversify their management and their staff. Diversity plans and programs are implemented in educational institutions and in the media. Do we think that by granting individual advantages and benefits under these programs that we will defuse any cultural claims that might emerge? This question, among others, deserves to be asked, including investigating the links between promoting certain forms of diversity and reproduction mechanisms of domination, exploitation and exclusion.

There is the gap between the neo-assimilationist rhetoric and an empirically observable fact: contemporary societies are increasingly diverse. National minorities, indigenous peoples, religious minorities, immigrant communities, "behavioural and sexual" minorities and "racialised" minorities constitute many spaces between the individual and the abstract nation organised as a state. Many societies are characterised by a growing identity and cultural diversity that is particularly visible at the urban level, especially in large cities. By way of analogy, we can look to the American historian Hollinger[4] who spoke of "diversification of diversity" in America, and we can speak of diversification of European diversity or, as does Steven Vertovec[5], of the entry into the era of "super diversity".

This diversification of diversity has several sources across the planet. First, the European Union has 28 member states, each with their national identity and their specific history of nation building.

These states have commonalities but also linguistic, legal, political and cultural specificities that they intend to maintain. The addition of states in the future could further increase the number of national identities in Europe. This process does not affect, for example, the United States or Australia. Secondly, some European states are characterised by processes of sub-national political mobilisation and display of ethno-regional identities. Some groups simply demand recognition as national minorities. Others are mobilising to obtain a broad autonomy or even complete independence. This is the case for Belgium, Catalonia, the Basque Country, northern Italy, or to be more precise Padania, Corsica or Brittany, besides the immense complexity of the issue of ethnic and national minorities in Central, Eastern and Balkan areas. Third, the European Union, North America and Australia have long been continents of immigration. Despite the global economic and financial crisis of 2008, and even though migration policies have become more restrictive, migration to the North will continue in the future. Migration patterns are constantly renewed, but international migration is indeed a structural component of most societies. Different mechanisms of integration of new migrants are at work, ranging from total assimilation to the local culture to the formation of ethnic communities living in cultural self-sufficiency. Since the early 1990s, the issue of the links of "transnational migrant communities" with the country of origin, or with the same community living in other receiving countries, has emerged in the agenda of ethnic and migration studies[6]. Migrants are somehow perceived as hyphens between the countries of departure and countries of arrival. Via migration and migrants, new cultures, religions and identities enrich the European, American and Australian societies every day. Fourth, the presence of Roma populations is another important source of diversity, at least in Europe. Doubly excluded both from immigration debates and from discussions on national minorities, they are victims of strong discrimination. Fifth, identity debates in the Jewish communities in Europe and North America and the persistence of various forms of anti-Semitism, particularly in relation to the Middle East situation, should not be overlooked in the reflections on the global diversification of societies.

In many countries, federal or not, many groups formulate claims for one form or another of public recognition, from simple symbolic recognition to recognition as a separate entity in society, or even by claiming full sovereignty. Some claim preferential policies while others request special collective rights. Some do not call into question the primacy of the nation and the state, while others are working to bring about their dissolution. Some have open identities and promote dialogue; others are the cantors of purity and exclusivity and withdraw into their own communities. Some are deeply peaceful; others may resort to violence.

If all human societies are diversified to various degrees, each of them has a particular configuration of cultural, religious and identity diversity based on its historical process of formation and reproduction. In his book published in 1995, the eminent philosopher Will Kymlicka distinguished two types of multicultural societies: "multinational" societies and "polyethnic" societies[7]. In the former, cultural and identity diversity is mainly the result of the incorporation of pre-existing cultural entities into a new state, sometimes a federation, composed of a variable number of national groups, often referred to as national minorities and majorities. In "polyethnic" societies, cultural and religious diversity is rather the result of successive waves of migration that have led to the permanent settlement of migrants and the formation of ethnic groups. They are not perceived as being at the origin of the state or viewed as constitutive parts of the nation, but as more or less unexpected additions to nations already established before their arrival.

In addition, all societies do not accept their cultural, religious and identity diversity in the same way. Some stress cultural unity while diversity is neglected or denied. Others are more aware of their

diversity and of the necessity to value it. But each country has developed its own understanding of its own cultural diversity and has adopted variable rules of recognition of cultural identities, distinguishing in particular those that are legitimate and those that are not. In other words, each country has invented its own way to deal with diversity and diversity claims, its own "philosophy of integration"[8].

Since federalism is often a way to deal with the "multinational" character of society, it is interesting to ask whether federal countries differ from unitary countries in the way they deal with their growing "polyethnic" character. In other words, does the fact of having built a federation in order to manage diversity related to national minorities translate into a specific federal approach to the management of immigration related cultural and identity diversity? This issue provides insights to answer this question by examining and comparing policies designed and implemented in order to manage immigration related cultural diversity in a sample of federated entities of several federal countries. Traditionally, the issue of the management of immigration related cultural diversity has been framed in the debate on the integration of immigrants at the national level. A great deal of attention has been paid to the national models of integration[9], and more recently there is significant interest in the local level. Some scholars have written about the local shift in integration policies[10], and by local they usually mean the city or the urban regional level. In Europe, the issue of integration of migrants has also made its way to the supranational European Union level even though the competences largely remain with the national states. The comparisons between federal countries and unitary countries and the comparisons between federated entities in federal countries have not been very numerous. A few years ago, the Forum of Federations launched a project on immigrant integration in federal countries. The focus was on newcomers[11] and issues of multilevel governance present in managing their integration. The present issue is, in a way, a continuation of that project.

This issue examines and compares policies designed and implemented to manage immigration related cultural diversity in a sample of federated entities of several federal countries. In the world today, there are 25 federal countries spread across the five continents. The federal countries vary in many respects: the size of the country, from Russia to Micronesia; the number of components, from two units in Bosnia and Herzegovina to 81 units in Russia; the extent of official linguistic diversity, from one language de facto in the United States to 11 in South Africa; the level of autonomy of federated entities; the type of federalism, etc. Obviously, this issue cannot cover them all. Instead, it deals with four European federal countries from Western and Southern Europe (Germany, Belgium, Switzerland and Spain), one North American country (Canada) and one Oceanian country (Australia). All these countries have faced an important influx of migrants in the past decades and have had to deal with new forms of diversity expressed by migrant groups and communities.

In each of the six countries under examination, we have tried to contrast two federated entities characterised by the most different possible policy approaches to immigrant cultural diversity: the *Länder* of Berlin and Bavaria for Germany; the Flemish *Region* and *Community* and the French speaking *Community* in Belgium; the *Cantons* of Neuchâtel and Zurich in Switzerland; the *Autonomous Communities* of Galicia and the Basque Country in Spain; the *Provinces* of Québec and Ontario in Canada. In the case of Australia, the data come from three *states*: New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria.

Cultural diversity comprises a set of numerous and complex issues that cannot be covered in one single journal issue. The contributions here focus on three main issues linked to culture and

identity: linguistic diversity, religious diversity and artistic diversity. How do federal countries deal with immigrant linguistic diversity? How do they accommodate immigrant minorities' religious claims? What do they do to recognise immigrant artistic expressions? Whereas the first two issues have been discussed at length in the immigrant integration field, the issue of immigrants' artistic expressions has, until recently, been relatively neglected. Dealing with this often-overlooked topic is, therefore, one of the novelties of this special issue12.

In their comparison of the policies that manage immigrant related cultural diversity in Bavaria and Berlin, Holger Kolb and Caroline Schultz conclude that beyond their differences, both *Länder* have designed hybrid strategies to accommodate different types of cultural diversity. The content of these strategies differ, but there is clearly no "pure", "ideal-typical" model of diversity, which would characterize each of these two *Länder*. In their paper, Ilke Adam and Corinne Torrekens describe the divergent evolution of Francophone and Flemish cultural diversity policies in Belgium, a country in which separatism is part of the daily political life. They attempt to explain this divergence by focussing on the role of the historical path dependency between the linguistic and religious cleavages. In Switzerland, Gianni D'Amato shows how cantons use their large amount of autonomy to define their own policy on the field of cultural diversity. They do this with the support of the federal level, which does not provide any strict guidelines in any of the three sub-fields covered by the article (langue, religion and arts). In her article on Spain, Monica Ibáñez Angulo insists on what the autonomous should do in the field of immigrant related cultural diversity: to understand that culture can shape and transform social interactions between social groups that do not occupy the same social position and design policies accordingly. Victor Armony argues that Canada's case demonstrates that a country can embrace more than a single approach to diversity. He also argues that Québec has privileged a new approach to cultural diversity between North American multiculturalism and the continental European models of integration. Finally, Lesleyanne Hawthorne shows that in the Australian federal regime, the federal state has the leadership role in setting the frame for cultural diversity policies. The autonomy of the federated entities is very small compared to the other five countries under scrutiny.

All the articles show that the existence of national models of cultural diversity management should not be taken for granted in federal countries. Except for the Australian case, the federated entities in all the countries covered by the issue enjoy a high degree of autonomy in the field of cultural policies linked to immigration. Processes of divergence may develop between them, but sometimes convergence is also observed. There is a wide variety of approaches to immigration related cultural diversity, as was to be anticipated, but nothing so far allows us to claim that federal countries are better equipped than other countries to respond to the challenges of diversifying societies.

Notes

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9 *Ibid*.

10 Caponio (T.) and Borket (M.)(eds), *The Local Dimension of Migration Policymaking (IMISCOE Reports)*, Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press, 2014.

11 Kymlicka (W.), *op.cit*.

12 Martiniello (M.), “Immigrants, Ethnicized Minorities and the arts: A Relatively Neglected Research Area”, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 2015.