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# THE CONTEMPORARY MIGRATION PHENOMENON – THE (UN) SOLVED PROBLEM OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY?!

Review  
Article

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## Keywords

Immigration,  
Quran,  
Umma,  
Interreligious dialogue,  
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## Abstract

*It is obvious that the migration wave from the Orient is a challenge for Europe and especially for the Catholic and Protestant countries. Its geopolitical, economic, social, cultural, theological, and spiritual significance has hardly any competition in the old evolution of the world, the secularization from the 17<sup>th</sup> century or the globalization from the 21<sup>st</sup> century. From this perspective, it is necessary to study carefully the migration phenomenon in its assembly, trying to present an integrated and multi-criteria diagnosis, especially due to the migration phenomenon brings closer to each of us the huge and extremely difficult problem of Muslim radicalization, together with its cohort of terrorist manifestations endangering the most important human right: the right to life. Our study is intentionally intended to evaluate and commensurate, using Orthodox theological criteria, the impact of the actual migration phenomenon, the life of the Muslim community – umma, related to the Christian community from the multicultural European society. We start from the opposed manner the two sides relate to society, understand freedom and the dialogue between religions.*

## PRELIMINARIES

An analysis of the contemporary migration phenomenon requires operating with a multitude of perspectives, at least equal in number with the domains that interfere with the European Christian society. The main questions upon the incidence of the contemporary Muslim migration in the Christian western territories and upon the future of the Islamic Western communities – in their second or even third generation – need, with the aim of offering sustainable and adequate responses, *cross disciplinary, sociological, psychological, juridical and theological investigations*. The perspective offered by the theologian researcher may be, at least in part, a determinant one, because it presents and quantifies aspects related to the attitude and the behavior of individuals and groups, determined by Islam, that is not in a dominant/exclusive position, but in a position of a minority, accepted or rejected in a complex interaction with Christianity.

Even from the start, we notice that the numerical growth of the Muslims and their incapacity to form communities willing to integrate in the western Christian societies (In its conceptual dimension, integration is related to individuals and social structures; it becomes real when the individuals and their traditional institutions are moving in a convergent direction with the host-society (Borlandi et. al., 2009, p. 389), must be connected with the particular way the Islam perceives the Christian Occident – described by the Romanian Ambassador Dumitru Chican as the sum of all *the reactions against modernity*, determined by the factors of maintaining the Muslim identity through the emphasis of the *nationalist frustrations, starting from the economic robbery and the exploitation of the natural resources by the western world and the United States, the political recurrence of the Palestinian problems, the authoritarianism or the extreme survival of the existence of the Muslim population*. These are the origins of a tendency to concentrate the believers and the community towards the *search of the genuine pure Islam* (Chican, 2011, pp. 83 – 85), the aim of a pure religion – the unique recipient of the truth and of the theocratic vision upon the world, as a form of integrating the living religious belief in the political world. Inside this context no Muslim *tinker will be preoccupied to develop a political vision independent from the religious conception* (Bălănean, 2015, p. 181). In fact, such objective only *gives meaning and brings to fruition the particular view of the Islamic thinking upon umma, the world, the community and the individual, a view that seems to be subdued to the desiderate of global expansion for the belief of the Prophet and his book, The Quran*.

We consider necessary to mention that in our country – unlike Russia, Greece, Bulgaria or Hungary – the public perception of the migration phenomenon is rather favorable. The positive attitude is proved by the analysis upon the characterization of the immigrants, seen as hardworking people (Table 1 and Table 2).

We believe that this situation will probably slightly change when Romania will become a route point for the immigrants from the Middle East. The situation is a result of the following factors: **(1)** the lack of significant contacts, which they don't have a significant extension in the Muslim community of Romania, which does not manifest its action of proselytism among the population, on which it lives among; **(2)** the lack of the active offensive actions of Muslim proselytism among the Christian in the country; **(3)** the small percentage of Muslim immigrants in our country (Turkish - about 16% from the total, Syrians – 5%, Tunisians and Lebanese – 2% (General Inspectorate for Immigration, 2015). The data are courtesy to the young theologian student Ioan-Daniel Manolache and a result of his economy studies in Babeş-Bolyai University of Cluj Napoca, concluded with a thesis upon the contemporary migrations phenomenon).

## ISLAMANDITS PERSPECTIVE UPON IMMIGRATION VERSUS CHRISTIAN CIVILISATION

A famous novel of Elena Cudinova, published at the beginning of 2000 contested by the Islam world (Chudinova, 2009), contains a description of Paris in 2048, dominated by a majoritarian Islam, while the Christian world, a marginal one, lives in the ghetto. The novel is a representation of the fears related to the demographic growth of the immigrants in the Christian world. Even if a writer as Philip Jenkis, from the Baylor Baptist University of Waco-Texas, thinks that the demographic outnumbering of Christianity by Islam may not be anticipated (Achimescu, 2013, p. 370), *the pressure of demography and the fear of radicalization are more present in the collective mentality of the western world and begin to appear in the Easter Europe as well*.

The Islam will thus draw for itself *a depreciative image, an authentic scary image for the Christian world, fed by the theoretical thinking and the daily life of the community – umma*, characterized by the following significant reference points in relation with the other religious communities:

**a)** *The Islamic migration rejects as programme the idea of fitting in the host-society, its vision upon the social organization being deeply rooted in the Arabian tribal order from the 7<sup>th</sup> century*

(Bălănean, 2015, p. 184). In this context, it will be promoted as main value in the common life the idea of loyalty of the other religious communities upon the Islamic umma – *asabiyya* inside the community (Sitaru, 2009, p. 188). More than this, the Islam is in a situation when it cannot adapt its social thinking to the reality around because, starting with the 9<sup>th</sup> century, Ulama decided that, in juridical matters, no new solutions must be identified, recommending the old solutions from similar species – *taqlid*. This attitude leads to the *closing of the gated of ijihad* (Brusanowski, 2009, p. 102), the systemic preoccupations of the Islamic religious thinking in relation with the civil society – *the entire activity of the teachers and canonic law professors related to the decisions of the old teachers* (Lammens, 2003, p. 112). On this matter, a Muslim scientist with Pakistan origins, SeyyidEbulA'la el-Meududi (1903 – 1979) wrote: *Islam forbids the imitation of culture and living of other nations [...]. This may destroy its internal vitality, narrows the perspicacity and the understanding of a nation, diminishes its judgement, gives birth to an inferiority complex and condemns the nation to death. Thus, our prophet, Muhammad, forbade the Muslims to adopt the culture and the living of other religions. As a consequence, if you wish to learn something from others, first learn their way of working, their social discipline and use their discovering in the field of science and technique* (Ebul, 1991, p. 107). In a concrete manner, the Islamic community - *umma* tends to take from the western society most of the elements from the productive activity and the civilization economic welfare, keeping a safe distance from anything in the sphere of Christian culture, orienting on the axe family-community, nothing else than an actualization of the middle age reference formed by the triad family-clan-tribe (Huntington, 2000, p. 257).

**b)** From the umma's perspective, the relation with the Christian neighbours, the Muslim believer will need to start from the Quran teaching that *You are the best community that ever emerged for humanity: you advocate what is moral, and forbid what is immoral* (Quran III, 110). The appurtenance to *umma* – the unique human institution in the possession of the true religious faith – will put the Muslim in the position of *looking outside the community with reserve in communication and interlinking, suspecting a closer approach, because every relation with a non-believer is considered a sympathy or an accession to foreign ideas* (Chebel, 2010, p. 257) (Quran XXXVII, 50 – 55). This radical position is fully supported by the sacred text - *Do not take the Jews and the Christians as allies; some of them are allies of one another. Whoever of you allies himself with them is one of them* – Quran V, 51 -, and does

nothing else than maintaining the traditional interpretations established *sharyia*, according to which a Muslim in relation with a nonbeliever may have only one of this qualities: (1) a missionary, aiming to convert the other, or (2) a protector, when collect a tribute for protecting the other (Bălănean, 2015, p. 185). This anachronism from *sharya* puts Islam in a situation when it cannot find new conceptual theological fundamentals and is forced by the implacable globalisation – or by itself by its own good belief – to cohabitate with the Christian civilisation (Practically, the only form of legal coexistence with the non-believers is the marriage of the Muslim with „chaste women from the people who were given The Book before you”, meaning Jewish or Christian women (Quran V, 5). Starting from this point, Islam will not hesitate to claim its superiority as religion; it will do it even if the Christians worship the same God – *and our God and your God is One; and to Him we are submissive* – Quran XXIX, 46 -, highlighting that Islam is the container of the true divine revelation and of the supreme truth, thus being exclusively on the good side, because God does not forgive those denying Him and His Prophet (Quran IX, 80). Obviously, the dogma of the Holy Trinity is at the core of this type of discourse, a consistent one, connected to the text of Quran, even solely based on verses as: *The likeness of Jesus in God's sight is that of Adam: He created him from dust, then said to him, Be, and he was* (Quran III, 59) or *do not say about God except the truth. The Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary, is the Messenger of God [...] do not say: and Three! [...] God is only one God. Glory be to Him—that He should have a son* (Quran IV, 171).

**c)** Without a doubt, from this radical point of view, *jihad* is the most invoked constitutive element of militant Islam and the big problem in the dialogue between religions. In fact, the Quranic text shows the Prophet calling to *jihad*: *Fight those who do not believe in God, nor in the Last Day, nor forbid what God and His Messenger have forbidden, nor abide by the religion of truth—from among those who received the Scripture—until they pay the due tax, willingly or unwillingly* (Quran IX, 29). Participating to *jihad* is presented as an obligation for every Muslim. *O you who believe! When you meet those who disbelieve on the march, never turn your backs on them. Anyone who turns his back on them on that Day, except while maneuvering for battle, or to join another group, has incurred wrath from God, and his abode is Hell—what a miserable destination!* (Quran VIII, 15 – 16).

In this context, due to the major importance of *jihad* in the contemporary global interactions of Islam, we must highlight the detail related to the image of *jihad*, the way the Muslim exegetes are

trying to transfer to the western public, an unequivocal image.

A first profound theological perspective, somehow a mystical one, affirms that the meaning of *jihad* is that of *unpersonal war every single Muslim must fight against himself – nafs, to progress in spirituality*. This perspective was extrapolated to the military meaning of *jihad* reserved to *some integratory currents and terrorist groups, to which the umma is renouncing the major part of muslims apparently separate from* (Bălănean, 2015, p. 189 – 190). According to *sharya, jihad expresses the fight in the name of Allah and against the armed enemies of Islam; it is a duty for every Muslim – fard 'ayn, of the community and of the state, of all the Muslims – fardkifay* (Ebul, 1991, pp. 90 – 91).

In spite this equivocal, *Islam offers without any doubt a side of armed offensive, extra poled, especially in the last part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, under the form of an irrational violence [...] no matter how much make-up the Muslim exegetes may try to apply on the face of jihad*. (Chican, 2011, p. 21). *Jihad* is explicitly presenting itself as a military dimension/ component of Islam, manifesting even from its beginnings and which, at least theoretically, *is not allowed to be interrupted and should never end before the conquering of the entire world in the name of Islam* (Lammens, 2003, p. 75).

**d)** In conclusion, *jihad* remains a constituent of Islam, as individual obligation and collective obligation as well, at least until the time when, hermeneutically speaking, the Qur'anic references invoking it will be permitted an interpretation other than strictly the literal one. In other words, the interpretative exegeses will exist, *ta'wil* will continue to be prohibited in the favour of the literal interpretations. A *zahir* of *Quran*, IbnHazm appreciated, even during the 11<sup>th</sup> century, that allegory compromises the authentic meaning of the divine revelation from the 114 *surahs* (Chebel, 2010, p. 153). For the above mentioned aspects, it will be very difficult for Islam to confer to *jihad* positive spiritual valences, some related to the inner fight of the believer against his own nature for overcoming the sin.

The armed content of *jihad* gains precise contours, assumed openly by many Muslim exegetes, similar to the approach of *sharya*. Once accepted, the content requires to be nuanced under the aspect of action – offensive or defensive. Due to the fact that the contemporary standards reject the direct exposition of a conquering war, the theorisation seems to be in the yard of extremist groups, as *Islamic State* is, which assumes clearly the offensive *jihad* through the reorganisation of the theocratic caliphate. As a result, the presentation of *jihad* as a defensive war is predominant: *The supreme sacrifice of a Muslim for Allah is*

*participating to jihad, the holy war in the defence of Islam. [...]. We may clearly affirm that, if jihad would not be used, Islam and the Muslim world would suffer extreme losses. Thus, in order to avoid such a disaster, Allah commands us to be ready all the time to sacrifice our life and our goods to defence and flourish our faith*. With a precise aim, such war will not hurt the innocents, only confronting the enemies, which constitutes a different vision from the terrorist actions leading deliberately to kill the non-combatants: *Allah warns us not to spill blood without a just cause and forbids us to hurt old people, women, and children, sick or wounded people. His command is to fight those coming with war against us* (Ebul, 1991, p. 99)

**e)** Despite its refractory attitude towards modernity, Islam may not completely avoid the multiple influences of the contemporary road to a global society. *The Arabian Spring* is such an example, as *mass phenomenon showing the real power of the influences*. Implicitly, applied to Islam, the cultural and civil globalization generates two categories opposed in their effects:

a. *a tendency for opening to modernity, perceived as a project of modern, modernist and liberal Islam, willing and capable to accept the values of the western Christian society* and b. *a tendency to radicalise the reaction to the destructive pressure of the western and American globalisation, standing at the core of the contemporary Islamic radicalism in its fundamental forms*.

## CONCLUSIONS

The present article presents the following conclusions:

**1)** The concept of *contemporary Islamic radicalism* designates the most actual extremist form of opposition towards the global politics of the western centres of power; without any historical antecedents (Achimescu, 2013., p. 363), it tends to *have no direct connection to the tradition and the culture of the Muslim countries, becoming more a phenomenon specific to the Muslim immigration* (Achimescu, 2013, p. 371).

**2)** In exchange the liberal effects of globalisation manifest especially in the countries with native Muslim population. India, Egypt and Turkey are the main centres of preoccupation for *a reform of Islam, in the direction of its modernisation at least on three coordinates* (Lammens, 2003, p. 213):

a. *a reform of jurisprudence, meaning the reopening of the ijthihad way;*  
b. *a reform of the religious thinking through the revision of the traditional Qur'anic exegesis;*

c. a reform of the civil liberties.

This tendency has as opposition the assembly of the conservative and traditionalist Islamic centres; the most important appears to be the Saudi Wahhabism, a political movement based on a strict appliance of the Qur'anic law, implying the rejection of any innovation, creating at the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century a Bedouin principality in a canonically constructed theocracy (Sourdel, 1993, p. 149.). Upon the orientation of the above mentioned directions, Professor Nicu Gavriluță observed that, even if the Muslim immigrants in Europe during the 60's and 70's used to behave inside the limits of decency and respected the welcoming state", they "are nowadays asking for the limitation or redirecting of the traffic in their district during the Ramadan" (Gavriluță, 2016, pp. 269 – 270.) It is a case of an attitudinal dynamic, somehow possible to be foreseen, because the Muslim believers only crossed what it seemed to be a legitimacy in the evolution of all confessional minorities, not only applicable to Islam, because: when a religion is in a situation of minority, it tends to equality, but it asks for preferential conditions when it becomes majoritarian in a society (Ericson, 2000, p. 34). We need to highlight the fact that the road from claiming equality to claiming a preferential statute is possible only where there are pre-existing conditions for a climate characterised by real religious and civil liberty. The civil liberty is determinant, because the religious liberty requires a guaranteed freedom of the civil society, meaning the freedom of press and the freedom of speaking for all the citizens (Ericson, 2000, pp. 34 – 35). Benefiting of all these conditions, Islam does not hesitate to value for its own interest the free climate ensured by the western countries, a freedom that Islam is not capable in fact to assimilate from a political-religious doctrinarian point of view and avoids adopting it as fundamental value. In fact, developing and asking for preferential treatment, the Muslim communities admit that the authorities are those offering them religious freedom without discrimination, that the state is the main factor that ensures the social equilibrium in the field of religion, that the democratic political system is the one ensuring their right to manifest without constraints their religion – a different one than the majoritarian religion (Cuciuc, 2000, p. 28)

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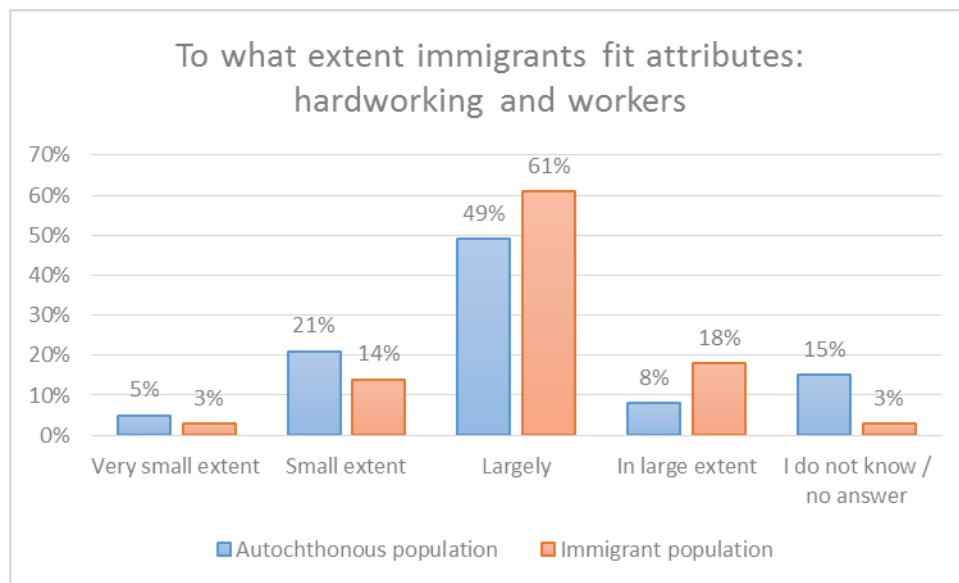
**Tables**

Table 1. Romanians' attitude related to immigrants

Romanian's opinion upon immigrants willing to work in Romania - Survey 2014	
1. Permit entrance to anyone interested	37%
2. Permit entrance only in case of available working places	33%
3. Establish rigorous limits for the number of foreigners permitted to work in Romania	19%
4. Forbid foreigners to come to work in Romania	4%
5. I do not know/I refuse to answer	7%

Source: Centrul de Cercetare și Documentare în Domeniul Integrării Imigranților [Centre for Research and Documentation in the field of immigrant integration].

Table 2. To what extent immigrants fit attributes: hardworking and workers



Source: adapted from <http://www.arps.ro> [22.12.2015]