

## Review

# Is the World Global or is the North opposed to the South and the West to the East?

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**Accepted 20<sup>th</sup> October, 2014**

The fall of the Berlin Wall, the expected accession of Turkey to EU, the two Iraqi wars and the deaths of Saddam Hussein, Osama Bin Laden and Muammar al-Gaddafi, the troubles in North Africa, Egypt, Syria, are posing, once more, the question of the contrasts and their possible solutions among different political systems, religious convictions, oriental traditions and western habits. The contrasts between the two worlds have always been aggressive and they don't cease, at the opposite, sometimes they grow heavier. The E-W oppositions are adjoined to former N-S disparities which contributed to make our world and even EU internally differentiated. Then, for the moment it seems not possible, not only to realize any sort of global world, but even one simple kind of a limited globalization which could recall the ancient grandeur of the cultures along the Mediterranean Sea, as in the huge past of Greek civilization and Roman Empire times. For the moment we only do have a "global war". Probably a role of mediator can be played by some countries, like Turkey or Albania which are geographically and culturally in the middle of two conceptions of life

**Keywords:** Globalization, Culture, war, Muslims, West, East

## INTRODUCTION

This article has been conceived on the second of May 2011, the date of Osama Bin Laden's death. His activity has been the most patent manifestation of the contrasts between two worlds which have always collided. Even this death, which probably would put an end to the consequences of the September eleven, will surely not suffice for long lasting processes of peace.

This was also the week of Prince William of Windsor marriage, during whose ceremony the bishop quoted a biblical sermon which tells: "Transform yourselves, by renewing your mind to discern what is good and what is bad". The fact is that good and bad aren't globally recognized; the worst is that what is good for one is bad for the other. The ideal good for geographers should be the highest degree of human beings' realization for the Earth's good. For that goal a sort of materialism is required, a big quantity of hard sciences, and together with Geography, Sociology and Anthropology, but less percentage of metaphysics....but at this point the contrast among cultures will

come to blows.

This was also the period when all the Middle East was in turmoil for the popular rebellions against dictatorships and governments' corruption along the Northern African coasts and in Syria or Albania. I was in Turkey, at the borders with Syria, for an Erasmus exchange, so I had the possibility to see the world from East with western eyes, and I reflected on the oppositions, and, at the opposite, on the facilitation of exchanges during the classic antiquity.

Globalization is an abused term, since it is for many of us more a desire than reality. For example, also the European Union is quite far away from being "global". The EU *Culture 2000* Program is emphasizing the concept of unity through diversity; that is also suggested in the European Capital of Culture Program which sustains the value of diversity, by reinforcing the worth of the common roots.

Apart from the inevitable differences among States, one important distinction remains the disparity between the Northern and Southern States, and after

the Berlin wall's fall, new disparity among Western and Eastern countries. The fact that the first hearth of the common market has been the Benelux agreement has its weight until today, even if the European Common Market had been signed in Rome in 1957. The later agreements have had a confirmation in the choice of the European capital city in Belgium, or in Nederland for the Maastricht Protocol of the Union in 1992.

The Northern primacy derives its force from the accelerated process that has been triggered off since the first industrial revolution from which an uncontrollable economic process has taken place. The force of the industrial sector has been so hard that not only it has continually changed the economic life over times, but also the social and cultural behaviour. The dynamism of the productive power is also confirmed by a sort of different ranks and layers in which the 28 countries are positioned; a minor degree of development is connected to a retarded industrialization process. The economic performances have obviously been stimulated by the integration duties and the *acquis* requirements, but the financial appraisal shows so much *défaillances* in Spain, Portugal, Greece, and Italy, that some of them couldn't probably maintain the required *status* with the peril of being thrown out from the Union.

### The European Union's state of the art

The present situation of EU is admirable and some socio-economic conditions are considered at the highest state of the art, likewise the research, the agriculture, and the stimulation funds for innovation.

In the meantime, the EU southern countries are facing an exorbitant illegal immigration, because the Mediterranean Sea isn't at all a boundary, instead it functions as a bridge. Along the Mediterranean waters, people from all over the world are continually arriving. The situation is uncontrollable and very expensive for some countries, since Spain and Portugal must face also immigration from the ocean; Greece has so many islands, and Italy has a very long coastline. Both this two last ones stand also in front of continental borders easily passed by the former Eastern Soviet populations.

The position of Malta and Cyprus is under easier control, due to their limited extension.

In the past, the long lasting situation of immigration has been accepted, since the economic transformation of western societies required less paid work forces, but, recently, the augmented policy controls are increasingly fining the black work, while the GATT agreement requires the same conditions for all the workers in the same territory without any

restrictions. The last big economic crisis is also penalizing the residential workers, with a before unimagined youth unemployment which acidifies the nationalism and the racism.

For some countries the condition of being an immigration area is quite new, after having been, for long time, an emigration source. The new fluxes are often socially disruptive, causing internal political contrasts, between citizens' heavy duties of fulfilling overloaded financial burdens, and the obligation of maintaining at the same time a surplus of workers. Some countries are more penalized, especially Italy, which has, on average, the oldest, population in Europe, with one of the highest need of home workers and at the same time it is penalized by catholic parties which prefer, for the so-called humanitarian reasons to give more than needed to foreigners, legal or illegal (no matter at all), subtracting, as a counterpart, funds from the scientific research, especially the medical research which must challenge the future of terrible illnesses without hope. Maybe they consider health a non humanitarian question, since people must suffer for gaining the paradise.

The new phenomenon is recently aggravated by enormous fluxes from North Africa, after the turmoil which is until now affecting some governments like Egypt, Syria or Libya.

The discussion among the Mediterranean states is burning, with some residents requiring the unconditioned help to all who ask to come into one state and participate at its life; some others requiring an homogeneous effort from all the EU countries, in order to alleviate the burdens for the maritime states, and ultimately, the radicals are expecting that the States will reject all the foreigners.

Catholics feel the need to help poor people, but if the northern African populations are poor in comparison with EU conditions, they are rich in comparison with sub-Saharan areas.

At the same time as rich American or European countries are helping youth middle class cohort which composes the new immigration fluxes, they are neglecting the poorest children of the world who don't have and never will have the possibility to ask asylum to anyone. The same quantity of money spent for cigarettes and phone calls or army protection gifted in the immigration centres to new illegal immigrants would be many, many times more useful for the basic needs or fundamental education for the forgotten children of the planet. All this without considering the quantity of money wasted on paying the careers of the immigrants along the sea and the consequent silent acceptance of their illegal activity.

### Old and new revolutions

The tumult generated in some Arabian countries is a manifestation of the repressed exigencies of democracy, a demonstration of the need of modernization felt by the populations under authoritarian governments where the dictatorship is accentuated by strong religious controls which enter even into the private life, erasing every image of freedom.

Combatants desiring western ways of life should pass through the many passages which before were afforded in the long process of the western democratization history, passing through wars, rebellions, revolutions, starting from the religious Reform, the French Revolution, the refusal of dictatorships, the two World Wars until the modern daily struggles of unemployment, crisis, the costs of life, of a good education and the last challenge of lifelong learning, proposed by the EU Agenda.

The goal of integration isn't easy at all, and, frequently, emigration or immigration wouldn't be able to contribute to it, often they aggravate the relationships. Few personages abroad cannot help to change or reduce the tensions of their original country where people aren't able to move forward, after centuries of stagnation. Innovation must spring up from the core of the nations and spread out, as a fire, along the entire territory of countries, as it is now occurring in China. Like the colonization process, a counter-colonization will probably fail; a more general integrated development is required in the framework of globalization.

Nowadays we must ask ourselves: under what conditions would the globalization be realized? Would the democratization be recognized? Would a global integration be possible?

Who must direct new processes in emergent countries?

Surely, a virtual unity of the nations along the Med (Mediterranean) Sea is attractive, especially for the Med countries which were more connected in the past than in the present times. Civilization started from here, political power was enhanced here, cultural education initiated to be considered important from here, sciences developed from the ancient philosophers here.

Nevertheless who can or must start the development process along all the economically marginalized or politically penalized countries of the Med?

Who will meet the expenses of all the economical, political, technical, social burdens of democracy in a so large area? Wasn't the German re-unification so hard to realize that only a strong economic power has been able to afford?

Is South Korea unable to pay for North Korea reunification? Isn't it?

Surely the advantages of having or exchanging the oil would be of the supreme value for all the European continent. The southern European resources are complementary over the northern ones.

But it is too early to really discuss the topic of a "Med Rim" (Liebfried, 1993), since for this moment the term has a negative meaning. It means that southern Med countries are lagging behind the northern ones in many aspects. They are struggling along the path of reaching the indicators' level of the best performing nations and the way is very long, implying many efforts in different political and social areas, other than in the economic field.

According to the Italian journalist Severgnini (2000), the northern European countries will be the final model for the southern ones.

"Political parties and secondary associations remained organizationally weak in Southern Europe, failing to develop strong, healthy links to civil society. Unlike in Northern Europe, where labour movements and other secondary associations articulated workers' interests and demands, in the South, they played a very circumscribed role, both in the design and in the implementation of welfare policies... even though developed incrementally over a long period of time... under long periods of authoritarianism and restricted democracy, the Southern European social welfare States remained underdeveloped and highly particularistic" (García and Karakatsanis, 2006: 131). Quoting Flaquer (2000: 26), the authors say that in Southern European Countries, familiar solidarity, or *familism*, together with *corporatism*, explains and is the result of an underdeveloped "family policy".

### Geography of contrasts

Katrougalos and Lazaridis (2003: xv) recognize that it is from the early 1990s that the idea of the Southern European countries came, constituting a separate cluster in the space of welfare States.

They connect this idea to the Liebfried's concept (1993) who pointed out the existence of a "Latin Rim" model of welfare, characterized by rudimentary systems of social protection, a strong influence of Catholic tradition and a solid presence of family as a key welfare provider. All these facts were seen as being backward defective. Negative impacts of rapid (since it is belated in comparison with Northern Countries) economic growth encourage the view that Southern Europe is the least ecologically modern part of the EU, according to Pridham, who refers to the "Mediterranean Syndrome" in which any kind of public

good is likely to encounter fundamental obstacles (2006: 263). “Delayed development has, by and large, been followed by delayed environmentalism” (idem: 265). In such a discussion, geography must undertake the charge of the research of the possibilities of homogenization through the study and the implementation of cases of excellence.

In fact, the cited authors, reviewing recent studies, underline that in some policy areas these countries have done better than their northern counterparts. “The Europeanization processes induced by the European Commission may have been the major catalyst for this convergence. Many economic sectors were forced to liberalize and become more efficient in their efforts to adapt to the various demands of European Integration (Boerzel 2001, cited in Pridham 2006: 263).

Gunther, Diamandourous and Sotiropoulos, the authors of the third volume (2006) of the Oxford Studies in Democratization series, focus on the analysis of the democratic transition processes and consolidation of the new democratic regimes. They explore the evolutionary procedure that brought four Southern European countries to resemble more similar to those of Western and Northern countries. This process occurred along extended periods of stable democratic governance. The transformation runs from the French Revolution, through the post WW II era which so profoundly altered socio-economical structures and mental attitudes that, fundamentally, changed the conditions of life (Introduction: III-VI). Jurisdictional conflict with the Catholic Church contributed to the paralysis, as endless struggles occurred over the degree to which education should meet religious rather than secular needs, and how much the church should contribute to the cost of the enterprise (ibidem). Gunther (et al, cit.) explains that he and the other authors of the book have repeatedly encountered evidence of the importance of three clusters of explanatory factors, which are: *modernization, democratization, Europeanization*; but also that the achievement of a certain “threshold level” (*quotation marks in the text*) of modernization is a prerequisite for the development of a social-welfare safety net for all the citizens (idem: 29).

We are supposed to assist to a continually evolving process, since modernization is likely to accelerate from one generation to the next; given that life is carried out by men and not by angels.

In the Scandinavian literature welfare is analyzed along the spectrum of various resources enabling individuals to determine their own life. Fundamentally, welfare is connected to *equality*, based on income, health, opportunities and especially gender equality (Kautto et al 2001, Introduction). In the Kautto’s book, Annemette Sorensen states that economic

independence for women may lead to greater economic interdependence between spouses (2001: 112).

One special question arises along the Nordic political discourse regarding the Dutch concept of emancipation. Its political goal includes not merely a gender perspective, but aims rather at a multiform society in which everyone, regardless of sex, marital status, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, religion, etc., has the opportunity to create for him or herself an independent life (Kjeldstad, 2001: 69). It is a fact that “socioeconomic modernization has gone hand-in-hand with technological advances; particularly important has been the emergence of television, which has become the principal medium of political communication, consequently, the authors conclude that “socioeconomic modernization may facilitate the moderation of party ideologies and programmatic stands, as well as to transform party organizations towards more modern forms that can effectively participate in the new politics campaigns .... Socioeconomic modernization insofar as increases in literacy, urbanizations, and exposure to mass communication and transportation networks give rise to the demand for a more active participatory role in the political system, and provide citizens with many of the tools necessary to play an active and efficacious role in politics” (Gunther et al. 2006, Introduction: 31).

Kautto (et al. 2001, Introduction: 7) states that “welfare States react and adapt to changing circumstances, but they also aim to exert a proactive impact on the development of other institutions”. ... “The numerous identified common policy challenges include globalization, mobility of capital and production, competitiveness, changes in the nature of work and employment patterns, unemployment and social exclusion, gender equality, provision of care, changing family and household patterns, ageing, ethnicity and balancing of budgets.”

Thus, while changing labour markets and family structures put pressure on welfare state adaptation, welfare state programmes may actively influence the whole of labour markets and choices within families.

García and Karakatsanis (2000: 87) quote the Marshall’s works *Citizenship and Social Class and Other Essays* (1950) where they found the affirmation that universal provision of education, health, social security, and welfare benefits leads to the development of full citizenship and, through it, political citizenship; thus linking civil citizenship with social welfare.

Neither is the free market all bad, as alleged by non Western societies, since, as supposed by García and Karakatsanis (cit.: 90), “the social democratic regime of welfare has become the model of social citizenship – a system which permits citizens the greatest degree

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of independence from market forces in constructing individual life chances through universal welfare services and a relatively high degree of labour de-commodification” .

### The Med Union

The unification process of the Mediterranean coasts, geographically favoured by a sea, considered under many aspects a lake, is practically restrained by different mentalities, life-styles, religions and politics among the Northern coastline and the Eastern or Southern ones. Many contrasts can usually be overtaken, but not if the differences are leading to a war “The war of ideas”, as named by President Obama (Patterson, Gallagher, 2009: 121). Religion values and political activism naturally converge at the interface of religion and secularism, at the point of “culture wars” within countries, until to the purported “clash of civilizations” (*ibidem*) which brings to real death’s wars.

### A review of colliding ideas

Stephan (2009, Introduction), based on ratings of political rights and civil liberties, considers the Middle East the most autocratic region of the world. Stephan concludes that the “freedom deficit” in Arab countries “undermines human development and is one of the most painful manifestations of lagging political development.”

The utopian Islamic State - the absolutists assert - must of necessity be opposed to democracy, which is founded upon the will of the people (Afsaruddin: 134). Mawdudi retorts to democracy (cited in Afsaruddin: 135): “Wherever this system exists, we do not consider Islam to exist, and wherever Islam exists, there is no room for this system.” Muslims who advocate democracy, he said, are harking back to the *Jahiliyya*, the “Age of Ignorance” before the rise of Islam and betraying their own legacy.

Islam is the greatest wall which stops the collaboration with Christians, both Catholic and Protestant. New Radical are in favor of Pan-Arab Nationalism, considering the Arabs’ special role in Islam, taking into consideration that Arab unity is a necessary stepping stone on the road to Islamic unity, even if Pan Arabism is composed by a secularist brand putting major emphasis on language (Sivan, 1985: 28-29).

If the three pillars of western society are modernization, democratization, Europeanization, at the opposite, orthodox Islam is reinterpreted as “refractory to progress” (Gunther et al, cit.).

According to the radical interpretation: “modernity is the most effective Trojan Horse penetrating the very citadel of Islam though the three most nefarious currents (or three opponents to three development concepts): secularism, Marxism, existentialism” (Sivan, 1985: 59).

Sivan (cit.: 14) states that the fundamentalist world cannot cope with the challenges of the future. In fact, radical and conservative are united in the hate for the “evil of evils”: *modernity*. Modernity is alien to Islam because it consists of “imported ideas”. Top places on the list of imported ideas are reserved for revolutionary theories of modern science which challenges the premises of traditional religion. The followers of Faramawiya reject science and technology; an activist group, the Tafkir wa- Hijra, goes so far as to doubt the value of literacy altogether (cit.: 138).

The Lebanese thinker Muhammad Mahdi Sham al-Din (1980, quoted in Sivan, cit. : 63) expresses great preoccupation about the media, tools of political and cultural propaganda: “What renders the idea of modern civilization particularly dangerous are the efficient and scientific methods with which they are diffused.... The common man in this day and age is the constant object of a brainwashing which intends to market specific commodities or ideas”.

Also nationalism is rejected: Qutb, an authority on Koranic exegesis, quotes a verse to prove that “God’s real chosen people is the Muslim Community, regardless of ethnic, racial, or territorial affiliation of its members...” “Patriotism should consist in bonds to the Faith, not to a piece of land” (Sivan, cit. : 32).

Europeanization is the western “nationalism”; it is important for Europeans, they think it could be also useful for others and good for many, but this don’t reflect the Muslim philosophy; the Muslims disrespect Egyptians, considered not Muslim any more, accused of being assimilated and Europeanized. The January 1977 Bread Riots in Cairo enunciated this streak with the sacking of the Pyramids` Street night clubs frequented by tourists. This is a clear denial of UN and UNWTO mission exposed by the former Secretary Boutros Boutros-Ghali (1992-1996) in Madrid in 1994, which stated “Tourism could be the only driving force able to realize the world peace”. Paradoxically Boutros-Ghali is Egyptian, but his dream hasn’t been realized until jet. The Chamber of Commerce of Turkey destined in February 2011 funds for the expansion of their enterprises, excluding those providing services for tourists, since tourists are men and women practicing leisure together. More vehement is the obsession with the media: refraining from watching television and listening to the radio became a norm of the new zealots, often imposed by force on neighbors and fellow students; films, press,

advertising, and books come in for their share of vituperation. (cit.: 124).

## Turkey

Tourism is one of the main forces of Egypt, but also of Turkey, due to its wonderful landscape and huge cultural and historical heritage.

Turkey has many potentialities since it is situated at the interface between West and East, where the complexity of Western and Muslim societies interact (Patterson, Gallagher, 2009).

It could be the nation which could connect two worlds, geographically *Eurasia*, politically *Eurabia* (Blankley, 2005). From one part, it claims the right to the EU accession, from the other it is flattered by Eastern Arabian countries. From one part the language isn't Arabic, from the other, Europe is expecting political rights grants are given to minorities. It is in the realm of uncertainty, actually with politicians all agreeing that the accession of Turkey represents the geographic limit to the European integration (Bolkestein and Eppink, 2004: 14, cited in Moore et al, 2009).

The world began to believe that Turkey could be the first Muslim democracy. Around 1997 Turkey began to adopt many of the EU institutions, but on its own terms. In many ways, Turkey's situation, as positioned between the core of the EU and the periphery of Eurasia, re-asserts the centrality of the semi-periphery in the management of the uncertainties of the global political economy (Moore, Dannreuther, 2009 : 151).

Turkey's position in the international political economy has changed dramatically over the past decade. The complexity of the battle for Turkish identity is far more intricate as it addresses the role of secular and religious politics in addition to other traditional issues that accessions procedures have to deal with, in relation to national identity and self determination (Moore, Dannreuther: 154).

Turkey's position in the contemporary world, however, is in crisis as the government's desire to become a fully accepted member of the EU clashes with an overtly authoritative strategic foreign policy (cit.:156).

In some aspects Turkey is very modern, or open to modern aspects. Magazines and newspapers portray actresses scantily dressed, even considering the western standards, other women are wearing scarves. At the end, many are contrasting all what is considered laicism exaggeration (Dressler, 2009).

According to Linnell, (2010: 122), Turkey has also an infamous record of media censorship, ideologically motivated supervision of public education, continuing discrimination against religious and ethnic minorities,

as well as curtailment of freedom of speech, felt in particular by public voices (especially journalists, intellectuals, and publishers) who address taboo topics or criticize sacred national symbols. Since the 1990s, however, Turkey has experienced a gradual liberalization on the public sphere and voices that challenge the centralist doctrines of the Kemalist state ideology which have become more pronounced and self-confident.

Asma Afsaruddin observes that most societies look to their own historical narratives to provide lessons for the present as well as the future. She tries to erase the image of West and East as two monoliths; as professor of Islamic studies at the Indiana University, she depicts the internal conflicts. Despite their respect for tradition in general, modernists tend to be critical of traditionalists who are perceived as unthinkingly following precedent and stymieing the efforts of Muslims to adapt to the modern world in an ethical and critical manner (2009 : 132). A neutral position is assumed by the movement of Civilian Jihad which professes "Nonviolent Struggle, Democratization, and Governance" (Stephan, 2009, Introduction). *Civilian Jihad* is an attempt to expand the debate on democratization and governance in the area, to include these powerful but overlooked indigenous forces for change" (Stephan, 2009 : 2).

Stephan, reflecting on the results of the *Arab Human Development Report* (2002) - document written by Arab intellectuals and civic leaders - thinks that civilian-driven strategies could have a role in forging regional transformation towards the democratic development in the Middle East, since the report found that a recourse to armed struggle, "is significantly less likely to produce sustainable freedom, in contrast to non violent opposition, which even in the face of State repression is far more likely to yield a democratic outcome." (cit. Introduction).

## CONCLUSIONS

The war of cultures could be circumvented by the simple diffusion of culture. Culture means to beat superstitions which hindrance development.

Atheism is considered by philosophers the most likely aspect of freedom. Feuerbach acknowledges that the laic virtues based on self-love recognition are the anthropological fundamentals of morality. The philosopher discloses in his work *Theogony* that anthropology is the theology's secret. Feuerbach considered Homer the father of western culture, the prophet of anthropology, who has resolved the *vexata quaestio* of nature and spirit's connection, demonstrating how in the ancient Greek poetry "the

art's idealism had learned how to ally itself with the nature's materialism" (2010: 27).

From anthropology towards geography the path is short, since Feuerbach's philosophy is practically connected to the real world. In fact, it is not by chance that his reviewer Cardillo (2010: XXVI, Introduction in Feuerbach) affirms that if someone hopes that the men should be better individuals, he should, first of all, make them happier, realising the philosopher's concept that the virtue which doesn't come from happiness is only hypocrisy.

We do recognize in the study and practice of geography the same goal of human happiness, in the sense that human beings' duty is to disclose in the best way all the potentialities buried in men and nature's secrets. We must pose the question: could globalization realize happiness, according not only to Feuerbach, but also to Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi Report?

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