

HISTORIOGRAPHY AND THE FUTURE OF MULTICULTURALISM IN EUROPE: PERİNÇEK V. SWITZERLAND

(TARİH YAZIMI VE AVRUPA'DA ÇOK-KÜLTÜRLÜLÜĞÜN GELECEĞİ:
PERİNÇEK-İSVİÇRE DAVASI)

Tal BUENOS
PhD Candidate
University of Utah

Abstract: *The case of Perinçek v. Switzerland, seen at the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), serves as an indication of a civic-integration crisis in parts of Europe. Since 9/11, the academic debate on multiculturalism has become highly politicized and has shifted away from previous postcolonialist sensibilities. The significance of historiography to national identity is currently understated in the relevant studies. Similarly, even though the ECHR recently ruled in favor of Doğu Perinçek, stating that there was no pressing social need to convict him because his speech was of a historical, legal and political nature, the Court did not consider, however, whether there is a pressing social need to ask how historiographical differences due to difference of national heritage stifle civil integration in Europe. The main argument in this paper is that historiographical adjustments toward a harmonious consolidation of historical narratives among groups of different national and ethnic background are a prerequisite for civil integration in Europe. It is a major misconception to think that multiculturalism is the reason for the failing integration of Muslims in Europe, while there are in existence irreconcilable narratives of national and religious history that are foundational in the formation of group identity. The conflicting characterizations of the events in 1915-16 provide a major example of this challenge.*

Keywords: *Perinçek v. Switzerland case, European Court of Human Rights, multiculturalism, integration, historiography*

Öz: *Avrupa İnsan Hakları Mahkemesi'nde (AİHM) görülen Perinçek-İsviçre davası, Avrupa'nın bazı kısımlarında toplumsal hayata uyum sağlamada yaşanan krizin bir göstergesidir. 11 Eylül 2001 terör saldırılarından sonra, çok-kültürlülük üzerine olan akademik tartışma son derece siyasileşmiş ve sömürgecilik-sonrası dönemin anlayışından uzaklaşmıştır. Şu anda bu konuyla ilgili yapılan çalışmalarda tarih yazımının, ulusal kimlik için olan önemi üzerinde yeterince*

durulmamaktadır. Yakın zamanda AIHM -konuşmasının tarihsel, hukuksal ve siyasi içeriği olduğu gerekçesiyle, mahkûm edilmesine sebebiyet verecek bir acil toplumsal ihtiyaç olmadığını belirterek- Doğu Perinçek lehine karar vermiş olsa da, Mahkeme ulusal köken sebebiyle ortaya çıkan tarih yazımı farklarının Avrupa 'da nasıl toplumsal yaşama uyum sağlamaya engel teşkil ettiğini sorgulamaya yönelik bir acil toplumsal ihtiyaç olup olmadığı meselesine ele almamıştır. Bu makalenin ana savı, Avrupa'da toplumsal yaşama uyum sağlanması için, değişik ulusal ve etnik kökenler arasındaki tarih anlayışlarının birbirleriyle uyuşması için, tarih yazımında değişiklikler yapılmasının bir önkoşul olduğudur. Grup kimliğinin oluşmasının temel belirleyicilerinden olan ulusal ve dini tarih anlatımlarındaki uyumsuzluk söz konusuysen, Avrupa'da Müslümanların toplumsal yaşama uyum sağlayamamasının sebebinin çok-kültürlülük olduğunu düşünmek ciddi bir yanıldır. 1915-16 olaylarına yönelik birbirleriyle çelişen nitelendirmeler, bu soruna önemli bir örnek teşkil etmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Perinçek-İsviçre davası, Avrupa İnsan Hakları Mahkemesi, çok-kültürlülük, toplumsal yaşama uyum sağlama, tarih yazımı*

Historiographical differences are at the very core of court cases, but it is less common for court judges to be asked to settle cases because of inter-national historiographical differences on the characterization of events that took place a century ago during a “world war.” Such was the task before the judges of the European Court of Human Rights (the Court) in the case of *Perinçek v. Switzerland*.

Doğu Perinçek, a Turkish national who is a doctor of laws, a politician – as the chairman of the Turkish Workers’ Party – and a journalist, was taken to court in Switzerland and convicted of a crime there after challenging certain local historiographical perceptions while speaking publicly in Switzerland in 2005. More specifically, he refused to characterize the events in which Ottoman Armenians were deported and massacred in 1915-16 as genocide, and described the placing of a genocide label on the events as an “international lie.”

In 2007, following the complaint filed by an association called “Switzerland-Armenia,” the Lausanne Police Court found Perinçek to be guilty of racial discrimination as it is defined in the Swiss Criminal Code. His appeal was dismissed by the Criminal Cessation Division of the Vaud Cantonal Court because – it was held – he was in denial of a proven historical fact that was put in writing and made official by the Swiss legislature in Article 216bis of the Swiss Criminal Code. Such was the decision, even though it was recognized by the judges that Perinçek did not question that the deportations and massacres of the Ottoman Armenians ever happened, but merely disagreed with the characterization of the events as genocide.

After the Federal Court dismissed Perinçek’s final appeal in Switzerland, the matter was brought before the Court in Strasbourg, France, by Perinçek on the grounds that the Swiss decision to convict him constituted a violation of his freedom of expression as stated in Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights (the Convention). The Court decided in favor of Perinçek, by a majority of five to two, because Article 17 of the Convention, which is set to prohibit the abuse of rights, gave no basis in this case for the prohibition of Perinçek’s freedom of expression. This highlighted the significance of Article 10 § 2, which states that one’s freedom of expression is to be protected even if the ideas are offensive, shocking or disturbing.¹

1 For the official full version of the Court’s decision in English, see: <http://fatsr.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/AFFAIRE-PERINCEK-C.-SUISSE-OFFICIAL-ENGLISH-VERSION.pdf>, last accessed on November 8, 2013. For the Press Release in English issued by the Registrar of the Court, see: <http://hudoc.echr.coe.int/webservices/content/pdf/003-4613832-5581451>, last accessed on November 8, 2013. Interestingly, even though the Court stated that “it was not called upon to rule on the legal characterisation” (pp., 1, 3) of the events, the press release contains eight instances in which

The Court made an important observation regarding Perinçek's conviction in Switzerland, stating that it was essentially based on "the apparent existence of a general consensus, especially in the academic community, concerning the legal characterisation of the events in question."² This idea of "general consensus" was dismissed by the Court for being vague and having no legal merit, but it does convey a view of there being a common perception of history that is in direct and intense conflict with a Turkish – if not Muslim – understanding of world history. While the Court concluded that there was no pressing social need to convict Perinçek because his "speech of a historical, legal and political nature"³ did not pose a threat to public order, its judges did not consider whether there is a pressing social need to ask how inter-national or inter-religious historiographical differences, as exemplified by this case, may affect civic integration in Europe.

Riding the momentum created by *Perinçek v. Switzerland*, this article's main argument is that historiographical adjustments toward a harmonious consolidation of historical narratives among groups of different national and ethnic background are a prerequisite for civic integration in Europe, and that it is a major misconception to think that multiculturalism is the reason for the failing integration of Muslims in Europe while there are in existence irreconcilable narratives of national and religious history that are foundational in the formation of group identity. In other words, it is not multiculturalism but rather an unaddressed multinational and multiethnic tension – upon its historiographical underpinnings – that is stifling Muslim integration throughout Europe, and the court case of *Perinçek v. Switzerland* – upon the exclusion of Turkish historiography in Switzerland – has called attention to it.

The Academic Debate on Multiculturalism and Its Politicization

As observed by Will Kymlicka, "Most countries today are culturally diverse."⁴ The presence of ethnocultural diversity in Western democracies post-World War II (WWII) is an undeniable fact. The public policies regarding this phenomenon have been diverse themselves. The initial push to assimilate or marginalize minority ethnic groups turned in the 1980s and 1990s into a long

the words "Armenian" and "genocide" are coupled together as a phrase. The use of this phrasing is reflective of the pervading tendency in the discourse on the characterization of these events to use a language that pulls historiographical leanings in a certain direction.

2 Ibid., p. 3.

3 Ibid.

4 Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), p. 1.

line of accommodating rights that accepted and recognized unique customs, languages and land-ties. These were the fingerprints of multiculturalism, creating a society in which the unique cultural traits of groups were recognized, accepted and even supported. The main criticism against multiculturalism was that it is not conducive to the creation of social affinity between members of the same state, and the reaction to 9/11 has generated a trend to relate Muslim radicalization to the isolated space that is facilitated by multiculturalism in Western societies.⁵

The discourse on Muslim presence in Western society in the twenty-first century has shown a shift of emphasis from policies that seek to enhance Muslim sense of belonging to endeavors to enhance the sense of protection from Muslims. Not only have the events of 9/11 changed the manner in which Muslims are treated in Western societies,⁶ “terrorism by Muslims” has become the point of departure for academic evaluations of multiculturalist policies. Discussions of immigration and minority rights have been lumped together with security issues in a context that begins “In the wake of 9/11...”⁷ Multiculturalism has been made to seem inadequate once “state-Muslim relations” in the West outgrew the mere considerations of cultural fairness and were suddenly shaped by security concerns that a failure to integrate Muslims would mean that they might maintain solidarity with outside anti-Western entities.⁸

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The theoretical opposition to multiculturalism intensified and became pragmatic, as if proven by the acts of terror. While the Muslim presence in Europe was already perceived in pre-9/11 academic writing as presenting

5 Keith Banting and Will Kymlicka, “Introduction: Multiculturalism and the Welfare State: Setting the Context,” in Keith Banting and Will Kymlicka (eds.), *Multiculturalism and the Welfare State: Recognition and Redistribution in Contemporary Democracies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 1-4.

6 Joel S. Fetzer and J. Christopher Soper, *Muslims and the State in Britain, France, and Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 145.

7 Edna Keeble, “Immigration, Civil Liberties, and National/Homeland Security,” *International Journal* 60:2 (2005), p. 359. Even in an effort to produce a work that stresses mutual points between the Islamic and Christian traditions, the discourse begins with reference to 9/11, see: Richard W. Bulliet, *The Case for Islamo-Christian Civilization* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), p. vii.

8 Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Odysseys: Navigating the New International Politics of Diversity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 125.

particular challenges to multiculturalism and threats to political unity,⁹ it seems as though the post-9/11 reality, including the terror attacks in Madrid and London, has fixated in the minds of many European societies the perception of the Muslim as an “Other” that is inherently non-European.¹⁰ Public opinion in Western societies held that this Muslim otherness was not changeable, and that action had to be taken to change how Muslims are handled, enabling the transition of multiculturalism from an accepted academic sub-political policy to a much publicized failure whose dismissal promises political capital. This transition was made evident when British Prime Minister David Cameron used the platform of his first speech as prime minister in 2011, in Munich, to declare that “state multiculturalism has failed,” because it encouraged different cultures to lead separate lives, and ignored the “rootless” Western existence of Muslims, who were then attracted to “Islamist extremism.”¹¹

Correspondingly, this amplified sense of an Islamic challenge in Europe has opened up an opportunity to reinterpret the recent history of Muslim immigration to Europe. The Muslim immigration following WWII, which was part of a great recruitment of foreign workers from previously colonized countries to cover the shortage in labor and facilitate Western Europe’s economic expansion,¹² is described in alarmist fashion as one of three Muslim “penetrations” into Europe, in keeping with the Arab conquest of Spain and the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople, to issue a warning that the “third penetration is done by immigration, and the demographic inundation of Europe, together with a campaign of *da’wa* (religious propaganda) to help spread Islam, [is] aided by a terrorist wave to intimidate the West.”¹³ Raphael Israeli makes a connection between “the Palestinian hijackings of the 1970s and 1980s” and the events of 9/11 to argue that this is an “era of international terrorism,”¹⁴ thereby associating multiculturalism with “Muslim world terrorism.”¹⁵

Significantly, a policy question that contended with postcolonialist expectations as a result of a history of Western domination had changed into a terror-

9 Adrian Favell, “Multicultural Race Relations in Britain: Problem of Interpretation and Explanation,” in Christian Joppke (ed.), *Challenges to the Nation-State: Immigration in Western Europe and the United States* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 322.

10 H. A. Hellyer, *Muslims of Europe: The “Other” Europeans* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), pp. 1-3.

11 “State Multiculturalism Has Failed, Says David Cameron,” *BBC News*, February 5, 2011. See: <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-12371994>, last accessed on November 9, 2014.

12 Fetzer and Soper, *Muslims*, p. 2

13 Raphael Israeli, *The Islamic Challenge in Europe* (New Brunswick, NJ and London: Transaction Publishers, 2008), p. 1.

14 *Ibid.*, p. 2.

15 *Ibid.*, p. 10.

centered narrative in which the West is depicted as a victim of exploitation and attacks. This reversal blended with a new academic mainstream direction in the debate on multiculturalism when Christian Joppke wrote that there is “a wholesale *retreat* from multiculturalism in Europe.”¹⁶ According to Joppke, “it is logically impossible to recognize all cultures as equal,”¹⁷ and therefore it is sensible for Western liberal states to implement assertive policies to allow liberal values to trump all opposing values. Joppke adds that the notion of values being “forced by the winner (‘master’) upon the loser (‘servant’) of this ‘struggle for recognition’” is in the spirit of G. W. F. Hegel’s thought, perhaps to convince Germans that the argument against multiculturalism is in agreement with modern German philosophy.

Interestingly, in that Munich speech when Cameron followed Joppke’s line of thinking and introduced “muscular liberalism,” a counter-policy to multiculturalism, he was speaking before a German audience:

Now... we must build stronger societies and stronger identities at home. Frankly, we need a lot less of the passive tolerance of recent years and a much more active, muscular liberalism. A passively tolerant society says to its citizens, as long as you obey the law we will just leave you alone. It stands neutral between different values. But I believe a genuinely liberal country does much more; it believes in certain values and actively promotes them. Freedom of speech, freedom of worship, democracy, the rule of law, equal rights regardless of race, sex or sexuality. It says to its citizens, this is what defines us as a society: to belong here is to believe in these things. Now, each of us in our own countries, I believe, must be unambiguous and hard-nosed about this defence of our liberty.¹⁸

In this speech, Cameron reiterates the post 9/11 narrative according to which the Western liberal states had been passive and tolerant while rights have been abused and European values ignored.

This argument by Cameron summarizes the expectation of civic integration in Western societies: equal rights are given by the state in exchange for a full acceptance by its citizens of the values that inspire these rights. However,

16 Christian Joppke, “The Retreat of Multiculturalism in the Liberal State: Theory and Policy,” *British Journal of Sociology* 55:2 (2004), p. 244.

17 *Ibid.*, p. 242.

18 “PM’s Speech at Munich Security Conference,” *The National Archives*, February 5, 2011. See: <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130109092234/http://number10.gov.uk/news/pms-speech-at-munich-security-conference/>, last accessed on November 9, 2014.

Cameron asks for more than civic integration; he argues in the same speech that there is need for “a clear sense of shared national identity that is open to everyone.”¹⁹ An important distinction – that is not articulated by Cameron – must be made between the acceptance of societal values and the acceptance of a national identity. It is not safe to assume that people of different national backgrounds can easily accept another national identity simply because it is available to them. It is problematic to bunch liberalism and national identity together; the rejection of the latter does not reflect an inability to accept the former.

The aftermath of 9/11 disrupted the academic debate over multiculturalism. It politicized the discussion on multiculturalism at the expense of careful study. Therefore, it would be conducive to the restoration of a scholarly discourse on multiculturalism to revisit the theoretical work on pluralist states as it was offered before it became politically fashionable to abandon pre-9/11 policies for new ones. Thus, through an examination of the works that illustrate the guidelines for a successful liberal society, it may become possible to distinguish between the liberal standard and national identity.

Political pluralism, according to David Nicholls in 1975, does not only require the promotion of liberty or the rejection of sovereignty but also “a notion of the real personality of groups.”²⁰ One may read this to mean that an insistence on a national identity that is not aligned with the personality of groups in a nation’s society will likely tear down the pluralist foundations of that society even if there was no direct rejection at all of liberal values. Gianfranco Poggi pointed out in 1978 that “the capitalist economic system” has taken over the “homogenizing and hegemonizing” role that the state used to have in the Hegelian tradition; what used to be a “social mission” to bind together an “inherently fragmented, atomized, and centerless” society has been rendered unnecessary by the processes of economics.²¹ Accordingly, it may be argued that not only is there less urgency for a construct of national identity in modern-day Western liberal states, but also the molding of national identities are likely to interfere with the “homogenizing and hegemonizing” effect of the capitalist economic system if not updated to meet the changes that the system had introduced into the social makeup of states.

The ideal society of multiculturalism is described by John Rex as one “which is unitary in the public domain but which encourages diversity in what are

19 Ibid.

20 David Nicholls, *The Pluralist State* (London: Macmillan, 1975), p. 11.

21 Gianfranco Poggi, *The Development of the Modern State* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1978), p. 121.

thought of as private or communal matters.”²² He cautioned that multiculturalism is challenged whenever there is conflict between beliefs taught in the private or communal realm and the moral values that are being transmitted in the public realm,²³ but for some reason it is supposed that the incongruence revolves around moral values rather than national identity.

As part of a direct critique of multiculturalism just prior to 9/11, Brian Barry illustrated how in certain situations the demands for religious or cultural respect may be in conflict with liberal principles such as the freedom of speech.²⁴ He does not consider how British culture and the possibility of a deeply embedded disrespect for Islam in the formation of Britain’s modern national identity may be a factor that precedes in both sequence and significance the outcomes that show a dissonance between religious cultures and liberal rights. The core of Barry’s claim against multiculturalism is the same as what he considers to be the core of the conception of citizenship in a liberal state, which is the protection of equal rights.²⁵ It therefore follows that, to him, the way to a successful integration in a liberal state is by emphasizing the expectation that every individual citizen is assigned the same legal and political rights, and by reducing the existence of special rights that are based on group membership. Barry was skeptical that a strong religious culture such as that which is associated with Islam would accept a diminished role in the public realm and willingly refrain from actively pursuing the enactment of prohibitions, bans and forms of discrimination that rival existing equal rights.²⁶

However, multiculturalism is neither the gap nor the bridge between the Muslim cultural heritage and Western liberal rights; multiculturalism is a reflection of the cultural and liberal facts of the society. It is the national identity of the state that determines whether different cultures are reconciled with the legal expectations. Thus, Nasar Meer and Tariq Modood challenge the notion that there is a dichotomy between “civic integration” and “multiculturalism” that places the two in a “zero-sum equation;”²⁷ rather, as Modood later wrote, it is the absence of commonality in the United Kingdom that must be remedied.²⁸ What has failed is the attitude of instructing a perceived “Other”

22 John Rex, *Ethnic Minorities in the Modern Nation State: Working Papers in the Theory of Multiculturalism and Political Integration* (London: Macmillan, 1996), p. 15.

23 *Ibid.*, p. 21.

24 Brian Barry, *Culture and Equality: An Egalitarian Critique of Multiculturalism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), pp. 30-31.

25 *Ibid.*, p. 7.

26 *Ibid.*, p. 28.

27 Nasar Meer and Tariq Modood, “The Multicultural State We’re In: Muslims, ‘Multiculture’ and the ‘Civic Re-balancing’ of British Multiculturalism,” *Political Studies* 57:3 (2009), p. 475.

28 Tariq Modood, *Still Not Easy Being British: Struggles for a Multicultural Citizenship* (Stoke on Trent, UK and Sterlin, USA: Trentham Books, 2010), p. 119.

to accept a preexisting national identity, instead of recognizing that the social makeup of the state is not what it was when the identity was more representative of the state's society. To Modood, the highest level of multiculturalism is reached when in addition to "positive minority identities" there is also "a positive vision of society as a whole."²⁹ This high level of multiculturalism will not be reached by multiculturalism itself, but by a state recognition that its existing national identity must be in harmony with a multicultural society.

Also, equal rights on their own do not lead to an optimal civic integration. In the context of efforts to reconcile between multicultural diversity and a common identity, Keith Banting stresses the importance of "diverse narratives, a variety of stories which point to different possible relationships between diversity and redistribution."³⁰ After new civil rights were introduced in the United States in the 1960s and 1970s, the people of African heritage were not asked to succeed in their civic integration without an accompanying adjustment to the American national identity upon its historical narratives. According to Michael Lind, the arrival at the "Third Republic of the United States" – namely a "Multicultural America" in which affirmative action is proliferated – came accompanied by "its own national story, its own widely – though not universally accepted – conception of the American nation's identity and destiny," as opposed to the previous "Anglo-American national story told of the providential expansion of an Anglo-American Protestant nation in its destined North American homeland" and "the Euro-American story, of the formation of a new white Christian nation..."³¹

Racism lives in narratives of the past, despite the introduction of rights that show no racial discrimination. An important question to ask is whether the racist narratives of the past are still foundational components of the current national identity. In Canada, which has been heralded as the "'home' of multiculturalism," there were no preexisting historical national narratives that would require state adjustment or "demand renunciation of one's previous identity."³² Being that Canada – as Australia – is a relatively new settler nation, multiculturalism there is "directed at everyone, not only immigrants."³³ In the

29 Ibid., p. 6.

30 Keith G. Banting, "The Multicultural Welfare State: International Experience and North American Narratives," *Social Policy and Administration* 39:2 (2005), p. 112.

31 Michael Lind, *The Next American Nation: The New Nationalism and the Fourth American Revolution* (New York: The Free Press, 1995), pp. 97-98.

32 Anthony Giddens, *Europe in the Global Age* (Cambridge: Polity, 2007), p. 122.

33 Christian Joppke and Ewa Morawska, "Integrating Immigrants in Liberal Nation-States: Policies and Practices," in Christian Joppke and Ewa Morawska (eds.), *Toward Assimilation and Citizenship: Immigrants in Liberal Nation-States* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 12.

United States, while the examination of cultural racist roots has not been exhaustive, the current national narratives purposely negate the legitimization of past perspectives that would be considered offensive to groups of which today's American society is comprised. Significantly, the American responsibility to facilitate the civic integration of Africans has replaced the mentality according to which this was a "Negro problem" rather than an American one.³⁴

Britain's Anti-Muslim Historiography and the National Identity Problem

In Britain, a long national history of imperialist campaigns overseas has produced historical narratives that justified Britain's dominance of colonized and semi-colonized peoples – whose descendants are now British citizens – from racial and religious perspectives. In addition, to this day British national identity is not religion-neutral, but Christian. Having in mind that the Queen of the United Kingdom is crowned by the Archbishop of the Anglican Church to serve as the "Supreme Governor" of the Church, and that Christianity receives preferential treatment in the British school system, Rex argues that "It is hard to see how Britain could fully claim to be a multicultural society so long as the Anglican Church enjoys these privileges."³⁵

Britain's traditional identity as a Christian nation is in tension with Muslim identity, especially if the latter is also regarded as national. For most Muslims, according to Rex, Islam is "a whole way of life," be it in the private domain or the public domain.³⁶ The idea that the public domain is institutionally dominated by the culture of a rivaling proselytizing religion is likely to stand in the way of a Muslim's embrace of the British national identity. Ernest Gellner, in his postmodernist view, sees the Islamic national identity within "the context of the struggle with colonialism."³⁷ In other words, a national narrative that is naturally in conflict with Muslim heritage would strengthen the national aspects of Muslim identity as part of a counteraction. To Gellner, the Muslim identity of the Bosnians serves as a fascinating example of how a national identity as disagreeable as the Yugoslavian national identity was to them could strengthen a Muslim national identity even when the Muslim religion was not practiced and there was no linguistic differentiation.³⁸

34 As Lind points out, Frederick Douglass advocated for this mental transformation. See: Lind, *Next American*, p. 382.

35 Rex, *Ethnic Minorities*, p. 238.

36 *Ibid.*, p. 237.

37 Ernest Gellner, *Postmodernism, Reason and Religion* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 15.

38 Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), pp. 71-72. The Bosnian example also challenges the conclusion drawn by Elie Kedourie that "A group speaking the same language is known as a nation." See: Elie Kedourie, *Nationalism*, (Oxford and Cambridge, MA:

Therefore, it might prove helpful to those who evaluate integration policies in Western liberal states to examine ways to ensure that the existing national identity is not threatening to Muslim identity, and to realize that in order for a national identity to be sustainable it is necessary to establish a membership that Karl Deutsch defined as a “wide complementarity of social communication,” which goes beyond language: “It consists in the ability to

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communicate more effectively, and over a wider range of subjects, with members of one large group than with outsiders.”³⁹ History, according to Deutsch, is selective – and thereby changeable – as it is used to reflect the national consciousness,⁴⁰ for which “there must be a minimum, at least, of cohesion and distinctiveness of a people.”⁴¹

In Britain, where the calls against a multicultural approach to Muslim communities have been strong, and where there is a natural state desire to effectively control all of its members, the enforcement of state laws will have to rely heavily on its “machinery of compulsion”⁴² – to borrow another one of Deutsch’s phrases – and become defined by a growing policing burden,

unless a policy is designed to initiate a massive historiographical reformation. Britain may have turned its back on an American styled affirmative action that is set to compensate for harm in the working place,⁴³ but perhaps it should carefully consider introducing affirmative action to qualify the harmful colonialist elements in its historical narratives and present a corrected historiographical basis for national identity.

The historiographical discord between Western and Turkish narratives

Blackwell, 1993 [1960]), p. 62. An emphasis on the learning of the national language as part of an overall effort to promote civic integration may turn focus away from the importance of the historical narratives on which the national identity is based.

39 Karl W. Deutsch, *Nationalism and Social Communication: An Inquiry into the Foundations of Nationality* (New York: Technology Press of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and John Wiley & Sons; London: Chapman & Hall, 1953), p. 71.

40 Ibid., p. 152.

41 Ibid., p. 147.

42 Ibid., p. 78.

43 Christian Joppke, *Immigration and the Nation-State: The United States, Germany, and Great Britain* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 230.

regarding the circumstances that led to the collapse of the Ottoman Empire is at the heart of *Perinçek v. Switzerland*. Even though Perinçek was visiting Switzerland and not its citizen, and regardless of whether he is a practicing Muslim, his characterization of historical events concerning aspects of Turkish, Muslim and Ottoman memory was reflective of the perspectives and attitudes of Muslim communities in Western societies, many of whom are of Turkish descent and many of whom find in the past of the Ottoman Empire a representation of the history of Muslim interaction with the West. The fact that the courts and the government in Switzerland decided that Perinçek's view of history – a product of his identity as a Turk – is illegitimate and even criminal attests to the exclusion of Turkish historiography from the historical narratives that inform the Swiss national identity. It also attests to the arrogant and self-assured certainty with which it was determined that Perinçek's view of history is both inaccurate and harmful.

The Ottoman otherness in Europe had carried over to Western history books, and now it is expected of Turks and Muslims there – while they themselves are considered non-European by many European societies – to see the past existence of their own Ottoman heritage through Western eyes. In other words, the Swiss attempt to press Perinçek to characterize the events of 1915-16 in a Western politicized view of history that runs counter to Turkish historiography is nothing short of institutionalized Orientalism. In Britain, anti-Turkish, anti-Muslim and anti-Ottoman sentiment is intertwined with the influence of makers and authors of modern British history, from William Gladstone to Arnold Toynbee.

Toynbee, one of the West's most influential historians in the twentieth century, was hired by the British government to produce propaganda against the Ottoman Empire during World War I (WWI).⁴⁴ While working for a government at war with the Ottoman state, he wrote that the name Turkey "explains nothing;"⁴⁵ that the Osmanlis came of a clan of Turkish nomads "crossed with the blood of slave-women from half the world;"⁴⁶ and that up to 95 per cent of the Turkish language is "an infusion of Persian and Arabic idioms."⁴⁷ While Toynbee degraded Turkish culture and Ottoman government,

44 Michael L. Sanders and Philip M. Taylor, *British Propaganda during the First World War, 1914-18* (London and Basingstoke: The Macmillan Press, 1982), pp. 41, 82; Gary S. Messinger, *British Propaganda and the State in the First World War* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1992), p. 39.

45 Arnold J. Toynbee, *Turkey: A Past and a Future* (London, New York and Toronto: Hodder and Stoughton, 1917), p. 1.

46 *Ibid.*, p. 4.

47 *Ibid.* Oddly, in a footnote, Toynbee admits that the percentage is an exaggeration. Nonetheless, he wanted to present Turkish as an artificial language, which is a clear show of disrespect to Turkish culture.

he argued that the Armenians, along with the Greeks, were “the most energetic, intellectual, liberal elements in Turkey, the natural intermediaries between the other races and western civilisation.”⁴⁸ Britain’s imperialist plan for Anatolia ran through them. Accordingly, Toynbee disseminated the belief that “‘Turkey-in-Asia’ is a transitory phenomenon,”⁴⁹ and that “Turkey... is nothing but an overthrow of the past and an obstruction of the future.”⁵⁰

Already in 1878, Bryce announced Turkey’s death, and presented the plan to cultivate “the growth of a native Christian race” – the Armenians – to the point of establishing “the nucleus of an independent state” – Armenia – whose territories would comprise of Ottoman land in the size of “about three hundred and fifty miles in length by two hundred and fifty in breadth.”

It was in such hostile and biased literature that the Ottoman government was accused of planning a “systematic extermination of the Armenian race in the Ottoman Empire.”⁵¹ The “evidence,” which offered no means of knowing the perspective of the Ottoman government, was based on the gathering of witness accounts that were mainly given by Christian missionaries who had a pronounced agenda in Anatolia. This material was made into an official government Blue Book, titled *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, 1915-1916*, which was edited by Toynbee under the supervision of James Bryce.⁵²

By the time WWI necessitated extensive propaganda efforts in Britain to affect the American public,⁵³ Bryce had already established himself as the most eligible person for the task; even more so, it may be argued that his reputation in the United States is what made the British propaganda objectives there thinkable and possible.⁵⁴ In his preface to the Blue Book, Bryce explains the dire Armenian situation by blaming the Sultan’s leadership during the 1890s while avoiding any mention of his own

48 Ibid., p. 7.

49 Ibid., p. 11.

50 Ibid., p. 79.

51 Ibid., p. 20.

52 In 1967, Toynbee admitted that the purpose of the report on Armenian massacres was to win American support. However, he coupled this acknowledgment with a perplexing claim (if one considers the very nature of his employment and Bryce’s high political stature), namely that had he and Bryce known of its propaganda aims they would have reconsidered their roles in the report. See: Arnold J. Toynbee, *Acquaintances* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), pp. 151-153.

53 James M. Read, *Atrocity Propaganda* (New York: Arno Press, 1972 [1941]), p. 189.

54 In an article in the *Washington Post* during the war, it is stated that “No man in Europe commands a more sympathetic audience in America than Viscount Bryce,” see: *Washington Post*, January 28, 1917, p. 4.

involvement.⁵⁵ Decades prior to WWI, Bryce had made a name for himself as a Liberal politician, and an expert in foreign affairs, when in 1876 he raised the Armenian Question as part of the larger Eastern Question during the days of the heated Bulgarian Agitation.⁵⁶

Already in 1878, Bryce announced Turkey's death,⁵⁷ and presented the plan to cultivate "the growth of a native Christian race" – the Armenians – to the point of establishing "the nucleus of an independent state" – Armenia – whose territories would comprise of Ottoman land in the size of "about three hundred and fifty miles in length by two hundred and fifty in breadth."⁵⁸ Between then and WWI, Bryce engaged in many activities to organize the Armenians as a political entity within the Ottoman state that would replace the Ottoman rule.⁵⁹ This was accompanied by the promotion of the conviction that Turks as a race and as followers of Islam were inferior, uncivilized and an obstruction of progress. In the context of rationalizing "cases in which the exclusion of the Backward race seems justified, in the interests of humanity at large,"⁶⁰ Bryce invited his audience to "Conceive what a difference it might make if Islam were within two centuries to disappear from the earth!"⁶¹

Bryce was mentored by Edward Freeman, who later became the Regius Professor of Modern History at the University of Oxford and one of the most prominent historians in the late nineteenth century.⁶² Freeman was considered a spokesperson for Liberal Party ideology during Benjamin Disraeli's premiership,⁶³ when the party was in the opposition. To him, "the people of Aryan and Christian Europe" – the Christian minorities in the European

55 James Bryce, "Preface by Viscount Bryce," in Arnold J. Toynbee (ed.), *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire: Documents Presented to Viscount Falldon* (London, New York and Toronto: Hodder and Stoughton, 1916), p. xxvii.

56 Herbert A. L. Fisher, *James Bryce*, vol. 1 (New York: Macmillan, 1927), p. 183.

57 James Bryce, "The Future of Asiatic Turkey," *The Fortnightly Review* 29 (1878), p. 927.

58 *Ibid.*, p. 930.

59 This is made apparent through his correspondence with Armenian representatives. See: MSS. Bryce 191-208, Catalogue of the papers of James, Viscount Bryce, 1826-1958, University of Oxford, Bodleian Library.

60 James Bryce, *The Romans Lecture 1902: The Relations of the Advanced and the Backward Races of Mankind* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1903), p. 34.

61 *Ibid.*, p. 46.

62 Toynbee intimated that it was Freeman's work that inspired him into becoming a historian. See: Arnold J. Toynbee, *A Study of History*, vol. 1 (London, New York and Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1935), p. 339.

63 According to Richard Shannon, "Freeman was the natural leader of the Gladstonian historians." See: Richard Shannon, *Gladstone and the Bulgarian Agitation, 1876* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1963), p. 223.

territories of the Ottoman Empire – were suffering from “The union of the Jew and the Turk against the Christian.”⁶⁴ Freeman was adamant that the Turkish presence in Europe was “artificial” because they “did not belong to the Aryan branch of mankind, and their original speech is not an Aryan speech.”⁶⁵ Interestingly, a passage in which Freeman remarks that “A day will come when the Turkish horde shall be driven back to its native deserts, or else die out, the victim of its own vices, upon the soil which it has too long defiled,”⁶⁶ is described in 1986 by Jonathan Parry simply as a passage in which “Freeman recommended the institution of federal government in the Balkans, which would preserve the independence of the constituent states, and yet would secure the area against attack.”⁶⁷ Meaning, this is an instance in which British historiography has taken a fiery anti-Turkish text that was authored by one of its greatest historians in the Victorian period, and presented it as a mild-mannered scholarly observation, thereby failing to acknowledge the anti-Turkish intensity of the passage and the roots of anti-Muslim sentiment in modern British historiography.

The most glaring representation of historiographical dissonance between British and Muslim identity is embodied by Gladstone, who from the late 1860s to the 1890s was Britain’s most highly regarded politician having been elected as premier on four different occasions, more than any politician in Britain’s history. Gladstone advocated policies against Muslims in Turkey⁶⁸ and Egypt⁶⁹ while claiming that it was done in the name of God,⁷⁰ and for the sake of Christianity⁷¹ and the progress of mankind.⁷² His stated belief in his country’s “moral elevation,”⁷³ is, problematically, both an integral part of Britain’s liberal

64 Edward A. Freeman, *The Ottoman Power in Europe, Its Nature, Its Growth, and Its Decline* (London: Macmillan and Company, 1877), pp. xix-xx.

65 *Ibid.*, pp. 41-43.

66 Edward A. Freeman, *History of Federal Government in Greece and Italy* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1893 [1863]), pp. 554-555.

67 Jonathan P. Parry, *Democracy and Religion: Gladstone and the Liberal Party, 1867-1875* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 188.

68 William E. Gladstone, “The Peace to Come,” *Nineteenth Century* 3 (1878), p. 219; Stephen J. Lee, *Aspects of British Political History, 1815-1914* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 190.

69 William E. Gladstone, “Aggression on Egypt and Freedom in the East,” *The Nineteenth Century* 2 (1877), pp. 159-160.

70 David W. Bebbington, *William Ewart Gladstone: Faith & Politics in Victorian Britain* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1993), p. 171.

71 William E. Gladstone, “The Paths of Honour and Shame,” *The Nineteenth Century* 3 (1878), p. 603.

72 William E. Gladstone, “Right Principles of Foreign Policy,” in Edgar R. Jones (ed.), *Selected Speeches on British Foreign Policy, 1738-1914* (London: Humphrey Milford, 1914), p. 382.

73 William E. Gladstone, “England’s Mission,” *The Nineteenth Century* 4 (1878), p. 574.

identity and an insult to those who were colonized by Britain.⁷⁴ The same man who was pivotal in shaping British liberalism is the one who defined the Turk as inherently standing in opposition to it: “It is not a question of Mahometanism simply, but of Mahometanism compounded with the peculiar character of a race... They [the Turks] were, upon the whole, from the black day when they first entered Europe, the one great anti-human specimen of humanity.”⁷⁵

How do all of these direct clashes with Turkish and Muslim perspectives compute into the British national identity? How deep have these political texts penetrated British historical narratives? It is the teaching of history that defines national identity. It has been observed that “The nation-state and historiography traditionally have an intimate relationship,”⁷⁶ and that in Western European historiography “the nation is being tendentiously recast in a European framework.”⁷⁷ How does that affect the “non-European” cultures in Europe? To understand the identity crisis of a young African Muslim in Britain, for instance, one must consider that the British state does not actively pursue a reexamination of significant prejudice against Islam and Africans in its historical narratives. Such a reexamination would mean that every nook and cranny of British historiography must be reviewed through postcolonialist eyes. Not only should Gladstone’s place in British history demonstrate an acknowledgement of his Islamophobia, but there should also be full recognition of his father’s slave-ownership and its implications.⁷⁸ It will likely require

74 Such as moralizing Britain’s imperialist hold of India. See: Gladstone, “Aggression,” p. 154. In this context, it is relevant to consider the following comment on how Britain’s national identity perceives the massacres of Indians in 1857: “British historiography on the Mutiny became a sermon, not a science.” See: Sashi B. Chaudhuri, *English Historical Writings on the Indian Mutiny, 1857-1859* (Calcutta: The World Press Private Ltd., 1979), p. 280.

75 William E. Gladstone, *Bulgarian Horrors and the Question of the East* (London: John Murray, 1876), pp. 12-13.

76 Yasemin N. Soysal and Hanna Schissler, “Teaching Beyond the National Narrative,” in Hanna Schissler and Yasemin N. Soysal (eds.), *The Nation, Europe, and the World: Textbooks and Curricula in Transition* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2005), p. 1.

77 *Ibid.*, p. 5.

78 John Gladstone, William’s father, was one of the wealthiest slave-holders in Liverpool. In his owned plantations in Demarara, “Fifty negroes were hanged, many were shot down in the thickets, others were torn in pieces by the lash of cart-whip.” See: John Morley, *The Life of William Ewart Gladstone*, vol. 1 (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1932 [1903]). In his writings on the subject, John Gladstone argued that just as there were people in the world deprived of Christianity, it is also theologically understandable that there would be slaves deprived of freedom, and he referred to William Wilberforce, the leader of the anti-slavery campaign, as a “mistaken man.” See: The West India Association, *The Correspondence between John Gladstone and James Cropper on the Present State of Slavery in the British West Indies and in the United States of America and on the Importation of Sugar from the British Settlements in India* (Liverpool: The West India Association), pp. 16-17. Nonetheless, there is a historiographical perception that John Gladstone was a philanthropist. For instance, see: Thomas Archer, *William Ewart Gladstone and His Contemporaries: Seventy Years of Social and Political Progress*, vol. 1 (London: The Gresham Publishing Company, 1898), p. xi. Joppke is mistaken when he claims that because Britain had abandoned slavery “early on,” it need not “turn multiculturalism into the retributive

further historical inquiry and corrective publications before it becomes common knowledge that political anti-Ottoman rhetoric since the 1870s is what inspired the wartime propaganda during WWI, which, in turn, is what informs Americans and Europeans to this day about what happened in 1915-16.

Conclusion

Instead of seeking to place institutional constraints on behavior that follows cultural preferences among minority groups, institutions in Western liberal states should reflect the multinationalism and multiethnicity of their citizens. In Perinçek's case, the Swiss failure to establish institutions that reflect such multinational or multiethnic perspectives on history illustrates how important it is to accompany equal rights and state multiculturalism with a broad historiographical awareness that is respectful of the multinational and multiethnic backgrounds in the population. The British avoidance of recognizing that the national historiography is filled with historiographical bias against Muslims plays a great role in the national identity crisis among the Muslim citizens of Britain. While anti-Ottoman elements in British historiography do not come under reexamination and reconsideration, it will be used continuously as the main sources of information on the Armenian issue. The promotion of the claim that multiculturalism is in retreat may be explained by the service of such a claim to the state that refuses to acknowledge a national historiography that is hostile to Turks and Muslims, and prefers to place the burden of change on the Turks and Muslims themselves so that disturbing truths will remain blocked by the existing national narratives. State multiculturalism cannot lead to successful integration if it is not accompanied by a national identity that is complementary to the changed social makeup of the state via historical narratives that are inclusive of different national and ethnic backgrounds, and strive for historical accuracy.

direction of affirmative action" as in the United States. See: Christian Joppke, "Immigration Challenges the Nation-State," in Christian Joppke (ed.), *Challenges to the Nation-State: Immigration in Western Europe and the United States* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 36. Rather, it is the lack of historiographical awareness that has prevented the meaning of slavery in Britain from becoming a matter of national agenda.

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