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**Jean Monnet Chair Student Workshop I**  
**27 May 2013, Dolapdere, Istanbul**

## **Interculturalism versus Multiculturalism and The Social Crisis of Europe**

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# **Interculturalism versus Multiculturalism and the Social Crisis of Europe**

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*As a `competitor` term in public discourse it is important that we try to understand the differences between interculturalism and multiculturalism. This paper critically examines multiculturalism in Europe and tries to put out the reasons why it has not been successful yet. It is not possible for Europe to solve its social identity crisis until having a true understanding of `diversity` and `living together`. The paper begins with an introduction of my main idea about multiculturalism and interculturalism before exploring and discussing the problematic approaches of European states to the minorities and different identities. Following this discussion, the paper moves on to the different elements of the social crisis of Europe and examines the discriminative approaches towards immigrants – especially towards Muslim communities as the largest minority group- in European countries. The paper also focuses on Islamophobia in Europe and Turkey's road to EU membership in this framework as a country with a high Muslim population. It concludes with some suggestions to overcome these crucial problems such as racism and islamophobia in Europe which are important for the future generations and European democracies.*

## **Interculturalism and Multiculturalism**

The development of technology, transportation and communication which led us to globalisation has increased both inter-connection and migration of communities. Therefore in last decades we need more respect to differences, continue to promote cultural diversity but have a much clearer sense of promoting commonality between different communities. The problem is, we don't really know how to do that. In *Of Hospitality* Jacques Derrida (2000) explored the rights of the stranger, arguing that ethics is fundamentally about hospitality. If we fail to treat strangers with hospitality, they become aliens. If they are aliens, then they are not regarded as rights-bearing individuals, and we have no responsibility towards them. If we have no responsibility towards them, they remain outsiders, and they become targets of

xenophobia. If they are the targets of xenophobic fear, then they are enemies.<sup>1</sup> This is not an enough but a brief and symbolic explanation of the failing process.

I would like to join in the already existing argument that interculturalism is more accommodating and liberal compared to multiculturalism which is more `groupist`, that is, recognising differences yet keeping them separate in parallel societies without enough interaction and dialogue. Interculturalism can be said to be something more committed to a stronger sense of the `whole` in a society, in terms of such things as societal cohesion and national citizenship. Being a real citizen is clearly related to the social policies of states. I would like to argue that the difference between the two is more than a matter of the concrete policies, but concerns rather the story that we tell about where we are coming from and where we are going.

Sometimes scholars are referring to the statements given by British Prime Minister David Cameron and German Chancellor Angela Merkel that tells multiculturalism has failed in their countries. This was a very important step. `Multiculturalism policy in Europe is an assimilation project and it will only fail` told by many academicians and strategists, and now it is admitted by the state authorities. Is multiculturalism a failed experiment? It depends on what kind of multiculturalism we are talking about. What is multiculturalism? Is it that the UK, France or Germany thought that they are doing by letting people to work in their countries? Or doing nothing to motivate the participation of these people to the social and political life and with a miracle expecting them to `integrate`? No, this is not multiculturalism. Multiculturalism is not something exists outside you adorn or decorate with some garnitures around it. Multiculturalism is creating the appropriate conditions that different identities are cooperating with the state and civil societies; different groups, identities, religious communities and cultures are informing each other. This is in fact bringing us to the concept of interculturalism. We talk like this is something which has been continuing for last twenty years and now it has failed but I`m afraid it did not even start yet in Europe. Western European states and societies have never made a real investment to build a multicultural society. In some ways, interculturalism is more suitable for certain European countries.

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<sup>1</sup> (2006) *Citizenship Studies*, B. S. Turner , *Citizenship and the Crisis of Multiculturalism* , Routledge , s. 607-608

## **Politics and the Power of Fear**

We can ask the question ‘What is happening in Europe?’ Is the politics of Europe taken as a hostage by mad politicians who have forgotten the results of Holocaust in Europe and who are trying to gain political power through ethnic and religious minorities? The problematic relation of politics and religion is not really because of religion itself. Religion is not getting into politics, but the religious and minority associations are forced to defend themselves because some politicians attack these communities. The effort to ban Halal slaughter, put a fine to wear burka, provocative publishes of politicians such as Wilders, cartoon crisis, the pressures on NGOs, minaret ban in Switzerland, foster care agencies as tools of assimilation and so on.

Freedom of speech, freedom of expression cannot be used as a tool for hate speeches/crimes. Therefore Islamophobic hate speeches pose threat directly to the core of European values and social space. It is important to remember that hate crimes originate from hate speeches. There is a thin line we need to determine between insulting and declaring ideas. If your speech is insulting the values of a different identity, pointing a community as a resource of all social problems which are causing to attack each other, this is something beyond freedom of expression. Using hate crimes as a tool for political interests is not contributing to the peace and diversity of the society. This is called ‘cultural terrorism’<sup>2</sup> and sometimes ‘psychological terror’.

Government is a form of activity aiming to shape, guide or affect the conduct of persons. Foucault defines *governmentality* as the art of government. Modern societies can be understood only by reconstructing certain ‘techniques of power’ designed to observe, control the behavior of individuals. Security discourse has become the most efficient instrument for the states to role their subjects and for the survival of states and governmentality. Then, it becomes a political technique to integrate a society politically by staging a credible existential threat in the form of an internal enemy that is fabricated by security agencies through categorizing migration together with criminality, terrorism or drug trafficking.<sup>3</sup> It is not a surprise to see the gaining votes

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<sup>2</sup> Şenay, Bülent (2010) Undoing Hate Crimes: Combating Islamophobia as Cultural Terrorism, OSCE Review Conference, Astana.

<sup>3</sup> Kaya, Ayhan (2012). Power of fear: Migration and Securitization, IR 472 Europe and Migration, Jean Monnet Module, Istanbul Bilgi University

of some extreme right wing parties in European countries while there is such a popular spread of fear promoted.

The meaning of security is important in the context of securitization. Security is no longer limited to the protection of state, national boundaries or military threat. Now the term goes beyond the limits and they are rather related to several different issues such as immigration, ethnic/religious revival, identity claims and even supranational entities. In other words, issues become security issues, a process of social construction that is securitization. Security discourse shifted from protecting the state to protecting the society. The trick is hidden here. Immigration has been defined as a threat, not the survival of the state, but of social security. Ethnic or religious revival which comes among some migrant groups as a reaction to poverty, unemployment, insecurity and institutional discrimination decoded by the state as a challenge to societal security, a challenge which has to be immediately prevented.

EMISCO (European Muslim Initiative for Social Cohesion) and ENAR (European Network Against Racism) prepared a report in 2012 and presented it in the European parliament which basically emphasizes that European states should recognize Muslims as equal citizens not only in legal terms but also practically. Many other researches on this issue show that the problem in Europe moved from ethnic racism to cultural hate. In past, people were saying 'Black people go home'. Today they are saying 'Muslims go home' or 'Turks go home'. This is not about religion or Islam; it is an issue about human rights and an issue about being a co-citizen. The young generations of minorities living in Europe are French, Swedish, Danish and Dutch; they are equally citizens as same as everybody and they are not going anywhere. These are not only Muslims or Jews or Romans, these people are Europeans, contributing to the European economy and will continue to contribute to the future of Europe. The new generations are being doctors, teachers, lawyers in these countries, they cannot be seen as only permanent worker groups serving to the industrial system.

If minorities started to be seen as the root of almost every social problem, if it is started to be put as the opposite of Europe's identity, we can say now Islamophobia is not only an issue of Muslim community but it also became an issue of Europe itself. We can ask the question that

'is it a Don Quixote syndrome?' Don Quixote the knight with sword in his hand metaphorically represents Europe and the windmills are Muslims.<sup>4</sup> The result is Islamophobia.

Public / private sphere division is one of the popular issues regarding to the problems of Muslims in Europe as it is seen in the discussions on headscarf ban in France. The definition of 'public sphere' in Charles Taylor's analysis is: "*The public sphere is a common space in which the members of society are deemed to meet through a variety of media: print, electronic, and also face-to-face encounters; to discuss matters of common interest; and thus to be able to form a common mind about these.*"<sup>5</sup> Islamophobia emerges where common mind and common sense is lost in European public sphere and public policies.

### **The Social Crisis of Europe and 'Otherization'**

When we say minorities in Europe, there are Jews, Buddhists, Hindus, and also the people who migrate from east Europe to west Europe such as Romanians, Bulgarians and Polka Orthodox Christians. Especially there are many problems of the last group which is not seen yet and it will increase, because Orthodox Christianity is a color of the 'other' world in Europe. It has seen 'outside' of the Catholic and Protestant world. But they are more from the 'family' comparing to the Muslims. In fact, the Buddhists, Hindus or Orthodoxies are not at the centre of discussion about minorities in Europe. The whole issue is about Muslims. It is not only because of the history of migration, but because of it is the Muslims that are showing a different cultural identity and they have a large demographic structure in Europe. Therefore, when we say religious minorities in Europe – we do not use 'minority' as its legal definition in law, we use the sociological mean (foreigner, allochton, alien...) – we talk about Muslims and their future.

It is important to look at Martin Luther's works to see the roots of the relation between West and Turks. Lutheran Protestantism is closely related to the Turkish movement towards Europe in history. Martin Luther wrote an assessment on Turks religion and traditions in 1530 while performances about 'barbaric Turks' were played in the theatres of European capitals. As a reaction to the Catholic Church, he says if Catholic priests will spend three days with Turks, they would become Muslims. A year before in 1529, he has another work 'On war against the

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<sup>4</sup> Şenay, Bülent, (2005) Euroislam - Project Event: EU - Back to Tolerance? , Muslim in Europe: Don Quixote's Windmills? Recognition, Toleration, Integration, Forli, Italy, 2-5 March 2005

<sup>5</sup> Taylor, Charles (2004) Modern Social Imaginaries. Duke University Press, p.83.

Turk' which he says 'barbaric Turks, antichrist Turks'. After a while, he complains about the 'religious collapse' and the 'otherization' of Catholic Church and says that "the way of pray, regard and cultural level of Turks would make everyone Muslim." Luther says that he read Islam from Catholic writers and after a time he read the holy book of Muslims, Qur'an. Then he blames Catholic writers to manipulate, twist the subjects. He also uses an interesting statement "They hide the reality."

After 500 years, today's Europe is still talking otherization, racism, islamophobia. Why the problematic relation with 'other' exists today? Europe is facing with 'other' for the first time in its public sphere. After the Second World War, during the time called post-modernity, neo-colonial age, minorities started to create a realm of existence. Europe does not have the historical experience to answer the question 'How can we live together?'

It is understandable how the debate about European identity is wrong by appointing Muslims because even Catholics, Protestants, Rationalists, Humanists could not create a common ground about what's the identity of Europe. We can see in the Eurobarometre and European Values Research reports that Europeans could not define yet what means being French, British, German or Dutch. Or if we should be ironic, if they started to define themselves by not telling 'what are they' but telling 'what are not they', if they started to define themselves by telling 'we are not Muslim', this is a dangerous picture for Europe.

When there is a discussion about ethnic/religious societies in the context of host – society relations, there is always a reference to the European values which come from Christian-Jewish tradition. It refers 'non-Europeans will not be compatible with Europe'. Especially there is a developing discourse by saying that it is not possible for Muslims to be modern, to adopt contemporary norms, values and behavior as long as they remain connected to Islam. These political discourses seem to have forgotten their relation to trade wars, looting, slavery and colonialism. European countries need to face with their colonial history if they want to develop an intercultural understanding. The word 'integration' is a concept includes 'interaction'. It should not get as adapting a minority identity by melting it in a main identity, changing or assimilating. 'Ask' and sharing information is the best way to achieve 'living together'.

**Islam, Turkey and the EU**

Although it has been seven years since the full negotiations started between Turkey and EU, there is not an enough progress due to political set-backs, stonewalls. The identity challenge is still an issue which reflects the political reasons. The best example of the identity challenge and anti-Islam behavior is the pending EU membership of Turkey, whose Islamic background is being used as a reason for prolonging the negotiations. Even the presence and contributions of 6 million Turks in Europe are being totally neglected in this process. Non-European communities and progressive Europeans are asking; where is the true and democratic Europe. What happened to diversity and inclusion? Is European continent moving in the wrong direction?

It is clear that Muslim communities need moral and political support in convincing decision makers in Europe to change their anti-Muslim discourse and consider them as co-citizens. Such recourse must have a real political legitimacy based on a mutual dialogue. As part of the European continent and a candidate for EU membership, Turkey is the only country in the Islamic world that meets these criteria. While this issue can be treated in the context of EU-Turkey and Turks in Europe, it is inevitable that Turkey through its good offices will also play a major role in bringing closer the Muslim communities in Europe and the majority societies. To achieve this objective, it is necessary that Turkish government strengthen its relations and co-operation with Turkish NGOs and representatives of Muslim communities in Europe who are involved in helping the minorities.

We were discussing Turkey's road to EU with a member of EPP –which is the largest party in the European parliament- during a conference in Italy. He told that he has a hope for the full membership of Croatia, Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro after they fulfil the criteria's of EU while telling that Turkey has shift from west towards middle east and she is far away from being a member of EU. This 'shift of axis' argument became popular in anti-Turkish political circles. After I asked few questions and started cut down his arguments, he said "Look, we don't want Turkey in EU." Thus he gave up creating some artificial arguments and started to refer to the 'European values' and the issue came to identity. Although these approach, there are also many politicians in Europe that thinks Turkey's membership to the EU will contribute to the intercultural development of Europe; it will help Europe to have a better dialogue with Middle East and Asia. This attitude is representing EU mentally based on Christianity and pushing it to an 'exclusionist' position. This 'otherization' over values is a danger for Europe. Consequently Turkey's reactions or criticisms towards EU should not be



seen as a growing arrogance of multi-dimensional policies but a disappointment of state and society.

## Conclusion

Intercultural integration encourages the view that diversity is an asset and fights discrimination with the active support of public authorities, business, civil society and the media. European democracies need to accept interculturalism by its principles and standards. In order to achieve it, there is a need to make reforms in law and education fields for a rights-based approach to diversity management.

The existence of ‘common mind’, ‘common sense’ can achieve through education which is an important field to contribute to the future of Europe. In my opinion, the problems such as islamophobia in middle and west Europe today are related to the lack of philosophical knowledge about the ‘other’. Therefore before any law enforcement we need to focus on public perceptions and education.

The project works of international organizations can be examined to draw the path. For instance, the white paper of the council of Europe, OSCE events on this issue can help to develop this process. Council of Europe discussed intercultural education with representatives of religions at “Exchange 2009” is another work on this issue.<sup>6</sup> A clear, honest, objective education about each other is a need and critical matter to advance interculturalism.

In the legal system, the most important issue is to draw the thin line between freedom of expression and insult. Hate speeches are examples of the abuse of the freedom of expression. There must be a legal regulation to provide a safer, tolerant living space in the society. This is not a suggestion kind of a blasphemy law to protect any religion; it is a simple legal reform which will prevent to harm each other’s values in multicultural societies. A success of this

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<sup>6</sup> The main part of the Exchange 2009 consisted of key note addresses and discussions linked to recent Council of Europe documents dealing with the issue of intercultural dialogue and what in Council of Europe parlance is known as “teaching of religious facts”: Council of Ministers’ Recommendation 12 (2008) on “The dimension of religious and non-religious convictions within intercultural education”, *Religious diversity and intercultural education. A reference book for schools* (2007), and the *White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue* (2008).

process will also help Europe to redefine its identity to continue future as an intercultural society or to set with a monocultural understanding.

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