GHEORGHE-ILIE FÂRTE (IAȘI)

MANAGING INTOLERANCE TO PREVENT THE BALKANIZATION OF EURO-ATLANTIC SUPERDIVERSE SOCIETIES

Abstract

The main thesis of this article is that Western societies risk becoming Balkanized if they confront the superdiversity issue without sound management of intolerance. The Balkanization process has some essential features that allow the use of this term outside the area of origin (namely the Balkan Peninsula). Thus:

It always affects a diverse political unit that comprises an inextricable medley of racial, ethnocultural, religious, ideological, or gender identities.

It emerges only where neither the hegemony principle nor the confederacy principle can sustain a divided population's peaceful coexistence.

It entails "antagonistic and conflict-oriented relationships resistant to resolution" between the groups or classes dissociated from a diverse political unit.

It increases the density of physical and psychological boundaries between the formerly associated parts.

It is perpetuated by the great sponsors of the dissociated parts.

Any diverse political unit can enter a process of Balkanization, regardless of its degree of culture and civilization. Balkanization does not have a fatal course. Just as there is no society immune to Balkanization, there is no diverse society doomed to Balkanization. Balkanization can be prevented, checked, stopped, or reversed, depending on society members' individual and collective actions.

To survive, the superdiverse liberal democracies from the Euro-Atlantic area need an agonistic public sphere, where actionable truths emerge from a genuine clash of educated opinions. If intolerance management is the first step in preventing the Balkanization of a superdiverse political unit, promoting social and political tolerance towards all people who express

educated opinions is the best starting point to genuine tolerance. The return to Enlightenment rationalism values that underpinned our freedom of thought and expression will help us meet the challenges inherent in current and future superdiversity. By feeding enlightened conversations and debates with genuine, educated opinions, people learn to have tolerance for "unpleasant" pieces of knowledge. Then, they spread general tolerance – as a by-product – across the entire society.

Keywords: Balkanization, superdiversity, identity, intolerance, social tolerance, political tolerance, educated opinion, agonistic public sphere

Introduction

In order to survive and thrive, any human society must achieve a proper balance between order and disorder. Highlighted by human relationships' regularity and uniformity, the excess of order tends to ossify and stiffen society. Excessively ordered societies can no longer respond adaptively to environmental challenges; they go into decline, decay, and eventually disappear despite their members' apparent cooperation. Characterized by the blatant manifestation of differences and the proliferation of conflicts, excessive disorder undermines the relations of cooperation and mutual aid, impedes the production and exchange of products, and plunges the entire society into chaos and poverty. Anarchist societies create a space for everyone to fight against everyone. In the end, such societies disappear as well. A healthy human society avoids both absolute order and total anarchy. It ensures their survival and development by looking for optimal mixtures of homogeneity, diversity, cooperation, and separation.

In recent decades, Euro-Atlantic societies have undergone significant demographic, technological, political, social, economic, and cultural changes. Some of these changes were produced deliberately; others were caused by processes independent of the individuals' reason and will (Hayek 1952). Following these changes, Euro-Atlantic societies have reached a dynamic equilibrium formula that combines liberal democracy's attractors with the market economy's principles. Inclusion, political equality, political pluralism, free elections, majority rule, and rational public debate (Young 2002; Kuehnelt-Leddihn 1952; Gastil 2008), on the one hand, and private ownership of production factors, freedom of production, freedom of trade, freedom of consumption, and the free price mechanism, on the other hand (von Mises 1985), have favored both participation in political life and

increased prosperity. Besides, the sophisticated use of communication technologies and the globalization process allow Euro-Atlantic businesses and other organizations to operate internationally (cf. Aslam et al. 2018). As expected, they benefited fully from the generalized interconnectedness and constant flows of commodities, knowledge, and ideas worldwide. Never and nowhere in human history have people reached the current level of freedom and well-being existing in the Euro-Atlantic area.

Like any other human product, the Euro-Atlantic type of society is not perfect. However, it is better than all other existent types. If it wasn't, why would millions of migrants worldwide strive to reach and live in Western countries? The number of foreign-born people as a percentage of the total population is high in most countries that share Euro-Atlantic cultural values: Italy (10.4%), France (12.5%), USA (13.6%), UK (13.8%), Sweden (18.8%), Austria (19.4%), and Australia (29.6%) (OECD 2020). In particular, "[b]etween 2000 and 2009, Spain's foreign-born population more than quadrupled, rising from under 1.5 million to over 6.5 million" (D'Ancona 2016, 571). It is reasonable to assume that migrants consider the destination country more attractive than their country of origin. If it were otherwise, migrants would not leave their homelands.

As is often the case, Western countries risk becoming victims of their own success. Already diverse due to their intrinsic pluralism and the proliferation of gender, religious, or cultural identities, Euro-Atlantic societies became superdiverse (Bélanger 2019; Spoonley 2014) by absorbing successive waves of migration from an increasing number of source countries. They face a dramatic increase in the scale and scope of minority ethnic and immigrant groups" (Spoonley 2014), having to manage a postmodern or, more precisely, anti-modern current of opinion.

Western states have become what they are due to a winding process of modernization that has led to abolishing legal privileges and discriminations. The thrust toward uniformity and unification was doubled by a cultural crusade, more precisely, by a "powerful and relentless drive to extirpate differences in values and ways of living, customs and speech, beliefs and public demeanor" (Bauman 1990, 72). By contrast, the current anti-modern movement that tries to mold the Euro-Atlantic public sphere promotes a peculiar superdiversity without creating a higher unity level. The promoted superdiversity includes the immigrant communities and specific gender, ethnic, racial, and religious identities, provided that all

these minorities can be considered victims of discrimination, intolerance, and exploitation. The promoters of superdiversity assume the role of deciding themselves which minorities should be protected from discrimination, intolerance, and exploitation. Besides, they assume the privilege to be intolerant of those who challenge their opinions and judgments.

The article's central thesis is that Western societies risk becoming Balkanized if they confront the superdiversity issue without sound management of intolerance. The superdiversity activists have already imposed an ideological frame, in which the adherents of the modern establishment are labeled as exploiters of an increasingly branched network of oppressed minorities. If the ideological struggle on the superdiversity problem is not waged in a climate of tolerance, Western societies will fragment into a multitude of communities. They will orient themselves towards unresolved conflict relations, inclined to use violence and to be distrustful of any elite's legitimacy. The very foundations of the Euro-Atlantic civilization would be at stake.

Fortunately, no matter how bitter the ideological struggle, it can have a happy ending if the parties involved agree to build an agonistic public sphere (Dahlberg 2007) and transfer into the private sphere the values that do not allow a reasonable compromise to be reached (Beligman 1999). The agonistic public sphere and the privatization of issues causing unresolved conflicts could form the tolerance formula that allows superdiversity to be kept under control. To justify the assertions mentioned above, I will use the scholastic method to examine the relevant aspects of the problem from opposing points of view regarding known facts and human reason (NCE 2019).

Balkanization: from yesterday to today

Used at first to denote "a process of national fragmentation of former geographical and political units into new problematic national states with disrupted political relations, as in the case of what happened during the Balkan wars" (Zemon 2018), the term "balkanization" was gradually loaded with a multitude of blended connotations, most of them pejorative. Today, it conveys, among others, differences, barbarism, tribalism, underdevelopment, noncooperativeness, political, economic and demographic disintegration, territorial disintegration, parcelization,

corruption, economic instability, breach of human rights, dehumanization and devastation of civilization, gender enclaves, gated communities, divergence over time of human languages, programming languages and data file formats, postmodernism and deconstruction, a threat to centralized and coercive systems, etc. (cf. Veliu 2018). Besides, some people see Balkanization as a process opposite to "Europeanization," "Westernization," or "modernization" of a space characterized by diversity (cf. Todorova 2009, 13).

It is obvious that no one can use the term "Balkanization" as a useful tool for knowledge if accidental, exaggerated, or simply incorrect connotations are taken into account. Therefore, it is necessary to clarify the meaning of the concept of Balkanization by selecting those attributes that appear to be both essential and characteristic.

Firstly, Balkanization always affects a diverse political unit that comprises an inextricable medley of racial, ethnocultural, religious, ideological, or gender identities. Such political units can be equally multiethnic states (such as Turkey and Austria-Hungary) or non-ethnic states (such as the United States) in which confidently self-asserted group identities proliferate as the common citizenship culture fades. It is noteworthy, however, that diversity in itself does not automatically lead to Balkanization. As an example, "[f]or centuries the Balkan Peninsula was almost the only part of Europe with a tradition of tolerance toward people of different religions, ethnic origins, and cultures. (…) [T]he peoples of the Balkans lived in a multicultural milieu long before it became fashionable in the West" (Zemon 2018). Diversity is a necessary but not sufficient condition for Balkanization. If adequately managed, diversity can be a source of development and prosperity, as is Switzerland's case.

Secondly, Balkanization emerges only where neither the hegemony principle nor the confederacy principle can sustain the peaceful coexistence of a divided population (cf. Mowrer 1921, 3). A diverse society is governed by virtue of the hegemony principle if people commonly perceive the ruling class as the strongest and most powerful constituent of society. As such, the ruling class appears to be both apt and entitled to control others. A diverse society is bound together by the confederacy principle when people consent to live together as equal partners, without giving pre-eminence to a specific social class. In this case, there is an enlightened consensus on society's

basic principles and rules that prevent some ethnic or cultural differences from putting society on the brink of disintegration.

Both principles can sustain a peaceful society but not under any circumstance. For example, Turkey, Austria, and Hungary succeeded in maintaining – for centuries – the peaceful coexistence of countless ethnic and religious groups under the hegemony principle. However, the weakening of the military and financial potency on the one hand, and the attempt to double the political pre-eminence with the cultural assimilation of minorities on the other hand, undermined the position of the rulers, paving the way for Balkanization. The confederacy principle ensured – for centuries – a peaceful and prosperous coexistence in Switzerland and Belgium. Nowadays, it governs Switzerland with the same vigor but tends to fade in Belgium. The Flemings' growing distrust in the commonwealth involving the Walloon population fuels the autonomist or even secessionist tendencies.

Thirdly, Balkanization entails "antagonistic and conflict-oriented relationships resistant to resolution" between the groups or classes dissociated from a diverse political unit (Zemon 2018). In the absence of a unique center of power able to control the entire political body and without a general agreement on the principles and rules apt to curb diversity, all parts dissociated tend to adopt a belligerent attitude toward the others. Devoid of legitimate elites, having an exaggerated sense of self-importance, suffering from insecurity or persecution-mania, and ineradicably convinced of their own essential rightness (Mowrer 1921, 53-55), they aggressively look for a place as advantageous as possible in relation to the former partners. Inasmuch as the new political entities act as emotion-driven actors rather than rational negotiators, it is no wonder that conflicts constitute the norm and periods of peace are only an exception in the Balkanized areas.

Fourthly, as a consequence of the permanent state of conflict, Balkanization increases the density of physical and psychological boundaries between the formerly associated parts. An illustrative example is provided by the Balkan region itself, which, at the end of the Cold War, probably had the highest concentration of borders per square kilometer (Ditchev 2019). Needles to say, the more borders appear, the more contested they are, especially if they are established between certain social groups within the same society. The borders between two Ex-Yugoslav states were easier to accept and respect than the imaginary borders of "safe

spaces" established ad hoc on some American campuses. Because it is practically impossible to establish cleancut natural, ethnic, or cultural boundaries in a turbulent region, the borders themselves feed the conflicts.

Finally, Balkanization is perpetuated by the great sponsors of the dissociated parts (Ditchev 2019). A multinational state's successors have great powers as sponsors that use local conflicts to achieve their own geostrategic objectives. For example, before the First World War, the "cause" of the Romanians, Serbs, Croats, and Greeks was "supported" by France, Russia, Austria-Hungary, and Great Britain, respectively (Ditchev 2019). Nowadays, among the great powers involved in the Balkan region are the United States, the European Union, and Russia.

When Balkanization affects a non-ethnic state, the sponsors of the dissociated parts are political parties and multinational corporations. For example, in the United States, the Democratic Party manifests itself as the sponsor of an ever-increasing number of "oppressed minorities": the workers, African-Americans, Hispanics, members of LGBTQ+ minorities, immigrants, etc. (2020 Democratic Party Platform). It is true that the Democratic Party speaks on behalf of these minorities, but it is also true that it instrumentalizes their real challenges to gain electoral support. Any social category that automatically and overwhelmingly votes for a given political party is the client of this party. The big corporations that offered financial support to the Black Lives Matter movement (Hunter 2020) manifested as sponsors of some contesting and dissociative forces from the American society as well. The proper job of a company is to provide goods and services on the market and not to pursue an anti-establishment political agenda.

In conclusion, Balkanization is not the work of unpredictable, dangerous, chaotic, dirty, lazy, primitive, cruel, selfish, or uncooperative people (Zemon 2018) who live in a specific geographical area. Any diverse political unit can enter a process of Balkanization, regardless of its degree of culture and civilization. Balkanization does not have a fatal course. Just as there is no society immune to Balkanization, there is no diverse society doomed to Balkanization. Balkanization can be prevented, checked, stopped, or reversed depending on society members' individual and collective actions.

If Balkanization depends on people's actions and has destructive effects (such as diversity intolerance, segregation, and self-segregation,

ghettoization, dictatorship, ethnic cleansing, misery, civil war, dissolution of civilization), it is reasonable to seek efficient means to preclude it. This task seems to be a priority in the Euro-Atlantic area where Balkanization's prodromes have been felt in recent years.

Intrinsically diverse, the Euro-Atlantic societies have to cope with tough challenges: a radical and accelerated technological revolution, a revolution of the economic structure from within, successive waves of immigrants, diminishing trust in traditional institutions, and the lack of a new cultural worldview that could incorporate both the "underinclusive" and "overinclusive"[106] particular cultures (Joppke 1996, 450). Unfortunately, the new elements of diversity came before the old ones were sufficiently assimilated, and, consequently, diversity transformed itself into superdiversity (which is much more difficult to manage).

Superdiversity is here to stay because the culture is no longer and can no longer be "contained, controlled, and homogenized" by the national states (Joppke 1996, 450). As Michael Schudson said, "cultures flow in, out, around, and through state borders" (cf. Joppke 1996, 450). Since no state can enforce cultural assimilation and homogenization in a given area, the only way to prevent Balkanization is to take a reasonable approach to diversity. The first step in this direction is intolerance management.

Tolerance as a by-product of civilized societies

A superdiverse society avoids Balkanization only if diversity at one level correlates with unity at the next higher level. More precisely, people can peacefully face the unavoidable differences between them provided that they are tied together by shared values, practices, and rules of conduct. Because people's "natural response" to differences is intolerance, tolerance needs to be learned (Lee 2014, 712). The process of learning tolerance is not an easy one at all.

First of all, to learn tolerance does not mean to condemn any form of intolerance altogether. For example, it would be absurd to incriminate people for their inability to take particular medicines or eat particular foods. Persons who suffer from glucose, lactose, or alcohol intolerance cannot ingest such substances without suffering harmful effects. Their innate intolerance is, therefore, entirely acceptable. In the same way, if there were innate forms of intolerance (having a physiological foundation) at the level of human relationships, these forms of intolerance should be recognized and

accepted as well. Of course, the burden of proof would rest on the people who claim to suffer from such innate intolerance. The most reasonable default position is to reject the existence of an innate social intolerance that would aim, for example, at some racial, ethnic, religious, or sexual minorities.

Thus, intolerance that all people must overcome is not the inability but unwillingness to put up with different ways of thinking and behaving. Moreover, the intolerance management concerns not a private state of mind but public behaviors that reveal it (Weissberg 1998, 9-10). As long as intolerance remains an internal state invisible to others, it does not matter for others, no matter how hateful it may be.

Intolerance must not be confused with the manifestation of private preferences for certain people, values, beliefs, norms, or behaviors. No one can be blamed for not dating certain persons, for not having any contact with or for not cohabiting with them. Everyone may praise specific ideas or behaviors which are criticized by others and vice versa. What is not acceptable is the manifestation of subjective preferences in a public situation, in which the selection criteria must neither advantage nor disadvantage someone in terms of differences in race, nationality, sex, or way of life.

Some scholars argue that tolerance can refer at the minimum to "a resigned acceptance of or a passive indifference toward cultural and political differences" (Lee 2014, 712). At a higher level, it would refer to the "willingness to learn from others or even an enthusiastic endorsement of differences" (Lee 2014, 712). However, as Robert Weissber said, we do not live "in a world of complete worthiness" (Weissberg 1998, 8). Being tolerant does not mean turning a blind eye to all intellectual and moral deficiencies. It is truly recommendable to manifest a certain "skepticism or tentativeness," in other words, "a modesty (…) towards our own epistemological claims" (Seligman 1999, 50), but we must not abandon – in the name of tolerance – all reasoned standards, evaluations, and hierarchies. It is not reasonable to enthusiastically endorse those differences that can be proven to be deficiencies.

Different from 'indifference', tolerance is "the middle point on a threepart scale of acceptability," namely "a 'window' separating the appreciated from the wholly unacceptable" (Weissberg 1998, 8-9). Tolerant persons are willing to "put up with [innocuous] objectionable" (*ibidem*),

retaining their right to reject the perceived harmful objectionable. During the whole process of discrimination between totally acceptable, totally unacceptable, and innocuous objectionable, tolerant people display a genuine modesty towards their epistemological claims.

According to some scholars, tolerance develops within a political unit as social tolerance or political tolerance. Social tolerance is concerned with "people's willingness to accept disliked others into their everyday life" and political tolerance with "people's willingness to extend citizen rights and liberties to members of disliked groups" (Lee 2014, 713). Recent history has shown that extending the rights of some minorities in the name of political tolerance can increase social tolerance. For example, recognizing same-sex marriage as a human and civil right also heightens social tolerance towards same-sex couples. On the other hand, the claims of peculiar rights from other sexual minorities risk inducing mistrust and even intolerance. It is not advisable to grant – in the name of political tolerance – special rights to some social categories in contradiction with the level of social tolerance.

In order to survive, any superdiverse liberal democracy needs an agonistic public sphere, where actionable truths emerge from a genuine clash of educated opinions. If intolerance management is the first step in preventing the Balkanization of a superdiverse political unit, promoting social and political tolerance towards all people who express educated opinions is the best starting point to genuine tolerance.

The opinions that deserve plenary tolerance are formulated with modesty and in a tentative manner. They are reasonable and evidence-based judgments, oriented towards order and stability. The qualified people who express them do not arrogate a privileged position to compensate for the weakness of arguments and embrace solid moral values. They do not use their opinions as weapons to stigmatize or marginalize other people, especially the persons who contradict them.

Unfortunately, silencing thinkers who want to express their qualified opinions in the academic environment has become a sad practice. People avoid cognitive dissonance at all costs even if they undermine the core of the Euro-Atlantic system of values: freedom of expression and the free exchange of ideas. Seemingly paradoxically, the return to Enlightenment rationalism values that underpinned our freedom of thought and expression will help us meet the challenges inherent in current and future

superdiversity. By feeding enlightened conversations and debates with genuine educated opinions, people learn to have tolerance for "unpleasant" pieces of knowledge. Then, they spread general tolerance – as a by-product – across the entire society.

Conclusions

The specter of Balkanization haunts the superdiverse societies from the Euro-Atlantic area. Even though its prodromes do not seem severe yet, the process of fragmentation and dissolution can accelerate at any time. Fortunately, it is not too late to prevent or stop this process by promoting social and political tolerance towards educated opinions expressed in the agonistic public sphere. Accustomed to confronting genuine opinions in enlightened discussions and debates, people can develop intellectual tolerance and afterward – as a by-product – general tolerance towards diversity.

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[106] Underinclusive cultures integrate groups smaller than the national society, and overinclusive cultures integrate groups larger than the national society. (Joppke 1996, 450)

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DAS OSTEUROPAPROGRAMM DES KAAD

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Kandidaten/innen aus Ländern [Mittel-, Ost- und Südosteuropas, Kaukasus und Zentralasiens](#) mit guten Deutschkenntnissen (Niveau B2, bzw. bei englischsprachigen Studiengängen mindestens A2, besser B1) und katholischer Konfession (in Ausnahmefällen auch einer anderen christlichen Konfession, sofern sie von katholischen Partnern vorgeschlagen werden).

WAS FÖRDERN WIR?

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  - eine Promotion mit Abschluss in Deutschland anstreben (max. 36 Monate)
  - nach dem Abschluss ihres heimischen Examens einen Forschungsaufenthalt oder eine Vertiefung der vorhandenen wissenschaftlichen Kenntnisse in Deutschland anstreben oder
  - ein nicht-konsekutives Aufbaustudium oder Zusatzstudium anstreben (dies gilt auch für Fortbildungen von approbierten Medizinern).

- Hochschullehrer/innen, die zu kurzen Forschungsaufenthalten (bis zu 6 Monate) nach Deutschland eingeladen werden.
- Studierende in Masterstudiengängen im Heimatland, die einen Studienaufenthalt zur Materialsammlung an einer Hochschule in Deutschland planen.

Vollständige Masterstudiengänge werden gefördert, wenn diese im Heimatland nicht angeboten werden. Voraussetzung ist ein B.A. Studienabschluss im Heimatland.

Stipendien werden für alle Fachrichtungen vergeben (mit Ausnahme von Theologie).

WAS ERWARTET DER KAAD VON IHNEN?

- Ein überdurchschnittliches Leistungspotenzial für das Studium bzw. die Forschung,
- die Ausrichtung des Studiums oder der Forschung auf eine dauerhafte Reintegration in die jeweilige Heimatregion (andernfalls gilt das Stipendium als Darlehen),
- kirchliches und soziales Engagement bzw. Bereitschaft zum interreligiösen Dialog

WIE IST DAS ANTRAGSVERFAHREN?
Der KAAD hat ein zweistufiges Antragsverfahren.
Interessenten senden einen ausgefüllten Fragebogen, sowie einen CV an:
leimbach(at)kaad.de.

Wenn Sie für die zweite Stufe des Bewerbungsverfahrens in Frage kommen, werden Ihnen die erforderlichen Antragsunterlagen zugeschickt, diese senden Sie bitte bis zum 15. Januar (Stipendienvergabe März) bzw. bis zum 30. Juni (Stipendienvergabe September) an das KAAD-Osteuropareferat. Parallel senden Sie Fotokopien des Motivationsbriefes, des Lebenslaufes, sämtlicher Gutachten sowie der Projektbeschreibung und der Betreuungszusage an das Partnergremium in Ihrem Heimatland (falls vorhanden).

Weitere Informationen und den Fragebogen finden Sie unter:
www.kaad.de/stipendien/osteuropaprogramm/