
***COSMOPOLITANISM AND THE EUROPEAN UNION'S MULTICULTURIST
PROJECT***

Cătălin Constantin Diaconu, PhD Student, "Al. Ioan Cuza" University of Iași

Abstract: Two main approaches were used at the stage of European integration: the economic and the political-social one. In the latter, the political system is an apparatus which serves the purpose of selecting and implementing normative systems to the effect of attaining integration. The article attempts a parallel analysis of two paradigms concerning the social realities of the European Union and with the need that these paradigms focus on a 'unity in diversity' which characterizes the European space. In order to integrate this goal, I will briefly outline the consequences of multiculturalism in relation to the social needs it must respond to. The mismatch between what multiculturalism proposes to achieve and what it succeeds in achieving can be understood as a deadlock of integration and not a failure. The last part of the article will seek to define the ethic fundamentals of cosmopolitanism in relation to the same social realities. The conclusion which will be built on these principles will show us the way in which the European integration might continue to take place around these fundamentals which are of a certain normative character.

Keywords: *cosmopolitanism, multiculturalism, etics, european integration, social rights*

When the project of the European Union was seen as the sole solution to avoid the horrors of recently ended wars, the concept of *European integration* was thought out as a catalyst which would lead to the constitution of a large European society. This integration first happened by the building a common market. Establishing this integrated market was possible through the creation of superstate structures which, through a set of common norms and values, would make up a systemic unit so that afterwards this political and economic integration would be followed by a social one, as well. Thus, the citizens of Europe become the citizens of the European Union without giving up regional or national specificities. Within the initial treaties dealing with the formation of the European Community, the purpose of transnational institutions was to build the common market. At this stage, social integration, seen as a long-term aspiration, remained in the background as the fore was being taken up by the practical priorities of the moment.

The theorization of the processes resulting in European integration meant the establishing, from the very beginning, of a paradigm of international relations that aimed at the realistic school's model (inter-national relations) through which the maximization of each of the Union's members' national interests was sought.¹

Later on, the transition from the consolidation of the common economy to the making of a sole cultural and social space was achieved through the post-Maastricht model. Rightfully, social responsibility and economic growth must not rule each other out. 'Growth' is desirable, but not at the price of giving up the moral legitimacy provided by the conscience of a European identity. The economic integration achieved up to that point created a social European model. There were several versions of that model: Northern, Catholic, Southern – each with its variants. The common denominator did not consist of a series of economic or

¹ Dusan Sidjanski, (2010) *Viitorul federalist al Europei*, Polirom, , p 13

political practices. It was rather a perception – sometimes phrased at the level of public opinion, sometimes not – about what social rights, civic solidarity, collective responsibility – which is to be desired in a modern state and in an European democracy – mean.

Europe was, at the end of the millennium, of a thriving diversity. The dissolution of physical barriers, which do not always overlap cultural borders, the unprecedented speed of communications, as well as the contrasting perspectives of Islam and Christianity, the two great religions on the Continent – all these were an obstacle in easily discerning a form of collective experience.

It is in this context that the necessity of assessing a new paradigm that legitimates this super-statal political structure – the European Union – appears. It must refer to democratic values and principles: observing the autonomy of the person,² the minorities' rights and interests, women's rights, equal opportunities, social justice – unanimous values in the nation-states that make up the EU.

1. Unity and Diversity: Key Concepts in the European Integration Paradigm

Throughout history, there have always been flexible borders between the ethnic groups and peoples of Europe. The European continent has always been the space of migrations, interactions, disagreements and conflicts between nations. This diversity of origins was an essential element in the evolution of the European civilisation. The state of conflict that has tormented the history of Europe requires a different approach: applying the solution of *inclusion* to matters which have constantly been approached exclusively in the terms of *exclusion*. This explains the way in which, at different times in its evolution and expansion, the EU has continued to claim it is a project, not a territory. It has defined itself as political, not geographical, entity. This project had as main motivation the opposition towards any form of totalitarianism and authoritarianism that lead the entire European civilisation on the brink of disaster and annihilation. This opposition was characterized by the commitment to bring the Declaration of Human Rights at the fore of European policies and avoiding any form of totalitarianism. The most important results of the anti-totalitarian reaction are: the negotiation of differences, the suppression of unjustified inequalities, the reconciliation of contradictory values.

In order to support these statements, I will quote from *Opinion no. 64 of the Consultative Council of the European Judges* from 1935, which argues that the protection of national and cultural communities co-inhabiting Europe has, at its basis, 'making sure that the different elements incorporated by the state, distinguished by race, language or religion, have the possibility to live in peace and in friendly cooperation with the majority and that, at the same time, they retain the features that distinguish them from the majority and the satisfaction of the ensuing specific necessities.'³ These policies, phrased as officially adopted political ideologies, were constituted to support *inclusion*.

²I preferred the concept of 'autonomy' to that of freedom due to its ethical connotations.

³ *Apud* Gabriel Andreescu, (2001)*Națiuni și minorități*, Iași, Polirom, , p. 134.

2. European Multiculturalism

European cultural diversity was dominated, up until the late 70s, by historical minorities. Until then, the main European states had integrated the national communities that separated themselves from the majority by means of specific legislation meant to ensure social inclusion, as well as means of fighting discrimination. Collective obligations were also adopted within the Council of Europe and European Communities. Most of the measures adopted by the EU concerning the cultural minorities were multiculturalist. However, multiculturalism became established as a political ideology especially after the 1980s as a means of managing the new minorities. This was also the moment when multiculturalism started to fail precisely because it exclusively focused on the attribute of `culture` while ignoring other human dimensions. Thus, in very many cases, the `tradition` invoked by these minorities seriously violated children's right to education or women's right to self-determination (So-called honor murders are a significant problem in Britain)⁴. Multiculturalists perceive communities as monoliths and do not provide individuals with status or fail in establishing an ethical framework concerning power relations between members. Courts belonging to minority cultures, for instance, such as the Stabor, which is a highly patriarchal parallel court of justice, or the Sharia, which imposes itself as the only Law authority adopted by the Muslim community, the Sharia observes that so-called `Cairo Declaration`, which emphasizes the fact that the position of the Muslim world regarding the fundamental human rights is one of rejection.⁵ In many cases, the women's appearance before these courts is not voluntary; those convicted by these courts cannot appeal. Also, juridical procedures lack transparency – a central element to law practice which guarantees a fair trial. The judge's verdict is, of course, not justified.⁶

We can state that these communities' practice of seizing the claim to self-affirmation in order to promote, in their turn, a culture that rejects the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Man, a declaration which states, first and foremost, the rights by which entitles these communities' right to self-affirmation, is nonsensical. As a response to the failure of multiculturalism in the main EU countries, the political elite of most Western countries has distanced itself from multiculturalism in a series of statements.

Thus, Angela Merkel and Thilo Sarrazin declared at an Oct. 16(2010) meeting of young members of her party, the Christian Democratic Union, that multiculturalism, or Multikulti, as the Germans put it, `has failed totally`⁷. The statement should be taken with utmost seriousness and considered for its social and geopolitical implications. It should also be considered in the broader context of Europe's response to immigration, not to Germany's response alone.⁸ David Cameron, in his first speech as Prime Minister, re-affirmed multiculturalism's failure: `Let's properly judge these organisations: Do they believe in universal human rights - including for women and people of other faiths? Do they believe in

⁴”Father denies killing daughter in UK 'honor murder' case” By Richard Allen Greene, CNN, July 11, 2012, <http://edition.cnn.com/2012/07/11/world/europe/uk-shafiea-honor-murder/>

⁵Fatema Mernissi, (2002) *Islam and Democracy*, Cambridge, Perseus Books, p. 67.

⁶Ann Mayer, (1999)“An Assessment of Human Rights Schemes”, in *Islam and Human Rights*, Westview, Westview Press p. 175.

⁷ Geore Frideman, *Germany and the Failure of Multiculturalism*, Stratfor, OCTOBER 19, 2010 | 08:55 GMT

⁸ *Ibidem*.

equality of all before the law? Do they believe in democracy and the right of people to elect their own government? Do they encourage integration or separatism? These are the sorts of questions we need to ask. Fail these tests and the presumption should be not to engage with organisations.....the "doctrine of state multiculturalism", different cultures have been encouraged to live separate lives..... the key to achieving true cohesion by allowing people to say "I am a Muslim, I am a Hindu, I am a Christian, but I am a Londoner... too"⁹

3. Cosmopolitanism, A New Perspective

Multiculturalism has failed in the way it should have addressed the double condition of the human being: of counting in itself and of counting for/along with the others. For to address this double condition means that we must own principles which are and must be universal, as well as there are a plethora of values which are, and should be, local.¹⁰

As we have seen so far, the ideological solution for European integration must take an essential aspect into account: individuals must be considered members of a European community. This implies bestowing a new meaning to the idea of `responsibility`. Individuals have a responsibility towards all the other members of the community, not only towards those within a particular group (nation, ethnic group, family, etc.) and, most importantly, all human beings must be considered *morally equal*. The normative commitments listed above only seem attainable under the terms of autonomy, which is the core of the EU political project, which thinks of the person as a `free and equal citizen`, at least in principle, in a manner *comprehensible* to all. The theories of democracy provide normative models of the way in which individual autonomy can be defended in particular historical, social and economical contexts. Unlike other political ideologies which have the role to understand and define the political regime, cosmopolitanism has a rather normative role, in the sense that it relies on a set of ideals, ideas, ethical principles and doctrines that will define a social and political frame of action. Through people's autonomy, cosmopolitanism understands the fact that human beings or persons are taken to be "self-originating sources of valid claims" and, as such, as the ultimate units of concern. In this way, moral cosmopolitanism differs from moral approaches that take ethnic or religious communities, the family, the state, traditions, etc. as moral concerns in and of themselves. For cosmopolitanism, such issues are not valuable intrinsically, but only instrumentally in the role they play in making people's lives better.¹¹ David Held defines this type of principle as a `metaprinciple` as it shapes, in its turn, a new series of specific principles, such as the principle of equal opportunities, of active agency, of responsibility and transparency, of making collective decisions through vote in public matters (by abiding by the inclusiveness and subsidiarity criteria in the making of jurisdictions), the principle of avoiding serious damages that can be brought upon individuals (or the principle of social justice) etc.¹² Contemporary cosmopolitanism is preoccupied with the conceptualization and generation of

⁹ 'State multiculturalism has failed, says David Cameron', BBC News, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-12371994>.

¹⁰ Kwame Anthony Appiah, (1994) 'Identity Authenticity Survival', in *Multiculturalism. Examining the Politics of Recognition*, Princeton University Press, , p.163

¹¹ Roland Pierik and Wouter Werner, (2013) *Cosmopolitanism in Context, Perspectives from International Law and Political Theory*, Cambridge University Press, , p 15

¹² David Held, (2010) *Cosmopolitanism. Ideals, Realities and Deficits*, Polity Press, Bodmin, pp 20-25

conditions that can currently lead to the achievement of autonomy within the framework of a fundamental common structure of individual action and social activity¹³.

Conclusion

The integration in a single political unit requires renouncing hegemony. The EU integration process must bring together the diverse elements of the European continent in a dynamic balance. Thus defined, integration must entail keeping the quality of each nation of ethnic group, of each region. It must represent the opposite of totalitarian simplification. The European Union will not be able to work as a social project if is not a space of freedom and pluralism of ideas, cultures, faiths evolving in complex and diversified social interconnection, an ideological system founded on acknowledging the free and responsible man, on tolerance. Throughout this article I have attempted to emphasize those elements which can support the statement that cosmopolitanism is fundamentally an ethical-political philosophy which responds to the same needs as multiculturalism but is different in its approach. This philosophy's specificity lies in the 'normative individualism', whose dimensions (individualism, impartiality, inclusion and generality) require the global application of derived principles such as the principles of autonomy, impartial argumentation, equal opportunity, representative participation, responsibility, social justice or public intervention. Cosmopolitanism thus significantly influences the theory of democracy, as well as theory of justice, providing new meanings to their founding principles.¹⁴

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: This work was supported by the strategic grant POSDRU/159/1.5/S/133652, co-financed by the European Social Fund within the Sectorial Operational Program Human Resources Development 2007 – 2013.

REFERENCES

1. Andreescu, Gabriel (2001)*Națiuni și minorități*, Iași, Polirom 2001
2. Appiah Kwane Antony,(1994) Identity Autenticity Survival, in *Multiculturalism. Examining the Politics of Recognition*, Princeton University Press, 1994
3. Dusan Sidjanski, (2010) *Viitorul federalist al Europei*, Polirom 2010
4. Held David,(2010) *Cosmopolitanism. Ideals, Realities and Deficits*, Polity Press, Bodmin, 2010
5. Hollinger David A.,(2006)*Cosmopolitanism and Solidarity*, University of Wisconsin Press 2006
6. Mernissi Fatema,(2002) *Islam and Democracy*, Cambridge, Perseus Books 2002
7. Mayer Ann, (1999)An Assessment of Human Rights Schemes, in *Islam and Human Rights*, Westview, Westview Press 1999
8. Pierik Roland and Wouter Werner, (2013)*Cosmopolitanism in Context, Perspectives from International Law and Political Theory*,Cambridge University Press 2013
9. https://www.stratfor.com/weekly/20101018_germany_and_failure_multiculturalism accesat 24.02.2015
10. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-12371994>. accesat 24.02.2015
11. <http://edition.cnn.com/2012/07/11/world/europe/uk-shafiea-honor-murder/> accesat 24.02.2015

¹³*Idem*, p. 16

¹⁴David A. Hollinger,(2006)*Cosmopolitanism and Solidarity*, University of Wisconsin Press, , p. 106.