RELACJE I BADANIA

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The Possibility of Multiculturalism
in a Nation State: A Debate on Europe and Millet System

Abstract

This article aims to examine the possibility of multiculturalism in the concept of nation state. It argues multiculturalism with comparison of it with terms of contemporary citizenship that emerged after establishment of nation states, and the *millet system* that was practiced during Ottoman Empire. The article bases the argument on crisis of multiculturalism debate in Europe. In the article, the concept of multiculturalism in a nation state is perceived as a dilemma, since the nation state is based on a dominant culture which is illustrated in term of *Leitkultur*. In this sense, the article asserts that developing a new concept of citizenship might be a solution for establishing a multicultural society, and applies this argument to the idea of European citizenship and identity.

Key words: multiculturalism, citizenship, nation state, empire, millet system, Leitkultur, European citizenship

Introduction

Diversity has always been one of the basic features of societies. Like in nature, societies have been diverse in social structure, culture, religion, ethnicity etc. In societies, diversity occurs according to geography and history – the same factors that determine how cultures are created. Every society, more or less, is based on diversity in social structure, religion, ethnicity, class etc. One of the main functions of a state is to peacefully integrate its divergent society. Throughout history, states have tried to manage such integration in different ways according to their organizing structures and regimes. As such, this article examines social diversity within the context of nation states, considering the definition of multiculturalism within nation states in light of both nationalism and terms of citizenship.

For this reason, the article first discusses the theory of multiculturalism before considering debates on nation states and the multiculturalism crisis in European countries. The article draws upon the German term *Leitkultur* to explain the construction of nation states around ethnicities and to discuss the essential problem of multiculturalism in such a notion of nation state. In order to clarify the argument, the article compares the idea of citizenship both in nation states and empires, examining the millet system practiced during the Ottoman Empire and how that system might

model ways for overcoming the current multiculturalism crisis in nation states. As the term *Leitkultur* describes, traditionally nation states are built on the dominance of a particular ethnic group and that dominant group in turn defines the citizenry. However, this article sees this structure as handicap to establishing multiculturalism in the political sphere and proposes a reconstruction of the notion of citizenship in order to build multiculturalism within nation states. In this context, the article argues the possibility of overcoming the multicultural crisis in European countries by establishing European citizenship alongside the establishment of European identity.

Debates on Multiculturalism, Nationalism and Construction of Nation State

The term "multiculturalism" essentially refers to togetherness of different cultures in a common space. Multiculturalism is mostly related with diversity of ethnicities. In multiculturalism, people of different languages, religions, sects etc. live together and interact with each other, sharing a common place, city, town, village or state in a multicultural social structure. As Conrad William Watson (2000) notes, the question of what precisely constitutes a culture generally concerns a common language, a shared history, a shared set of religious beliefs and moral values and a shared geographical origin, which, when taken together, define sense of belonging to a specific group. However, according to him, this is not very satisfactory as a definition, and one would be hard put to defend all the facets of its criteria, or to decide in difficult cases what was or was not a culture; nevertheless, these ideas are the ones which people have in mind when they use the phrase "multicultural society" (Watson 2000, p. 1).

In Al Haj and Mielke's (2007) description, multiculturalism is defined as a model that entails the promotion of equality and equity in addition to the "right to be different". This means that sociopolitical inequalities should be dealt with and power should be negotiated and shared as an integral part of promoting multicultural conceptions and shared civility. Besides the basic elements of culture (language, cultural symbols, etc.) it includes collective identity and historical narrative that should be recognized and legitimized (Al Haj and Mielke 2007, p. 2).

Debates on multiculturalism as an alternative theory for societies started around the 1960s (Gordon 1964, p. 85). In these debates, multiculturalism is seen as an alternative thesis to assimilation discourse. Multiculturalism briefly identifies and embraces the diversity of society, wherein people participate in daily life with their ethnic, religious, sexual identities. Therefore, one can assert that for a well-functioning multicultural structure, democracy and human rights are indispensable circumstances; institutions that protect this diversity are mandatory for multiculturalism. These institutions can coordinate with each other to guard and maintain basic rights, such as rights of different or marginal groups and people. In this sense, it is possible to claim that one of the main institutions for a well-functioning society is the justice system. For a compatible multicultural society,

tolerance is not sufficient; an inclusive lawful order that is based on human rights and liberty is essential, too.

According to Parekh, multicultural perspective is composed of the creative interplay of these three complementary insights, namely the cultural embeddedness of human beings, the inescapability and desirability of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue, and the internal plurality of each culture (2000, p. 337). Encounters between and among cultures progresses intercultural dialog. Social scientists operate from the perspective that there is no way to objectively establish hierarchy among cultures. Looking for the superiority or inferiority of any culture may fall into the realm of racism. Similarly, asserting the superiority of one culture over another can be a basis of nationalism. One can claim that nationalism handicaps the development of multicultural society, because nationalism is communicative. That is, it causes communities to turn upon themselves and diverge from other communities.

Watson (2000) describes multiculturalism and nationalism in the 20th century in awkward and dangerously entangled terms. According to him, an emphasis on the former has often meant a reduction in the importance attached to the latter. In broad terms and allowing for exceptions, nationalism in most regions of the world was clearly more significant in the first half of the century; it was instrumental in persuading populations within the boundaries of one nation to mobilize against those of another, or, in colonial circumstances, to expel from within the nation dominant groups who owed their presence to military conquest in the recent past (Watson 2000, p. 18).

As an ideology nationalism has a dual function. It creates solidarity and sense of unification among members of a community, and thus plays a key role in turning prepolitical ethnic or cultural groups into political entities, such as nations. Yet, while it creates unification among a group by constructing a common identity, it inherently brings about exclusion and segregation of other ethnic and cultural groups. Such is the case for nation states. In a nation state nationalism can occur in many primary forms; civic, ethnic, religious or ideological, all of which can cause segregation in a society. Normally, a segregated society consists of compartments of people with different ethnic, religious identities or class positions. In such a society, xenophobia is another cause of segregation. This fear arises from intolerance of diversity, competition for "a piece of the pie", and cultural conflicts.

Throughout history nationalism has been a basic – and necessary – instrument in building nation states, as the core component of nation state united its population based on a common cultural heritage. According to Ernest Renan, a nation is a soul, a spiritual principle and two elements (which are really only one), make up this soul or spiritual principle. One of these things lies in the past, the other in the present. The first is the possession in common of a rich heritage of memories, and the second is actual agreement, the desire to live together, and the will to continue to make the most of a joint inheritance (1995, p. 153).

A common cultural identity is not sufficient for establishing a nation state. A nation needs to be constructed around a national identity formed by the state, thus providing individuals with the sense of belonging to a politicized nation. Such identity generally builds on the common sociocultural dimensions of the society – that is, those shared by the majority. National identity emerged as an important aspect of individual and collective identity in Europe in the modern age. From 1789 onwards the rights of the people and of the nation were joined together, and were the object of aspirations and political movements in Europe. The common history and culture, underlying national identity, is expressed through and furthered by the state, in particular institutional forms like national education systems (Smith and Wistrich 2007, p. 16). As Calhoun notes, nations are made by internal processes of struggle, communication, political participation, road building, education, history writing and economic development as well as by campaigns against external enemies (1997, p. 79).

Habermas points out that, during the process of building nation states, the meaning of the term "nation" [has] changed from designating a prepolitical entity to something that was supposed to play a constitutive role in defining the political identity of the citizen within a democratic polity, and in the final instance, the manner in which national identity determines citizenship can in fact be reversed (1995, p. 334).

The definition of citizenship plays a critical role in regulating the relations between a state and a nation. Citizenship of a nation state gives individuals access to rights (civil, political, social and cultural) and obligations (military service, tax payment etc.). Definition of citizenship in most nation states is based on ethnicity (generally that of the majority), and in some cases it is based on territorial location, whereas national citizenship is generally defined according to dominant culture. Minorities usually are expected to integrate with this national identity, and institutions of the states are organized to create homogeneity in the society through an established national identity.

Homogeneity is one of the unique features of nation states. Basically, a nation state aims to create a homogeneous nation that shares a common national identity, ideology and a sense of patriotism. In this sense, minorities with different cultural identities are one of the biggest handicaps for building an ideal nation. Thus, the ethnic cleansing and discrimination against minorities consist of a large part of nation state history. In this respect, the history of building nation states is partly a history of sorrow, filled with genocides, population exchange and civil war.

Evaluation of Citizenship from Empire to Nation State

Successor of empire, the nation state system, differs from that of the empire in many ways. The first difference pertains to citizenship. It should be noted that term "citizenship" is modern, and came into use with emergence of nation states. Therefore, this term has a different conceptual meaning than that of subjects of empires, but both citizens and subjects relate to the issue of the citizenry. The

concept of citizenry is a crucial contrast between the empire and the nation state, or, as Weintraub (1997) has noted, between the cosmopolitan city and the polis. In the cosmopolis or empire, since 'heterogeneous multitudes were not called upon to be citizens, they could remain in apolitical coexistence, and each could do as he wished without the occasion to deliberate with his neighbors' (quoted by Calhoun 1997, p. 110).

The differences between empire and nation state systems are not only about the conception of citizenship, but also about the whole political system. The importance of citizenship notion is that it gives a base for a relationship between political and social sphere. A society takes its shape according to this mutual relation. The political system also shapes a society – whether a society becomes uniform or multicultural depends primarily on policies that the politic system creates. Thus, one can state that multiculturalism is closely connected with the concept of citizenship. According to this definition of citizenship societies produce social, economic and cultural relations, and that gives the society its structure when the definition of citizenship is built on ethnic or religious identity, then the dilemma between nation state and multiculturalism occurs, as is the case for many nation states.

Another difference between empires and nation states is the system of governance. While empires are more tolerant about local authorities, nation states are stricter about centralized administration and social control. Unlike cosmopolite empires, nation states are formed on homogeneity, which is seen as a way to build harmony within a nation. As Ernest Gellner argues, industrial society creates nations by promoting homogenization of national culture. Gellner argues that the cultural homogeneity of modern societies is an 'essential concomitant' of industrial production with its reliance on science, technology, and mass education (Calhoun, 1997, p. 80). A homogeneity imposed by objective, inescapable imperative eventually appears on the surface in the form of nationalism (Gellner 1997, p. 39). According to Caglar Keyder (2005) nation states have distinctive projects for societies; even if it is not declared, the aim of a state is homogenization of the society, because it is the subject, which produces modernization. It has to apply a unique law system to all citizens; every citizen will learn the same things, will be educated in the same school, will speak in the same language and will read the same books. On the other hand, empires recognize diversity. We can accept these criteria as a distinguishing feature for empires; a social action that distinguishes itself with its religion, language, root, race etc. can be admitted as a group, and according to this description, different applications can be maintained (Keyder 2005, p. 8).

However, empires are based on cosmopolitanism which, as Hollinger defines, promotes multiple identities, emphasizes the dynamic and changing character of many groups, and is responsive to the potential for creating new cultural combinations (2000, p. 3). As Calhoun (1997) states, imperial rule is precisely not the attempt to forge a unity between nation and state.

In the late nineteenth-century Austro-Hungarian Empire, for example, though some of their advisers encouraged the idea, the Habsburgs did not attempt to integrate their dominions into a modern nation-state. That is, they did not begin to treat their subjects as more or less interchangeable members of the polity, impose linguistic uniformity, build an infrastructure rendering communication and commerce easy throughout the realm, replace narratives of conquest with those of primordial ethnic commonality, or base claims to legitimacy on the interests or will of 'the people'. Only in the modern era however, has the rhetoric of nationalism been employed to recast these local and ethnic groups as nations. Historical empires were relatively effective at enabling people of different ethnic groups to live together in peace. In and around the Ottoman capital of Istanbul, for example, Jews, Christians, and Muslims lived traded with each other. But peace was relatively easy because the different groups were not called upon to join in common deliberations about the government or public affairs; the Sultan consulted advisers of various ethnic groups, but not the ordinary people (Calhoun 1997, pp. 104–110).

Different communities could have their own municipal law in an empire regime such as the Ottoman. Keyder underlines that the state had laws that aimed to protect the state system and solve some common problems, and these laws concern all subjects. On the other hand, every recognized community had a private law that regulated their internal affairs, marriage, heritage of people and problems that occurred in the community. In other words, communities had autonomy in regulating their own daily lives. Therefore, an empire did not impose a system that would homogenize a community. For instance, the Ottoman Empire did not force a Kurdish phratry to change its private law or alter the election system of the leader of phratry, it did not tell a chief rabbi how he would manage the internal affairs of his community, and it never interfered to internal affairs of patriarchate (Keyder 2005, p. 12).

The Ottoman Empire employed the "*millet system*" (nations system), which was used for many years to regulate the relations among ethnic groups and also between the state and its subjects. Some aspects of this system can serve as a model for maintaining multiculturalism in a peaceful way within a state.

Millet System in the Ottoman Empire

The Ottoman Empire created a system of social concordance in its rule over various ethnicities (religious groups) and numerous linguistic groups in the Balkans and the Middle East over half a millennium. The imperial social order was multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and multi-religious, but like previous empires in the region, was the most successful in adopting a new way of co-existence among different groups. The Ottoman social organization, which lasted well into the middle of the nineteenth century, became known as the *millet system*, and was based primarily on the separation of different religious groups from each other with legal status granted to each denominational community with granting rights and privileges (Boztemur 2005, p. 145). According to Mete Tuncay (2003), this system was inherited from the Byzantium Empire. On the other hand, Kemal Karpat (1973) claims that millet system

may also have stemmed from an existing practice in Constantinople. According to Karpat, the millet system actually emerged after the conquest of Constantinople in 1453 (1973, p. 32).

Millets were also called *dhimmis*. There were three types of officially recognized *dhimmi*s in the Ottoman Empire: 1 – The Orthodox Christians, 2 – The Armenians, and 3 – The Jews. Their status is called the status of *dhimmis* (Cahnman 1994, pp. 524–525). Similarly, the term "millet" was based on religious identity, determined by the family into which subject was born. Turks, Kurds, Arabs belonged to the Muslim millet, while Greeks, Bulgarians and Serbians were recognized as Ortodox Christian millet. For Karpat (1973) the division of the non-Muslims into three millets according to their religious, linguistic, and cultural characteristics indicates that each group was treated separately, and was represented in the system through the assignment of a rather high rank to its respective head. The Orthodox Christian and Jewish millets were not subordinated to the Muslim millet, and the government was not yet identified with the Muslims (1973, p. 37). Under the Ottoman Empire, Christian and Jewish groups were governed by their religious leaders, and later also by lay councils, in "millets" or recognized national groups, for many religious, educational and social purposes (Smith and Wistrich 2007, p. 20).

As Kemal Karpat suggests, the communal religious organizations, or millets, enabled the government elites to avoid interference in the religious and cultural affairs of the population. The heads of the millets also provided useful channels for implementing government decisions among the non-Muslim raya, and, by insulating the Sultan, played the vital role of preventing friction between him and his non-Muslim subjects (Karpat 1973, p. 31).

The millet system persisted into the 19th century. The Tanzimat Edict, declared in 1839, and the Islahat Fermani (Reform Charter) of 1856 brought the end of the millet system. The Tanzimat Edict promised "equality" between Christians and Muslims in a gradual effort to establish Ottomanism as a legal tie common to all subjects. The Islahat Fermani (Reform Charter) of 1856 is often considered to be a follow-up to the Edict of 1839. Its main features lay in a series of specific measures designated to achieve the "equality" between Muslims and Christians that had been promised in 1839. As Karpat (1973) states, this legal development created for certain groups a series of rights and obligations above and beyond the membership in the millet.

> Ottoman citizenship was a new legal category of secular identity, and created a new status for the citizen. Membership in the millet was superseded, in fact depriving it of its formerly legal aspect and reducing it to a mere religious affiliation. In other words, the state intended to assume the legal, cultural, and educational responsibilities of the millet and leave it as a cemaat, or religious congregation. The Ferman of 1856 also proposed to reform the millet system in accordance with the needs of each community. Indeed, the millet now only encompassed people with common religious identities and had to be reorganized accordingly (Karpat 1973, pp. 87–88).

In this sense, the French revolution of 1789 was a milestone for nations. After the revolution, the idea of nationalism scattered around the empire, and it caused *millets*, or in other words, nations to gain sense of politics, and such awareness formed the base for building nation state. Surely, construction of a nation state was not possible without nationalism. Nationalism had already emerged among ethnic groups in the Ottoman Empire and Turks were the last ethnic group to adopt nationalism as liberator factor.

At the end of the imperial era, nation states emerged, particularly on the European continent. However, nearly all of them took the heritage of their empires in their cultural and social dimensions. Almost none of nation states were unified in nation, and thus had different ethnic, religious minority groups. Minorities posed a continual challenge to the establishment of unified national identities during the history of nation state-building, and the creation of such an identity for multicultural societies remains a challenge.

Crisis of Multiculturalism and Building European Citizenship

The history of multiculturalism goes back to the mid-twentieth century in Europe. The expression "multicultural society" was first applied in the 1950s to Switzerland, where cultural pluralism had been translated into policy (Prato 2009, p. 6). However, as we witness today, European countries struggle with issues that closely relate to multiculturalism. The murder of Theo Van Gogh in Amsterdam in 2004, the terrorist attacks in Madrid in 2004 and London in 2005, the uprisings in Clichy-sous-Bois in Paris the same year, the *Jyllands-Posten* 'cartoon controversy' in 2005–06: these and other symbolic flashpoints are widely regarded as both evidence of a shared European crisis and salutary lessons in a collective process of political reorientation. The 'minaret debate' in 2009 is the latest symbolic contest with transnational resonance to join this list. According to Lentin and Titley the crisis of multiculturalism in Europe is symptomatic rather than casual. They claim that if culture works as a categorical substitute for the disavowed term 'race', while re-avowing the salience of 'race-thinking', this salience is symptomatic of a wider ontology (2012, p. 127).

The German Chancellor Angela Merkel talked about multiculturalism crisis in Europe during a 2010 speech. She remarked: "we are a country which, at the beginning of the 1960s, actually brought guest workers to Germany. Now they live with us, and we lied to ourselves for a while, saying that they won't stay and that they will disappear one day. That's not the reality. This multicultural approach, saying that we simply live side by side and are happy about each other, this approach has failed, utterly failed"[1]. According to Slavoj Žižek, Merkel was consistent, echoing the

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[1] Merkel: Multiculturalism is Failed, 17 October 2010, [online], http://news.sky.com/story/812922/merkel-multiculturalism-has-failed-in-germany, accessed 04 August 2012.

debate about *Leitkultur*[2] from a few years, when conservatives insisted on the fact that every state is based on predominant cultural space which the members of other cultures who live in the same space should respect. For Žižek, the conflict about multiculturalism already exists as *Leitkultur*. That is, it is not a conflict between cultures, but a conflict between different visions of how different cultures can and should co-exist, given the rules and practices these cultures have to share? In that light, Žižek propounds that although the ongoing crisis of the European Union appears as a crisis of economy and finances, it is fundamentally an ideological-political crisis[3].

Europe is a continent that has attracted immigrants from different parts of the world since the colonialism era. While some people sometimes were brought forcibly as slaves, some of them immigrated voluntarily and worked as laborers. In any case, those people were located out of society. In other words, they were actually embedded parts of the society. However, today immigrants, with different ethnic and religious identities, have become an essential part of Europe, with Muslim comprising the largest immigrant group.

According to Nilüfer Göle (2010), today Europe and Islam are encountering one another in the same chronoscope (correlation between time and space) without the geographical distance and time lag between the Western colonizer and the colonized, thus necessitating framing the relationship in transnational and intercultural terms (Göle 2010, p. 103). This is a new situation for both Europe and Islam. As a result of this encounter, new debates have arisen, especially about identity, diversity and multiculturalism. One can claim that the main reason for these debates is to increase the visibility of Islam in the public spaces of Europe, with participating in politics, education, cultural and economic activities.

Certainly, the interrelationship between Europe and Islam does not occur only in democratic ways. For instance, terrorism represents a particularly negative element of the relationship. According to Göle, the purposes of terrorism are to threaten Muslims who are establishing a dialogue with modernity and spread out a collective fear, so constricting the existence of political sphere and negotiation (2012, pp. 73–74). However, this tension does not emerge from only one side, but is also mutual. As witnessed in recent years, far right wings parties and religious conservative movements are gaining strength in Europe. Such movements can naturally raise xenophobia, chauvinism and jingoism in the society.

No doubt the most tragic incident of terrorism was Oslo slaughter of July 2011. A man named Anders Behring Breivik killed more than seventy people in Oslo. In explaining his actions Breivik expressed anger towards foreigners, such as Muslims, Jewish people (or Jews) etc. This fatal event can be seen as the highest level of xenophobia and an indicator of the multicultural crisis in Europe. Anti-immigrant

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[2] *Guiding Culture* or *the dominant culture*. The term is analyzed by Bassam Tibi in his book *Europa ohne Identität, Die Krise der multikulturellen Gesellschaft*, 1998.

[3] Žižek S., (2012). *What Does Europe Want? Beyond The Multiculturalism Deadlock*. 24 July 2012, [online], http://www.abc.net.au/religion/articles, accessed 04 August 2012.

thought is increasing in many European countries, especially among followers of far-right wing parties.

The European Union is formed by 28 nation states, and the nation state remains the key unit in the present day EU. However, there is also a deepening process for the EU's future that has been going on for a decade and is expected to change the EU structure from confederation to federation. Creating a common currency (euro), establishing a new EU constitution and building European citizenship are some of the basic instruments for this deepening process.

European citizenship can be built by gathering all of the European citizens under a common definition, providing fundamental rights and freedoms equally to all its people, without distinguishing among languages, ethnic identities, or religious beliefs. Such a practice would create a citizenship that transcends national identity. As Dolejsiova and Lopez point out, the unitary model gives highest primacy to the state and is not relevant for the study of European citizenship, and it is distinct from the general understanding of citizenship, which is entwined with that of nation state. It is a post-national, as opposed to national, citizenship. European citizenship is acquired at the level of the nation state (2009, p. 23).

European citizenship can be defined as a transcended or multicultural citizenship as analyzed by Will Kymlicka. In his definition "multicultultural citizenship" is essentially a critique of the unitary model of citizenship, where the state does not make any distinction between its citizens on the basis of their ascriptive identities, and prescribes that every citizen enjoys the same legal rights and that every individual possesses the legal status (Kymlicka 1995). European citizenship that carries a transcended meaning needs a European identity shared by all citizens of European countries. European identity does not just pertain to being European, but speaks to the sharing of basic rights and freedoms, as well as diversity in cultural identities. European identity is being systematically sponsored by the Administration of the European Union, and as Juan Delgado cites, a European identity is necessary for the European Union to avoid 'fragmentation, chaos and conflict' (Santer 1995) of every kind (military, social, economic and politic) and to help achieve cohesion, solidarity, subsidiary, concertation and cooperation (Delgado 2000, p. 142).

Conclusions

Unlike assimilationist theory, multiculturalism accepts the plurality of society, and defends diversity within a society. In contrast with the melting pot analogy used in assimilation theory, in multicultural theory society is perceived as a season salad or a mosaic. No doubt, one of the basic tenets of multiculturalism is defense of diversity of cultures, ethnic and religious identities in society.

Apart from archaic societies that lived isolated from other communities, almost all societies have been based on diversity, and included people with different identities. Those differences could vary from religion to race, from ethnic identity to consanguinity. In particular, in the age of empires (which comprises the biggest part

of political history), societies embraced diversity, and were comprised of different religious, ethnic and sectarian communities. Citizens of an empire would establish their relations with the state via the communities to which they were bound, as with example, the millet system of the Ottoman Empire, wherein communities had their own social and cultural institutions. Having autonomy in cultural and social affairs does not prevent people with different ethnic and religious identities from building social, cultural and economic relations with each other. One of the core elements that let communities interact with each other and build complex relations in the Ottoman Empire was the absence of political distinct among ethnic and religious groups. Identities were cultural rather than political. In this sense, lack of political difference among millets in the Ottoman Empire enabled communities to build intercultural, social and economic relations with each other. Thus, absence of politicization can work as a key element for establishing multiculturalism in plural societies. Obviously, the concept of citizenship in empires differed from modern citizenship which started in the 19th century with establishment of nation states in Europe following the French revolution.

Normally, a nation state depends on creating a homogeneous society. It needs a nation that will be the base for the state and provide it with national identity. In general, that nation comprises the majority. However, almost no nation country is built on a homogeneous ethnic structure. Almost all nation countries have a majority of a nation that comprises the base of the country, with some minorities from different ethnic or religious backgrounds. Therefore, nation states must develop new policies to integrate those ethnic groups with making up to the rest of the population. Unique nation, unique culture, unique language, unique ideology etc. are all the instruments of creating nation state.

The concept of nation state is based on a monolithic system, with minority populations located around a dominant group. As the German word, *Leitkultur,* describes the domination of a culture upon others, a nation state has a central culture that draws its features from the majority, and expect other minorities to integrate with the dominant culture. In this system, some cultures are described as premise and some as successors. However, ranking cultures in a hierarchy does not contribute to creation of a multicultural society, but may make it more difficult. Furthermore, placing cultures in a hierarchical structure is fundamentally flawed, as there is no measure to calculate the comparative merits of a culture.

The critical question remains as to what degree multiculturalism is possible in the concept of a nation state. In other words, in a nation state that expects citizens to stay close and to adapt to national culture, which draws its essence from a particular ethnic group, how can a truly multicultural society emerge?

Answers of these questions are closely related with how we conceptualize the term "citizenship". Along with the arrival of nation states, the modern concept of citizenship equipped people with civil, political and social rights and also with duties. The difference between empire regimes and nation state regimes in terms

of citizenship is that people were connected with the state indirectly in empires, whereas nation states connect directly with citizens. The nation state interferes in its citizens' lives much more than empires did.

In a nation state, the desired type of a citizen adopts the national identity, a term of that can include ideology, language, tradition etc. That sort of identity is not something organically developed, but is constructed by policies that are applied by institutions, particularly by education. National identity is unique, so it does not contain plural meanings, and is an indispensable tool when a nation state is built. Thus, coexistence of the terms of nation state and multiculturalism can be regarded as anachronistic, because "the national" inherently depends on dominant ethnic groups.

In this sense, the nature of citizenship is a key element in building multicultural societies. One can assert that one of the ways of building a multicultural society is related with how the term "citizenship" is conceptualized. The solution might be found in the re-imagination of citizenship that transcends the nation state concept. In this respect, European Union is a unique example for building a transcended citizenship or a multicultural citizenship. Furthering its aims the European Union, by establishing a new constitution and creating a newer citizenship law, can promote the growth of multiculturalism in Europe. In this context, European citizenship has the potential to help Europe move beyond the restrictions of national citizenship and overcome the handicap described by the term *Leitkultur*, the domination of a particular ethnic group in a nation state. Building this citizenship can be accomplished by maintaining the diversity of cultural identities (as was the case in the era of empires) and avoiding expectations of and policies for the creation of homogeneity among the citizenry. Such citizenship cannot be considered apart from construction of European identity, which can help establish multiculturalism in European society by adding "diversity" to its definition of Europeanness and allowing different cultures – including Islam – to find home under its cover.

Today European Union project is still a hope for multicultural society and dialog among cultures. It proved that by getting the Nobel Peace Prize in 2012. As shown by its receipt of the NPP in 2012, the EU still provides hope for the formation of multicultural society and dialog among cultures.

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