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How do European Young Muslims View European Identity?

Abstract: This paper examines the situation in the European Union where the growing presence of Muslim communities has already taken place. The initial understanding of the then European Economic Community as Christian Democratic, thus as Catholic, is no longer valid. In fact, from a social constructivist perspective, the presence of Muslims has posed a challenge and led to numerous debates relating to what has been promoted as European identity. Accordingly, this qualitative paper focuses on the coexistence of the two identities and questions to what extent young, EU-born, Muslims are ready to accept European identity, or, by contrast, continue to cultivate their own Muslim identity. The paper argues that the young Muslims can be divided into three different groups – traditionalists, neo-traditionalists and liberals, a division that is easily ignored by the society and, more importantly, policy makers, who consider only the first category when portraying Islam as a serious challenge to European identity. Conclusively, the paper notes that bigger efforts are needed on behalf of both the Europeans and the Muslims, efforts that will lead to successful co-existence and validate the EU's cosmopolitan approach towards its otherness.

Key words: Young Muslims, European identity, adaptation

Introduction

Every single enlargement of the European Union has provoked debate about a single European identity. Admittedly, the easiest period was in the very beginning when the establishment of the European Economic Community was characterized by the Christian Democratic values of the founding fathers: Konrad Adenauer, Alcide de Gasperi and Robert Schuman were all Christian Democrats and devoted Catholics. However, numerous bilateral agreements signed between the member states of the Community and Muslim countries in the 1960s invited Muslim labor to Europe in order to build its war-affected infrastructure. Religious differences were excluded and, more importantly, the very idea that at one point in the future Islam might be per-

ceived as a threat to Western society was never considered. Numerous Muslim immigrants who were expected to leave the European Community once their work permits had expired did not do so but instead had their family members come to Europe and decided to settle across the Community permanently. Becoming aware of their presence, Europeans began to insist on a European citizenship and, accordingly, presented a paper on European identity during the 1973 Copenhagen summit. As recalled by Antje Wiener, the paper "broadly defined European identity as being based on a 'common heritage' and 'acting together in relation to the rest of the world,' while the 'dynamic nature of European unification' was to be respected" (Wiener 1997, 538).

Increasing numbers of Muslims in Europe have contributed to the differentiation between *us* and *them* – a division that social sciences usually tend to characterise as *good us* and *bad them*. In this respect, the *Other* is often perceived as a threat that penetrates *our* territory. The anxiety surrounding the events of September 11, 2001, and the Madrid and London bombings in March 2004 and July 2005, respectively, confirmed the existence of the *Other* who is ready to affect *our* territory. Accordingly, this paper analyzes the position of two hundred mostly EU-born, Muslims, aged 18-25, and their own perception of Islam in Europe, their different religious and political identities and their vision of adaptation and coexistence.¹ While aware of their situation across the EU and their understanding of a European identity, I divide young Muslims into three groups: traditionalists, neo-traditionalists and liberals. As will be shown, each of these groups is characterized by different understandings of adaptation and European identity.

Traditional Young Muslims

The majority of traditionalists decided to continue with the life-style of their parents or, in many cases, grandparents. When their ancestors came to Europe, they represented what Milton Esman describes as labour diaspora, "composed mainly of undereducated, unskilled individuals of peasant or urban proletarian backgrounds" (Esman 2009, 16). Being aware of their position in their host countries, they accepted the lower wages and living standards that soon became one of the main characteristics of their presence. Many immigrants' children have found it difficult to change this uneasy life-style. In Esman's view, they "tend to remain proletarians in their host country, in some cases for several generations until acculturation and education enable them

¹ I would like to thank the young Muslims who took part in this questionnaire-based study.

eventually to advance to the middle class and to positions of prestige and power" (2009, 17). Today, European capitals such as Berlin, Paris and Brussels host big Muslim communities with an image corresponding to Esman's understanding of labor diaspora in Europe. Numerous Turkish supermarkets, Moroccan restaurants and Algerian dry-cleaning shops employ the grandchildren of first generation immigrants or their closest relatives. As noted by one of the respondents, there were various reasons for continuing with these family owned businesses: first, Islam promotes strong association with tradition, the home and family values; second, the parents never managed to adjust or assimilate to life in the host society to the extent that their children would feel a sense of belonging; and finally, family businesses represented an economic security that at various stages seemed inappropriate to compromise.

Apart from revealing some of the main characteristics of Muslim identity, the above mentioned aspects offer additional conclusions. Over time, the decision to stay close to the family led to the idea that integration into European society was not even necessary. The Muslims were comfortable in their own Muslim neighbourhoods as they realized that they represented the majority. From the other side, as soon as the Europeans had realized that the Muslim guest workers were obtaining permanent residence permits, they decided to take the first steps in order to protect their own identity. As Wiener points out, the 1973 idea on a European identity "was then approached by a citizenship practice that included the adoption of the two policy objectives of 'special rights' for European citizens and a 'passport union'" (Wiener 1997, 539). However, the main problem with this project was that it focused too much on the Europeans and too little on the *Others*.

Many traditional young Muslims agree that their strong links with their own communities' representatives in the host country, in most cases supported by their country of origin, foster the existence of parallel societies. As one group of Muslim students in Brussels admitted, traditionalists are primarily concerned with maintenance of their own Muslim identity and therefore any attempt to undermine it from the outside will face strong obstacles. Alongside this, traditionalists do not perceive the process known as ghettoization as something negative. In her study, Sue Kenny correctly warns that "[t]he anxiety generated by fear of the Other, of course, also generates its own solidarity, that is, the solidarity of anxiety ... [that] can be the driver of political movements, including nationalistic and racist ones" (Kenny 2010, 100).

The process of ghettoization goes hand in hand with Islamophobia. In 1997, the Runnymede Trust, a well-known pro-multiculturalism think tank, published a report *Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All* and identified eight points related to the concept of Islamophobia:

"1. Islam is seen as a monolithic bloc, static and unresponsive to change; 2. Islam is seen as separate and 'other.' It does not have values in common with other cultures, is not affected by them and does not influence them; 3. Islam is seen as inferior to the West. It is seen as barbaric, irrational, primitive, and sexist; 4. Islam is seen as violent, aggressive, threatening, supportive of terrorism, and engaged in a clash of civilizations; 5. Islam is seen as a political ideology, used for political or military advantage; 6. Criticisms made of 'the West' by Islam are rejected out of hand; 7. Hostility towards Islam is used to justify discriminatory practices towards Muslims and exclusion of Muslims from mainstream society; 8. Anti-Muslim hostility is seen as natural and normal" (Runnymede Trust Online).

In short, these points indicated that there was a serious problem with the perception and acceptance of Islam. If we take these points together, they warn that such an obvious presence of Islamophobia could widen the gap between the European Union and its Muslim communities.

Islamophobia became a matter of serious discussions only after the terrorist attacks against the US and subsequent attacks in Madrid and London, in 2004 and 2005. Following these attacks, the Council of Europe (2005, 6) presented its definition of Islamophobia as "the fear of or prejudicial viewpoint towards Islam, Muslims and matters pertaining to them. Whether it takes the shape of daily forms of racism and discrimination or more violent forms, Islamophobia is a violation of human rights and a threat to social cohesion." Thus, although less broad, the post-September 11 definition is relevant for two reasons in particular: first, it linked Islamophobia to violations of human rights and, second, it underlined the linkage between Islam and social cohesion.

Tinka Veldhuis and Edwin Bakker take this debate further by focusing on the situation in the Netherlands. They note that many young Muslims face an identity crisis both because of a generational conflict with their parents and a general feeling of rejection by Dutch society. The feeling of alienation usually results in joining a social group as "once people have categorized themselves into a social group and this group has become an important part of their social identity, issues that concern the group also concern the individual" (Veldhuis and Bakker 2009, 7). This is why most of the traditional respondents see assaults on Islam and complaints about Muslim communities as a personal threat. Moreover, in order to protect their already disputed identity, the young Muslims have joined various Muslim organizations such as the Arab European League, the Armed Islamic Group and the Hofstadgroep.

In the Netherlands, traditionalists are aware of the fact that the gap between the Muslim and non-Muslim communities was widened after the murders of Pim Fortuyn, a right-wing politician who portrayed Islam as a backward culture and wanted to limit immigration from Muslim countries, and Theo van Gogh, a film director whose film *Submission* openly criticized the treatment of women in Muslim societies. Veldhuis and Bakker (2009, 25)

argue that after these events, "the Netherlands has witnessed a growing climate of intolerance in its non-Muslim community followed by increased episodes of attacks against Muslims and cases of discrimination." At this point, it was impossible to deny the presence of Islamophobia across the European Union. After having conducting a survey about the Muslims, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) summarized the findings: "On average 1 in 3 Muslim respondents were discriminated against in the past 12 months, and 11% experienced a racist crime. The highest levels of discrimination occurred in employment ... thousands of cases of discrimination and racist crime remain invisible ... People without citizenship and those who have lived in the country for the shortest period of time are less likely to report discrimination. Regarding the reasons for not reporting incidents, 59% of Muslim respondents believe that 'nothing would happen or change by reporting' ... Ethnicity is the main reason for discrimination ... Only 10% stated that they thought the discrimination they experienced was based solely on their religion" (FRA Online).

The above survey is important not only because it shows that being Muslim in the EU can be rather difficult, but because it questions some of the so far self-glorified aspects of the Union, such as the respect for diversity and inclusion. Discriminatory policies in employment lead to a conclusion that the EU is not as open as it promotes itself to be. Ethnic background and clothing choice often have primacy over educational background and professional expertise. More alarming is the fact that many young Muslims believe that reporting discrimination seems pointless. Such a belief implies that the European leaders who deal with these highly sensitive issues maintain dual standards shifting from favoring diversity and inclusion to ignoring them, depending on the occasion. For example, according to the *Economist*, some European governments see the *burqa* as a symbol for "the repression that women can suffer in Islam" and a threat to "security, sexual equality and secularism," and therefore they would like to see it banned although "banning it altogether would be an infringement on the individual rights which their culture normally struggles to protect."² Of the 5 million Muslims in France, only about 2000 cover their face fully. This micro-minority was enough for the French National Assembly to pass a draft law on 13 July 2010 stipulating that no one can, in the public space, wear clothing intended to hide the face. Thus, while French leaders justify the ban as the right way to fight all forms of religious extremism, they cannot predict possible reactions. Indeed, in talking about consequences of the ban, the most dangerous aspect seems overlooked: French leadership has ignored the fact that even a decision to ban *burqas* may further radicalize Islam and create hostilities across the EU.

² "Banning the burqa: A bad idea ... whose time may soon come in parts of Europe," *Economist*, 15.05.2010, p. 18.

Neo-traditional Young Muslims

Neo-traditional Muslims believe in the coexistence of different traditions and values. They are not so much concerned with strict definitions of Islam and Christianity, but are interested in the prerequisites that will allow for their coexistence. Understandably, in this scenario both sides are expected to make some significant compromises. For example, Bernard Lewis suggests that "[i]t is not the West's business to correct them, still less to change them, but merely to ensure that the despots are friendly rather than hostile to Western interests" (Lewis 2004, 91). This rather harsh statement encourages numerous comments. First, although not clarified whose business the correction of the Muslims should be, luckily it is not the West that should correct them as some of the involvements of the Western powers to 'correct' some European, non-Muslim, countries and societies in the Western Balkans, have failed. Second, the attempt to change a society is more likely to produce a counter-effect than the desired aim and in this case radicalization of Islam would most probably be the consequence. Finally, seeing Muslims as despots, when the term 'despot' is often associated with a tyrant or a dictator, does not really help to the overall objective, which is coexistence.

Neo-traditionalists, as a group of young respondents from London noted, do not reject their background, but try to compromise and benefit both from their Muslim background and present circumstances. Indeed, they feel enriched by this opportunity. However, sometimes this adaptation can be a long and difficult process. As Pauline Kollontai summarized in her study, "[c]ommunity and identity can provide the individual with a sense of belonging, stability and meaning. It can also cause a struggle for individuals as they attempt to balance their religious heritage with secular and humanistic concepts and values, or incorporate aspects of other religions into their lives" (Kollontai 2007, 67). Here, one of the main differences between the traditionalists and neo-traditionalists becomes clear: while for the former bringing two different religions is almost an unacceptable concept, for the latter it represents a prerequisite for coexistence. This is why neo-traditionalists sometimes attend celebrations of non-Muslim character.

In order to take this argument further and demonstrate the relevance of the neo-traditional element amongst young Muslims across Europe, I note their appreciation for Tariq Ramadan, an Oxford scholar, who believes that the presence of numerous Muslims in Europe will imply the establishment of a new, Westernized, Islam. This standpoint, sustained by reconsideration and democratization of political systems existing in Islamic countries, is likely to bring Muslims and Europeans together. As a group of them from the Free University of Berlin wrote:

"In our view, a Westernized Islam represents a joint venture for successful coexistence. Many young Muslims, who were born in Europe, do not even know what 'real' Islam is, as their parents or even grandparents had decided to integrate themselves as much as possible in European society ... On the other hand, some European governments that openly show antipathy towards Muslim communities in their states refer to the Muslims that rejected and continue to reject any connection with their host societies, thus the West."

In Ramadan's view, the fact that the individual constitutions of European countries are not against Islam, but support the rights of the Muslims, is enough to believe that a multiple identity – a Muslim who is at the same time a European – is possible. As insisted by Ramadan himself: "I'm a European who has grown up here. I don't deny my Muslim roots, but I don't vilify Europe either."³

Statements of this kind are what bring neo-traditionalists together: awareness of the past, of family roots, as well as remarkable respect for the present and their everyday life in Europe. Nowadays, many EU-born Muslims enjoy exactly the same privileges as non-Muslims. They share the same citizenship and their applications to universities or state aid are treated based on criteria other than their religious background. However, the problem here is that young Muslims in this category truly believe that this is the case, whereas the traditionalists insist that the questions about denomination, often appearing in various applications or surveys, have discriminatory intentions. These basic examples of opposite points of view presented by the two Muslim groups reveal which of them is more likely to adapt European identity.

In his study, Esman discusses adaptation and distinguishes between two stages: acculturation and assimilation. Acculturation implies "acceptance and adoption of basic elements of the local culture, its language and lifestyle, its methods of working and popular entertainment, its dress codes and cuisine," whereas assimilation implies "participation in the networks of mainstream institutions – educational, economic, religious and political – leading to social assimilation, absorption into the local mainstream and acceptance of citizenship, culminating often in intermarriage" (Esman 2009, 103). Contrary to traditionalists, the neo-traditional young Muslims find none of the two states as strange. In regard to acculturation, they comprehend the relevance of European culture and the language of the country they live in. In fact, most of them are at least bilingual. Understanding of dress codes and appreciation for cuisine are not even questioned. As many respondents agreed, there is not much sense in insisting on *burqa* or *halal* meat in some rural areas that have never

³ Ramadan quoted in Nicholas Le Quesne, "Trying to Bridge a Great Divide," *Time*, Internet: http://www.time.com/time/innovators/spirituality/profile_ramadan.html, 14. 02. 2011.

encountered such traditions. In regard to assimilation, neo-traditional young Muslims are keen on greater involvement in various institutions of their European homeland. They attend European universities and take part in various extracurricular activities that bring Muslims and non-Muslims together.

Acceptance of citizenship and intermarriage are seen as final stages of the process of full integration. In most cases, the parents became citizens of any of the Member States of the European Union at the time meaning that their EU-born children satisfy both *jus soli* and *jus sanguinis* criteria. Contrary to the traditionalists whose focus after obtaining EU citizenship remained on supporting the Muslim community even more, the neo-traditionalists have insisted on a wider usage of their European citizenship. In his study, Tufyal Choudhury examined the situation in the United Kingdom and concluded that the idea of a European Muslim citizenship "has been attributed to the emergence of a younger generation of British born Muslims, educated and socialized in Britain and embedded in communities whose future is in Britain, combined with a shift of focus within existing organizations from a focus on working for the good of the Muslim community towards working for the common good" (Choudhury 2007, 14). Surely, intermarriage contributes to this shift, as the traditional fashion, when both partners were likely to be of Muslim origin and required both sets of their parents to agree upon their decision to get married, has been abandoned.

It is important to note that neo-traditional young Muslims perceive successful integration as a two-way phenomenon. As stressed by Will Kymlicka, it is a joint venture in which the immigrants wish to integrate themselves in the host society by taking an active role in various social, economic and political structures and the host state is ready to facilitate the process of their integration (Kymlicka 1995). Even though this reasoning could be more applicable to the older generations of Muslims in the European Union, their EU-born children sometimes face obstacles similar to the ones faced by their parents. By ignorance, they are viewed as immigrants – a disputed label in the present European context. In addition, many neo-traditional respondents have agreed that some controversies, such as the infamous Danish cartoons of 2005 that in many Muslims' view were directed at undermining the whole Muslim community, question European preparedness to support their full integration, thus "Europe is having to choose which is more important, the right to ridicule Muslims or the integration of Muslims" (Modood 2006, 6).

At this stage, alongside the ridicule and integration, it is important to note the position of the Europeans and, more relevantly for this article, the advocates of a European identity. As indicated in Susan Condor's qualitative analysis, Europeans themselves distinguish between different Muslim societies: "In particular, it was notable that when respondents spoke in favor of Turkey's membership of the EU, this was often justified by arguing that Turkey was not a

‘very’ Muslim country, that it was somehow ‘better’ than ‘other’ Muslim countries, or that the peoples of Turkey were gradually ‘developing’ and becoming ‘less’ Muslim" (Condor 2004). All these neo-traditional observations complement Mustafa Kemal Atatürk’s ideas that sought to establish Turkey as a secular nation-state. European appreciation for Turkish society and its Western values resulted in the 1999 EU decision to grant Turkey candidate status.

Liberal Young Muslims

Liberal Muslims represent the smallest of the three groups addressed in this paper. This is an important aspect as it makes the existence of a different, liberal, form of Islam almost invisible. Contrary to the traditionalists and neo-traditionalists, who have already strengthened their values and managed to spread them further, liberal Muslims represent a category that is often marginalized. As Bassam Tibi, German scholar has argued:

"Liberal Muslims living in Europe – like myself – do not want to belong to a peripheral minority, but rather want to be members of the European polity itself with its respective rights and duties... I see no contradiction between being at the same time a European and a Muslim. In contrast, the Islamist groups under issue are not interested in the role of Muslim migrants as a bridge between the society they are living in and the civilization they are coming from" (Tibi 2001, 205).

Liberal Muslims are fully aware of their Muslim background, but more importantly, have a very strong commitment to European society. In this respect, Islam has become a less relevant element in the process of their integration. They do not face some of the previously examined issues related to successful acculturation and assimilation. As some of the respondents recalled, St. Ambrose, the bishop of Milan, had once said: ‘When in Rome, do as the Romans do!’ By recalling this proverb, the respondents agreed that they had actually accepted the local culture and lifestyle. Born in families that had left strict Muslim homelands in the 1960s and 1970s and aware of the efforts their parents invested to integrate into Western host societies, these young people face almost no background boundaries. They do not wear the *burqa*, they drink alcohol and talk openly about (homo) sexuality.

Strong incentives to assimilate are seen in the growing interest to participate in educational, economic and political institutions. Liberal Muslims are graduates of Western universities where they focus on Western philosophy, European history and the politics of their European homeland. Many of them work in economic institutions dealing with the progress of the European Union. In regard to political activism, as some of them acknowledged, they are

active members in political parties whose policies support greater integration of immigrants. These ambitious people are often misjudged and here Esman has another valid point when stating that some Europeans view the Muslim diaspora "as 'Islamofascists,' forerunners of a vast conspiracy to Islamize Europe." There is, in their view, a risk that these Muslims could use democratic institutions across Europe to gain control of various governing bodies and then destroy them and impose Islamic rule on them (Esman 2009, 105).

When it comes to religion, the situation is more complex. This is the point where many liberal Muslims – although sound advocates of 'Christian' values – discuss the state of Islam. To begin with, liberal Muslims maintain that Islam and democracy are compatible. Based on their European experience, they fully support Tibi's scholarship that invites the non-liberal Muslims in Europe to reinterpret Islam – a new interpretation that will help Muslims to be perceived and judged as European citizens and not as Muslims only, thus based on their democratic identity, not religion (Tibi 2002). In this view, religion would have to shift from being a collective denominator to being an individual denominator. In this new form, religion would complement the cultural pluralism that characterises the society where various Muslim communities are accommodated. Some studies underline that it is normal that the new environment affects religious and cultural traditions of the homeland (Knott 2007, 10). Accordingly, most female liberals admit that they do not possess a *burqa* and would not even know how to place it on their head properly. The rejection of a traditional Muslim outfit is due to their awareness of its negative image across various European countries, regions and cities, and their own willingness to integrate into the European society as much as possible. Furthermore, alcohol consumption understood by the traditionalists as prohibited and neo-traditionalists as discouraged, is something that leaves liberal Muslims indifferent. Finally, homosexuality, which many Muslim countries consider a sin, should be reconsidered, as most liberal Muslims agree with the analysis of James Neill concluding that actually "the circumstances of Muslim society strongly encouraged homosexuality, especially among young men" (Neill 2009, 301).

However, there are various problems in relation to the above arguments. First, while insisting on Islam and democracy as compatible, liberal Muslims risk their own reputation within both their European and countries of origin. This is primarily due to the unclear extent of compatibility and questions whether any of the two – Islam or democracy – would be ready to challenge its well-defined principles. Moreover, contrary to the traditionalists and neo-traditionalists, many of liberal respondents have never been to their parents' country of origin – a decision that has cost them marginalization amongst other Muslims.

Second, while the liberals are the smallest group of all young Muslims, their invitation to reinterpret and challenge traditional texts and aspects of the Islamic civilization – inspired by the idea that living in a secular society

should require secular behaviour – represents a risk for their coexistence with the other two groups of young Muslims. Kollontai correctly points out that "[t]radition refers to the content (teaching, beliefs and rituals) of a religion and interpretation refers to what happens to these things once there is a change in the context in which the religion is operating" (Kollontai 2007, 59). Having said that, many liberals have never had direct contact with Muslim tradition and therefore risk misinterpretation of some of its elements. In this respect, traditional and neo-traditional Muslims appear as better informed, as they can address teaching, beliefs and rituals based on their own, family cultivated tradition. On the other hand, reinterpretation is problematic on its own, as there are no proper guidelines for how to proceed with a new interpretation of Islam, an interpretation that would suit European standpoints about Islam and how Muslims in Europe should behave.

Finally, liberal Muslims go even further in their own alienation by arguing that once changed in the West, a Europeanized Islam could affect the whole Islamic culture. For example, both Dalil Boubakeur, the Head of the Paris Mosque, and Soheib Bencheikh, the Grand Mufti of Marseille, are regarded as leading figures of a Europeanized Islam. In their view, successful coexistence is conditioned by clear differentiation between religion, politics and ethics (Bencheikh 2000). It appears that long tradition represents an obstacle that could be overcome by an interfaith dialogue bringing different Muslim communities, – traditionalists, neo-traditionalists and liberals – and non-Muslims together. Along these lines, liberal Muslims perceive the European Union as the main actor capable of imposing European values on Muslim immigrants. In fact, as maintained by Tibi, Europeans have every right to reject Muslim identity and to insist on their own identity. Still, such strong advocacy can easily provoke unwanted reactions by other Muslim communities (traditionalists and, to a lesser extent, neo-traditionalists) and more importantly, question and undervalue the ethical principles the EU itself has been insisting on since its early days. If, by any chance, such a project would prove successful, Europeans would finally overcome their prejudices about Islam, up to now being "an object of suspicion for many Europeans as it was in the heyday of Christianity" and undermining "any celebration of European achievements and of the project of European unification" (Outhwaite 2008, 132). As a result, Muslim communities in Europe would probably face another act of discrimination.

Conclusion

This paper examined the position of three different groups of young Muslims in the European Union and their perceptions of European identity. From traditionalists to neo-traditionalists and liberals, it is obvious that all of them have

rather contrasting views that can be accepted or rejected by both policy-makers and public. Muslim tradition, which usually comes hand in hand with religion, cannot be ignored. As correctly argued by Ramadan, the decision to abandon tradition could easily cause confusion within Muslim society and end in conflict. In order to avoid such scenarios, adjustments that would not compromise traditional values, but rather modernize them, seem to be the only solution.

For example, in 2001, members of the European Parliament met with international experts to address the growing role of religion in European policy. As the press release observed, this meeting took place "at a time when religious institutions are increasingly interested in participating in policy debates within Europe even as the positions of some religious institutions are at odds with the values that form a European consensus on critical issues" (European Parliament Online). During the meeting, Camillo Ruini, an Italian cardinal, criticized the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights adopted in December 2000 for not having included the "historical and cultural roots of Europe, in particular Christianity, which represents Europe's soul and which still today can inspire Europe's mission and identity" – a criticism complementing an earlier point offered by Joseph Ratzinger, then cardinal and now head of the Catholic Church, for whom "God and our responsibility before God" should have been "anchored in the European constitution" (Ibid.).

There is no need to explain here what kind of discord the above quoted words might provoke amongst the non-Catholics or non-Christians. If applied to the Balkans, they could signify that Turkey, although a candidate country for European Union membership, will remain a candidate country forever. If applied to the Western Balkans, then surely Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo and Albania will have to pass different tests to convince Europeans that being different, being Muslim, will not affect negatively neither their own integrationist vision nor the basics of European identity. In this respect, compromise again appears to be a prerequisite for a successful coexistence, but who is going to make the first step?

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Kako evropski mladi Muslimani vide evropski identitet?

Ovaj rad ispituje situaciju u Evropskoj Uniji gde su već uveliko prisutne narastajuće muslimanske zajednice. Početno shvatanje Evropske ekonomske zajednice (EEZ) kao hrišćanske i demokratske, a otuda i katoličke, više nije validno. Zapravo, iz

perspektive socijalnih konstruktivista, prisustvo Muslimana predstavlja izazov i već je dovelo do brojnih debata o tome šta se promoviše kao evropski identitet. Shodno tome, ovo kvalitativno istraživanje se fokusira na paralelno postojanje dva identiteta i postavlja pitanje do koje mere su mladi u Evropi rođeni Muslimani spremni da prihvate evropski identitet ili, naprotiv, nastavljaju da neguju svoj osoben muslimanski identitet. U ovom radu se tvrdi da mladi Muslimani mogu biti podeljeni u tri grupe: na tradicionaliste, neo-tradicionaliste i liberalne. Ovu podelu društvo olako prenebregava i, što je važnije, kreatori politike kada razmatraju samo prvu kategoriju u prikazivanju Islama kao ozbiljnog izazova evropskom identitetu. U završnom delu ističe se potreba za dodatnim naporima u ime i Evropljana i Muslimana, naporima koji bi doveli do uspešnije koegzistencije i potvrdili evropski kosmopolitizam spram drugih.

Ključne reči: mladi Muslimani, evropski identitet, adaptacija

Comment les jeunes musulmans européens voient-ils l'identité européenne?

Dans cet article on examine la situation dans l'Union Européenne où la présence des communautés musulmanes s'est déjà révélée croissante. La conception initiale de ce qui était autrefois la Communauté économique européenne, c'est-à-dire une communauté chrétienne, démocratique, enfin catholique, n'est plus valide. En fait, du point de vue social constructiviste, la présence des musulmans a été une sorte de défi et a mené à de nombreux débats concernant ce qui est promu comme identité européenne. Par conséquent, cette analyse qualitative se concentre sur la coexistence de deux identités et s'interroge dans quelle mesure les jeunes musulmans nés dans l'UE, sont prêts à accepter l'identité européenne, ou bien, tout au contraire, continuent à cultiver leur propre identité musulmane. Le travail expose que les jeunes musulmans peuvent être divisés en trois différents groupes – les traditionnalistes, les néo-traditionnalistes et les libéraux; une distinction qui est volontiers ignorée par la société et, ce qui est plus important, par les décideurs politiques, qui ne prennent en considération que la première catégorie lorsqu'ils peignent l'Islam comme un sérieux défi à l'identité européenne. Enfin, le travail note que de plus grands efforts sont nécessaires de la part aussi bien des Européens que des musulmans, efforts qui vont mener à une co-existence réussie et vont valider l'approche cosmopolitaine de l'UE envers son altérité.

Mots clés: jeunes musulmans, identité européenne, adaptation

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