

Doru Petrișor Franțescu

The Activation of Xenophobia as a Result of Immigration in Europe Case Study: Spain



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Lumen

Iași 2007

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Referenț științific: asis. univ. Oana Valentina SUCIU

Editura Lumen este acreditată CNCIS sub nr 003

Redactor: Morariu Irina Maria

Descrierea CIP a Bibliotecii Naționale.

Doru Petrișor FRANȚESCU

The Activation of Xenophobia as a Result of Immigration in Europe. Case Study: Spain

Editura Lumen

Bibliografie

Pag. 103

ISBN- 978-973-1703-51-0

Extras din volumul:

Frantescu, D.P. (2007). The Activation of Xenophobia as a Result of Immigration in Europe. Case Study: Spain. Iasi, Romania: Lumen.

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Pagina lasata intentionat goala

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Executive Summary

At the time of the writing of this thesis the European Union is at a crossroads. Hardly have the member states got over the crisis that divided them during the Iraqi war in 2003, that other problems emerged to the European construction. In late May and early June 2005, France and respectively the Netherlands have rejected through referendum the Constitutional Treaty. In December the same year the negotiations for the 2007-2013 financial plan came dangerously close to a failure and the final budget agreed upon represents less than the European Commission had considered necessary for a successful integration. In the broader context, the 2000 Lisbon Agenda that was supposed to make the European economy the most competitive knowledge-based economy in the world is far from achieving that objective half-way through its proposed period of 10 years. One of the means through which the EU tries to reach this target is enlargement. Through the four fundamental freedoms of circulation (goods, services, capital and labor) the EU hopes to integrate the economies of the new member states. However, most of the countries of EU15¹, concerned about their internal social problems, were not convinced of the beneficence of opening their labor markets to populations from the new members, therefore they imposed restrictions that can last up to 7 years. In spite of the ageing population in countries in Western Europe, their governments are afraid of the possibility of being confronted with waves of immigrants from Eastern Europe that may not be well received by the local population who sees the new-comers as competitors for jobs and social welfare.

On this background, the revolts of the immigrant Arab population that broke out in France in autumn 2005 and that spread in neighboring countries emphasized that the policies of integrating the new minorities have not been accurate enough and that more attention should be granted to the changes that have taken place

¹ EU member states before the enlargement of May 1st 2004.

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lately in the European societies regarding its increasingly multi-cultural feature. But there may be also another result of the above-mentioned social unrests: the higher level of acceptance of the Eastern European immigrants, who, when compared to the Arab/Muslim population are considered less potentially dangerous because of their more similar way of life and shared faith with the receiving societies. Therefore, the increasing fear that the non-integrated Muslim elements are likely to be recruited by the terrorist organizations, as it happened in the case of the attacks in Madrid and London, may actually favor the migration of the East Europeans in the Western states, particularly to those where there is a lack of labor force and an ageing population. As a result of the combination of these factors with other political reasons that we shall see in the present study, states from EU15 begin reconsidering the restrictions that they imposed two years ago to the eight new acceding countries from Eastern Europe. Spain, whose special situation (relatively new country of immigration in the proximity of Africa) will be examined in the last chapter of this study, has lifted restrictions beginning with May 1st 2006. It is likely to be joined in this decision by Finland and other few EU members.

The present study is divided in three parts. The first one brings a theoretical approach to the process of construction of the Western political nation who has at its core the stripping off of the individual of his religious and ethnical background so as to be able to interact on the social and political level. It also focuses on the interaction of the immigrant Muslim community with the Western society it resides in and the rough identity crisis that it is confronted with as a result of this interaction, as well as the problems of societal security resulting from it. Furthermore, it presents the present dangers that the failure of integration policies can pose to the European security, particularly due to the tensions at international level and to the expecting rising number of the Muslim population living in Europe.

The second part aims at presenting the circumstances that led to the present state of facts. After a short history of how the

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migration evolved in post World War II Europe, the emphasis is laid on the relations between the new minorities and the local societies, the xenophobic behaviors and the discrimination in their different forms. Apart from the relation on individual level, there are several important stake holders in the issue of migration whose actuation is taken into account, such as political parties, mass media and trade unions. In addition to that, we get an insight of what life of immigrants involved in political arena means, with all their contradictions, doubts and dangers, by presenting their own views expressed on the occasion of the interviews that the author of this study conducted in Denmark in the summer of 2005².

The third part of the study represents a case study of the situation in Spain and is, to a large extent, the result of the interaction and research that the author developed in this country during his study period there³. Spain was seen as an excellent case study due to its relatively new status of country of immigration. In spite of this novelty, as from 2005 the country in the Iberia peninsula became the main destination for immigrants coming to the European Union as a result of several converging factors such as the special relations that it has with the countries in Latin America, the proximity to Africa, the ageing population and the coming to power of a socialist government, coupled with an economy in full swing of development. These rapid demographical changes have certainly had effects on the relations between the Spaniards and the new-comers, leading to an ever greater polarization of the public opinion with regard to the welcoming of the immigrants. This polarization took place along several characteristics of the social groups (age, education, location, social status, political ideology), characteristics that have become variables to work with in the quest for measuring the level of xenophobia of the Spanish population throughout a continuous period of time. One of the most important issues in this part is to see whether there is a differentiation between

² Together with other fellows of the Humanity in Action 2005 Summer Core Program.

³ First half of 2005, Erasmus Student at *Universidad de Zaragoza*.

Extras din volumul:

Fratescu, D.P. (2007). *The Activation of Xenophobia as a Result of Immigration in Europe. Case Study: Spain*. Iasi, Romania: Lumen.

certain categories of immigrants, in the sense of the way they are perceived by the Spaniards. Also, an important focus is on the impact of the mass media and the actuation of the government regarding internal policies, such as commenting the causes and implications of the extraordinary regulatory process emplaced in the spring of 2005, but also at the level of international relations with special attention granted to the contribution to the Barcelona Process and the relation with EU institutions.

One can easily notice that the experience Spain has passed through for the past twenty years is likely to be shared in the future by Romania. Just like Spain, Romania is situated at the border of the European Union and in the same time in the proximity of very poor regions where the waves of migrants are likely to come from: Africa in the Spanish case and respectively former Soviet Union space and Central Asia in Romanian one. Furthermore, both countries have a special relationship with a particular category of immigrants, who are likely to establish a significant presence due to common language and culture: if for Spain is the Latin Americans, for Romania we are talking about Moldavians. And finally but not lastly, as Spain experienced since twenty years ago, Romania is expected to have a constant economic recovery after joining EU who, coupled with the ageing population, will act as a pull factor for immigrants. From this perspective, it seems justified to try to learn from the Spanish case in order to be better prepared for the challenges ahead of us.

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Chapter 1: The Specificity of the European Citizenship

It can be considered that the specificity of the political project of the European civilization resides in formulating and imposing a public space that is neutral from the point of view of identity, capable of integrating cultural and ethnic minorities and majorities in a community of citizens. The Western political nation, this construction of identity which dominates the Western public sphere, has at its basis a set of interactions, of essentially political connections, which surpass any sort of determinations of cultural, ethnic and religious origin. Western political nation represents, in its essence, a macro formula of identity which is beyond differences between populations, regardless whether it is about objective differences of social, religious or national origin or differences of collective identity, and it integrates them into an identity organized around a common political project⁴. Western political nation implies a process of integration in the active sense of the term to the extent to which it defines through its ambition of “transcending through the citizenship personal, biological, historical, economical, social, religious or cultural belongings, in order to define the citizen as an abstract individual, without a certain identification and personal qualification before and beyond all his concrete determinations”⁵.

In the center of this project regarding identity it lies the individual, a radical and independent individual capable of interacting in the public space with the other individuals and to create as basis of national political society a homogenous and integrated political body. Political nations assume the creation of a community of citizens-individuals capable of sustaining a common political project. The idea of nation is based on the assumption that

⁴Dominique SCHNAPPER:*Comunitatea cetățenilor-asupra ideii moderne de națiune*, Paralela 45, Bucuresti, 2004, pp. 27.

⁵ Ibidem, pp. 28.

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the citizen has the capacity to brake away from his specific rooting of any sort, cultural, religious or ethnical, and to interact with the other individuals with the aim of promoting the common political project. The individual-citizen is defined by its aptitude to brake away from natural determination that would close him into a culture destiny imposed by birth. In addition, the finality of the project of integration of identities is represented by the development of two complementary types of loyalties: on the one hand the basic loyalty (preeminent) essentially public, to what we call as being the imagined community of individual-citizens and the common political project; on the other hand is the secondary loyalty, essentially private, to the cultural-ethnic and religious community that the individual is part of by birth.

Once into the public space, the individual renounces his private determinations so as to involve in a dense network of merely political non-religious and non-ethnical interactions. Thereby, secularity becomes a major consequence of this project regarding identity and also an essential component of public space to the extent that it allows individuals to surpass the diversity of their religious background, completing the passing into the private space of beliefs and practices. The public sphere is becoming neutral from the religious point of view; it is common to all citizens regardless of the Church that they belong to⁶.

The modern European state is defined by two essential components: on the one hand a new perception of the citizen and on the other hand by the configuration of a representative system of citizens so as to avoid the feeling of alienation in relation to the policies that their leaders pursue. Modern citizenship is simultaneously political and social implying altogether political and social rights: on the one hand in the former category the most important is the right to vote which has been extended in gradual steps to all individuals, regardless of their features in terms of social class, faith or sex. The most important signification of the right to

⁶ Idem.

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vote is that it manifests clearly the existence of an abstract political space, in which, contrary to any social experience each citizen is equal to any other. On the other hand, social citizenship implies that all citizens must have all necessary resources in order for their rights not to remain only on paper. Thereby, the material survival has gradually become a right of the poor citizen to whom the democratic society, according to the principles that its legitimacy it is based on, must respond⁷. Roger Scruton argues that the essence of the modern democratic state is the system of representation of the citizens which, in its turn, develops certain loyalties that enforce it: respect of the law, self-sacrifice in times of war and civic spirit in times of peace.⁸

There are few observations that can be done with respect to the first type of loyalty described by Scruton as being an extremely important dimension for the European democratic state: the respect for the law. Western reason requires to its citizens not to let themselves be led by other people for the reason that nobody can assume the good intentions of anybody else. Therefore, it is preferable that when interact with one another with the purpose of promoting a common public good, people should place themselves under an authority beyond the will of private persons. Daniel Barbu argues that the specificity of Western individual resides in the fact he “asks from early stages to be governed not by its fellows, but by law”⁹, an impersonal, neutral and secular law which develops in its turn an authority of the civil norm that the rational individual gladly obeys. From this point of view, the only legitimate manifestation of Western patriotism is, using Jurgen Habermas’s expression, the constitutional patriotism, that is the love to the laws of the country. Therefore, it is considered that efficiency, the civilizational progress of the Western world is to a great extent the consequence of the existence of law, of a founding contract between the individual citizens and state, a state that also obeys the law, a state of citizens

⁷ Ibidem, pp. 35.

⁸ Roger SCRUTON, *Restul si Vestul*, Humanitas, Bucuresti, 2004, pp. 57

⁹ Daniel BARBU: *Politica pentru barbari*, Nemira, București 2005, pp. 32.

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that acts for the respect of their rights. The law rules impartially over all citizens and it has succeeded to “fill” the public space with trust, responsibility, rationality and predictability. The major consequences of this state of facts are that “essential societal virtues of Western individual are based on the responsibility, both moral and legal, of everyone to the liberty of everybody”¹⁰.

With regard to the third type of loyalty, the civics spirit, it can be assumed that the ambition of the modern “*etat de droit*” is also to institutionalize, is what it can be called the ideal of the participatory democracy. This ideal of participatory democracy is that every citizen should interact with the rest of the society via a dense network NGOs created with the purpose of promoting the public collective good. This ideal requires a high level of political culture and an increased level of participation from the members of the society: The participationists think of a full participation, that is a very intense one. The active participant acts this way because his reward is the activity itself. (...) Rightfully understood, participation means taking part personally, *willingly*. Therefore, participation is the *self set in motion* being the opposite of *being set in motion* (by somebody else’s will)”¹¹.

For a society to get as close as possible to the ideals of the ideals of participatory democracy, it is the developments of a civil society with a high degree of engagement and participation. A first feature of this society is variety of its components, in other words it is characterized by the existence of a network of various organizations and institutions that can articulate the different interests of citizens. A second important feature is the autonomy of its numerous organizational and institutional components in the sense that these are independent from any center of power. In a certain way, the civil society is self-sustained, because it is made up by networks of institutions and autonomous organizations that have not one, but a thousand centers, and therefore cannot be easily

¹⁰ Ibidem, pp. 31.

¹¹ Giovanni SARTORI: *Teoria democrației reinterpretată*, Polirom, Iași, 1999, pp. 123.

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destroyed by a monopolistic authority. Ralf Dahrendorf considers that “the civil society means substantial sources of power outside the state and for the most times, against the state”¹²

Democratic participation made via the civil society assumes capable people, willing to act themselves, rational human beings with civic initiative, with a civic sense, thereby a responsible civic behavior: citizens. Civil society assumes a civic status, a civic sense, a certain type of responsible behavior. The citizen doesn't ask what the other is doing, and particularly what the state is doing for him, but takes initiatives and does something. Dahrendorf considers that “citizenship is not a passive state but an opportunity, a chance to live an active life, to take part in the political process, to the labor market, to society”¹³.

Civil society also assumes a certain type of political culture. By political culture one should understand “the way in which the political system is internalized in the cognitive and emotional orientations of its members”¹⁴. Relevant for the political participation are a series of variables as: the level of political information of individuals, the way in which they perceive themselves as members of the community and in what way they are aware of their political rights and obligations, which are the means for the promotion of their economical and political interests as well as for that control of any deviation of power, to what extent they are involved in the mechanisms of local power, and so on.

A mature civil society assumes a civic culture which is a political culture of participatory type in which the social actors are fully aware of their rights and obligation of political type and, most importantly, they are active in the public and the political sphere. The social actors accustomed to this type of political culture develop the feeling of a subjective civic competency, based on the myth of the powerful citizen that allows them to articulate civic initiatives

¹² Ralf DAHRENDORF: *Reflecții asupra revoluției din Europa*, Humanitas, 1993, pp. 90.

¹³ Ibidem, pp. 93.

¹⁴ Aurelian CRĂIUȚU, *Elogiul Libertății*, Polirom, Iasi, 1998, pp. 143.

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that questions the policies of the governmental establishment. These active and responsible citizens believe in their power of influencing the political leaders with the purpose of promoting their own interests, reason for which they join various voluntary associations and take part in public debates. Their participation in intermediary and independent-from-the-state structures such the civic associations, religious organizations or of charity, and, more generally, to any sort of NGO is essential because these not only control and restrain the expanding and arbitrary tendencies of the central and local power but also develop the science of self-governing, thus increasing the sentiment of independence and individual dignity¹⁵. In conclusion, the social actors that have internalized the norms of civic culture are those enlightened and independent citizens, aware of their political liberties and rights, deeply involved in different civic associations and that make up the spine of a participatory democracy.

Roger Scruton states that to a certain extent the modern Western state can be perceived as a *society of foreigners* integrated into a network of mutual support, of rights and duties; moreover, one of the consequences of this society of foreigners is that it develops a certain type of citizenship that implies the availability of recognizing and assuming the obligations to persons that one doesn't know and to act in accordance with these obligations¹⁶. Western citizenship is bi-dimensional, in the sense that it means both rights and obligations. Citizens enjoy rights that are the precondition for their allowance of being governed and the right to take part in the political process. Also, the citizens, as a consequence of their belonging to a community take some obligations as well: "citizens are firstly members of a society of foreigners engaged in the defense of the common territory and in the imposing of the law that applies there"¹⁷.

¹⁵ Ibidem, pp. 160.

¹⁶ Roger SCRUTON, (2004) pag. 52-53.

¹⁷ Ibidem, pp. 61.

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The Interaction of the Muslim Minority with European Society

The Muslim minorities in Europe inherit a traditional civilizational perspective profoundly different from the Western political culture, in which the virtues of the status of citizen are not so much valued. Traditional Muslim society is almost mono-dimensional in the sense that the social status involves not so much rights as the need to assume a rigid set of obligation to the family, friends, tribe. Beyond this set of obligations, that one can call of secondary importance, there a set of primary obligations, the holy ones, that derive from the divine law.

Islamic civilization is defined in terms of liberties, but in the ones of abeyance. In this sense, Scruton reminds us that the notions of *Islam*, *salm* and *salaam* derive from the verb *salima*, whose primary meaning is to be safe, unharmed, but that has also a derived form, with the meaning of “to surrender”. Traditional Muslim society produces a human type whose social status is defined not by its rights, but by its obligations that have attributed to it, that have not been chosen. This society produces a population of subjects, not of citizens, a population that does not want to be represented, but on the contrary, governed. The Muslim is the one that *surrendered* in the exchange of safety¹⁸. The central idea of citizenship as it has been assumed by the modern state and the European society lies in total antithesis with the type of political culture and internalized social practices at the level of Muslim traditional society.

European societies can be defined using a Popper-based terminology as open societies, societies that increase personal options and that confer to the individual citizen the possibility of personal choice for himself. Using this terminology, so as to suggest the fundamental differences between the European society and the Muslim one, the conceptual opposition between *open society* and *closed society* will be used. Open societies increase options, closed ones

¹⁸ Ibidem, pp. 64.

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ucw "fkp" nkdt tkkng "pqcuvtg" r

ISBN 978-973-1703-51-0



9 789731 703510

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Publicat cu finanțarea:

www.EuroMarket.ro

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