Sustainability Dilemma of Pluralistic Social Structure in Western Democracies

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1.INTRODUCTION

Different groups in a society have several powers to access the ruling system. One of them is highly organized to reach governing mechanism to affect decision-making process while the others really suffered from not being part of it. Some state mechanisms adopt very embracing policy for minority groups of society in opposition to other states insisting on implying majoritarian policies. Majoritanism which is a political theory based on prioritizing the will of majority is more prone to exclude minor parts of society from involving state system. Thus a problematic situation is given rise to emerge "other" concept known as not being a part of majority.

2.Pluralism

Pluralism is a term used for diversity of multiplicity or a descriptive concept standing for co-existence of different moral and political values in terms of political science. Pluralism is used to characterize the attitude of open-mindedness and the willingness to non-repressively tolerate the diversity of worthwhile pursuits to which humans may devote themselves (Talisse, 2011:88). Pluralism enables to disperse power more equally within alls sections of a society. When we look at European democracies and state mechanism from pluralistic view, it is easy to find many critical points that do not fit with this approach. However not only developing but also current western democracies whose social structures composed of pluralistic view sometimes ignore their democratic character. Xenophobia, Islamophobia and racism are different kind of terms which damages pluralism by suppressing minority groups in the developed countries.

Cultural pluralism explains the dynamic by which minority groups fully participate in the dominant society while maintaining their cultural differences. A pluralistic society is a community where different groups have a certain degree of tolerance for one another while interacting. Different cultures can coexist without major conflicts, and where minority cultures are encouraged to uphold their customs in pluralistic societies (Ratulea, 2009:43). The relation between the "majority culture" on one side and the "culture of minorities" another side as a relation of possible antagonism can lead to mutual social exclusion through the necessity of preserving some particular cultural identities within the context of a cultural pluralism. (Bercea, 2007:195-196). Multicultural politics produce a collective Muslim

identity "as a shared immigrant experience and as a representational identity" (Humphrey, 2001:35)

3.Islamophobia

Islamophobia is a word that is practically in many places at the same time in today's discourse on Islam. The situation of Muslim minorities in the West is frequently framed both by academics and by pundits in terms of the 'need' to combat the 'evils' of Islamophobia (Zuquete, 2008:321). Islamophobia "has fed racist hostility against people of Middle Eastern, Arab and South Asian origin and has in turn been bolstered by racial prejudice and xenophobia" (Rudiger, 2001). Unnecessary hostility against Islam refers to the practical consequences of such hostility in unfounded discrimination against individuals and societies whose religion is Islam (Trust, 2002). Muslim minorities have recently emerged in most Western countries; for instance; some European countries (England, France and Germany in particular. Muslim immigration has been more recent in other countries such as the USA and Canada) have been receiving Muslim migrants of various origins since the 1950s (Bloul, 2008:9). Moreover, Muslim contact with the Australian landmass has dated back to the 17th century (Kabir, 2004). The Muslim population of Australia is relatively small and comes from different origins 'Muslimness' of Australian immigrants is open to negotiate within the wider social, legal and political environment (Humphrey, 2001:40)

4.Xenophobia

The style of immigrants becoming sources of economic threats is perceived in terms of labor market theory (Bonacich, 1972; Boswell, 1986), which assumes that xenophobia is strengthened when immigrant workers work for decidedly lower wages than the majority population. Many immigrants are more willing to work for low wages with poor working conditions in a receiving country due to low incomes and living standards in their home countries. Accordingly, immigrants lead to decrease job opportunities for the majority populations as well as undermine the wage standard in the host society – thus becoming a threat to the majority population (Hjerm and Nagayoshi, 2011:4). As it is accentuated by Bonacich and Boswell labor market theory is one of very crucial part in rising hatred towards foreign people in a society.

The origin of anti-immigrant voices is related to cultural tensions between ethnic groups where foreigners are viewed as potential threats to national identity, social order and values of the majority population (Hjerm and Nagoyashi, 2011:5). Cultural aspects are emphasized as a significant factor for creating prejudices towards immigrant groups (McLaren and Johnson, 2007). The focus on cultural threat has either been somewhat neglected or, alternatively, has been overtly on perceptions of cultural threat instead of their objective sources. However, the existing empirical studies which has importance suggest that social and economic variables were mostly insignificant in explaining support for anti-immigrant parties in seven European countries (Van der Brug et al. 2000). Furthermore, cultural threat is a more beneficial and an analytical tool to explain prejudice than economic threat. (Scheepers

et al., 2002:22). The size of non-European population of immigrants is often used as an indicator of objective sources of cultural threat (Schneider, 2007), but 'non-European' implies various differences: linguistic, religious, or perhaps physical appearance. (Hjerm and Nagoyashi, 2011:5)

5.Rise of Extreme Right

The 1990s were a period of tremendous growth in electoral support for radical right-wing parties across Western Europe. When we look at seven prominent radical right parties from 1990 to 2000, we can see that one study showing a mean increase of 55% in vote share during during this period (Norris, 2005:8). Particular importance of radical right-wing parties for the investigation, they have often been defined by their positions in opposition to immigration (Williams, 2006). However, the specific enemies and the degree to which they are looked down on change from state to state in spite of the common rhetoric of xenophobia among radical right-wing parties, because each country has the unique history and context (Williams, 2010:112). For instance, , Turks have formed a sort of Parallelgesellschaft ("parallel society") in Germany which remains separate and distinct in many forms from German society (Caglar, 2001:604). Far right parties defended cultural purity during 1980's and 1990's through accentuating anti-immigrant expressions. Immigrant values conveyed by workers whose cultural background stemming from non- European societies are important threats against native culture or life style. Thus different values and cultures can eradicate or erode the basic principles of native societies. Therefore, extreme right wings brought protecting traditional life characteristics up to the agenda on account of high damaging possibilities of immigrant values.

Following this logic, the self-proclaimed spiritual leader of the Danish Progress Party, Mogens Glistrup, made anti-immigrant sentiment an issue of patriotism saying "Of course I am a racist—all good Danes are. Either you're a racist, or else you're a traitor" (Widfeldt, 2000:490). Glistrup has also stated that Muslims should be "chased away" or else "they will kill us all." The French FN expressed its policy of "national preference" in the 1993 party program by second-in-command leader Bruno M´egret. The "300 measures" in the 1993 program recommended that French and European Union nationals be considered the primary recipients of welfare state benefits such as unemployment compensation, housing, and health care. The policy was criticized widely as a form of anti-foreigner apartheid, racist in its intention. However, the National Front defended the aims of the plan, which it said were to preserve the French nation, a rooted, "historic, traditional, ethnically-inspired entity that can easily be undermined by alien values, groups, culture and influences."(Hainsworth and Mitchell, 2000:445).

 The Swiss People's Party, which won 22.5% of the popular vote, emphasized "abuse of asylum" and opposed illegal immigration on the ground that immigrant use resources of local

people (Husbands, 2000:508). Another example of anti-immigrant policy in Europe was the Danish People's Party claiming that Denmark is not an immigrant country (Widfeldt, 2000:491). On the other hand the Norwegian Progress Party claimed that immigrants cause to drain national sources (Gibson, 2002:25). In Holland Pim Fortuyn's List Party opposing immigrants due to cultural reasons says that previous government ignored the effects by which Muslim immigrations were caused (Migration News, 2002). German National Democratic Party claimed that foreign influence infiltrated into Germany and expressed that American culture and non-Europeans immigrants undermined German cultural heritage (Winkler and Schuman, 1998:102).

6.Anti-Discrimination Laws in Europe

Religious discrimination in Europe is very critical issue, so the EU adopted some principles in order to combat religious discrimination in Treaty of Amsterdam in Article 13 says:

This Article complements Article 12, which prohibits discrimination on grounds of nationality. The new Article enables the Council to take appropriate action to combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation

(Treaty of Amsterdam, Article 12)

Few European countries developed and overhaul their legislation on discrimination based on religious grounds. There are some instances about this tendency by European states. Even though the anti-discrimination legislation in the United Kingdom did not cover religious Discrimination area, the Race Relations Act of 1998 include discrimination against ethno-religious groups which has been used by the Commission for Racial Equality to argue that religious discrimination in effect amounts to unlawful indirect racial discrimination against a particular racial group covered by the Race Relations Act (Religious Discrimination: Your Rights in Bloul, 2008). Some other example in Europe for anti-religious discrimination can be arrayes as Finland's Penal Code (1995, Section 9) explaining sentences for discrimination because of religion, civil and administrative law in Austria contains provisions prohibiting public expressions of prejudice against persons on the ground of religion or creed. The 1987 Penal Code In Denmark provides punishments for discrimination and harassment on the grounds of belief (Article 266b, Act 626 of 1987), The Penal Code in France, (1985, Art. R-624-3, 4, 7) punishes verbal hatred on grounds of religion. Discrimination on grounds of religion is also prohibited and punished in Holland (Penal Code 1992), Norway (Penal Code 1981, Paragraph 135a), Sweden (Act 134, 1994), Spain (Cooperation Agreement 1992, Institutional Law 10/1995) (Bloul, 2008:14).

7.CONCLUSION

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Pluralism is a term used for diversity of multiplicity or a descriptive concept standing for co-existence of different moral and political values in terms of political science. Pluralism enables to disperse power more equally within alls sections of a society. When we look at European democracies and state mechanism from pluralistic view, it is easy to find many critical points that do not fit with this approach. However not only developing but also current western democracies whose social structures composed of pluralistic view sometimes ignore their democratic character. Xenophobia, Islamphobia and racism are different kind of terms which damages pluralism by suppressing minority groups in the developed countries.

The most important thing of pressure on different groups in a society is to create an "other" notion which is not welcomed by the majority of community. From this perspective the other concept can easily appear in the societies that does not internalize pluralism. In other words, majoritarian or no pluralistic structure of societies complicates co-existence of different groups. In that context, we aimed at investigating unpluralistic structure, which creates xenophobia, Islamphobia and racism in European democracies post Sept 11.

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