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THE MULTICULTURALISM BETWEEN POLITICAL UNITY AND CULTURAL PLURALISM – EXAMPLE OF THE BALKANS

Abstract:

The political map of the Balkans today, express a victory for the nation-state project (new national states / ethnic nations) as well as involvement in the processes of fragmentation, parallel to the globalization processes. It seems that the cultural pluralism is not the one of the winning categories in this historical-political competition. The winner is the political unity of small nations-states, for whose interests the different cultural groups and cultures have been discriminated or sacrificed in the past and even today. The models of multiculturalism and the division of power in Macedonia and Bosnia are exclusions from this policy matrix. The process of anti-multiculturalism in Europe will have negative consequences on the multicultural models at the Balkans. These are the thesis that will be argued in this article.

Key words: nation, political unity, multiculturalism, anti-multiculturalism

1. HISTORICAL REMINDER

The history of the Balkans is full of turbulent events mixed with the domination of several major kingdoms, powerful empires, many wars and uprisings, but also ascents, prosperity, cultural creativity and civilizational achievements. Great warriors, leaders, writers and artists were born at the Balkans. People from different nations, cultures and religions lived in this area or traveled through it. While in the past, i.e. until the creation of nations-states, empires in the Balkans were multinational, today, multinationality is not a praising feature of the Balkan states. While policies suffered major changes, the Balkan people and cultures of the bigger states learned to coexist with people of other cultures and religions in the past. Often, the political ideologies and transformations at the Balkans were not autochthonous ideas, but were taken by other large and powerful states, that used to "fabricate" and materialize the political history. This is especially emphasized in the past 2-3 centuries. As the European (western) political history rolled over the past 200 years, it found a way to influence the unique reflection at the spaces of the Balkans. Moreover, as the rulers and the ideologies used to change, the state forms and boundaries changed as well. Balkan nations and ethnies' (Smith, 1999) wanted to create their own nations-states following the example of the European ones. They used to do it in accordance to their knowledge and opportunities, often with military means, but usually with a large "sponsorship" by the European empires at that time. Unfortunately, except the copied processes of nationalism (nation building) in the mentioned period, the processes of modernization (capitalism / market economy) and building a democratic (liberal) society were missing for a long period of time. According to Krste Misirkov, the small Balkan states during the 19th century, have tried to create their own nation, same as the large nations-states (Misirkov, 1903). That is why all those wars happened at the Balkans in the 19th and first half of the 20th century. In these "events" the major imperialist countries took a role, but the most important in these wars for and about Macedonia were just the "small nations of the Balkans". Today, the Ottoman Empire legacy mostly could be perceived in Macedonia and Bosnia since the cultural pluralism and the new social history has not contributed to the wider political integration in these two countries. The cultural and religious differences in both countries are factors of influence that probably haven`t contributed to the development of inclusive democratic societies. It is obvious that the small Balkan nations were created on the image of the major European nations. Thus, neither the first mentioned nor the second ones dedicated enough space to the cultural pluralism where it could develop and pervade within the social substance of the nation. Therefore, the multicultural models that were being "defended" in Macedonia and in Bosnia in the context of debate on European anti-multiculturalism don`t have any political long-term perspective. The only option

that will support these models of cultural pluralism is the European integration which is a room that provides free development of different time viable political models, like the examples of Belgium and Switzerland as well as the United Kingdom and Spain.

2. THE NATION - A PARADIGM OF POLITICAL (CULTURAL) UNITY

The last "wind of changes" of the political mapping of the Balkans happened after the year 1989. The political earthquake that shook Europe, deeply affected almost the entire world. The ongoing was a reflection of the European political turbulences. The political map of the Balkans, two decades later, means a final celebration of the national / state project, where several new nations-states were created. Meanwhile, some other parts of the world were also involved in the processes of fragmentation and globalization. After all these turbulent political turmoil, it seems that the cultural pluralism is not one of the winning categories in this political game. The winner is the political and "granite" unity of the small nations-states with cultural groups of majorities whose interests are greater than the ones of smaller cultural groups and cultures which are different and unrecognized by the domestic, "big", nationalisms. These different cultural groups often cannot enjoy basic human rights, including their cultural rights.

The story of the nation as a construct of modern European history is already well elaborated in the social sciences. Although, according to Seton-Watson, not a single "scientific definition" about the nation can be constructed (Seton-Watson, 1977), the phenomenon of the nation existed and will exist. A nation exists when a significant number of people in a community think of themselves that constitute a nation, or behave as a nation. But it is not necessary for the entire population to feel or behave like that and it is not even possible to establish a minimum percentage of the population that have to feel that way. According to Seton-Watson, when a significant group believes in the nation it can be said that they have "national consciousness". Renan, however, indicates that the nation is a spirit, a spiritual principle consisting of two things - one is in the past, while the other in the present. The nation is the culmination of long-term challenges, sacrifices and dedication (Renan 1882). The nation is a large-scale solidarity, constructed of sacrificing feelings in the past and the readiness that someone will do the same in future. According to Renan, the strength and power of the nation lies exactly in these sacrifices. According to Hobsbaum, the nation is far more self-conscious community than the ethnicity. It is created by one or more ethnicities and identifies itself with own literary work, assets or have the right to political identity or autonomy as a

nation, along with the control over specific territory. (Hastings, 1997) Hobsbaum stressed that the nation is a horizontally connected society owning the state. Thus, the identity of the nation is a connection between the state and people. The Anthony Smith`s study about the ethnies` named human population with shared myths, histories and cultures, associated by a particular territory and a sense of solidarity, is an integral part of the theory of ethno-symbolism. This theory is important for the ethnies' as a precursor to the nation and its relevance for the ethnic origin of nations is fundamentally important for the understanding why and where the first nations appeared. (Guibernau, 2004) According to Guibernau, the political dimension of national identity derives from its association with the modern nation-state. Ruling on diverse populations as a political institution, since the moment of its creation, the nation-state insisted on cultural and linguistic homogenization of the diverse citizens. The citizens unite themselves by construction and dissemination of a particular image about the "nation", through creation and spreading of certain symbols and rituals in order to strengthen the sense of belonging to the community among the citizens. Concerning this, the civil affiliation (citizenship) having defined rights and obligations, creates a crucial difference between the included and excluded members of the community.

Most of the prognoses about the end of the nation- state, mix the different and separate (although related) aspects of nation building and state formation. While the forces of fragmentation are associated with the production and reproduction of the "nations", the forces of globalization are largely concerned (though not completely) about the authority and competence issues of the state. Hence, the connection between the emergence of globalization forces and fragmentation with expiration of the nation-state is not necessary. (Biswas, 2002). The debate on the topic how national and state identities negotiate and restructure in the form of fragmentation and globalization, and the political implications coming of it, is more important than the question whether the nation-state is in crisis. It appears that fragmentation is more a threat to the existence of certain states, rather than to the nation-state system. The fragmentation is the failure of certain states to maintain the suitable "spaciousness" (geopolitical and cultural) in the form of their legitimate government. According to Bisvas, the fragmentation is a success of the idea about nation-state - that every nation deserves its own state. The cultural globalization breakout produces and supports the system of nation-states, rather than being a threat to its existence. This is connected to the national idea that nation-states are fully legitimate since the nation is a unique and authentic cultural entity. These considerations are a part of modernism in the deliberations about politics and culture in the creation process of the nation. The theory developed by Gellner claims that the political and cultural units should be congruent (to be congruent, to match). A nation is created when a

complete interaction between the politics and culture is available. This is the pattern followed by both, the large and small states. The cultural group is somewhere completed integrity, so the borders are easily recognizable, while somewhere the borders are wide and the cultural differences should be settled in the process of education and cultural homogenization. Of course, the cultural homogenization is "painless" at the places where the differences are smaller and the building of the nation is more like a "natural" process. Even Max Weber wrote that the nation is a community of feelings that could be properly manifested in their own state. Thus, Gilbert concludes that the state is adequate to the community of feelings because the feelings provide a cohesion which is necessary for a successful state (Gilbert, 2000). Expressed in a word appears that the subjectivity is mixed into the objective marks and it is necessary as a glue for the national sentiments and the national identity. The nation is a political (cultural) unity and "granite" structure as seen by its members. Moreover, no much room remains for some other or smaller cultural groups. The smaller cultural groups could only assimilate, segregate or ghettoize with all socio-economic challenges imposed by the isolation.

In his book about the theories of the nationalism, Ozkirimli (Özkirimli, 2000) says that most of the theories are created since the 60-es and sociologists and politicologists have been silent for a long period of time concerning these issues. Today, the theories of nations are quite developed and explored. There are many attempts in the theories to accentuate the differences in the development of "imagined community" according to the Anderson idea of nation. Moreover, Anderson makes a distinction between civil and ethnic concept of nation, as political and cultural nations are sometimes misnamed, or as it is between western and eastern nationalism. The first categories are accepted as more modern and enlightened while the latter ones are seen as anachronistic and under the influence of dark and dangerous forces. (Gilbert, 2000) Civic nationalism is based on subjective choices made by the individual. However, the civic nations are defined in territorial and legal terms, while the citizens should just have to incline to the political structures that govern the nation and to self-identify themselves as a part of it. The modernization of the state meant the adoption of rigid ideas of the French Revolution and the expansion of access in order to get the political power on behalf of the many. According to Shopflin, this is the key (Schöpflin, 2003). Local elites had pre-modern power and tried to modernize it through its transformation into a national power. Having in mind the power of the empires to prohibit political autonomy within empires, for the nation, there was only one direction of movement - in the culture. Then, these elites have to rely on the definition of culture as a source of power which meant mobilization of the followers to support that power. The members of culturally defined nation were the answer to Central Europe and

to the challenge of the French Revolution. This powerful process that happened in the early 20th century, just continued with the same matrix with the same strength in the Eastern and Southeastern Europe after the events dated 1989. Therefore, debates about separation of political power from the culture, typical for today's multiculturalism, the culture understood as an ethnic mobilization, it is impossible to be effective in a short period of time, if it is possible at all. Shopflin writes that the political power and the ethnic identity cannot be separated because the state will always play a role into the cultural reproduction, by controlling the country which is a key target of the political action.

3. MULTICULTURALISM - A PARADIGM OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Ethnicity (ethnies` searching for their own country) in a form of political mobilization appeared again in the second half of the 20th century. The analyses of the causes of this phenomenon talk about the emergence of ethnicity as a response to the disadvantaged cultural groups within the big nations and federations, but also about ethnicity as a reaction to the inability of the political unity of nations-states to provide enough space for cultural development of smaller cultures. Some questions inevitably entailed about the development of policies for prevention of the ethnic conflicts. The question asking whether and how cultural groups should be recognized in the politics, returned in the agenda. Multiculturalism as a concept emerged to the wider U.S. public in the early 80s, demanding greater diversity at the universities and greater participation in the state institutions. Multiculturalism as a movement aimed to preserve the differences among ethnic and cultural communities without blending them into the majority and by providing equal respect for the own culture. Multiculturalism as a policy required recognition of all cultural groups and their articulation in the public sphere as well as prevention of the discrimination suffered by the members of smaller cultural groups. Multiculturalism as an official policy of the state, but also as a political model, appeared in Canada, Australia, but also more modestly in several European countries (Sweden, Netherlands). The biggest problem among all these challenges occurred in relation to the very essence of multiculturalism as an ideology. It is not about a very coherent and defined ideology, or in fact there are many theories that are quite different and cannot be presented as a whole. At the same time, there is no model or complete multiculturalism which could be taken and used as "medicine" for managing cultural diversities in liberal and less liberal societies. The concept of multiculturalism is quite confusing and theoretically fragmented and could hardly be recommended as a whole. The factor that gives the greatest complexity is non-existence of two equal multicultural states

or societies where it could be implemented as a policy and a strategy. Every context is different and requires adjustment of many consisting elements of the model.

There are many models of multiculturalism that are defined and analyzed by several authors. Most of the divisions are binary, but there are divisions consisting of three or four criteria. According to the author of this article the most fruitful is the abstract theory of Christine Inglis, where models are divided to: a model of assimilation, a model of differentiation and a model of multiculturalism. (Inglis,1994). The model of assimilation is suitable for large and rich nations (U.S., Russia, Australia, Canada), while the model of differentiation is suitable for medium-sized nations (Germany, England, Spain). The model of multiculturalism seems to be the destiny of the smaller states where it serves to reduce the possibility of internal ethnic conflict. The elements of this model are analyzed in details and the same are offered by the international organizations through numerous conventions and consultations in order to explain what to do and how to avoid cultural groups to be institutionally discriminated, culturally disadvantaged and economically depressed. The exposure of these elements destroys the aura of multiculturalism as something nice, fine or exotic. The model of multiculturalism is not a cultural festival project on the high street in a big city where different cultures and traditions coexist. Also, the multiculturalism as a model cannot be identified as the harmony of coexistence among different religions. We can neither talk about multiculturalism as the ability of many individuals to identify with other ideas, nor trapping in its own appearance, culture or ethnicity. The multiculturalism is far from the stage when our membership will be elected, and instead to be defined by the cultural heritage. The possibility of conversion or existence of elements from other cultures should be wide open. At this moment, especially at the Balkan countries and wider, there is no possibility not to have ethnic identity. At the Balkans you gain this identity with the very act of birth. Since, it is very absurd, the multiculturalism makes huge problems to people living between two or more cultures. Multiculturalism at the Balkans is not a privilege but a condemnation in the marriages from different cultures and religions. Just think of mixed marriages in Bosnia during the war in the 90s and everything will become clear to you. At the Balkans today, the multiculturalism it is not trendy at all.

The model of multiculturalism that appeared by the end of 20th century does not mean celebration of different cultures, but protection of the smaller groups from the major ones. To adapt a model of a liberal state to the standards of multiculturalism the following elements must be considered: a commonly adopted political model, the same package of constitutional rights, fair and impartial state, multicultural common culture (interculturalism), multicultural education and inclusive concept of nationality (Parekh, 2000). Simply explained, the democratic

state should be increased in the quality in order to implement all or at least some of these prerequisites for creating a multicultural model of state. Now, there are two powerful sides in relation to this ideology: those who are for and those who are against this model. The both sides implicitly agree that multiculturalism is more addressed to politics than to the culture. My students or audience at the classes about multiculturalism model are often surprised when I emphasize that while talking about multiculturalism we talk about politics and not about culture. We talk about the politics of the ethnic groups in the quest for more rights, and if there are adequate conditions we talk about creation of an own ethnic (national) state.

4. THE BALKANS BETWEEN NATIONALISM AND MULTICULTURALISM

Nation and ethnicity have been proven as the strongest adhesives concerning building of a state in the 19th century and in the last decades of the 20th century. The people need mobilizing factor, they want to belong to large groups such as extended families, communities, nations, ethnic groups and other collectivities. From today`s point of view the story about creation of the nation on the European continent in the 18-19 century is a successful page of European history. This process is known today as a project for creation of civic nations (France, England, Italy and USA). In Europe for example, building of Germany and Russia is considered as a process of ethnic nation-building implementing processes similar to those from the first stage, but including elements of exclusivity concerning the membership in these nations. Concerning the smaller nations of Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe, building a nation went through the dominant cultural group (ethnicity, ethnies`) in three stages. These processes became possible during and after the collapse of Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Ottoman Empire in the late 19th century and in the first half of 20th century (the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Austria, Hungary), but also after the breakup of large federal states, the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, in the last decade of the 20th century (Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia, Macedonia). The final stage occurred after the breakup of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in the first decade of the 21st century (Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo).

This could be likely compared with the decentralization of a large European country, if its regions or federal units (culturally or ethnically diverse) decide to begin the processes of building their own nation and establishing their own states. The process of building civic nation by using the concept of inclusion and homogenization of cultural elements is completely opposite to the process of building ethnic nation through the concept of exclusivity and outlining of ethnic divisions. Civic concept expands the boundaries of the state, while the ethnic

concept reduces the country's borders, unless the ethnic nation wanted to expand to a "foreign" territory and to homogenize differences between ethnic groups through a process of assimilation, even with violent methods of assimilation like banning the use of mother tongue, cultural discrimination, etc. Someone wrote that history has provided very a few reasons to assume that the cultural pluralism and the democracy are natural partners. In the first and also in the second case, the nations insist on matching of political and cultural units. That doesn`t mean that the multicultural society cannot sustain democratic institutions and respect for the individual. However, the coexistence of different cultures in a certain territory or in a certain society usually results in the triumph of the administrative or authoritarian government or with superiority of the members of one group over the members of another cultural group. The harmonization of these relationships is only a distant perspective. It is so in many countries and societies, and the same is at the Balkans.

The contemporary political map of the Balkans represents a "triumph" of the nation-state project (there are several new national, ethnic, states) and involvement in the processes of fragmentation in parallel to the processes of globalization and Europeanization. It seems that the cultural pluralism is not the one of the winning categories in this politico-historical competition. The winner is the political (and cultural) unity of small (and medium size) nation-states, for whose interests in the past and also today were sacrificed the interests of more or less known and diverse cultural groups, sometimes more and sometimes less. The main reason for the disintegration of Yugoslavia was the "competition" between Serbian, Croatian and Slovenian (ethnic) nationalism. But, besides the national (ethnic) states two other countries that were strong supporters of Yugoslav territorial (federal / national) multiculturalism, Macedonia and Bosnia gained independence during the disintegration of Yugoslavia.

Building of Bosnian state (federation) was realized by a bloody denouement of the Yugoslav crisis. The international factor stood behind the new state at the Balkans - Bosnia, and still assists with a strong political support. But, years after the Bosnian epilogue, until today, Bosnia passes through a difficult path of stabilization, without producing a "new glue" for the political unity of the state. Tripartite model (Bosnians, Serbs and Croats) or the consociation model failed to create a common society that would be the basis of the political unity. The theory on the example of Bosnia shows that parts of nations that are close in its history, culture (language) and social development could hardly find common elements for building a new nation. The reasons for this could be found in the poor historical memory and religious differences that have left strong traces and emotional charges, so with the first more serious opportunity erupted again in ethnic (and possibly religious) conflicts. The biggest problem with the Bosnian state is the fact that there is no dominant carrier of the nation (dominant ethnic group), nor there is a common will

to build a state with three entities. Years behind, the news coming from Bosnia doesn`t not talk about integration, but talk about disagreement around the essential issues for the state. The Dayton Agreement brought peace to Bosnia, but did not bring a vision for the state as well as a stable political future.

The example of Macedonia is very different. From the very beginning of the process of independence in 1991, Macedonia aimed to create a national state of the Macedonian people, following the ideals of the Ilinden Uprising (1903) and the national-liberation struggle 1941-1945. Macedonian ethnic group had sufficient capacity to fight for the legal unraveling for the independence of the Republic. Initially, Macedonia used to build a unitary state through a socio-cultural variant of multiculturalism, having into consideration the percentage of Albanians, Turks, Roma, Serbs and Vlachs, mostly Muslims, and more or less successfully built it until 2001. In the year 2001 Macedonia was plunged into a regional militant finish of the Serbian-Albanian conflict over Kosovo, and after several months security crisis had to change several articles in its constitution where Macedonia incorporated several elements of consociation in its political structure. Now, Republic of Macedonia has a stable and democratic political structure and performs as a multiethnic democracy, although cannot be proud to a great progress in the context of integration within the society. Ohrid Framework Agreement brought peace and a stable political future to Macedonia after its implementation in the past 10 years.

The multiculturalism and the division of power in Macedonia and Bosnia are exclusions from the policy matrix of the Balkans today, which was elaborated above. The future of both countries depends on two contexts: regional and European. On one hand, the regional context is not inclined to the multiculturalism because it promotes the nations-states with ethnic indication. However, the regional intergovernmental cooperation constantly imposes as a prerequisite for European integration, especially between countries of the Western Balkans. On the other hand, the European integration will relax policies and the cultural groups in the both countries while the models of cohabitation will probably have better chances for success. If the Belgium example functioning without a government for almost one year is an adequate proof, then the examples of Bosnia and Macedonia will probably have greater success in the context of better living conditions for citizens of different cultural groups. The "groups" often demand equal political, cultural and economic power in all spheres of life. The great cultural and religious differences are just an additional element in these models of coexistence. But, unfortunately, the situation in several European countries is not supporting the idea of multiculturalism models at the Balkans where enormous efforts are made in order to be successful.

5. THE ANTI-MULTICULTURALISM INFLUENCE

Multiculturalism is not a very popular idea in Europe. Europe is a collection of nation- states. Europe is a community of powerful monocultures. The protection of linguistic diversity In the European Union is mainly understood as a policy goal at supra-national level, leaving the ideal of national monolingualism unthreatened. Respecting the principle of territoriality, the European policies only support the regional variant of multicultural language policies, while the linguistic rights of immigrants are explicitly excluded. Concerning their languages the immigrants are not well accepted, but also they do not feel well about their religions, especially members of Islam lately.

European countries have large differences in the approach to different cultural immigrant groups that changed the demographic structure of Western cities in many cases. In the past year, from the leaders of several major states we overlistened statements about the actual situation of multiculturalism in their countries, although some of them never proclaimed any strategy, policy or project about multiculturalism. First, the leaders of Germany and France have questioned the European approach to multiculturalism. Saying that other cultures (immigrants that work for low wages while developing their rich economies) no longer succeed to live separately from their main land and that "the multiculturalism in their country is dead"(Germany). The leader of Great Britain joined and approved these statements (one of the few countries that build a model of multiculturalism) with his statement that the doctrine of multiculturalism in Britain has experienced a failure. According to the intonation, the statements of all three leaders were directed to the immigrant Muslims who are more and more numerous and become a permanent part of the European social tissue. Analysts on duty from the European think-tanks already woke up and immediately recommended to leave and forget the policies of multiculturalism and assimilation, which are "twins concerning the danger" and propagate the adoption of an average policy of interculturalism as a combination of rights, obligations, active policies and compromise between assimilation and multiculturalism. So, the answer of the medium sized states that adopted a policy of multiculturalism after the severe terrorist acts in the last decade, was taking a step backwards by supporting the policies of "more active integration" of newcomers. Those states that had no model of multiculturalism gained extra time in relation to defending their policies of assimilation or differentiation.

If we return back to the beginning of the text where it says that the mainstream of the political engineering at the Balkans often comes throughout European ideological models, then it becomes clear that the anti-multiculturalism in Europe today has negative resonances over the multicultural models at the Balkans. It is

unnatural to propagate models of multiculturalism at the Balkans and to claim at home that the model of multiculturalism is dead. The small Balkan states need a strong support in adopting the criteria of the democratic model of society. They need even more support for the development of multiculturalism, especially that our societies have just begun to walk the path of democracy. Bosnia and Macedonia have many common historical features as well as a need for models of coexistence among different cultures and religions. The political unity of the Balkans, mostly in Macedonia and Bosnia, cannot be developed without respect for the cultural pluralism and associated building by all groups in these young political nations that are painstakingly trying to claim their place under the European sun.

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