



ANTISEMITISM AND ISLAMOPHOBIA: TWO FACES OF DISCRIMINATION?

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INTEGRIM ONLINE PAPERS

N°2/2016

“The research leading to these results has received funding from the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007-2013) under grant agreement n° 316796”

1. Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia: two faces of discrimination?

It is of no news that Jews are passing through worrying times in Europe. The list of European cities where Jews have lately been attacked and the number of anti-Semitic uttering or desecration of Jewish graves is on the raising in Europe. No wonder Jews in Europe ask themselves questions they hoped had been banished long ago: is it safe to wear a kippah (skullcap), send one's children to Jewish schools or attend synagogue? (The Economist, 2105). Many observers wonder about the new features of the new anti-Semitism raising up. Whether we are facing a return of the old type of "brown" racist anti-Semitism or whether what we have nowadays are basically jihadist attacks against Jews and basic left liberals bashing of Israel and Zionism? As Robert Wistrich remarks: "once considered the preserve of reactionary clerics, conservative nationalists, fascist bigots, and ultra-radical leftists, Judeophobia has undergone a radical mutation in recent years." It has become an issue of the liberal left and its banishing of Israel. (Wistrich, 2005, p.1) For these brands of people anti-Semitism or hatred of the Jews is an over-lasting phenomenon that because of its consequences in the Holocaust is non comparable to any other phenomenon of discrimination and ethnic repression.

Others scholars and organizations however, while not diminishing or relativizing the importance of the Holocaust, still attempt to define the current bashing of Muslims in Europe as part of a discrimination process that could lead to dramatic consequences. Not in vain the French government has recently destined 100 million euros to the struggle against anti-Semitism and Islamophobia together

Although nothing compares to the Holocaust, still from a moral perspective several observers and scholars consider Jewish bashing and Muslim discrimination are product of a long term discrimination against the "other". As was expressed by Robert Prkiss of the EUMC management board, European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC), the European Union's research institute and think tank on racism and xenophobia: "Our conceptions of European identity are significant drivers of anti-Semitism and Islamophobia. One of the similarities between anti-Semitism and Islamophobia is their historical relationship to a Europe perceived as exclusively Christian. Jews have of course suffered the most unspeakable crimes by European Christians" (European Commission and EUMC 2003:103).

Furthermore for some scholars as A. Anidjar, to suggest that Jews are the endangered minority of Europe is ludicrous . If anything, Muslims are. Muslims are also the poor and the unemployed (who may no longer be a minority very soon, at the rate things are going). It is frightening thus to accept the kind of anti-Muslims discourse that passes in Europe as permissible in the public sphere against them. Following this line Anne Norton, advanced the concept of the 'Muslim Problem' in order to present the case of the Muslims in Europe as similar to the famous question of the Jewish problem. "The Jewish question was fundamental for politics and philosophy in the Enlightenment. In our time as the Enlightenment fades, the Muslim question takes its place." (Norton, 2013, p.1)

I suggest that this claim synthesizes the problem, and it is an important starting point for this article. My main argument is that integrating the Jews into the polity was an integral part and even a justification of the Enlightenment project and its ideological configurations, liberalism, socialism and the democratic state. At the same time the Jew became a marker and a challenge for the enemies of the Enlightenment in all its forms. While the integration of the Jew into the polity proved the success of the emancipating role of the Enlightenment, it became a problem and an asset for anti-democratic nationalists. The integration of the Jew into the polity, the judeization of the nation implied its political and cultural decadence. In that sense precisely the Jewish will to assimilate/ integrate on the one hand and the will of nationalist to redefine the nation as contrasting the ultimate "other" the Jew, served in shaping the idea of anti-liberal national-socialism.

This is not to say that anti-Judaism is only property of the exclusionist Right. It is well entrenched in Western thought in general. Karl Marx and Edmund Burke and a wide variety of intellectuals not necessarily nationalists or racists have used the Jew in order to explain Christian heresies, political tyrannies, medieval plagues, capitalist crises, and revolutionary movements. In this sense as notes David Nirenberg, anti-Judaism contributed Westerners, to make sense of the world (Nirenberg, 2013).

Notwithstanding, although the very idea of anti-Judaism erupted with almost no relation to specific political ideologies, we must stress that since the end of the 19th century it became a central asset precisely for those ideological forces that rejected one specific idea: that the "Other" can integrate into modern society. In that sense, the Jew fits perfectly well for exclusionist nationalists aspiring to define the nation as pure ethnic identity.

In slight contrast, the integration of Muslims into the western democratic polity has set a challenge and became a problem for liberals rather than for conservative exclusionists. Paradoxically the question of Muslims integration, has contributed in enhancing a type of "civic confrontation" in liberal political thought, between liberal multiculturalists and supporters of religious freedom on the one side, and secular democratic liberal nationalists, civic integrationist, and supporters of individual equality over religious freedom on the other. The conflict over the Muslims question and the definition of Islamophobia, has shaped and radicalized these two versions of liberalism

In short, in contrast to scholars that present Jews and Muslims as similar victims of racist nationalism, I suggest that while Jews have enhanced the conflict between the racist integralist Right and liberal democratic nationalism, the question of Islam has triggered a dilemma in liberalism itself, precisely because Muslims challenge the western democratic idea of civic integration into a national secular society.

Finally this article will not deal with the question of anti-Israeli anti-Semitism although which detects a new anti-Semitism in the new and expanding criticism of Israel, especially by left-wing liberals. In general terms I reject that assessment, although at the same time the Jew hatred argument takes another dimension nowadays through the Islamic rebellion in Europe. When radical Islamists target both Charlie Hebdo and the kosher supermarket in Paris, they hardly want to avenge Muslims from Western imperialism or Zionism. They rather targeted the complementary role fulfilled by the most radical expression of French democratic secular republicanism, Charlie Hebdo; and by the group most representative of the success of the Republican policies of integration/assimilation.

2. The Republic and democratic assimilation

One of the questions we should deal with when we open a debate on anti-Semitism and Islamophobia is why we should start with the French model of republican assimilation. All to all, for more than twenty years, scholars considered the model of French national republicanism as obsolete. Scholars suggested that the visible lack of integration of migrants, greater European unification, and the eruption of colonial memory have all challenged France's conception of itself. (Chabal, 2010, 495) Furthermore, several scholars were ready to admit that since the emergence and the establishment of multiculturalism as a dominant paradigm during the 1980's, and the appearance of new theories suggesting that national citizen rights are re-casted as global

human rights there is hardly a need for national association. (Soysal 1996, 4). However, it seems that nowadays there is a setback. In general terms those expecting the end of nationalism and the end of national citizenship have been disappointed. Indeed the idea of national citizenship in a liberal democratic state still can and does have more than a minimalist procedural content. (Hansen 2009). Furthermore, France still is the ideological and political laboratory of Europe. Even its non-ending debate over the contemporary definition of the nation which sounded bizarre and non-relevant for Europe during the 1980s and 1990s has become relevant again especially because of the challenge of Islam. If we pay attention to Britain's current debate on Britishness and civic integration programs, we must admit that even in liberal Great Britain, nationalism is returning from the backdoor, and France "obsolete" way to deal with the "other" is being reconsidered.

Indeed France is the crucial test, in where the fate of Muslims integration in European societies will be defined in current times. France has the largest Muslim population in Europe. It is in France in where the great majority of Muslims has been assimilated in French secular society, but still it is in France in where young Muslims are the most radicalized in Europe. Furthermore, it might sound bizarre that Muslims are portrayed in France more favorably than elsewhere in Europe, precisely in a country in where the most potent far-right party in Europe, thrives

It might be said, thus that if there's a path to greater Muslim assimilation and inclusion, it's more likely to be pioneered in France. If Islamic radicalism is going to gain ground, that will happen first in France's sphere of influence. At the same time if Europe's much-feared far right is going to complete its journey from the fringe to the mainstream, which might occur also in France first (Ross Douthat, 2015). However, more than that, after the terrorist attacks on Charlie Hebdo, the debate of freedom of expression, individual rights, freedom of religion and freedom from religion, are all issues that are being debated and radicalized in France as a reflection of the hard encounter of Muslims in a secular society dominated by the idea of *laïcité*, a type of secularism that pushes religion to the fringes. However if France is the epicenter of the debate in favor or against the idea of integration/assimilation of the other, this hardly implies that the problem is not universal. The debate has been and it is part of the debate on Europe's cultural identity. As we shall see, France was also the epicenter of the debate on Jewish emancipation and assimilation, as well as the place in where the idea of "national socialist" anti-Semitism was coined and radicalized. The question

thus, is whether the debate on the integration of the Jew and the rise of anti-Semitism, can help us to understand the current problem of Muslim integration and Islamophobia.

3. The Jew: Integrating the ultimate other into the Republic

As noted by Wendy Brown, the paradox of the integration of the Jew into the Republic was that Jews could be and were enfranchised on the condition of assimilation. That means that integrating the Jew was conditioned on the fact that they cast off constitutive Jewish practices or at least, send these practices to the private sphere. In short, "emancipation was tacitly or expressly dependent upon assimilation, which is to say, upon transformation of the Jew" (Brown, 2004) In this sense to be compatible with membership in the French republic, Jews had to be individuated, denationalized and de-corporatized as Jews. Jewishness could no longer consist in belonging to a distinct community bound by religious law, ritualized practices, and generational continuity, but would, rather, consist at most in privately held and conducted belief (Brown, 2004, 5-6) . In the famous words of député Clermont-Tonnerre: "Jews must be refused everything qua nation, and granted everything qua individuals... they acquire citizenship individually", (Lochak, Danièle, 1989: 111-112). In 1791, Jews were invited to take a civic oath and to renounce "all privileges and exceptions formerly introduced in their favor" as a religious minority. They were granted full citizenship as individuals, not on the basis of their group membership (Laborde, 2008: 38).

The "emancipation" of Jews thus, provided an early model for the individualistic mode of citizenship. The question however, is whether the price of becoming part of the French nation which implied the disaggregation of the Jewish nation, the de-corporatization of Jews, disassociation of Jews from Jews elsewhere and the making of Jews into modern French republicans, was a high price to paid ? Did the Jews reject it? And if they did not reject, then the question is why they did not? Brown is aware, that French Jews wanted to move from the margins to the mainstream of French society. This is certainly true in Germany as well. In particular, assimilated French Jews drew back sharply from the new Jewish immigrants fleeing the Eastern European and Russian pogroms. As was noted by M. Marrus those Jews coming from the East were too poor and unmannered, and above all, too Jewish (Marrus, 1971: 158–62). That observation indeed reflected a simple fact which was that the majority of Jews in the modern West going through a process of democratization were enticed precisely by the promises of the Enlightenment. Assimilation would transform Jews into more modern, and free. Emblematic in this regard is the nineteenth-century assimilationist Jewish historiography that cast the Revolution of 1789 as the "modern Passover," the second flight from Egypt (Marrus, 1971: 91–92, Brown 2004, 6).

However, another important point that critics of the model of assimilation tend to forget, is that paradoxically as notes D Schnapper, the cosmopolitan “Jews became the real French ... while the original population remained to be first and foremost Lombardi, Piedmonts, or Normans.” (Schnapper, 1998, 142) Ironically, while the idea of “citizenship” transformed “non-authentic French” into nationals, the “vrai pays” (real country) sub-national identities were repressed. All were assimilated into the secular, Republican nation. As Alain Dieckhoff has noted, the founders of the democratic Third Republic could not conceive of a French citizen who could simultaneously maintain his original, primary identity, be it Basque, Breton or Catalan. Local identities were denigrated as archaic regionalisms, and were ultimately relegated to the private sphere (Dieckhoff, 2005: 69). The interesting thing is that while regional minority identities and the majority Catholic religion resisted the Republican war against diversity, the Protestant minority and discriminated ethnic and religious groups such as Jews became an integral part of the secularization and homogenization process of the Republic.

It is not strange thus that Jews wanted to secularized and assimilate. That was not only a price that only them had to pay. It is not strange thus that assimilation was a major centrifugal force in Jewish life since the second half of the 18th century. It became an element of increasing magnitude in Jewish thought and society and helped to mold a new image of the Jew in literature and art, in which the problems it posed were reflected.

However in different European countries, the interrelationship between civil rights and liberalism was problematic and the Jewish will to integrate was not always enough.

Arguments took two general forms. One side held that Jews first had to demonstrate loyalty to the state and begin to behave like "natives" in order to merit citizenship. The other side claimed that while Jews acted differently due to their historic discrimination; only through granting civic rights they would abandon odious behavior and behave as nationals. The explicit message was that Jews would have to become patriotic and have to abandon specific characteristics that seem that gentiles no matter from what ideological side they were could hardly accept.

As Ira Katznelson notes, even in the United States the idea as reported in a Philadelphia newspaper, was that “Liberty has done for them [the Jews] what the hard repression and persecution of other nations has failed to accomplish” (Birnbaum, Katznelson, 1995: 157). As most authors of the volume *Paths of Emancipation* (1995) remark, Jewish successes in gaining their rights were not complete victories. Not always legal changes were accompanied by greater toleration on the part of the churches or general populations. Furthermore for the Jewish community, freedom was Janus faced, bringing an increased rate of conversion, intermarriages, and religious apathy in small communities. While that was exactly the results for which many advocates of emancipation had hoped, that was a dynamic that Jews fear even nowadays.

Finally and that is the final point, integration was no guarantee of permanent emancipation As Werner Mosse detects in relation to German Jews, integration was the dominance of liberal

ideals. If liberalism fails as happened during the twentieth century, the Jews' civil rights would collapse with liberalism itself. The other way around the enemies of liberalism would actually fight the Jews in general, but more importantly, they will fight against the assimilated Jew, because it undermines the national soul.

4. Anti-Semitism as a way to redefine the nation

The word anti-Semitism was invented in 1879 by Wilhelm Marr a political conservative influenced by Johann Gottfried von Herder, who had developed the idea of the Volk, and initiated the Burschenschaft movement of the early nineteenth century. Von Harder rejected the participation of Jews and other minorities in the German nation unless they assimilate and adopt a Christian-German spirit" (a decision of the "Burschenschaft Congress of 1818"). Similarly to Heinrich von Treitschke later, they were assimilationist, although the object to where the Jew had to be assimilated was not a secular society, but to a Christian-German spirit. While for an assimilated Jew the idea of integrating into a secular society was a relatively easy step, integration into Christian German. However, Marr even went further than them, in the attempt to racialize the Jew. He rejected the idea of assimilation. In his pamphlet *Der Weg zum Siege des Germanentums über das Judentum* (The Way to Victory of Germanicism over Judaism, 1879) he introduced the idea that Germans and Jews were locked in a longstanding conflict, the origins of which he attributed to race — and that the Jews were winning. He argued that Jewish emancipation resulting from German liberalism had allowed the Jews to control German finance and industry. Although Marr did not develop the concept of race, not even in a pseudo-scientific way, he was a social Darwinist of the type personified by the French nationalist writer Maurice Barrés and Ernst Haeckel, a professor who popularized the notion of Social Darwinism among Germany's educated classes. In France, intellectuals such as Maurice Barrés, Charles Maurras, and Louis Drumont, all of them associated the assimilation of the Jews to the centralist character of the Republic and its idea of universal citizenship. Interestingly, by assuming a "libertarian" approach, they assumed that this role of the Republic attempted and undermined the real and vital organic parts of the nation. In more sense than one they considered that the homogenizing role of Republican democracy would destroy the rich variety of cultures. Barrés brand of racism was not scientific, and he considered himself embedded in the Republican tradition. Nonetheless his cultural relativism and his concept of nationalism which relied in *La Terre et les Morts* was to

drive him into racial anti-Semitism and physiological determinism. While he accused Jews for not blending, namely for no assimilating, he pointed out the physical signs of Jewishness made them recognizable from a distance and utterly unassimilable. However, this raises the questions on regards to his anti Dreyfussian ideology. All at all, Dreyfuss was a completely assimilated Jew. How to make sense of it? Will a modern assimilated Jew similar to those that despise the "other Jews" of Eastern Europe be qualified for Frenchness according to Barrés.

As remarked by Z Sternhell, Barrés has found in modern anti-Semitism the best means for bringing the proletariat into the national communion. This way he transformed simple xenophobic and anti-Jewish feelings into a political concept of the first magnitude. Rejecting clerical anti-Semitism, thus, Barres focus on anti-Semitism as a political conception not mere hatred of the Jew; it had its task to fulfill on the flanks of socialism (Sternhell, 1973, 57). To the hard-working proletariat Barres presented the Jew as irremediably alien to manual work and to honest toil, regardless of whether we are dealing with an assimilated or a non-assimilated Jew. As noted by J Muller for nationalists the fact that Jews were so good at capitalism was itself a source of embarrassment. In more sense than one Jews were associated with trade and lending money well before the rise of capitalism in the 17th century (Muller, 2010, p5) Indeed that is the reason why, many of the late 19th and 20th century nationalist movements sought to restrict Jewish citizenship and legal equality out of the perception that Jews excelled at capitalist activity compared to their non-Jewish countryman. In pre-revolutionary Russia Poland, Hungary and Germany the "real" nation was defined in good part over and against the Jews. However, the interesting thing is that paradoxically those motives leading to social anti-Semitism were expanded by Marx in the Jewish Question. As David Niremberg notes Marx uses contemporary debates about Jewish emancipation in order to deal with the overthrow of the capitalist order. Capitalism is identified by Marx with Judaism, and so the overthrow of capitalism will be, he writes, "the emancipation of mankind from Judaism" (Niremberg, 2013, Welzer 2014). The argument is worth quoting, at least briefly: The Jew has already emancipated himself but that was in a Jewish way, namely by acquiring financial power. The idea was that through the Jew, money has risen to world power and the practical Jewish spirit has become the practical spirit of the Christian peoples. According to Niremberg thus, this is exactly what many other writers have done in the long history of Western civilization. In this sense Marx's essay represents a "strategic appropriation of the most powerful

language of opprobrium available to any critic of the powers and institutions of this world.” This is indeed the type of Barresian strategy, which leads to national-socialist anti-Semitic populism. In contrast to this thesis, however, Yoav Peled argues that Marx wanted to surpass Bruno Bauer's main arguments against the emancipating the Jews. Bauer claimed that Judaism as a religion of law, not of faith, was its nature a public creed and therefore incompatible with modern idea that bounds religion to the private sphere. According to Peled, Marx surpasses this argument and precisely treats Judaism as no different from Christianity, while dealing on the nature of the state and the role Jews play in civil society (Peled, 1992). Jewish emancipation thus, was related to universal economic emancipation through the role of the proletariat. The question however, is whether, Marx and Barrés characterization of the Jews, could be compared. Indeed, while they start from a common standpoint that the Jew will “Judaize” society through capitalism, their conclusions would lead to opposing directions. Barrés ideology leads to cultural relativism and finally to racism, while Marx analysis would lead to universal classless society, in where Jews and non-Jews would be totally equal. What is certain as notes Sternhell that Barrés National Socialism finally led to physiological and racial anti-Semitism. From populist Boulangism, which was part of the Republican tradition, Barres shifted through *La Terre et les Morts*, to racial anti-Semitism which would thenceforth be the cornerstone of his organic nationalism. To make perfect sense of what this organic nationalism means, it is quite illustrative to trace Barrés reaction to the Dreyfus affaire. Regardless of Dreyfus voluntarism to become an integral part of the French nation, Barrés claims that the individual will is not relevant. Ethical values are product of the national character and what is odious for a Frenchman is not odious for a Jew. According to Barrés, Dreyfus could not be judged by French justice, because he himself acted according to the dictates of his race (Todorov, 1993: 58). In short, Dreyfus could not become a true Frenchman because the individual cannot define his or her affiliation with a collective identity: “We are demanding that a child of Shem possess the fine features of the Indo European race” (Barres, I, 1902: 153). To be precise, it is not always made clear in accounts of the Dreyfus Affair, that many Dreyfusards were quite as anti-Semitic as their opponents. Zola himself has anti-Semitic stereotypes in his novels; so too the Dreyfusard authors Marcel Prévost and Anatole France. Nor were the Dreyfusards all motivated by a disinterested passion for justice. Pierre Waldeck-Rousseau, a prominent lawyer, refused to defend Dreyfus for fear that it would jeopardize his political career. However, despite that, it could be

argued that the Dreyfus affaire should be considered a watershed in France politics dividing between those defending a democratic Republic and those who rejected the idea of a civic nation and its idea of assimilation. It took eighty years from Barres remarks of the Dreyfus affaire, and forty years after the defeat of fascism and Nazism, for a sort of revival of Barresian political thought. The question is why this revival and for what purpose. The probable response is that in present times the idea of assimilation became scorned not only by the Radical Right but by the post Marxian multicultural left. The Nouvelle Droite led by Alain de Benoist since the 1980s was to transform and adapt Barres cultural relativism for postmodern times as an ideology of “multicultural differentialism”. As was noted by Benoist, “a racism based on culture rather than biology would be a racism without races. And without any commitment to a hierarchical view of cultures, there would be no racism.... The “right to difference” is not different from what you call recognition theory” (Benoist, 1993). It is precisely this “right of difference” or the “obligation to difference” what Barrés defended the most, and paradoxically it is this “right to be different” the underpinning of Muslims struggle in Europe. However, while for Barres-Benoist, the right to be different should lead to exclusion, for multiculturalists and Muslims, it is the only possible mechanism to inclusion. The question is whether European liberals would be ready to be receptive to this plea.

5. Islamophobia: The critic of assimilation

Bhikhu Parekh made the best attempt to date to explain the Muslim challenge to Western democratic societies. Parekh suggests that the encounter between Western and Islamic culture and the subsequent Muslim demands for accommodation, forced Western cultures to face their own arbitrariness. Parekh explains that “...in France, the definition of a secular society was challenged by the controversy surrounding the Muslim veil. In Holland, the meaning of permissiveness was also questioned by Islam’s position on the topic of homosexuality. In Great Britain the Rushdie Affair was a type of earthquake which sparked a debate on the features of British public culture” (Parekh, 1998: 19-21). Until the Rushdie affair, the debate about multiculturalism had been mainly led by members of the majority population; the role of minorities was mostly passive. Integration had been seen as the adjustment of minorities to dominant society; after the affair, it was understood to be a mutual process which would also transform the majority population.

Parekh’s point is remarkable. On the one hand, it rejects the ambiguous arguments surrounding the “clash of civilizations” dispute raised by Samuel Huntington and Bernard

Lewis. On the other hand, it dismantles more optimistic arguments portraying the divergences between Europe Muslims and their host countries as bridgeable.

In a complementary vein Tariq Ramadan suggests that Islam “does not have merely the cultural characteristics of a specific population coming from countries outside Europe.” Without “taking into account the religious dimension, all discussions about aspects of Islam in Europe-social and political integration, economic progress or other matters-would be, if not futile, highly inadequate.” (Ramadan, 2002) Tariq Modood has taken the concept a bit further, by assessing that the growth of Islam in Europe calls for an expansion of the liberal model for coping with the “concept of racism.” The concept must be stretched to include acceptance of religious values (Modood, 2004: 109).

From here thus comes the demand for the accommodation Islam which includes a demand to respect Muslim visibility in the public sphere, acceptance of Sharia as a source of law, (Esposito, and Mogahed, 2007: 92) and inclusion of defamation of religion as a serious affront to human dignity in countries’ legislation.

The question however, is whether Europe is ready for this challenge, and who the ones that oppose it are. Scholars that feel that Europe is raising barriers against those legitimate demands may fall into the concept of Islamophobia. As J. Cesari remarks Islamophobia first appeared in an essay from 1922 by the orientalist Ettiane Dinet however, only at the 1990s it became a common parlance in defining the discrimination of Muslims (Cesari, 2011: 21).

6. Muslim the ultimate other

The question we want to address, however, is whether the challenge of integrating Islam in Europe has indirectly and unwittingly served as a catalyst to the enhancement of two seemingly contrasting agendas, which nonetheless are logically overlapping. On the one hand, it has catalyzed the revival of European nationalism, national values and of civic integration, a strategy conceived at first glance for newcomers, although in reality it is an inwards looking strategy. It is minded to affirm the dominance of the state over cultural minorities.

Two set of questions arise from this assertion. The first set of questions focuses on the ‘ultimate’ other to which this liberal identity responds: Are the ‘ultimate other’ immigrants in general, Muslims in particular, or merely radical “Jihadists”? The second set of questions focus with the features of Europe’s refurbished ‘contested’ identity and its link to liberalism. It asks, whether this liberal identity is inclusive or exclusive?

Regarding the first set of question, we argue that despite the debate on immigration in general, the ultimative other in current times is perceived as Islam. Is

Islam a cultural or a 'security challenge'? Without dismissing the impact of the securitization argument regarding immigration and Islam in particular still, I suggest that in chorus with the debate on terrorism and security, Western European countries were confronted with an even more comprehensive cultural and ideological challenge. The issue explaining the dramatic developments besides religious radicalism or violence is the emergence of a new ideological and cultural challenge sparked by a new generation of European Muslims, eager to contribute to the shaping of Europe's public sphere (Spektorowski, Elfersy, 2015). These second-and-third-generations of European Muslims consist of a wide variety of intellectuals, middle class professionals and activists, as well as alienated youngsters. While not a homogenous group, most of the integrated Muslim professionals have produced an "innovative, cosmopolitan, and self-critical reformulations of [its] own tradition" (Mandaville 2001: 132-136). In general terms, they want to affirm their Islamic identity within its Western context and through interaction with it, re(defining) and (re)constructing in the process what it means to be British (or any national identity) as well as to be Muslim" (Moll, Yasmin, 2007: 1). In contrast to the assimilationist and isolationist approaches, this new band of Muslim intellectuals, communitarian activists, and professionals stress the retention of a visible Islamic identity while at the same time putting that identity in the context of a Western frame of reference. Most of these Muslims are ordinary and law abiding European citizens, who share the understanding that Western democratic societies subjectively justify the discrimination of Islam and Muslims.

The question is whether the type of emerging Islam is critical of its own dogmatic bias. Two opposing positions can be identified with respect to individualization in Islam. One position sees individualization coinciding with what can be defined as the fragmentation of religious authority and liberalization. Within this view, individualization comes as a result of a social adaptation of Muslim minority groups that has placed Islam within the three interrelated paradigms of secularization, individualization, and privatization. Until recently, these have been distinctive characteristics of Western societies". As Olivier Roy suggests, we are witnessing a process in which the realm of "the religious" is disconnected from any system of political control (Roy: 25). The problem for Western liberals however, is that paradoxically, the liberation of religion from culture and political control also allows for a process of growing religious fundamentalism.

At first glance the question is why Europe does not embrace this new brand of Muslims, who reject terrorism, although still aspire to influence Europe through in a synthesis of Islamic sources and multicultural thought. The second set of question relates to Western response.

7. Overlapping consensus, multiculturalism or civic integration

Should the West readapt the concept of racism to include religious defamation? As Talal Assad, remarks modern westerners believe they are free of the restrictions imposed by blasphemy laws, however, in order to protect their own way of life they impose their own restrictions. Secularism thus, must be protected in other less forthrightly religious terms. In a different sense, rather than defending free speech, westerners are defending a Eurocentric understanding of free speech, or a free speech that fit the communitarian national ideologies, concealed under universal criteria. In this sense, if we follow Talal Assad explanation, Islam challenges a "national understanding" of free speech rather than free speech itself. (Assad, 2009) For several critics the ensuing consequence of this approach is that rather than advancing the universal character of liberalism, Europe is crafting an exclusionist liberal identity. Under this reframed liberalism, European nationalisms are portrayed as progressive and tolerant, while Islam and its followers are depicted as incongruous with European secular modernity.

For several liberal scholars, a "modus vivendi" with Islam, as well as with other non-Western cultures can be achieved by overcoming the democratic type of national assimilation or national integration and by opening Western societies to different conceptions of the good - especially Islamic ones. Equipped with John Rawls's ideas from Political liberalism, they claim that threats to well-ordered societies coming from undemocratic or illiberal conceptions of the good (or "comprehensive doctrines") cannot be resolved by imposing a given conception of the good. Different doctrines may give support to liberal democracy from their own perspective and for their own reasons. This type of settlement can bring "certain stability to a liberal society." According to Andrew March, such an overlapping consensus is precisely what might lead to a moderate Islamic acceptance of partnership in Western society (March, 2007).

From a political perspective Alfred Stepan recommends that political leaders should make use of the concept of 'state nation'...' rather than the nation state. (Stepan, Alfred, Linz, Juan J., and Yadav, Yogendra, 2004: 7). This implies the idea that state

neutrality is embedded in a procedural state. The state should abstain from moral judgment, while preserving an equal distance from both majority and minority culture. However, the democratic dynamic of political processes proves the impossibility of state neutrality to the religious and the ethical, or at least this it is a problematic issue of no easy solution. Is neutrality possible? As Veit Bader adds states cannot be culturally neutral and generally, under an approach of “benign neglect” of religious diversity the state acts in favor of religious majorities (Bader, 2007: 68). In short if the public sphere is not neutral but hegemonic and even nationalistic, the state should act, not by removing religion from the public sphere, which is unfair. The state should come to the aid of some religions which suffer disadvantage vis-a-vis majoritarian religions which continue to maintain its historical privilege position. These theories that fit the idea of group rights, and differential citizenship suggest that if a Muslim girl is not willing to swim in a mixed pool or be examined by a male doctor, or if a Sikh boy wants to go to school with a turban, they should be allowed. According to Parekh, this type of cultural diversity is a source of enrichment for society.

However, the impossibility of neutrality as suggested by Bader, might lead precisely to the opposite of what Bader supposes. Indeed if the question of neutrality becomes problematic, from the moment the liberal state rests on one of the competing faiths (rationality) and then becomes a civic religion. Scholars like Richard Rorty who prefer to give away with rationality as the foundation of liberal society will lead to ethnocentrism. Indeed liberalism can survive its divorce from rationalism because of its ethnocentric bonds. Only its ethnocentric background allows liberalism to achieve a greater solidarity than the one expected from an abstract rationalist humanism (Owen, 2001: 71).

It seems that today more than ever European liberalism is advancing its nationalist ethnocentric bonds. The question is whether it is morally compelling and strategic workable. Whether is morally acceptable to demand newcomers to adapt to a liberal culture, which dismisses group cultural rights. While a wide variety of intellectuals support the idea of group rights and that would certainly fit Muslim communities, this view, group rights is becoming increasingly problematic for a wide variety of liberals. As Russell Hardin suggests this type of group rights, might partially cripple the next generation because, typically, it means making sure that the next generation is educated in the minority (Hardin, 2003: 10). However, more important than that, is the fact that precisely because of the fact that Western secularized societies

are populated by assertive cultural minorities, one can understand the growing desire of Western secularized societies to reject group rights, reaffirm national identities and demand integration into them.

From both a normative and utilitarian perspective several critics would argue that these policies are self-defeating and when they are mandatory they are illiberal and normatively illegitimate (Kymlicka, 2015). Pnina Werbner for example considers current strategies of assimilation as an attempt to banish an imaginary cast of “folk evils” (Werbner, 2013: 467). It seems however, that precisely from a strategic and moral perspective European societies feel that civic integration is the only path left.

Differently from the past, Western European democracies are feeling the pressure from two contrasting poles: Muslim assertiveness on the one hand and the rising power of Radical Right wing parties. In short when the pressure comes from multicultural demands on the one hand and ethno exclusionist from the other, western democracies are choosing the middle road of civic integration into a liberal national society.

The civic republican approach does not demand assimilation into a “traditional” religious or particular core culture. Rather, it demands that the historically local cultures, as well as immigrants within its territory, accept the supremacy of an open, modern, inclusive identity constructed “for all” (Petit, 1977). In that sense it does not rely on ancestral tradition but on the contemporary myth of political struggle [and civic religion] to achieve liberal democratic rights (Androche, 2006: 410). In that sense, it seems crucial to preserve the foundational myth of the democratic civic community, especially if that myth was forged in a struggle not only against foreign domination but against “local reactionary” elements as well. It is important that immigrants are acquainted with this narrative.

This pattern was best defined by the former British Foreign Minister Jack Straw, who claimed that “...British nationality is not about blood and soil, but about common civic values. You cannot transmit these ideas without stories. That means freedom through the narrative of the Magna Carta, the civil war, the Bill of Rights, through Adam Smith and the Scottish Enlightenment, the struggle for women’s and workers’ emancipation... and... the fight against unbridled terror” (Straw, 2007). This means a national narrative that sets the basis for what Roger Smith defines as ‘ethically constitutive stories’ (Smith 2003: 64-65).

I suggest that from a strategic perspective that it is the only plausible way to prevent the Radical Right overtaking. From a moral perspective, despite the hardens of civic integration, it is legitimate to define the nation as non-cultural neutral, open to newcomers and protective of individual rights.

7. Muslims as Jews?

A central and problematic question thus is whether anti-Semitism, racism and blasphemy could be compared, even if we admit that Muslims are as dramatically offended by blasphemy as Jews are with anti-Semitic remarks. The question is whether anti-religious comment should be equated with racist uttering. This has surge as a dramatic question especially after the Charlie Hebdo terrorist attack. All to all, Muslims don't claim that Hebdo's cartoons reflect ethnic contempt for Arab or African Muslims as an oppressed people. Instead they are making explicitly religious objection about the treatment of things sacred to their community and faith. No relation whatsoever with racism. Yet the question is, whether abusive words against Islam should not be treated as racist discourse Muslims had a legitimate right to wonder about what at first sight looks as discrimination against them. In this sense, many people decide define themselves as "not Charlie" because they believe that democratic debates should not upset people. In response, however, it can be claimed that that the idea of a democratic civility which implies different things for different people cannot be compared to ideologies and world-views that are accountable for mass murder. If Islam and Muslims had been allegedly murdered for being Muslims, and magazines like Charlie Hebdo, newspapers as Jyllands-Posten, or writers as Salman Rushdie would make a mock out of that, then a logical equivalence could be drew. However no provocations against Muslims have this background and neither of these factors defend an agenda of subjugation or elimination of the other.

As a mode of conclusion let me stress that one of the arguments being advanced is that Muslims in present times are suffering the same kind of discrimination suffered by Jews in the past. Some argue that the discussion regarding the discrimination and racism against Jews that ultimately led to the Holocaust can be resurrected to shed light on the present-day situation of Muslims in Europe. This is a compelling claim that deserves attention. Are the two cases comparable? Raymond Taras suggest that Islamphobia "becomes a cryptic articulation of race and racism" (Taras, R. 421). This constitutes racism even if on the surface this type of racism appears as prejudice against

religion. It could be argued that we are confronting a new racism without genetic assumptions. The results are similar and “the same mechanism that trigger antipathy towards Jews underlie today’s hostility towards Muslims”. The essence of Europe’s “civilizational identity” has been constructed by destabilizing “Islam” and rendering it civilizationaly different from Europe. Wendy Brown and Gil Anidjar suggest that Islam and Judaism have a common history of exclusion, assimilation, and subjection to state policies of exemption in the face of emergencies and political enemies. While Islam is presented as an external enemy, Jews were presented as an internal enemy. They were presented as polarized enemies of each other and common enemies of Europe (Anidjar, 2003, xxv). Without doubt there is enough field for comparison. However, the differences seemed to be more compelling than the encounters. However, more than that the perspectives for a near future are even more compelling. Anti-Semitism not only has led to the destruction of the Jews. It enhanced racist nationalism and presented the ugliest face of reactionary modernism. The other way around Europe’s debate with Euro-Islam has trigger the refurbishing of liberal nationalism in where the struggle for individual rights, women, lesbian and homosexual rights are becoming part of national narratives.

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