

# Multiculturalism and Community Building in Urban Europe

*Mark Kleyman*

In the years lasting back to 2015 Europe has been faced with an unprecedented influx of migrants. In most cases they seek refuge from civil wars and dictatorships that devastate many countries across North Africa and the Middle East. As a consequence, migration is becoming an increasingly urgent issue of many public and scholarly debates. In this context, the crucial problem is what type of multicultural society every European country and the EU in general want to be. This problem is particularly acute in urban areas where most Europeans live and most of the migrants permanently stay. The article contributes to drawing upon the theoretical framework for the analysis of socio-cultural and socio-psychological factors that could have an impact on the emergence of multicultural urban communities across Europe; at the same time, it attempts to break with the rhetoric of multiculturalism which still prevails in public and scholarly debates. This analysis is deployed in order to understand the (possible) influence of the ethical principle of solidary personalism on the emergence of practices directed toward the creation or enhancement of multicultural communities within the European cities.

*Keywords: Europe, migration, multiculturalism, solidary personalism, urban community, community building.*

Mark Kleyman. Multiculturalism and Community Building in Urban Europe. *Central European Journal of International and Security Studies* 14, no. 1: 31–51.

© 2020 CEJISS. Article is distributed under Open Access licence: Attribution - NonCommercial 3.0 Unported (cc by-nc 3.0).



The article aims to provide a theoretical framework for the analysis of socio-cultural and socio-psychological factors which could have an impact on the emergence of multicultural urban communities across Europe. At the same time, it focuses on discussing the (possible) ways to minimise the negative consequences of Europe's migration crisis, which is an increasingly urgent issue of many public and scholarly debates. In searching for the ways out of the current situation, the EU's top representatives often put an emphasis on developing policies and practices of multiculturalism, but the problem is how such policies and practices are often understood and implemented. After the 1940s and 1950s, when much attention was paid to culture as an important element of understanding societies, for decades the role of cultural values and attitudes was largely ignored by scholars and politicians alike. This situation inevitably resulted in widespread cultural relativism which presupposes that all cultures are intrinsically good. From this perspective, any culture and any cultural praxis could be recognised as morally acceptable if actually cultivated by some social group.<sup>1</sup> As an example, if sexual and gender-based violence could be a common practice within some social groups forming a majority within certain urban districts, ruling authorities would consequently shape tolerant attitudes towards losing control over such 'no-go areas'. In Stanley Fish's sense, such attitudes can be regarded as a result of boutique multiculturalism, which means a superficial fascination with the Other.<sup>2</sup> As Gary Olson puts it, boutique multiculturalists 'exoticise the culture of the other, turning it to a trendy object of their own pleasure, entertainment, and consumption.'<sup>3</sup> To describe such attitudes, Bojan Žalec introduces the term *leveling multiculturalism*,<sup>4</sup> because, in fact, this approach presupposes leveling every culture in a sense of superficial admiration for other cultures. However, such attitudes do not entail the recognition of the equal status of every culture; they are shallow and patronising at bottom, as boutique multiculturalists always regard other cultures from the perspectives of their own cultural values. Consequently, they fail short in the case when a distant stranger, or a briefly visiting stranger, or a passing-by stranger becomes a next-door neighbour who shares the streets, public facilities, workplaces and schools.<sup>5</sup>

Yet the situation, which has considerably challenged the development of cities across Western Europe from the 1990s onwards, is increasingly underpinning a major renewal of interest in culture appearing among scholars and practitioners alike. It was then becoming clear

that 'values shape human progress. [...] Our most pressing issues are profoundly cultural in nature. We try to address them, but without an appreciation of how deeply culture determines our worldviews, we can only grope and fumble'.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, in Fish's sense, there is an urgent need of rejecting boutique multiculturalism and supporting strong multiculturalism.<sup>7</sup> A major difference between boutique multiculturalism and strong multiculturalism lies in the latter's recognition of the value of difference in and for itself.<sup>8</sup> The main research question is thus how such recognition can be utilised for building urban communities in the period of mass influx of migrants to Europe.

*Mark Kleyman*

As Will Kymlicka argues, many immigrants do best, both in terms of psychological well-being and sociocultural outcomes, when they are to interlink their ethnic and / or religious identity with a sense of belonging to a host culture. Such 'integration orientation' is often opposed to either an 'assimilation orientation' or a 'separation orientation'.<sup>9</sup> The assimilation orientation presupposes that immigrants must abandon their ethnic identity and adopt a new national identity. As it seems, this inevitably maintains the traditional hierarchies with a strong division to a superior and inferior cultures. Conversely, a separation orientation assumes that one must renounce the new national identity and maintain their ethnic identity. In practice, this hinders the process of integration and thus entails the emergence of a new racialised underclass flocked in urban 'no-go areas'. The main research question revealed in this study is thus of how such integration orientation may be supported by a distinct social climate within a particular urban community.

The article begins with the analysis of the challenges posed by the migration crisis to the stable development of Europe. It continues with the critical evaluation of the different attitudes towards multiculturalism within the EU, with the special emphasis on the 'tolerance of the non-tolerant' conundrum. The next part attempts to answer the question of how the ethical principle of solidary personalism may contribute to supporting integration orientation and building multicultural urban communities across Europe. The concluding part presents the main research findings; at the same time, it specifies the strengths and weaknesses of the study.

The research methodology employed in this study is qualitative, that is, the study is based on the desktop research methodology, which largely involved extensive review of related literature to explore, dis-

cover, identify and deeply understand the mechanisms for resolving and managing conflicts and disputes on the issues of migration and its impact on the development of urban communities across Europe. Several scholarly works and media reports were reviewed and analysed to collect data on the effect of migration on urban community building. The study is based on the critical analysis of new in-depth insights and knowledge about the problems of multiculturalism, tolerance and urban community building with specific reference to a particular situation in contemporary Europe. The possible solutions identified and discussed might lend support to building multicultural urban communities across Europe. However, the study recognises that these findings cannot be generalised.

### **Europe's dilemma over migrants**

Over the past 30 years, the hitherto rather homogeneous Western European states have been experiencing a dramatic influx of immigrants. Though numbers are sharply down from their 2015-16 peaks because of a 2016 EU agreement with Turkey, new border fences in the Balkans, and a 2017 bilateral arrangement between Italy and Libya, tens of thousands of people are still trying to reach Europe. The underlying factors (first of all, extreme asymmetries in living standards which are considerably aggravated by permanent civil wars, human rights abuses by dictatorships, and whatever flows from it, e. g., growing political instability and insecurity) that have led to more than 1.8 million migrants coming to the EU member states since 2014 have not gone away.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, most observers believe it is only a matter of time before the number of arrivals picks up significantly once more.<sup>11</sup> The current situation is increasingly producing a strong, though invisible, division line between the West (i.e., the 'frontline' Southern Europe's states and the welfare Northern 'destination' countries bearing the heaviest burden of the inflow of migrants) and the East (namely, the 'hardline' Central and Eastern European states, for instance, Hungary and Poland refusing to accept any migrants at all).

The main problem is that the stable development of contemporary Europe is in principle impossible without massive immigration. Though the total population in the EU is projected to increase from 511 million in 2016 to 520 million in 2070, the working-age cohort (people aged between 15 and 64) will decrease significantly from 333 million in 2016 to 292 million in 2070. These projected changes in the popu-

lation structure reflect assumptions on fertility rates, life expectancy and migration flows.<sup>12</sup> Due to the low birth rates and population aging, long-standing communities are disappearing and the social burden on the young is becoming unsustainable. These processes increasingly affect Eastern and Western European countries alike, regardless of their past experience and cultural backgrounds. Therefore, sooner or later even the 'hardline' states will inevitably be in need of adopting large numbers of immigrants. The case of Japan, which so far has the strictest rules on immigration among the developed countries, demonstrates how the growing concerns about the labor shortage brought on by the low birthrate and subsequent loss of productive-age workers could add urgency to modify the legislation.<sup>13</sup>

At the same time, as Hyppolyte d'Albis argues, despite the fact that immigration brings significant costs for host countries, over the period from 1985 to 2015 one finds no statistical evidence suggesting worsening of economic conditions in Western European countries, whether in terms of standard of living, unemployment or public finance. On the contrary, after several years, there may be a slight positive effect as immigrants granted permanent residence take up employment and contribute actively to the economy of their host countries.<sup>14</sup>

To put it simply, today's Europe is increasingly faced with a dilemma: on the one hand, there is an urgent need of growing immigration; on the other hand, the fact that many migrants fall short when starting to live in an open and democratic society is becoming a major concern in all countries across Europe.

The EU's top officials often emphasise the need of developing policies and practices of multiculturalism as a way of solving the dilemma over migrants.<sup>15</sup> However, this inevitably reveals the question of how these policies and practices are often understood and implemented. For instance, from the mid-1970s onwards the goal of enabling the preservation of minorities and creating a positive attitude towards the new officially endorsed multicultural society among the majority population became incorporated into the Swedish constitution as well as cultural, educational and media policies.<sup>16</sup> However, the results of such policies are distinctly controversial. For example, a 2017 study by Lund University demonstrated that social trust was lower among people in regions with high levels of past non-Nordic immigration than among people in regions with low levels of past immigration; at the same time, the erosive effect on trust was more pronounced for recent im-

migrants from culturally distant countries.<sup>17</sup> This tendency cannot be regarded as a uniquely Swedish attribute. Immigration and terrorism remain citizens' top concerns all across the EU, and the debate about the refugee crisis often took place almost amid an absence of refugees, as, for example, in Central and Eastern European countries.<sup>18</sup>

### **Is there an intrinsically good culture?**

It seems likely that this situation can be regarded as a consequence of boutique multiculturalism widely accepted by many politicians within the EU. As Bauman argues, boutique multiculturalism is exactly what all the global consumerism attributes mean.<sup>19</sup> Purveyors of this superficial brand of multiculturalism appreciate, enjoy, sympathise with, and recognise the legitimacy of cultures other than their own, and, from this point of view, every culture really seems to be intrinsically good. At the same time, as Fish suggests, these people inevitably stop approving such a superficial approach towards multiculturalism when they take seriously the core values of the culture they have to tolerate.<sup>20</sup>

From this point of view, every culture is similar to the well-known Nozick's tank.<sup>21</sup> Being a result of the thought experiment, this tank is an experience machine in which individuals can make unrealistic, pleasurable experiences. In so doing, they think that all their wishes have been fulfilled and they live the life they desired at most. In other words, such a machine makes all wishes intrinsically good. In this context, urban 'no-go areas' can be compared with Nozick's machine in which people are separate from the legislation of a host country. According to Žalec, cultural relativism and, then, leveling multiculturalism are inevitably interlinked with nihilism and instrumentalism. Nihilism can be regarded as a settled way of thinking and feeling which is grounded on refusing to acknowledge any cultural difference. As a consequence, nihilistic subjects cannot perceive a particular cultural tradition as unique. As nihilism is practically impossible, it inevitably transforms into some kind of instrumentalism.<sup>22</sup> Instrumentalist attitudes presuppose that a particular person (or a particular culture) cannot be a goal, but (at best) merely a means. Consequently, in fact leveling multiculturalism rejects liberal principles and respect of human dignity, which are crucial elements of the European cultural identity.<sup>23</sup> In other words, from the perspective of leveling multiculturalism there is no need to cultivate the distinct European identity because the European culture is as good as any other culture. At the same time, as

Larry Siedentop argues, the European culture is unique, as it is rooted back to liberal attitudes that, in return, are of Christian origin.<sup>24</sup>

As it seems, the current situation provides empirical evidence to criticise the main premises of leveling multiculturalism. If we suppose that any culture is intrinsically good, the refugees, who flee, for instance, from the terroristic Islamist groups or the oppressive regime of Bashar al-Assad in Syria, would choose the neighboring Arab countries as their main destination. Some of these states, such as, for example, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, provide high standards of living. For example, according to the annual World Bank's report, in 2017 the gross domestic product per capita was estimated as 20,760.9 USD for Saudi Arabia, 40,698.8 USD for the United Arab Emirates and 63,505.8 USD for Qatar, to compare with 18,613.4 USD for Greece, 44,469.9 USD for Germany and 53,442.0 USD for Sweden.<sup>25</sup> The affluent Arab states increasingly attract labour migrants from many countries. Nevertheless, despite distinct cultural (and administrative) barriers, most of the refugees deliberately choose Europe as their main destination. Therefore, we cannot consider the economic reasons as the main factor which boosts the mass influx of refugees to Europe. These refugees are attracted, perhaps unconsciously, by the distinctive traits of the European culture, as in Europe they mostly seek for security and respect of human rights. But, in return, the very idea of the respect of human rights can be regarded as a unique characteristic of the European cultural traditions, which is rooted back in Christianity.<sup>26</sup> At the same time, the principles of tolerance, respect of human rights, equality and participation were not always the attributes of the European culture. Europe had passed through a long way of violence before; as a result of many adjustments, reconciliations, dialogues these principles became the core values of the European societies. On the other hand, as John Esposito argues, 'too often coverage of Islam and the Muslim world assumes the existence of a monolithic Islam in which all Muslims are the same'.<sup>27</sup> In this sense, the Islamic culture is often presented as violent and warlike. According to Esposito, such a view is naive and unjustifiably obscures important divisions and differences in the Muslim world.<sup>28</sup> It seems likely that the concept of the invention of tradition, which was made prominent in the eponymous 1983 book edited by British scholars Eric J. Hobsbawm and Terence O. Ranger,<sup>29</sup> could promote the pathway to understanding this situation. Despite the fact that this concept hides serious ambiguities

*Mark Kleyman*

(for example, it is often not possible or useful to distinguish between 'genuine' and recently 'invented' traditions, as both are intrinsic parts of a distinct cultural heritage), the term 'invented tradition' has some explanatory potential. For instance, it enables us to assume that any cultural tradition is a social invention and not some primordial characteristics. As it seems, this premise could enhance our learning and understanding of the issues of radical Islamism and Islamophobia in today's Europe.

The political assassins who attacked the French newsmagazine *Charlie Hebdo* on 7 January 2015 proclaimed that they took vengeance on those who published the cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad. Yet, the fact that the caricatures considered offensive to Muslims were published by this newsmagazine (and earlier by several Danish and Norwegian newspapers) may be regarded as an attempt to protest against leveling multiculturalism, which often resulted in tolerance of the non-tolerant, as well as an attempt to defend the main principles of European liberalism. The motto of *Je suis Charlie* (*I am Charlie*) encompassed millions of people across Europe to protest the massacre of terrorists. These protests reminded us of the necessity to insist that all immigrants must accept the legitimacy of state enforcement (and, in the EU's case, supra-national enforcement) of liberal principles.<sup>30</sup>

Nevertheless, this situation inevitably poses the following question: can the cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad be regarded as a proper way to protest against 'tolerance of the non-tolerant'?

According to Ayan Hirsi Ali, the vast majority of Muslims are currently torn between fundamentalists and terrorists on the one hand and the reformers on the other.<sup>31</sup> The problem is thus that by choosing the way of protest that is overtly offensive to all Muslims against the terrorist massacre, we could push Islamic communities towards fundamentalists and terrorists. In fact, when accepting the publication of such cartoons as a possible way of protest, we inevitably assume that the Islamic culture as such is intrinsically bad. Paradoxically, this position has a similarity with leveling multiculturalism. Both positions may be regarded as the opposite sides of the same coin, as they consider any culture as a homogenous entity (either intrinsically good or intrinsically bad). Both points of view are based on the idea that every person is determined with characteristics which he or she automatically inherits from his or her native culture.<sup>32</sup> In reality, however, a particular group is not predetermined and unchangeable; instead, it inevitably



represents phenomenal forms of human diversity and plurality which open up different perspectives on the world and which any person can freely form and transform as part of his or her human conditions.<sup>33</sup> As Erich Fromm argued, in a world in which violence in every form seems to be increasing, every culture can provide a support for human destructiveness while advocating violence against all regarded as 'bad' or 'wrong'.<sup>34</sup> Consequently, as Anthony Appiah puts it, any culture as such can be equally 'good' and 'bad'.<sup>35</sup> In this context, we should not reduce the issue of radicalisation and terrorism in Europe merely to the phenomenon of radical Islamist ideology.<sup>36</sup> For example, immediately after the terrorist attacks in Norway on 22 July 2011 the media affirmed that this was committed by Islamist fundamentalists, but soon it was discovered that 77 people, many of whom were under the age of 18, were killed by a 32-year-old Norwegian, who decided that the practices founded in the idea of tolerance and multiculturalism threatened Europe, and a 'right' of defending the European culture would justify any means of obtaining it.<sup>37</sup> The 2017 German federal elections, Austrian legislative elections and Italian parliamentary elections, and the 2018 Swedish parliamentary elections saw gains by fringe populist parties running an openly xenophobic platform. The possible way to stop this anti-democratic wave is to acknowledge that in any culture (including the Islamic culture) we must search for the elements which contribute to the autonomy and flourishing of individuals and support them.<sup>38</sup> At the same time, we should oppose the idea that there is no opportunity for a person to choose his or her own way of accepting or rejecting cultural values of his or her mother culture.

On the contrary, from the perspective of strong or, in Will Kymlicka's sense, liberal multiculturalism,<sup>39</sup> the personal freedom of choice is of primary importance.<sup>40</sup> In this context, we should, to some extent, tolerate the intolerant, but, at the same time, we must impose zero tolerance to the violations of human dignity in any form. For example, people who choose Europe as a place of permanent residence should realise that domestic violence (which is so common for many cultures, as it was a common practice in pre-modern Europe) cannot be justified in a sense that it is an inherent attribute of a particular culture; it will be inevitably considered as a criminal offence. In other words, democracy can be based mostly on accepting the universal truth of human dignity being a goal by itself. Among other things, this means zero tolerance to violence in all its forms. In this context, from the perspec-

tive of strong multiculturalism the freedom of speech (in our case, the right of publishing any caricatures) can be restricted only in the case if someone overtly propagates and defends violence and crimes against humanity (such as in the case of Holocaust denial and the crimes of Stalinism). In such a case, we distinctly need to accept the enforcement of liberal principles; however, such enforcement must be absolutely incompatible with violations of human dignity (such as prisoner abuse and torture that are commonly in use, for instance, in Putin's Russia increasingly turning back to Gulag).

### **Solidary personalism and community building in urban Europe**

The rule of law directed toward defending human dignity and human rights can be thus recognised as bedrock of building multicultural urban communities in Europe. At the same time, this cannot be effective without creating social climates which could foster open-mindedness towards different cultures and national traditions. Social climates can be considered a medium for transmitting and enforcing important social values in the city's everyday life;<sup>41</sup> at the same time, while building a community, beliefs are at the base of that community. The key beliefs are regarding ethics, core values, human rights and diversity. These beliefs are included in the social goals that particular social groups (for instance, urban neighborhoods) have to accomplish.<sup>42</sup> A social climate includes a set of social attitudes which specify the shared perceptions of what constitutes ethical behaviour, and the process of how ethical or moral issues will be dealt with. In this context, the problem of how the prevalent moral norms could help bridge the gap between different cultures is now gathering unprecedented momentum.

In searching for the possibility of dialogue between the persons who share different cultural traditions, Albert Schweitzer supported the idea that the European identity is liberal and of Christian origin. At the same time, he pointed out that the history of Europe provided many examples of massacre and violence of human rights. Albert Schweitzer believed that ethical values which could underpin the ideal of true civilisation had to have their foundation in deep thought and be world- and life-affirming. He therefore embarked on a search for ethical values in the various major religions and worldviews accessible to him. Finally, he decided that the only thing the people around the world are really sure of is that they live and want to go on living.<sup>43</sup> Consequently, the principle of the Reverence for Life, which is rooted back

not only to Christian humanism, but also to non-Western religious thought, in particular, the Jain principle of *ahimsa* (non-violence), can be regarded as an inherent part of Europe's cultural heritage and, at the same time, a result of critical rethinking of Europe's cultural traditions. Today this principle may form an ethical background for searching the foundations of universally valid ethics for building urban communities across Europe.<sup>44</sup>

Mark Kleyman

The idea of the Reverence for Life is in some respects interlinked with the ethical principle of solidary personalism. The term *solidary personalism* was firstly introduced by Bojan Žalec.<sup>45</sup> He presupposes that people are in principle equal regarding their right to cultivate their singularity or individuality, regardless of their cultural and / or religious backgrounds. The main aim of a personalist is flourishing of every person. At the same time, the aim of adjective 'solidary' is to stress the relational and participatory nature of a person.<sup>46</sup> As Žalec states, persons are essentially relational beings and must be treated in their concrete situation and historical perspective. Solidarity means not just a kind of economic solidarity but, at the same time, mutual participation of persons on their lives including all their aspects. The central moment of such solidarity is intellectual solidarity,<sup>47</sup> the participation on the experience of the other.<sup>48</sup> Yet it is crucial that we should recognise that there are limits of inter-personal solidarity: According to Žalec, '[s]olidarity – participation in the life of the other – can however be only partial. The belief that we can reach total participation is dangerous and destroys approaching of the other as the other [...] and provides contexts for instrumentalisation and manipulation'.<sup>49</sup> In other words, it is impossible to regard any other culture from the perspectives of one's own cultural values. Consequently, solidary personalism provides a background of criticism of boutique or leveling multiculturalism based upon the idea that every culture is intrinsically good, as well as upon the ignorance of the historical context and the current situation in which a distinct culture forms, exists and develops. Based upon the ethical principle of solidary personalism, we thus can develop a framework for strong multiculturalism.<sup>50</sup>

However, such practices should be developed and established merely through the dialogue between all concerned parties. As it seems, urban communities where people from different cultural, social and / or religious backgrounds do the things that allow them to sustain livelihoods and develop their place of living together may provide settings

for such dialogue. Leadership, geography, history, socio-cultural characteristics and socio-economic status are all traditionally used to explain success of community building and its well-being. In return, it is impossible without forming a sense of community. As Karel Müller argues, in multicultural settings the sense of community should be based on a particular kind of social identity which is characterised by porous active borders.<sup>51</sup> The concept of porous active borders presupposes that the social identity should be principally open for any cultural experience. However, in contemporary Europe's context, such cultural experience should be in favour of the European liberal tradition, which is of Christian origins. Such identity, or, to say more precisely, its inside / outside (us / them) dimensions, may be regarded as a crucial factor that specifies the way a tradition of a particular city is perceived. This assumption is in many respects based on the theoretical concept of social identity complexity that refers to an individual's subjective representation of the degree of overlap perceived to exist between groups of which a person is simultaneously a member.<sup>52</sup> Given the recognition that urban residents inevitably belong to multiple social groups with multiple corresponding social identities, an important question to be addressed is how individuals combine these group identities when they define their subjective in-groups. More specifically, do multiple group memberships lead to more inclusive or less inclusive in-groups, when compared to single group identities? In Müller's sense, it is accurate to comprehend a contemporary urban community as an open system of communication, rather than as an integrated social system of shared meanings and morals, which is embedded in a local context. Societies are nowadays, first of all, communicating societies, networks of mobility, and flows of social communication. Therefore, social identity should be understood as a project whose main objective is active participation in the process of fair and open communication within various spheres of local affairs. Communication itself could (and should) be the main overarching defining characteristic of social identities, which today resembles, as Stuart Hall argued, 'routes rather than 'roots'.<sup>53</sup> In this regard, it is possible to distinguish between active and passive borders of social identity. The active border is characterised by numerous channels providing contacts with outside cultures, and thus fosters the emergence of social identity complexity. Under these circumstances, particular ideas and practices from the outer cultures are adopting and adapting to a definite city's context. In such

a case, any cultural tradition can be considered not as somewhat dogmatic and inflexible, but as a factor that fosters intercultural dialogue. On the contrary, the passive border of social identity is marked with a communicational impermeability based on the stereotypical labeling, defining and preserving polarity of 'us' and 'them'.<sup>54</sup> In such a case, any cultural tradition tends to produce strict individual obedience to commonly shared rules, both formal and informal, without any doubt about their legitimacy. Hence, any alternative worldview, as well as the ways of creating something new, is opposed. Urban neighborhoods become the inflexible guardians of traditions, which are unalterably opposed to every sort of personal and / or group deviation from the socially accepted type. This vision is based on the essentialist interpretation of the distinct cultural heritage and forging an identity which is characterised by passive borders.

In this context, social climate within a particular place can play a crucial part in forming social identity complexity. If social climate within some urban neighborhoods fosters intolerance and even aggressiveness towards any form of 'otherness', it tends to impact the emergence of passive borders of closed, nested social identity. On the contrary, in the case when social climate motivates urban inhabitants to be tolerant and open towards outer cultures, alternative ways of thinking and lifestyles, this inevitably results in the emergence of active borders of social identity (and, then, social identity complexity). In any respect, social climate within urban neighborhoods is considerably impacted by formal and informal knowledge of the genesis, nature and structure of the traditions formed within a particular place and those bringing by the newcomers. Genuine and recently established traditions are thus 'invented' alike in the sense that the knowledge of both is socially constructed and embedded into a particular narrative forming a distinctive social identity and social climate within a particular community. In Benedict Anderson's sense, this knowledge is often used for the purpose of forming 'imagined communities'.<sup>55</sup>

As it seems, the case of contemporary Russia provides an example of how a particular narrative can be constructed for the purpose of forming a special kind of social identity. Many people, both in Russia and abroad, think that the Russian culture is based exclusively on the long-standing patterns of submission to authoritarian or totalitarian rule and military power. At the same time, little is known about the democratic stream of Russia's cultural heritage. For instance, the case

of the medieval Veliky Novgorod republic demonstrates how strong and sustainable traditions of grassroots democracy were embedded into a local context. Much later, *zemstvo*, or local self-government established in the 1860s, succeeded in solving in the proper way many problems of general education, medical service and public welfare. Generally speaking, the Russian culture fostered Leo Tolstoy's idea of eliminating the 'big state' and developing a 'big society'. Yet the knowledge of these facts is not embedded into the predominant narratives mainly due to the attempts of the authorities to construct a closed, exclusive identity of 'besieged fortress Russia'. This became especially evident after the 2014 annexation of Crimea, when Putin's regime has gone beyond the purely authoritarian type and embraced many features of the neo-Stalinist totalitarian dictatorship. As a result, the state controlled media widely uses the warlike Stalinist rhetoric when narrating the story of Russia's past and present. For instance, like under Stalin, Putin's propaganda glorifies the oppressive rule of the Tsar Ivan the Terrible who initiated the mass terror (*oprichnina*) in the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. One can observe this also at a particular city's level: in autumn 2016 the monument to Ivan the Terrible was erected in the city of Orel in Central Russia, and this action was supported by many top officials at the national level. This example likely demonstrates how particular one-dimensional and oversimplified identity can be violently defended. To overcome the current trend of rising xenophobia and other forms of social exclusion, which extends far beyond Russia's boundaries, the narratives about the particular city's past and present should oppose any reductionist division of people according to their nationality, ethnicity, class, religion, and the similar that inevitably entails diasporisation and ghettoisation of urban neighborhoods. At the same time, one should narrate the true stories about the cultural traditions of the host city and the cultures of all national and religious group that reside in this place. In so doing, in every culture, in accordance with the ethical principle of solidary personalism, one should search for the elements which are in favour of openness to change, meritocracy, social equality and universalism, lower importance of conservatism and power values and higher tolerance for diversity crucial for the emergence of social identity complexity. Such narratives, which are increasingly created and disseminated through global networks and social media, could motivate people to utilise a wide variety of practices directed towards creation or enhance-

ment of stable, culturally and ethnically diverse urban communities.<sup>56</sup> These practices may include, for instance, taking care of the elderly, helping the people with special needs, emerging crime fighting tools, the implementation of 'green-smart' solutions in creating public spaces, urban agriculture, housing and transport networks, or larger-scale efforts such as mass festivals and building construction projects that involve local participants rather than outside contractors. Such activities could facilitate civic engagement and collective action and have a positive effect on the quality of relationships among the citizens of multicultural community. In his book *Bowling Alone* Robert Putnam refers to this as social capital which creates a sense of belonging thus enhancing the overall health of a community.<sup>57</sup> This is especially crucial for migrants, many of whom came to Europe from dictatorships, and, as a consequence, they do not believe in a success of bottom-up initiatives and common actions interlinked with democratic, non-violent methods of solving major social problems. Therefore, one should narrate about the constructive potential of such procedures and thus persuade these people to participate in policymaking, first of all, at the community level. In other words, one should motivate the people of different cultural backgrounds to *create together* the place where they live in. In this context, from the perspective of the ethical principle of solidary personalism one could critically re-evaluate the existing concepts of urban creative milieu which can play a crucial part in community building in urban areas.

Mark Kleyman

As Landry states, a creative milieu is a place where 'face-to-face interaction [among a critical mass of entrepreneurs, intellectuals, social activists, artists, administrators, power brokers or students] creates new ideas, artefacts, products, services and institutions and, as a consequence, contributes to economic success'.<sup>58</sup> At the same time, 'in contrast to the more venerable innovative milieu construct that initially focused on creative interaction among workers and between firms and research institutes to examine innovation and economic competitiveness, members of the creative class seek to imbue creativity in all aspects of their lives'.<sup>59</sup> According to Florida, creative professions differ from all other professions in the fact that they base their work on defining issues, finding their solutions, while employing the existing knowledge in a new and innovative manner.<sup>60</sup> In this context, while a 'weak definition' of creative milieu<sup>61</sup> requires that unobserved interaction attracts a diverse set of creative people to creative places, a 'strong

definition' of creative milieu<sup>62</sup> posits that interaction across the diverse creative domains produces an innovative milieu which increases the dynamism of the local economy.<sup>63</sup> In this regard, creative economy is defined as the sum of economic activities arising from a highly educated segment of the workforce, which encompasses a wide variety of creative individuals.<sup>64</sup> In John Howkins's sense, creative economy comprises advertising, architecture, art, crafts, design, fashion, film, music, performing arts, publishing, software, toys and games, TV and radio, and video games.<sup>65</sup> Some scholars argue that education industry, including public and private services, is also forming a part of creative economy. There remain, therefore, different definitions of the sector.<sup>66</sup> At the same time, the attempts to divide all the professions into creative and non-creative inevitably result in a distinct elitism of creative class theory.<sup>67</sup> According to Peck, the contemporary creativity strategies barely disrupt extant urban policy orthodoxies, based on interlocal competition, place marketing, property- and market-led development, gentrification and normalised socio-spatial inequality. This has the effect of elevating creativity to the status of a new urban imperative.<sup>68</sup> Hence, to overcome the inherent weaknesses of creative class theory,<sup>69</sup> and to break with the rhetoric of creativity distinguishing the scholarly literature which still prevails in the field, one can notice that in a summary of research into creativity Michael Mumford suggests that 'creativity involves the production of novel, useful products'.<sup>70</sup> Creativity can also be defined as the process of producing something that is both original and worthwhile or characterised by originality, expressiveness and a person's imagination.<sup>71</sup> In this sense, creativity cannot be regarded merely in terms of economic effectiveness and one's professional or, moreover, class affiliation. Creative milieu can thus be considered as a set of formal and informal institutions supporting an individual or a group of people in thinking and acting creatively, regardless of one's professional, social and / or cultural status. In this regard, the issues of social identity complexity play a crucial role in the emergence of creative milieus within urban communities. Therefore, the critical urban theory,<sup>72</sup> which is rooted back to Henri Lefebvre's claim to the 'right to the city', i.e., a right to change ourselves by changing the city,<sup>73</sup> can provide an alternative theoretical framework for the creativity studies from the perspective of solidary personalism. In this sense, building multicultural urban communities should motivate people in every place to obtain their right to work creatively upon developing



a 'city for people, not for profit'.<sup>74</sup> At the same time, strong multiculturalism based upon the ethical principle of solidary personalism can foster the emergence of creative milieus within urban communities, as it can play a crucial part in introducing contrasting views and challenging existing assumptions.

**Conclusion**

Every developed country no longer has to decide whether it wants to become a multicultural society. In fact, it made that decision, perhaps unconsciously, years ago when a country decided to be a full participant in the emerging global economy. Developed states confirmed that decision when they decided to actively recruit foreign migrants to meet the economic and demographic needs of a fast-growing society. At the same time, every democratic state has a moral obligation to provide asylum for the people fleeing persecution by dictatorships. In this context, every European country today is faced with a difficult decision: what type of multicultural society does it want to be?

As a matter of fact, Europe is increasingly in need for strong multiculturalism. It presupposes that there are neither intrinsically good nor intrinsically bad cultures. In all cultures we should search for the elements which are in favour of non-violence and respect of human dignity. Strong multiculturalism may be most needed in times when many immigrants are perceived as illegitimate, illiberal, and burdensome.<sup>75</sup> Proactive policies to promote a true 'integration orientation' within multicultural urban communities require a lot of adjustments, reconciliations and dialogues, and the ethical principle of solidary personalism could provide a (possible) background of that. From the perspective of solidary personalism, one-dimensional simplifications of social identity inevitably produce a reductionist division of people according to their nationality, ethnicity, class, religion, and the similar.<sup>76</sup> We should thus create conditions in which people are allowed to step out from their original cultures, to link up within new social groups, with new cultures which might be even essentially opposing to their cultures of origin.<sup>77</sup> For the purpose of establishing porous, active borders of social identity we should narrate the stories on the culture of the host city and the cultural traditions of the newcomers. Such stories should foster collaboration among different ethnic, social and religious groups aimed at creating a stable urban community within a particular city.

The article has limitations, as it attempts to present merely a theoretical framework of the further research in the field. As a matter of fact, there is an urgent need to undertake primary research of the best practices and shortcomings in building multicultural urban communities across Europe. This study should be based on representative and statistically reliable data in order to deepen the insight into the impact of various narratives and common actions on creating multicultural urban communities. In this context, the empirical study should be ideally based on using several different, yet complementary, research methodologies.



MARK KLEYMAN is affiliated to the Department of Philosophy of Ivanovo State University of Chemistry and Technology and may be reached at [mark.kleyman2712@gmail.com](mailto:mark.kleyman2712@gmail.com).

### Endnotes

- 1 David Benatar (2008), 'Diversity Limited,' in Laurence Thomas (ed.), *Contemporary Debates in Social Philosophy*, Malden: Blackwell, p. 221.
- 2 Stanley Fish (1999), *The Trouble with Principle*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; see also Leszek Drong, (2009). 'The Trouble with Liberalism: Stanley Fish's Critique of Multiculturalism, Free Speech, Neutral Principles and Political Correctness,' in Wojciech Kalaga and Jacek Mydla (eds.), *Political Correctness: Mouth Wide Shut?* Frankfurt am Main, Berlin, Bern, New York, Paris, Wien: Peter Lang, pp. 23-32.
- 3 Gary Olson (2002), *Justifying Belief: Stanley Fish and the Work of Rhetoric*, Albany: SUNY Press, p. 54.
- 4 Bojan Žalec (2015a), *Genocide, Totalitarianism and Multiculturalism: Perspectives in the Light of Solidary Personalism*. Münster, Berlin, Wien, Zürich: Lit, p. 53.
- 5 Zygmunt Bauman (2016), *Strangers at Our Door*, Cambridge, UK; Malden, MA: Polity Press.
- 6 John Hooker (2009), 'The Cultural Iceberg,' in Larry A. Samovar, Richard E. Porter, Edwin R. McDaniel (eds.), *Intercultural Communication. A Reader*, Wadsworth: Thomson, p. 63.
- 7 Olson (2002), p. 56.
- 8 See Drong (2009), p. 28.
- 9 Will Kymlicka (2012), *Multiculturalism: Success, Failure, and the Future*, Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute, p. 12.
- 10 Jon Henley (2018), 'What is the Current State of the Migration Crisis in Europe?' *The Guardian*, 15 June, available at: <<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jun/15/what-current-scale-migration-crisis-europe-future-outlook>> (accessed 25 December 2018).

- 11 As it seems, the current situation in Libya provides a clear evidence of that. See Thomas Issak (2018), 'I am a Refugee in a Libyan Camp. Conditions are so Bad, People are Dying,' *The Guardian*, 08 November, available at: <<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/nov/08/refugee-libyan-camp-people-dying>> (accessed 25 December 2018).
- 12 The International Silver Economy Portal (2018), 'Ageing Report: Europe's Population is Getting Older,' available at: <<http://www.silvereco.org/en/2018-ageing-report-europes-population-is-getting-older/>> (accessed 26 December 2018).
- 13 Philip Brator (2018), 'Proposed Reform to Japan's Immigration Law Causes Concern,' *The Japan Times*, 27 October, available at: <<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2018/10/27/national/media-national/proposed-reform-japans-immigration-law-causes-concern/#.XCIBb5-g848>> (accessed 25 December 2018).
- 14 Saman Mustacchio (2018), 'The Beneficial Effect of Migration on the Economy,' *CNRS News*, 06 June, available at: <<https://news.cnrs.fr/articles/the-beneficial-effect-of-migration-on-the-economy>> (accessed 31 January 2019).
- 15 European Commission (2018), 'Migration,' available at: <[https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/migration\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/migration_en)> (accessed 27 December 2018).
- 16 Mats Wickström (2015), *The Multicultural Moment: The History of the Idea and Politics of Multiculturalism in Sweden in Comparative, Transnational and Biographical Context, 1964-1975*, Åbo, Finland: Åbo Akademi University.
- 17 Karl McShane (2017), 'Getting Used to Diversity? Immigration and Trust in Sweden,' *Economics Bulletin* 37 (3), p. 16.
- 18 See, for example, Karolina Wigura (2016), 'Poland's Islamophobia,' *Carnegie Europe*, 23 June, available at: <<https://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/63892>> (accessed 05 January 2019).
- 19 See Bauman (2016).
- 20 See Fish (1999).
- 21 Robert Nozick (1974), *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, New York: Basic Books, pp. 42-45.
- 22 Žalec (2015a), pp. 19-20.
- 23 Larry Siedentop (2001), *Democracy in Europe*, London: Allen Lane.
- 24 Ibidem.
- 25 World Bank (2017), 'GDP per Capita (Current US\$),' available at: <<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD?locations=SL>> (accessed 07 Jan 2019).
- 26 Siedentop (2001), pp. 210-211.
- 27 John L. Esposito (1999), *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?* Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press. pp. 225-28.
- 28 Ibidem.
- 29 Eric J. Hobsbawm and Terence O. Ranger (eds.) (1983), *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- 30 David Herbert (2001), 'Virtue Ethics, Justice and Religion in Multicultural Societies,' in Kieran Flanagan and Peter S. Jupp, *Virtue Ethics and Sociology: Issues of Modernity and Religion*. Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 51-67; Bojan Žalec (2015b), 'Factors and Indicators of Genocide,' in Janez Juhant and Bojan Žalec (eds.), *Understanding Genocide and Suicide*, Münster, Berlin, Wien, Zürich: Lit, pp. 25-35.
- 31 Cited in Drago K. Ocvirk (2011), *Muhammad: What Kind of Behaviour*

Mark Kleyman

- Pattern?* in Janez Juhant and Bojan Žalec (eds.), *Humanity after Selfish Prometheus: Chances of Dialogue and Ethics in a Technicized World*, **Münster, Berlin, Wien, Zürich: Lit**, p. 162.
- 32 Žalec (2015a), p. 26.
- 33 Vojko Strahovnik (2015), 'On the Concept of Genocide from the Point of View of Groups and Harm,' in Janez Juhant and Bojan Žalec (eds.), *Understanding Genocide and Suicide*, Münster, Berlin, Wien, Zürich: Lit, p. 58; Seyla Benhabib (2011), *Dignity in Adversity: Human Rights in Troubled Times*, Cambridge: Polity, pp. 51-54.
- 34 Erich Fromm (1973), *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*, New York: Henry Holt.
- 35 Anthony K. Appiah (2005), *The Ethics of Identity*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- 36 Bauman (2016).
- 37 Mark Kleyman (2017), 'Am I Charlie? Religion, Truth and Tolerance in Multicultural Urban Neighborhoods,' in Robert Petkovšek and Bojan Žalec (eds.), *Truth and Compassion*, Münster, Berlin, Wien, Zürich: Lit, pp. 65-73.
- 38 Žalec (2015a), p. 64.
- 39 Appiah (2005).
- 40 Betto van Waarden (2014), 'Amartya Sen's Identity Pluralism Applied to Will Kymlicka's Liberal Multiculturalism,' *International Journal of Minority and Group Rights* 21 (4), pp. 527-546.
- 41 Joel B. Bennett (2010), 'Social Climate Research,' *Corsini Encyclopedia of Psychology*, available at: <<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/9780470479216.corpsy0885/abstract>> (accessed 31 January 2019).
- 42 Cf. Mara W. Allodi (2010), 'The Meaning of Social Climate of Learning Environments: Some Reasons Why We do not Care Enough about It,' *Learning Environments Research* 13, p. 97.
- 43 Marvin Meyer and Kurt Bergel (eds.) (2002), *Reverence for Life: The Ethics of Albert Schweitzer for the Twenty-First Century*, Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.
- 44 Ara P. Barsam (2008), *Reverence for Life: Albert Schweitzer's Great Contribution to Ethical Thought*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- 45 Cf. Bojan Žalec (2011a), 'Personalism, Truth and Human Rights,' in Janez Juhant and Bojan Žalec (eds.), *Humanity after Selfish Prometheus*, **Münster, Berlin, Wien, Zürich: Lit**, pp. 29-41.
- 46 Bojan Žalec (2011b), 'On Not Knowing Who We Are: The Ethical Importance of Transcendent Anthropology,' *Synthesis Philosophica* 51, pp. 105-6.
- 47 Cf. David S. J. Hollenbach (2003), *The Common Good and Christian Ethics*, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- 48 Žalec (2011a), p. 32.
- 49 Žalec (2011b), p. 106.
- 50 Hollenbach (2003), p. 152, n. 23.
- 51 Karel Müller (2014), 'European Civil Society Conundrum: Public Spheres, Identities and the Challenge of Politicisation,' *Central European Journal of International and Security Studies* 8 (1), p. 44.
- 52 Sonia Roccas and Marilynn B. Brewer (2002), 'Social Identity Complexity,' *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 6, pp. 88 - 106.
- 53 Stuart Hall (1995), 'New Cultures for Old,' in Doreen Massey and Pat Jess (eds.), *A Place in the World? Places, cultures and globalization*, Oxford, UK: Open University/Oxford University Press, pp. 175-211.

- 54 Müller (2014), p. 44.
- 55 Benedict Anderson (1991), *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London: Verso.
- 56 Peter Block (2008), *Community: The Structure of Belonging*, San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.
- 57 Robert D. Putnam (2000), *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, New York: Simon and Schuster.
- 58 Charles Landry (2000), *The Creative City: A Toolkit for Urban Innovators*, London: Earthscan, p. 133.
- 59 Timothy Wojan, Dayton Lambert and David McGranahan (2007), 'Emoting with their Feet: Bohemian Attraction to Creative Milieu,' *Journal of Economic Geography* 7, p. 711.
- 60 Richard Florida (2012), *The Rise of the Creative Class Revisited*, New York: Basic Books.
- 61 Ibidem.
- 62 See Landry (2000).
- 63 See Wojan *et al.* (2007), p. 733.
- 64 See, inter alia, Florida (2012).
- 65 John Howkins (2013), *The Creative Economy: How People Make Money from Ideas*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, London: Penguin Random House, pp. 88–117.
- 66 David Hesmondhalgh (2002), *The Cultural Industries*, London: Sage, p. 12.
- 67 See, inter alia, Stefan Krätke (2011), *The Creative Capital of Cities: Interactive Knowledge Creation and the Urbanization Economies of Innovation*, Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.
- 68 Jamie Peck (2005), 'Struggling with the Creative Class,' *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 29 (4), pp. 740–770.
- 69 The inherent weaknesses of the creative class theory were implicitly recognised by Florida in his 2017 book. See Richard Florida (2017), *The New Urban Crisis: How Our Cities are Increasing Inequality, Deepening Segregation, and Failing the Middle Class -- and What We Can Do About It*. New York: Basic Books.
- 70 Michael Mumford (2003), 'Where Have We Been, Where are We Going? Taking Stock in Creativity Research,' *Creativity Research Journal* 15, p. 110.
- 71 Ibidem.
- 72 See, inter alia, Neil Brenner, Peter Marcuse and Margit Mayer (eds.) (2011), *Cities for People, Not for Profit – Critical Urban Theory and the Right to the City*. London: Routledge.
- 73 Henri Lefebvre (1968), *Le droit a la ville* [The Right to the City]. Paris: Anthropos.
- 74 See Brenner *et al.* (2011).
- 75 See Kymlicka (2012), p. 24.
- 76 Amartya Sen (2007), *Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny*, New York, London: W. W. Norton and Company, p. 160.
- 77 Žalec (2015a), p. 68.