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At present Göran Adamson is teaching Sociology, the Problem of Multiculturalism, and Social Policy at the Dep t. of Health and Society at Malmö University College, Sweden. He is also occupied with some amendments in his Ph.D. manuscript. In particular, he is analysing the actual content in Jörg Haider's own writings from the 1990. He has contributed three articles – “Pogroms”, “Atheism and violence” , and “Globalization and violence” in the “Encyclopedia on Religion and Violence”. (Forthcoming 2009). He occasionally works as a consultant for the FRA (formerly known as the EUMC – European Union Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia). His next book projects are 1) a book about Negative Nationalism

Panel I – Theories of Immigration

Multiculturalism and the Enhancement of Political Participation among Immigrant Communities – A Liberal Critique

Abstract :

(This abstract is partly based on the author's consultancy work for the *European Union Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia* (recently renamed *Fundamental Rights Agency*) in Vienna.) See:
http://fra.europa.eu/fra/material/pub/discussion/Immigrants_and_political_participation_2006.pdf

My presentation will be divided in three parts. A) The benefits of the multicultural agenda. B) The benefits of the liberal agenda. C) Manchester versus Antwerp – two empirical cases.

A) First, I shall address some of the benefits of the so-called “multicultural agenda” in relation to the issue of immigrants and political participation. Among other things, I will argue that 1) multiculturalism prevents degeneration and stagnation, as well as prevents nationalism. 2) Ethnic groups must be offered shelter due to their state of *difference*. And, the more different and fragile, the stronger we must seek to protect them.

3) The multicultural/ethnic group is particularly prone to offer protection in the early stages of an immigration process. 4) The multicultural agenda stands for a leftist attack against self-righteousness on the part of the domestic inhabitants. 5) All groups (including the multicultural entity) offer protection, especially in times of uncertainty. 6) Pluralism is a good in its own right. We have no right (to ourselves nor to coming generations) to allow fragile groups to vanish (which might be the case if they are left in under dire circumstances in their home country.) Hence, we must harbour and protect them *at all cost*.

B) Having done that, I shall turn the coin, and raise a number of problems related to this view. Notably, this critique will be levied from a liberal perspective. (Hence, I shall argue that the occasional fusing of liberalism and multiculturalism rests on a fundamental misunderstanding.)

I will start by countering the above by arguing that 1) the multicultural agenda rests on the sanctity of ethnic groups. But all of them are not benevolent. For instance, exil-Iranian democrats suffer tremendously from this positive stereotyping. The technical sociological term for this is “in-locking” – into an ethnic group that is. 2) The individual runs the risk of evaporating in a mist of ethnic romanticism. 3) In case the ethnic group is accentuated, we might fail to acknowledge psychological, personal and existential features. All we then have is facial features, colour of the skin, shape of the head; i.e. imperialist phrenology, be it from a fiercely benevolent perspective. 4) Multiculturalism might lead to exclusion. In other words, one may create precisely the beast one seeks to combat. 5) Multiculturalism may simply be nationalism in different bottles. The similarities are indeed numerous; the border towards the outer world, the sanctity of “ones own heritage”, the sense of imminent crisis, the idea of “us and them” and so on and so forth. 6) What about solidarity – the old leftist concept aimed at caring for those who do *not* belong to “our own” ethnic community? 7) What about this chasm between the “old and enlightened left versus the postmodern, and multicultural left? 8) What about the chasm between the old leftist “right to be equal”, versus the postmodern and multicultural “right to be different”? This is nothing less than a revolution in the mind – cutting, notably, right through the left. 9) The safety of the ethnic/multicultural group is mainly used by those immigrants who *fail* to integrate into the host society.

C) On top of this, I will also, in order to add empirical evidence to the theoretical discussion above, present two cases of methods in order to integrate immigrants. Manchester has chosen the liberal, distinctly anti-multicultural method, whereas Antwerp has chosen the multicultural method. The fundamental question is: What are the outcomes of these findings? Is it actually the case, that *one* of these two contesting methods is *superior* whereas the other one is *inferior* in terms of their explicit objective? Which one of them is, then, superior, and which one is inferior?

