



■ Book Review ■

*Meeting the Challenge of Cultural Diversity in Europe:
Moving Beyond the Crisis*

Robin Wilson. Cheltenham, UK and Northampton, MA, USA:
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The crisis in Europe has multiple causes. One internal cause is inequality resulting from deepened economic integration, while one external cause is the influx of refugees fleeing wars and conflicts in surrounding areas. The idea that increases in terrorism are linked to increased immigration is not limited to far-right populists in Europe. In 2015, the European Commission, led by Juncker, announced the “European Agenda for Security” and “European Agenda for Migration” with the goal of expanding discussion of the issues of refugees, terrorism, and security at the European Union level. Unlike the previous focus on the humanitarian perspective of refugees based on the Geneva Convention, the change in tone to “refugee crisis” in 2014 and 2015 indicates that Europe has become the main body having burdens to deal with the refugees problem as the subject of crisis rather than the responsibility for refugees. Approaching the issues around immigration from a security perspective means that not only states but individuals must pay close attention to international politics. When a stranger enters a society, this naturally occasions a variety of questions, such as whether immigrants might break social cohesion, increase economic burdens, and raise crime rates, leading to disputes over racism and multiculturalism. Other questions highlight the positive role of increased immigration, such as whether the influx of high-quality technologies and knowledge would increase productivity

sufficiently to make good any resource shortages due to population decrease. However, it is necessary to go beyond the debate over the positive/negative effects of immigrants and treat it as a political and moral issue.

This book, *Meeting the Challenge of Cultural Diversity in Europe: Moving Beyond the Crisis*, approaches the issues of refugees and immigrants from that exact perspective. Robin Wilson argues that efforts to solve the refugee crisis from the perspectives of assimilationism and multiculturalism have failed. His alternative proposal is interculturalism, which highlights the complexity and non-exclusive nature of human identity. At the same time, human relationships must be based on mutual respect and recognition. In this regard, interculturalism and cosmopolitanism create synergy. As he points out in Chapter 8, cosmopolitan Europe is no longer a project that stands against others. Rather, as Habermas points out, it shows that it is possible to have “solidarity among strangers” (p. 96).

Today, we live in an unprecedentedly globalized era. In this era, the phrase “living as a world citizen” seems highly appropriate. International organizations such as the United Nations and UNESCO also emphasize the importance of global civic education, and even at this very moment, specific goals and measures dedicated to this cause are being developed. Nevertheless, the term “world citizen” in widespread use not only lacks a unified concept, but its substance is unclear. As a result, some people regard the term as virtually meaningless beyond its role as an abstract slogan.

The greatest significance and value of this book is its sociological exploration combining theory and practice. First, the book points to the limitations of the two main traditional approaches of assimilationism and multiculturalism in dealing with issues of cultural diversity. As an alternative, it outlines the theoretical usefulness of interculturalism in supporting the virtue of cosmopolitanism. In addition, the author argues against many claims that cosmopolitanism is merely an abstract concept.¹⁾ Specifically, Chapter 8 illustrates the virtues of cosmopolitanism as a

theoretical foundation for overcoming cultural diversity in Europe through a review of historical traditions of the conceptual validity of cosmopolitanism, focusing on aspects of the Council of Europe's contributions to a new paradigm for managing cultural diversity at the Pan-European level. The EU-level Intercultural Cities Programs (ICCS) showed that there is an opportunity for Europeans to approach and accept each other's culture in an open-minded, inclusive manner. Thus, this book seeks to find solutions to the challenges of cultural diversity by focusing on the problem of urban space, which is a realistic foundation of multicultural society.

Through cosmopolitanism, Kant sought a new non-territorial global citizenship based on human solidarity. He saw that permanent peace was possible through reorganization of the world into a federation of nations under cosmopolitan law that treated individuals as citizens of a universal nation. This law would ensure that everyone has the right not to be treated as a hostile party within the territories of other nations, allowing every individual to belong to a universal community. The foundations of cosmopolitanism are non-hierarchical, in that all humans possess reason and humanity. In addition, it recognizes everyone as a member of one universal community. The object of human moral obligation is not geared toward a specialized organization, but rather all of humanity. The citizenship pursued by cosmopolitanism can be seen as the practice of these moral obligations. In this regard, we can support the right to solidarity on a humanitarian basis for involuntary immigrants who had to leave their homelands for unwanted reasons. Any discrimination against them should therefore be abolished because it is based on the evils of nationalism. The controversy over immigrants involves selective practices of exclusion or inclusion and institutionalized contempt or hospitality, which is why it requires a political approach.

1) Robin Wilson is able to offer practical solutions to problems of cultural diversity because of his positions as an advisor to the Council of Europe and an independent researcher focusing on intercultural issues, through which he helped draft a white paper on cultural diversity for the European Council in 2008. Since then, he has been working with participating member states and cities to develop intercultural strategies and programs.

The book consists of 11 chapters. After the introduction, Chapter 2 critically examines two leading models for cultural diversity management in Europe: assimilationism and multiculturalism. In essence, assimilationism entails a set of national “values” that all individual members of society, regardless of their cultural background, adhere to and follow. In contrast, multiculturalism is viewed as presuming that each ethnic society consists of various “communities,” emphasizing only the equal recognition of multiple cultures. Thus, in comparison with interculturalism, multiculturalism posits that group identity precedes individual identity. In other words, certain groups are identified and categorized. On the other hand, what is important in the intercultural approach is to identify others as “individuals,” not as members of a “group” or “culture.”

Chapter 3 considers European crises that pose a threat to the legitimacy of both models. Examining a series of violent racial and ethnic conflicts, it argues that neither model has been a practical solution nor has explanatory power.

Chapter 4 analyzes the flaws in how the existing paradigm conceptualizes the relationship between self and others and explains why outbursts of anger erupt in a specific form different from country to country.

Chapter 5 describes the global crisis of capitalism caused by the 2008 Lehman Brothers collapse, which led to the expression of extreme right-wing populists’ resentment toward immigrants and increased social unrest.

Chapter 6 introduces the role of the Council of Europe, a Pan-European organization, in solving the problems of integration in the midst of issues outlined in previous chapters. In particular, it shows how the Council of Europe embodies a normative foundation to prevent the recurrence of aggressive nationalism, racism, and xenophobia in the aftermath of World War II, while the EU focuses on the functional aspects of market integration. The need to include unstable, marginalized, and neglected groups in the process of economic integration has enabled the Council of Europe to intervene in this area.

Chapter 7 shows the emergence of a new paradigm for intercultural integration, first expressed in the Council of Europe's publication of a "White Paper on Cultural Diversity" in 2008. In particular, the author emphasizes that the ideas of the Council can be developed into a "mutual cultural strategy" that creates a space where people from various cultural backgrounds can interact productively and creatively. This chapter also describes how integrating the positive components of assimilationism and multiculturalism can set a universal norm. The author expresses the advantages of this process as follows:

"Nevertheless, the new paradigm incorporates the best elements of the prior approaches; it takes from assimilation the focus on the individual; it takes from multiculturalism the recognition of cultural diversity. And it adds the new element, critical to integration and social cohesion, of dialogue on the basis of equal dignity and shared values."(p. 99)

Especially regarding the universal concepts of human rights, democracy, and the rule of law, we must remember that humans have the freedom to choose their own culture, and this is the central axis of human rights. Furthermore, the white paper provides a common language to encourage mutual dialog on how different individuals can coexist on a horizontal and equal platform.

Chapter 8 introduces recent studies in the social sciences that embodied the concept of cosmopolitanism and emphasizes their theoretical associations with intercultural paradigms. Furthermore, it shows how the concept of cosmopolitanism highlights the relationship of individuals from a particular region with the entire world, emphasizing the importance of respecting others and treating them fairly as equal human beings.

Chapter 9 explores theoretical discussions of concrete cases by studying how the ICCS program (which currently involves more than 120 cities across and beyond Europe) has experimented with new intercultural

paradigms at regional and transnational levels. The ICCS network does not view population diversity as a threat, but rather as an opportunity for potential diversity. Thus, local authorities can learn how best to expand local resources in an interculturalist way.

Chapter 10 argues that Europe must embody the spirit of hospitality in order to solve the challenges discussed in previous chapters. The observation of these moral obligations would serve as a springboard to address EU-level commitments to allocating refugees.

Finally, Chapter 11 concludes with the crisis and modern unrest the EU is experiencing in the process of creating an integrated Europe due to events such as Brexit. As the only way to overcome this, the author emphasizes “the return to the federalist vision, which was one of the central ideas of European reconstruction after the end of World War II,” arguing that the above discussions could redefine the relationship between individuals in Europe and provide a foundation for solidarity-based integration.

I agree that multiculturalism, the main approach to cultural diversity, is incompatible with the values of solidarity, as discussed in this book, so long as it treats cultural communities as political units. Multiculturalism is essentially a relativistic discourse. From a multicultural perspective, individuals should be considered as being born in a particular cultural community. Therefore, governments and citizens should recognize, respect, and accept their needs. At the same time, this gives a small number of individual members a specific identity, regardless of their intimacy with the cultural community of each individual. This approach would disregard individual identities and might constitute an obstacle to the formation of human-rights-based solidarity.

On the other hand, the author’s hopeful expectations that pan-European integration would be possible if mutual dialog, introspective attitudes, and fair treatment of individuals were based on human dignity raise multiple questions, especially in light of the current situation of European integration.

First, the EU has established a supranational body operated by pro-

fessional technocrats rather than elected representatives. As a result, Europe has been criticized for becoming a “entrepreneur’s Europe” rather than a “citizen’s Europe.” Thus, it is questionable how many of the EU-level cultural diversity programs can achieve mutual understanding with outsiders.

Furthermore, the author raises the importance of “hospitality” for strangers and immigrants, first suggested by Kant in terms of political morality. However, the recent increase in support for radical political movements regarding the immigration debate, the revival of new nationalism, conflict of multiculturalism, and the spread of regionalism represent limitations on the legitimacy of cosmopolitanism.

Nevertheless, as the author aptly points out, it is more likely that the world is becoming more cosmopolitan because of the global crisis, rather than immigration itself. The core of cosmopolitan society is openness to others, building bridges rather than walls. In that sense, cosmopolitanism requires intercultural openness and knowledge. Without a doubt, the book’s discussions fully serve to reframe the discussion of these issues.

Biographical Note

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