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HABERMAS, POST-METAPHYSICAL THINKING, AND THE PROBLEM OF MUSLIM MINORITIES IN EUROPE

Dustin J. Byrd

Ph.D. em Filosofia pela Michigan State University. Professor de Humanidades no Olivet College (Estados Unidos). Publicou o livro *Ayatollah Khomeini and the anatomy of the Islamic Revolution in Iran: towards a theory of prophetic charisma* (University Press of America, 2011). *E-mail*: dbyrd@olivetcollege.edu

ABSTRACT

The Critical Theorist Jürgan Habermas has increasingly become more concerned about the issue of religion in Europe, especially the difficulties that new Islamic immigrants are having integrating and assimilating into secular European society. Habermas proposes that religious voices, especially those of Muslims, not be ex-communicated from the public discourse but rather be welcomed in. However, in order to do this, he requests that the ideals, principles, and values of Islam go through a "translation" process, that they be rendered into publicly accessible (secular) language so that the non-religious community can enter into a discourse with religious voice via a shared common language. Additionally, the secular voices of European society have also to go through a learning process; they have to cultivate a sensitivity towards religious beliefs, understanding them to be invaluable for the democratic processes due to the fact that their views can be meaningful sources of moral analysis and motivation for solidarity which has been depleted by secular modernity. This process is not without its problems as a discourse between the secular and the religious have been continually pulled apart via anti-Islamic actions as well as anti-Western terrorism. This situation has left the Muslim community isolated, self-ghettoized, and a virtual nation of stateless people within Europe, which has made reactionary Islamic fundamentalism more attractive to young Muslims alienated from European society. It is the purpose of this paper to highlight the major difficulties that Habermas' project of reconciliation will encounter and offer a critical prognosis of what to expect should this project materialize.

KEYWORDS

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the social-political philosopher Jürgen Habermas has become increasingly concerned with the status of religion within secular society; its value as a source of meaning and motivation; its potential for violence; the legal status of its adherents; the role it can potentially play in the integration of religious minorities within a society that is characterized by its secular ethos and worldview; and the requirements it must cultivate in order for it to enter into a robust and substantive discourse with others who ascribe to no religiously grounded faith position. In his attempt to find a geography for which religious citizens can continue to practice their traditions and live by the moral precepts of their doctrines and yet remain a fully engaged citizen within a secular society and state, he has put forth a theory that attempts to lay the groundwork for what he calls "post-metaphysical" thought, which remains sensitive to the cultural pluralism of the present condition. Post-metaphysical thinking, which we will continue to explore further in this article, is for Habermas a *change of consciousness* for both religious and secular citizens, with the goal being the introduction of parameters of discourse that are commonly agreed upon by both participants in the discourse so that the ultimate outcome is mutually constructed and agreed upon by all members of the communication community. In order to create the ideal situation for a meaningful religious-secular discourse, Habermas categorically assigns certain obligations on both groups, neither of which are bound to accept them without setting in abeyance certain presupposed truth claims that are inherent with their religious worldview and or in their commitment to a secular/Enlightenment ideal. Nevertheless, Habermas' theory presupposes a certain religious-secular discourse that takes place within a common European framework, one that has a common European history and heritage behind it: the *ethnos*. The question is not whether religious and secular Europeans can enter into a robust dialogue with each other about the role of religion within secular European society, but whether secular and religious Europeans can enter into such a discourse with their Euro-Muslim counterparts, who are also divided between

those who are devout in all aspects of life and those who reserve religion for the private sphere.

The purpose of this article is the reexamine Habermas' discourse theory as it pertains to his post-metaphysical thinking concerning religion both as a active ingredient in the public sphere as well as a vital source for political, cultural, and spiritual norms within a thoroughly secularized society, and then test it as to whether it can withstand the tensions and pressures that come with the problems of devoutly religious Muslim minorities within Europe. If Habermas insists that religion still has a place in European society, as he has expressed in his recent writings on religion, does that also include a potential contribution made by devout Muslims or is the cultural disconnect that has dominated certain segments of the Muslim community in nearly all European states too deep and insurmountable to come to some kind of mutually accepted agreement concerning the role of Islam within secular society? If it does not, does the modus vivendi that seems to already be normative simply relegate a potential Islamic contribution to European civilization unwanted and unrecognized? Is Europe *religiously unmusical* when it comes to Islam, as Habermas says he is in terms of religious faith? Does it only hear noise in the symphony of Muslim voices? We will examine the difficulties of overcoming the antagonism between religion and secularity, European culture and Islam, in an attempt to ascertain the possibilities of a Habermasian inspired European-Islamic discourse that would lead to what Max Horkheimer called a "future reconciled society".

2. HABERMAS' IMPERATIVES FOR THE RELIGIOUS AND SECULAR

In Habermas' (2009) theory concerning the public use of reason, all arguments, if they are to be made acceptable in a secular constitutional state, must be articulated with and deliberated upon through "publicly accessible reasoning". What Habermas (2009, p. 120) is insisting upon is that all reasons put forth to support any position that is deliberated upon within a secular polity must be articulated within the bounds

of reason that all thinking citizens have intellectual access to. He opposes the idea that certain legislative and social norms can be legitimated via closed systems of thought that are only accessible if one is a member of that particular adhering community. For example, Habermas (2009) would reject the idea that social legislation can be justified if the sole legitimation for such legislation is rooted in divine revelation – a source of knowledge and norms that is not universally accepted and therefore not accessible for much of a given population. In order for revelation to be a source of legitimation, it would require that the population has, through democratic deliberation, universally accepted it as a source by which it can then be used as a force of legitimation for legislation. The irony being that the legitimacy of the revelation is not *sui generis*, but stems from the democratic deliberation that presupposes it, and thus socially diminishing it as a source of legitimation. For Habermas (2009), only those claims that can be expressed and deliberated upon through the use of public reasoning can claim true legitimacy and therefore be binding upon the participants of the discourse. Any attempt to impose a law and/or norm that have not been agreed upon through the democratic deliberation process through publicly accessible reasoning is a point of coercion and cannot be acceptable in a constitutional democratic state.

For Habermas (2009), this does not mean that religious communities and their views on various social issues are denied access to public debates, but rather it implores them to *translate* their religious language into language that is openly accessible via reason. Habermas (2009, p. 122-131) believes that religion still contains certain semantic and semiotic potentials that can enrich and/or infuse the secular world with a sense of meaning and purpose but can only gain entry into the legislative process if, and only if, those values can be subjected to the "translation privso". In other words, the concerns of the religious communities, which Habermas (2009) accedes may be legitimate and useful for thinking about moral and ethical questions, have to be presented through a language that is open to rational discourse and debate, and therefore has to shed the theological semantics from which it originates. He says:

> Religious traditions have a special power to articulate moral intuitions, especially with regard to vulnerable forms of communal life. In corresponding political debates, this potential makes religious speech into a serious vehicle for possible truth contents, which can then be translated from the vocabulary of a particular religious community into a generally accessible language (HABERMAS, 2009, p. 131).

For Habermas, a project of translating theological claims into rational discourse has already occurred and has done so successfully in the realm of philosophy, which did not "deflate" or "exhaust" the meaning potential of the religious language as it transformed it into rational-secular values (HABERMAS; RATZINGER, 2006, p. 44-45). Although the translation proviso is required for religious citizens to complete in order to enter into a meaningful discourse with their secular counterparts, the non-religious citizen also has a positive duty that is equal in importance to the religious citizens' need to translate; the secular individual must "open their minds to the possible truth content of those presentations" made by the religious citizens, and "enter into dialogues from which religious reasons might well emerge in the transformed guise of generally accessible arguments" (HABERMAS, 2009, p. 132). In other words, the secular side must resist the temptation to close up the discourse in a *secularist* – what Habermas describes as "militantly secular" – way by refusing to entertain the idea that religion could potentially by the bearer of certain truths that are not fully appreciated or articulated by secular thinking. In this case, secular citizens cannot engage in discourse avoidance, but must be willing to engage with religious voices and their concerns and reasons, especially when those concerns and reasons have been translated into speech that is rooted in publicly accessible reasoning. Habermas (2009, p. 138) is not concerned for the welfare of secularity if the state enters into a meaningful discourse with its religious citizens, but is keen on having those secularist citizens become more "self-reflexive", and overcome "a rigid and exclusive secularist self-understanding of modernity".

For Habermas, a meaningful discourse between the religious and the secular is foundational for his theory of the

"post-secular society." What designates the secular society from the post-secular society, is not the often claimed idea that there is a civilizational return to religion that has been best exemplified by Islamic revivalism, the spread of Evangelicalism, and Hindu/Buddhism fundamentalism, but rather that there has been a change in *consciousness* concerning the continual existence of religion despite the increasing secularization of global polity, economy, and culture. A post-secular society is one that both 1. recognizes the permanence of the secular democratic state and predominance of reason, and 2. recognizes the unique and meaningful contribution that religion can offer a secular way-of-being if it is translated into publicly accessible reasoning. Both the religious and the non-religious have certain obligations to each other that if met, will make sure the discourse doesn't close upon itself either scientifically, by claiming that religious convictions have an irrational epistemological status, or via fundamentalism, which accuses secularity and science for reducing human life to merely the "metaphysics of what is the case" and thereby destroying all morality. Habermas states, "if both sides agree to understand the secularization of society as a complementary learning process, then they will also have cognitive reasons to take seriously each other's contributions to controversial subjects in the public sphere" (HABERMAS; RATZINGER, 2006, p. 47).

3. NATION, STATE, AND CITIZENSHIP

In the context of the discourse about what it means today to be a European, what it means to be a citizen of a secular European country, and whether or not it is possible for Muslims to maintain their Islamic identity while at the same time accepting the legitimacy of the secular democratic state as well as the increasingly secularized public sphere, Habermas turns his attention towards the theory of nation that is put forth by the political theologian of the Third Reich, Carl Schmitt.

In Schmitt's theory, the constitutional state of any given people presupposes a form of ethno-nationalism, believing that a "national homogeneity" is an absolute precondition for

the establishment of political authority (HABERMAS, 1998, p. 134). According to Habermas (1998, p. 134), Schmitt claims that

> [...] a democratic state in which democracy is founded on the national homogeneity of its citizens conforms to the so-called nationality principle according to which each nation forms a state and each state a nation[1].

This understanding of a state is derived from ancient Roman notion of *Natio*, the goddess of birth that was translated into political language as a group of people with shared heritage, language, customs, culture, but were lacking in a fully formed political state (HABERMAS, 1996, p. 494). For Schmitt, this shared heritage is the source from which one can build a state that is legitimate to the ethnos itself – it is an ethnic state, *by*, *of*, and *for* the ethnos. Without the pre-political social adhesive of a shared ethnicity to legitimate the state and solidify the bonds of the citizenry, the society would but appear as a mere aggregate of individuals as opposed to a unified nation embodied in a state. Habermas' (1998) cosmopolitan and post-Third Reich sensitivities compel him to reject such a claim. He cannot accept the idea that there is a "quasi-natural substrate" that is necessary for state organization; nor can he accept that "equal treatment [is] contingent on the fact of a uniform national origin" (HABERMAS, 1998, p. 135). For Habermas, as well as the Frankfurt School in general, the *volksgeist* [people's spirit] – if such a notion can really be acceded to in a modern secular society – cannot be made the basis for national citizenship or equal rights, as modernity is increasingly pluralistic, multicultural, and globalized. No, for Habermas, equal rights and equal treatment is rooted in universal norms that preclude ethnicity and race as a standard of inclusion. In affirming the necessary political distinction between "demos" and "ethnos", which had its origins in the Enlightenment and most particularly in the French Revolution,

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[1] It is also clear that there is a distinct difference in the way American and Europe approach their religious heritage. On the whole, Europe is more religiously literate than in the U.S., but less reverent. The opposite is true in the U.S., where religious literacy is tremendously low while the reverence towards religion is very high.

Habermas (1996) continues the argument that ethnicity lacks any ontological grounding to dictate who and what a citizen is in a secular democratic nation-state. He states that:

> The nation of citizens finds its identity not in ethnic and cultural commonalities but in the practice of citizens who actively exercise their rights to participation and communications. [...] the republican strand of citizenship completely parts company with the idea of belonging to a prepolitical community integrated on the basis of descent, shared tradition, and common language (HABERMAS, 1996, p. 494-495).

Citizenship for Habermas is rooted in the Enlightenment conceptions of demos and ethnos; an understanding that the *demos* (collective body of citizens) has separated itself from ethnicity and has instead bound itself to common ideals. To be a citizen of a state is not to necessarily share in the genetic makeup of the original ethnicity, or even its historical antecedence, but is to join a community of like-minded individuals who express their commitments to constitutional principles. Habermas' notion of *constitutional patriotism* is rooted in the understanding that the various ethnicities, races, religious commitments etc., that are found in a given society, are not the embodied ideas of the state, but rather the democratically deliberated and agreed upon constitutional principles, values, and norms, serve as the basis for the community of citizens. In this case, the ethnos is radically separated from the demos and ultimately plays no substantive part in the legal framework of the state. The demos are the community of citizens that ascribe to the constitutional values, whereas the ethnos, which may have been once the pre-political foundation for the state, has taken a backseat to philosophical and legal principles. In other words, the "nation" is defined by legally and philosophical ascribed norms of the society, and not its ethnic origins or contemporary makeup. This can most vividly be witnessed in the United State where: 1. race and ethnicity, while legally defined, are not legal considerations to citizenship, and 2. there is no pre-political notion of American ethnicity. The conception of an American citizen by design is someone who ascribes to certain philosophical and legal principles – any individual, regardless of race, gender, national origin, religion etc., can become an *naturalized* American

citizen by affirming their allegiance to the ideals embodied within the American constitution[2]. In the U.S., the most radical of separations between ethnos and demos has occurred (although not in the minds of many fringe "Nativist" groups who still see America as fundamentally a "white" (Euro-American) country). Although the ugly history of white supremacy in the U.S. demonstrates that the social reality of a pluralist society has never fully exemplified the radical egalitarianism that animated the American ideal of citizenship, the foundational principles of the U.S. Constitution, that all peoples can be equally American via their commitment to "American constitutional values", accounts for one of the reasons why the U.S. has become the world's most successful "melting pot". Despite a certain level of economic and racial gentrification, especially among whites and African-Americans, American integration of religious minorities has also been more successful that in Europe, especially when it comes to Muslims (NUSSBAUM, 2012, p. 13-19). National identity is predicated on beliefs derived from the Enlightenment and a certain vague notion of Christianity, not ethnos, as there is *no American ethnicity*. It is a quasi-American notion of citizenship that Habermas advocates for in Europe – one that precludes any emphasis on ethnos as a standard for full rights, participation, and entrance into the discourse community in a modern secular democratic state and society, the opposite of Schmitt's model which shares the same ethno-nationalism component of many on the contemporary political right in Europe.

4. MUSLIMS IN EUROPE: *DAS UNBEHAGEN IM DER KULTUR UND RESPEKTLOSIGKEIT*

Since 11 September 2001, many European countries have engaged in a fundamental rethinking of their liberal

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[2]   There is also *birthright citizenship*, which is an individual is legally considered a citizen by way of them being born on territory subject to U.S. authority. It is regulated by the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

immigration policies that have seemed to be responsible for opening the gates to a foreign "other" that has established itself in Europe while simultaneously resisting a thorough integration into European culture and society. Both religious and non-religious Europeans look with suspicion at the Muslims in their midst, not with a racial hatred that would echo the biologically determined racism of the Third Reich, but with a particular distrust for the religious convictions of the Muslim population, their cultural idiosyncrasies, and their supposed combination of theology and politics which, for the average European, is a conflation that naturally leads to violence[3]. Whether it is the Algerians in France, the Moroccans in Holland, the Turks in Germany, the Libyans in Italy, or the Bangladeshi in Greece, nearly all western European states have had to cope with the social and political problems that have resulted from a liberal post-World War II immigration policy that has been generous to Muslims. In the wake of such waves of immigration, states have also had to deal with the resulting backlash that has occurred from the native populations that have experienced such immigration in the everyday lifeworld as a net negative. The confluence of the nativist mindset, which is perpetually on guard concerning the "others in our midst", and a population that in many ways remain voluntarily alienated from their host culture, has born a situation of distrust and disrespect that cuts across the dividing line between the secular and the sacred. The dividing line is now between Europeans, both religious and secular, and the Muslims, both devout and those who see Islam as only part of the ethnic heritage and not as an active way of life.

Amidst the backdrop of such uneasiness, there has been in the last decade many instances where Muslims have felt that they have been deeply and genuinely disrespected by something that was either: 1. *unintentional*, i.e. out of ignorance or by mistake, or 2. through an intentional action meant to provoke a negative response from Muslims. These instances have only increased the distrust and suspicion between Europeans

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[3]   I am choosing not to examine terrorist attacks on European soil as they represent a different issue, one that has more to do with international politics, i.e. the "war on terror" and Europe's role in it. I will examine episodes of explosive antagonism *within* civil society that center on the issue of Muslims immigrants and Islamic identity in Europe.

and their Muslim guests/fellow citizens; Europeans have increasingly questioned the intentions of Muslims in Europe while Muslims have been rethinking whether or not it is even possible to maintain an Islamic identity within secular Europe. Is the gap between the secular culture and profane ethos of Europe too alien from the Islamic tradition to bridge the gap and create a multiethnic, multicultural, and multi-religious European society? Indeed, every instance in the breakdown of communication between Muslims and the West fueled what the American neo-conservative Samuel Huntington deemed the "Clash of Civilizations", and what bin Laden understood to be the defense of Islam against the "Zionists and Crusaders". Despite the deficiencies of both Huntington and bin Laden's manichaeistic theories, the fundamental antagonisms between the post-Christian secular ethos of Europe and the religiously oriented way of life for Muslim residents of Europe has continued to grow unimpeded. The clash between the religious and the secular in the public sphere has fostered a climate in which both sides feel disrespected – many Europeans think that their culture, norms, and values are not respected by Muslims while Muslims tend to think that Europeans can only accept Muslims if they abandon their religious views and practices. The following examples underline the deep-seated distrust of the two communities.

On 29 August 2004, Dutch national television aired the short film *Submission* produced by Theo Van Gogh and written by Ayaan Hirsi Ali, a Somali "refugee" to Holland who would later become a *cause célèbre* for her anti-Islamic crusade (BURUMA, 2006)[4]. The film depicted a naked and beaten woman pleading with the divine about the mistreatment she endures from her husband who justifies his violent attacks on her via Islam. The Dutch Muslim community was shocked and outraged by this film; for them it was another ideological attack on their religion as opposed to an honest discussion of a problem that plagues all societies including Europe, i.e. domestic violence. In response to the film, a young man of

[4] Although Ayaan Hirsi Ali applied for asylum in Holland as a refugee, she later explained that she had lied to the Dutch authorities. She had been told that the Dutch were less likely to accept her application if she was simply immigrating there, which she was attempting to do, but would more likely be accepted if she claimed she was a refugee.

Moroccan descent, Mohammed Bouyeri, later assassinated Theo Van Gogh in the streets of Amsterdam, leaving a condemnatory letter to Ayaan Hirsi Ali stabbed into the corpse. Bouyeri's true hatred was for Ayaan Hirsi Ali, whom he believed to be a Judas-like apostate. For Bouyeri, Van Gogh was a sexually promiscuous libertine non-believer, who thrived off offending people; not much could be expected of him in terms of honoring the sacred, but Ayaan was once a Muslim and her recent attacks on Islam were unforgivable in his mind. While on trial, Bouyeri showed no remorse for the murder as he believed he had done his rightful duty in defending the honor of Islam and Muslims. This episode led to firebombing attacks on mosques and counterattacks on churches in the otherwise very peaceful and tolerant Holland.

On 30 September 2005, Jyllands-Posten, a Danish newspaper, printed twelve cartoons that depicted Prophet Muhammad as a terrorist, buffoon, and a religious imposter. Being one of Europe's smaller states, Danish newspapers naturally have a limited readership. However, the images that were the product of a national competition to depict Muhammad in an irreverent way as a gesture of "freedom of speech" were eventually circulated globally. Through a skilled campaign to incite rage from the Muslim world by the leadership of the Danish Muslim community, the backlash against Denmark also went global (KLAUSEN, 2009). Flags and embassies were burned, people were killed, and Denmark became the latest object of vitriolic hatred in the Muslim world. Once again Europe argued for *free speech* while the Muslim world argued for *respect of the sacred*. This episode led to Mahmud Ahmadinejad, then President of Iran, to host the *International Conference to Review the Global Vision of the Holocaust*, a gathering of the most prominent Holocaust deniers (mainly European and American scholars of ill-repute). President Ahmadinejad was attempting to demonstrate to Europe that Iran also had freedom of speech; they can deny the Holocaust in Iran but it cannot be legally denied in most of Europe where it is a criminal act to publish Holocaust denial material.

On 12 September 2006, Pope Benedict XVI delivered his Regensburg address entitled *Glaube, Vernunft und Universität – Erinnerungen und Reflexionen* (*Faith, Reason, and the University – Memories and Reflections*), where he referrenced

the 14th century Byzantine Emperor Manuel II Palaiologos. The emperor stated that "Show me just what Muhammad brought that was new and there you will find things only evil and inhuman, such as his command to spread by the sword the faith he preached".

Although it didn't appear to be in the global press, the subject of the Pope's speech was the negative consequences of the process of de-hellenization, or the exorcism of reason from religion, and how that can potentially lead to the use of violence to carry out religious conversions. The *exclusion* of violence as a means to convince others of one's theological positions is, for the most part, a integral part of the Islamic tradition, as the Qur'an makes clear that "there is no compulsion in religion" (QUR'AN, 2, p. 256)[5]. Nevertheless, the idea that the Pope, a representative of all Christendom in the minds of many Muslims that are unfamiliar with the history of the Church, would use such a phrase to describe *Islam*, itself a derivative of the word for peace, was nothing but deeply insulting[6]. Despite the potential for discourse that the Pope's speech created, it was nevertheless transformed into another episode of mistrust and violent disagreement as nihilistic protests in Muslim majority countries ensued while Europeans looked arrogantly down in bewilderment at the irrationality of the "Muslims street." Again, what was for Muslims an issue of *respect* for the sacred was for Europeans an issue of *freedom of speech*.

In November of 2009, a constitutional amendment was passed that would ban the construction of new minarets in all of Switzerland. After months of conservative sloganeering, the amendment passed by a clear majority. Although Switzerland had only four minarets in all of the country, their existence was nevertheless depicted as an existential threat to the culture of the Swiss (NUSSBAUM, 2012, p. 4). As Martha

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[5] Some conservative Islamic scholars believe this verse to be abrogated; a claim that many anti-Muslim voices have repeated. However, the majority of mainstream Islamic scholars have argued for its normative stance in the Islamic tradition, including the Oxford Professor Dr. Tariq Ramadan.

[6] Even Ayatollah Khomeini, one of the most learned of Muslims in the Shi'a tradition, was unfamiliar with the idea that the Pope only represented the Catholic Church. Evidence for this can be found in his letters to the Pope during the 1980's.

Nussbaum (2012, p. 45) has recorded, the fear of a "slippery-slope" into an Islamic Euro-state motivated many citizens' vote: one voter remarked: "Before you know it, we'll have shari'a law and women being stoned to death in our streets". The sentiment, that Islam was an aggressive foreign culture within the European civilization, was stoked by the Swiss People's Party and the Federal Democratic Union in order to get their minaret ban proposal passed. The political use of fear and anxious suspicion drove the populace to the polls; uniting both political right and left against the Muslim minority. "Game Over," they exclaimed, "Switzerland is covered in minarets. Vote to ban them on November 29" (NUSSBAUM, 2012, p. 45).

In 2010, France enacted *Loi interdisant la dissimulation du visage dans l'espace public* (act prohibiting concealment of the face in public space). This act was meant to ban the practice of wearing the *niqab* (face veil) that is common among conservative Muslim women. Although it is understood to go beyond that which is maximally required by Islamic jurisprudence, some women choose to include the niqab in their religious dress, leaving only the eyes exposed. Although wearing the extra layer of concealment is only practiced by a very small number of French Muslims, the *laïcité* form of French secularism since 2004 has been popularly interpreted as less about government neutrality in regards to religion as opposed to government's active role in removing religion from the public sphere. Although the French authorities cited security, transparency, objectification, coercion, and health as reasons why the niqab had to be banned, the Muslim community perceived it as another attack on their sacred traditions, their religious identity, and the Enlightenment's notion of freedom of religion (NUSSBAUM, 2012, p. 105-138).

Although the last episode of misunderstanding, distrust, and suspicion didn't lead to an attack directly on Muslims, it was inspired by the hatred of their presence and the disgust for those on the political left who are thought to be responsible for the legal "Muslim invasion" of Europe. On 22 July 2011, a young Norwegian nationalist, Anders Behring Breivik, attacked the Norwegian capital, Oslo, with a car bomb and then proceeded to the island of Utøya, which is the site of the annual summer retreat of the Worker's Youth League

(*Arbeidernes ungdomsfylking*, AUF), the youth wing of the Norwegian Labor Party. Posing as a police officer, Breivik landed on the island armed with a Ruger Mini-14 assault rifle and a Glock 34 semiautomatic pistol, which he purchased legally in Norway, and began to massacre the teenagers that ran to him believing him to be security. Between the two attacks, Breivik killed 77 people and would later be sentenced to 21 years in prison (yet he is most likely to receive an additional life sentence). Breivik left behind a manifesto: *2083: A European Declaration of Independence*, in which he lays blame for the troubles of Norway and the rest of Europe upon the Muslim immigrants (that are slowly destroying the Euro-Christian culture) and the secular leftists, socialists, and communists, that have made it possible for this gradual "conquest". Breivik, seeing himself as a new Charles Martel, chose not to attack Muslims directly as he believed it would only garnish more sympathy for them. For Breivik, he had to depict Muslims as the aggressor and not the victim; only this could make his attack on fellow Europeans understandable, as they are seen as the collaborators in the destruction of European Christendom.

These incidents and many more that are not covered beyond the local news media, all contribute to the overall atmosphere of distrust and disrespect between Europeans and Euro-Muslims.

5. INNER ANTAGONISMS IN THE EUROPEAN UMMAH

The Muslim community in Europe is plagued with certain systemic problems, among them are: 1. the expansive gap between the secular European culture and the inherent social conservatism of the Islamic tradition, 2. the schizophrenic identity of the second generation of European Muslims, and 3. the tension between those who struggle for recognition within European society and those who've abandoned that struggle and retreated into a "pure" cultural subjectivity.

The religious hold on Europe has continued to fragment since the medieval period, as revelation has been displaced by

reason, science, and humanism as the dominant mode of everyday existence. Likewise, the religiously rooted morality that once defined the ethical mode-of-being in Europe has also deteriorated in light of the freedom of the individual to choose what his/her conscious would accept as moral; the guiding light of revelation has been privatized and castrated of its social power, and no institutional moral code holds authority over the individual unless the individual makes it their own by an act of subjective appropriation. Furthermore, the triumph of capitalism, with its emphasis on the self-interest, competition, and consumption, has left populations socially atomized and adrift in a ocean of meaningless; in the secular age, all meaning is individually created and often tied to the ethos of *having* that is the geist of the market way-of-being. The world, in Weberian language, is no longer enchanting (and therefore no longer imbued with purposivity) and since "God is dead", absolute meaning has become frustratingly elusive. However, this worldview is not the worldview of the majority of Muslim who still maintain, despite the continual attacks against religion via secularization and globalization, a worldview that is still infused with divine presence and as such still posits unconditional meaning and a divinely articulated purposivity. Again, in Weberian language, the world is still enchanting to the Muslims as Islam has not gone through a secularization process that would diminish the truth content of revelation. Although Muslims may live within a secular state, their predominant way-of-being-in-the-world remains highly enriched and fertilized by religious values and the presence of the divine. Devout Muslims still engage the world as an inter-subjective relationship between mankind and the creation of the divine, as opposed to seeing the world as a collection of dead matter accidentally set in motion purely by natural causes. As such, respect and reverence for the sacred, which Pope Benedict XVI argued is lacking in the West, is still preserved as a cultural norm within Islamic culture (RATZINGER; PERA, 2006, p. 78-80). Likewise, multiculturalism, which Pope Benedict XVI partially blamed for the disintegration of the believability of the core tents of Christianity in the West, failed to penetrate the truthfulness of the Qur'an and Islam for Muslims. For Muslims, multiculturalism and secularity is a *fact about life* in certain western

societies, but is not a *fact about truth* when it comes to religious revelation.

In the midst of Europe's post-Christendom identity crisis comes a mass immigration of religiously devout Muslims who not only fail to recognize the fragility of Europe's identity (between the historically religious and the modern secular), but also have very little tolerance for Europe's suspicion of religion, which is mostly due to their own religiously inspired violent history. Strong in their sense of religious identity, Muslims are often bewildered by the unlimited amounts of freedom, individuality, and disdain for the sacred that is normative in the West, especially in Europe. The cultural norms of Islam, rooted in the Qur'an, the *imitatio Muhammadi* (imitation of Muhammad) and the belief in *tawhid* (divine unity), and expressed through the family, social solidarity ('*assabiyya*), and the belief in substantive truth and justice, remains at odds in a cultural situation that values the independence of the individual, the neutrality of the state, relativism, the secular ethos of corporate capitalism, and the general lack of spirituality, religiosity, and awareness of the divine. In a society that makes shallow enjoyment mandatory, Muslims often affirm the belief that life isn't simply about pleasure, but about more substantive issues. Nevertheless, the life of material abundance, sexual liberty, and the freedom of the individual – unfettered by cultural and familial expectations – which is normative in much of western society, is overwhelmingly seductive for many young Muslims, causing tensions between generations, families, and communities that attempt to impart their religious and cultural values upon the next generation while battling the effects of "social decadence".

The schizophrenic nature of the second generation of Muslims living in the West has become readily apparent to the European and American Muslim community (LEIKEN, 2012). Young Muslims have become citizens in two separate and very different worlds. Some have been able to successfully reconcile the two in their everyday lives, while others have had to embrace one at the expense of the other. According to the Dutch-Moroccan psychiatrist Bellari Said, the most common ailments in his Muslim patients are "depression and schizophrenia" (BURUMA, 2006, p. 121). He states:

> Depression was especially common among women, and schizophrenia among men. But schizophrenia did not seem to affect first-generation immigrants. The guest workers tended to become depressed, not schizophrenic. It was the second generation of Moroccans born and educated in Holland that suffered from schizophrenia. A young Moroccan male of the second generation was ten times more likely to be schizophrenic than a native Dutchman from a similar economic background.

Extracting the particularity of the Dutch context and you have a phenomenon that is common throughout Western Europe – a sense of being of two places, two cultures, and two sets of expectations, without belonging totally to either: a cultural schizophrenic. What is typical behavior of young people especially in western countries is not permissible in the Islamic culture, yet they belong to both – a hybrid culture that attempts to blend the Western identity with the Islamic tradition. The "ethnos", represented by Islam and its cultural norms and expectations, and the "demos", the national culture of the European state, with its norms and expectations, both impinge on the psyche of the individual as they both demand mutually exclusive ways-of-being that ultimately result in massive cognitive dissonance. The realization that one is both of two cultures that are in many ways mutually exclusive in their ideals, priorities, and expectations, lead many second generation Muslims to choose either between: 1. struggle for recognition as *a European of the Islamic faith*, or 2. abandon the possibility of being culturally European and embrace a more "purist" and "fundamentalist" orientation of Islam[7].

If the first generation of Muslim guest workers are just satisfied with being "guests" in a strange and secular country, their children, who know no other country, are too often *not* satisfied with being a pseudo-European, i.e. culturally European – part of the demos – but of the wrong ethnos. This status is perceived to exclude them from full participation in the broader society as equal citizens. When the desire to be a European of the Islamic faith, and not a "displaced Muslim"

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[7] I am not claiming that "fundamentalism" is equal to "terrorism". It is not. It is a certain "belief attitude" that emphasized purity, discipline, and a strong sense of cultural identity. In no way does it inherently induce violence.

in Europe, is frustrated, too often young Muslims makes another stark choice: abandon the religion (ethnos) and all the familial connections that are bound to it and become completely absorbed into European culture, or abandon the membership in the demos and wholly embrace the ethnos of the family (in a purist and often fundamentalist way). Although the attempt to make a clean break is intense, the separation between demos and ethnos is not complete, and nor can it be; the abandonment of ethnos does not change the overall *ethnic/biological* makeup of the individual as it is perceived by the broader society, and thus they still are subject to the biases of the society against their ethnicity, despite their ultimate rejection of their inherited religious tradition. They are labeled "cultural Muslims" although they have rejected the tenets of Islam. Likewise, the abandonment of the demos does not automatically cancel their political rights and duties as part of the constitutional state. In a sense, many European Muslims are trapped in a state of identity confusion without a way to totally escape; they cannot break entirely out of either the demos or the ethnos, both of which in conjunction limit the possibility of an integrated personality and national/ethnic identity.

6. A NATION OF STATELESS MUSLIMS IN EUROPE

Although E.U. states constitutionally separate demos from ethnos, therefore making it possible to be a citizen of an E.U. country without belonging to its historical ethnic group, the societal perceptions of what it means to be German, French, Polish, Italian etc., continue to bind demos and ethnos together in perception and practice. In the minds of those who do not separate the two, who see a *volksgeist* (people's spirit) dwelling among only those who share a historical/racial connection to the land – a *blut und boden* (blood and soil) sentiment – those "others" that are of the demos but not of the dominant ethnos continue to be an foreign entity in the body of the nation. For many, Germany is Germany because it is the land of the Germans (ethnos); Italy is Italy because it is the

land of the Italians, etc. Legally, demos and ethnos are separated, thus making citizenship within the German or Italian state possible for those who do not share the same ethnos. This, in and of itself, has caused deep divisions between the dominant ethnic groups of European countries and their minority populations. Immigrants may *subjectively* feel as if they are part of the demos, and legally they may be, but *objectively* their ethnicity precludes them from full participation in the society, as it often limits the possibilities for their social advancement, economic mobility, i.e. and it often determines what their role in society can be – an iron cage of social expectations and limitations.

Unlike the United States, where race and ethnicity is not a consideration within the social perceptions of what it means to be a citizen, as there is no "American" ethnicity outside of Native Americans, historic European ethnic groups are fundamental in the construction of their national identity and their nation state. The perceived tie between demos and ethnos remains bound together because the demos (citizens bound to the authority of a given state) historically grew out of ethnos (people of shared religion, history, language, culture); this fact contributes to the rise of "nationalist" and racist political parties, such as Golden Dawn in Greece, the Northern League in Italy, and the Freedom Party in Austria, as well as Neo-Nazi hate groups that have arisen in Poland, Britain, France, Ukraine, and Russia, etc., that continue to target immigrants, Muslims, and racial minorities, for the ills of their particular societies. The "otherness" of this minority ethnic group within the majority ethnic group, is a legitimate concern for Europe – for what does it mean to be European if it does not include ethnicity? Can Europe really abandon the historical ethnicity of a given country in favor of the constitutional patriotism that Habermas advances, or is the social glue that shared ethnicity brings too essential for the identity of European nations? In light of the growing voices of the radical right who reject the presence of non-Europeans in Europe, we must ask: what can be done to reconcile such "otherness" to Europe that would preclude a return to national xenophobia, fascism, and violence?

On the other side of the equation, Muslims who are systemically shut out of full participation in European society

due to their ethnicity and their alienation from the secular European culture, or more specifically due to their religion and religious culture, find themselves in a situation that mirrors Carl Schmitt's notion of a nation; that a nation presupposes some pre-political reality that binds them together, i.e. a shared ethnicity. For Muslims, this "shared ethnicity" is rooted in religion as opposed to racial categories. As the Muslim community in Europe reflects the whole range of racial groups in the Muslim world, i.e. Arab, Turkish, Berber, Pakistani, Indonesian, etc., the "ethnic" character of the Muslim community in Europe is primarily rooted in shared religious commitments and not that of national origin or racial background. If one takes seriously the Islamic idea of the *ummah* (religiously rooted "community"), then the Muslim community already constitutes a *nation without a state* within the nation-states of Europe. The question for the future must be whether or not this unrecognized nation contributes to the flourishing of Europe, or, as the right-wing nationalists and neo-fascist proclaim, whether they will undermine European values such as secularity, separation of church and state, Christian heritage, tolerance for homosexuals, equality and equal opportunity for women, etc. (BURUMA, 2006, p. 30-31)[8].

7. WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Habermas' post-metaphysical thinking attempts to be sensitive towards the truth claims and concerns of various groups, especially when these groups are living in a pluralist secular society. It attempts to construct a framework in which those who are not of a dominant ethnos within the given community are not ignored, neglected, and or forgotten, but are recognized and integrated into the national discourse. It attempts to deflate the level of philosophical analysis down to the level of the empirical, the concrete, and the real; it understands that we moderns can no longer take for granted the

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[8] In their concerns for Islam's conservative moral code, many leftists, liberals, feminists etc., have expressed their concern that Muslims will undo the liberal and tolerant culture of Europe that has been fought for since the Enlightenment.

exclusive validity of a given worldview; that Hegel's grand narrative in his thesis on history cannot bear the weight of the situation at hand; it challenges modern society to enter into a meaningful discourse rooted in inter-subjectivity, and emphasizes the need for inter-civilizational dialogue and *intra*-civilizational debate.

Habermas understands that religious traditions, such as Christianity and Islam, are religions that in-themselves have divorced ethnos from demos. Such religions are important contributing factors in the creation of ethnos and ethnic histories, but are not exclusively bound to those ethnicities. Islam, regardless of its origins, is not an Arab religion, but a religion that welcomes people of all ethnicities. The same is true for Christianity, as it has had global success in welcoming members of different ethnic and racial groups into its fold. Habermas understands that if the bonds of religion can tie whole groups of people to ideals, practices, and values that are disassociated from their ethnic makeup, then the same can potentially be true of constitutional democracy. Democracy, for Habermas, is not just a system of voting for an elected government, but is a comprehensive way-of-being in the world that posits certain values, ideals, and principles that the *citoyen* (citizen) binds himself/herself to and makes his/her own. Such values become part of their inner-constitution. Following Kant, Habermas believes that citizenship, and the constitutional patriotism that is rooted in such citizenship, can be a potential source of unity among peoples who do not share a common ethnos. He believes that a comprehensive understanding of what it means to be a citizen of a state, bound by a legitimate democratically constructed constitution, can serve as the *new adhesive* that is missing in the lifeworld of the secularized, disenchanted, pluralist, and existentially meaningless society. Yet how can a notion of citizenship reconcile the legitimate concerns of ethnic Europeans and their Muslim counterparts over the contentious issues that divide them? It must start with shared convictions.

As stated before, Habermas imposes the "translation proviso" on the religious communities in their attempts to articulate their concerns in the arena of secular discourse, and likewise imposes the demand for secular individuals to not

become selectively deaf when confronted with religious concerns and convictions, as religion remains a potentially vital source for understanding the human condition. Nevertheless, religious Westerners, including Pope Benedict XVI, have argued that another proviso must be included in the discussion of Muslims in Europe; secular Europeans must be willing to come into contact with the "sacred" from their own past; appreciate the religious heritage and depth of importance in which Christianity played a part in European history; abandon the "pathological self-hatred" of its past, and renew a humble yet critical stance towards religion that refuses to dismissively deduce all of religion to the infancy of human history (RATZINGER; PERA, 2006, p. 78-79). This coming into contact with the West's own sense of the sacred, allows it to translate the values of humility, compassion, justice, and freedom, that are rooted in Christianity, into secular discourse and potential social legislation, and renews the essential 'respect' for the sacred that is so elusive in the dealings with the West and the Muslim world (as seen above). This mutual perspective taking within European society, between the secular and the sacred, would allow the West to engage the Muslim world from a common language and common foundation.

The Muslims on the other hand have to be willing to translate their concerns into the language of secular discourse without sacrificing the very theological and social justice ideals that animate the Islamic tradition. Revelation needs to be transformed into secular arguments so that they are accessible to all. Furthermore, they must be willing to fully enter into the multicultural milieu that does not afford reverence towards truth claims that cannot be democratically deliberated upon. They must be willing to risk the authority of the Qur'an and prophetic tradition in their forwarding arguments to be discussed within the public sphere with the understanding that although their arguments may not engender unanimous democratic agreement, they are not however automatically the subject of disrespect. If the translation proviso can be agreed upon by Christian and Muslim voices, and the secular voice can suspend their persistent suspicion of religious motives and thoughts and attempt to understand the humanistic concerns that are just beneath the theological language, then a

post-secular place for inter-religious and religious-secular discourse can be established in a way that respects the highest ideals of all groups. In a pluralist, democratic, and secular society, one that no longer makes membership in a certain ethnos the basis of their membership in the demos, one has to be willing to undertake the difficult task of understanding the plight and predicament, the concerns and values, of others that do not share a common heritage, national origin, religion, etc. Looking towards the bitter antagonisms that characterize much of the West and the Muslim world, Habermas and other critical scholars of religion see that the cultural language of our religious traditions and our secular worldview can often be an impenetrable stumbling block towards a common understanding. For Habermas, the only practical way to transcend such provincial semantics is to adopt a new language – one that can be deliberated upon while preserving the respect for the sacred and admiration for the secular world and its accomplishments. Although Max Horkheimer, the original director of the Institute for Social Research (Frankfurt School), lamented the poor state of religion in the modern world, understanding that it was as much responsible for its loss of relevancy as it can blame on the modern world, he nevertheless believed that religion was the "record of the wishes, desires, and accusations of countless generations" that had suffered at the hands of nature and history, and preserved within itself the desire to negate the unnecessary suffering of humanity that is so normative within the world. If this core tradition, which we can find at the heart of both prophetic religions as well as within the ideals of the Enlightenment, can be made the common foundation of a future discourse among the religions and the secular, than it may also be the foundation for a future reconciled society.

Dustin J. Byrd

HABERMAS, O PENSAMENTO PÓS-METAFÍSICO E O PROBLEMA DAS MINORIAS MUÇULMANAS NA EUROPA

RESUMO

O teórico crítico Jürgan Habermas tem se preocupado com a questão da religião na Europa, especialmente com as dificuldades dos novos imigrantes islâmicos para integrar-se à sociedade europeia secular e ser assimilados por ela. Habermas propõe que as vozes religiosas, principalmente as dos muçulmanos, não sejam ex-comunicadas do discurso público, mas sim sejam bem-vindas. No entanto, para fazer isso, ele pede que os ideais, princípios e valores do Islã passem por um processo de "tradução", que sejam utilizados em uma linguagem publicamente acessível (secular) para que a comunidade não religiosa possa entrar em um discurso com voz religiosa por meio de uma linguagem comum compartilhada. Além disso, as vozes seculares da sociedade europeia também têm de passar por um processo de aprendizagem; eles têm de cultivar uma sensibilidade para com as crenças religiosas, entendendo-as como de valor inestimável para os processos democráticos devido ao fato de que seus pontos de vista podem ser fontes significativas de análise moral e motivação para a solidariedade que foi esgotada pela modernidade secular. Esse processo não existe sem seus problemas, como o discurso entre o secular e o religioso que tem sido continuamente separado via ações anti-islâmicas, bem como o terrorismo antiocidental. Essa situação tem deixado a comunidade muçulmana isolada em autoguetos e uma nação virtual de pessoas apátridas dentro da própria Europa, o que tem tornado o fundamentalismo islâmico reacionário mais atraente para os jovens muçulmanos alienados à sociedade europeia. É o objetivo deste artigo destacar as principais dificuldades que o projeto de Habermas de reconciliação vai encontrar e oferecer um prognóstico crítico do que esperar para que tal projeto se materialize.

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