

SOCIAL INTEGRATION

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Social integration is one of the intensively debated terms. Intensive considerations have been taken place in several countries regardless of their level of progress. After reviewing and repairing the negative aspects of the World War II, ongoing implementations in economical policies, new and contemporary problems and failures have emerged in such countries named economically progressed. By reaching the stage of industrialism, apart from the economical problems which are mostly solved, some social and cultural problems are needed to be consulted and new remedies for the present issues are required.

Some industrialised and progressed countries in reviewing and renewing their social institutions or in reshaping new institutions for their survival, have facilitated to mention the prospect of their singularities.

Every society tries to find out the answers of such questions how can a society of individuals hold together in the social change process, what are the tools strengthening traditions, social relations and social ties for moral satisfaction in order to stimulate the social life.

Social integration conceptually is the fitting together of different functional parts or segments to achieve a unified whole in a particular society. In other terms, it is the fitting together of the parts of a social system.¹

Social integration doesn't occur by force. It is a social and cultural process. The most remarkable aspect of social integration is obtaining meaningful consensus between the social groups and individuals in the field of feeling of belonging to such a society, sharing and accepting symbols, leaders,

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¹ Caplow, T., Elementary Sociology, New York 1965, pp. 16

value-judgements, mores, traditions and norms. Consensus is necessary for participation and participation is one of the signs of integration.

There may be some societies well-integrated having different biological-oriented groups and on the other hand some societies have more homogeneity on biological aspect may not create a sufficient integration. To some extent, racial fact may be taken into account but integration is attributed to cultural basis rather than biological arguments.

There may be some ethnic groups and some local sub-cultures in a society. Integration is interconnectedness of all living things and not the isolation of local communities or groups. Preservation and promotion of the local cultures should not lead us to a different kind of isolation. Isolated communities, regardless of the whole society, which is hard to mention, do not create a meaningful integration but shape segregation.

Social integration is above the feeling of belonging to an association or to a trade union, a tribe and fellow townsmanship. It is the feeling of belonging to a national and societal level in board sense and consciously.

According to Malinowski, each culture surviving is in the form of integration. If not, culture is not able to survive.² In other terms, every social system must be integrated. On the other hand, culture is the integrated form of social-behaviours-and-it-is-assisted-by-value-judgements, mores, habits and social heritage. Education and cultural policies have a great role in integration.³

As we have mentioned before, integration by force is not the way that leads us to the stage of integrity because integration itself is a social and cultural process. Assimilation is the term referring with the term integration by force.

The process of integration is more fitful and available in societal entities rather than communitarian ones. In other terms, integration is attributed to heterogeneous groups or entities. In homogenous groups, integration is gained mechanically and the group is not differentiated. Before discussing integration, firstly we have to be acknowledged that differentiation and integration are both twin processes and they do not contradict but complement each other. Therefore process of integration involves differentiation of interest groups and division of labor that give chance to integration. Forcing to form new ethnic groups, social groups or reshaping inevitable cultural identities and breaking the unification of a society leads us to disintegration instead of integration. Segregation or atomisation of a society into different cultural identities is not the right path for integration and it is not the way of recognition of different cultures. Different

² Angell, R. C. "Integration" International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, V. 7, pp.373

³ Horton, P. B., Hunt, C. L., Sociology, New York, 1964, pp.69

cultures and recognition of them needs cultural distinctiveness almost in every aspect of culture.

Assimilation is the process versus **accommodation**. In accommodation, change in life style occurs voluntarily by cultural interaction and by acculturation and not by force. But in assimilation, an ethnic group or a minority modifies its distinctive characteristics and conforms to the pattern of the dominant group. In this process, force or political pressure is available. Assimilation as a social process is available between the groups having different and distinctive cultural identities. Distinctive cultural identity means having different language, religion, mores, habits and remarkable historical traditions.

Sometimes assimilation is applied on neighbour cultural identities. In Cyprus, Greek Cypriots tried to eliminate the Turkish Cypriots, rejecting the human rights of the Turks and their existence. Because assimilation of the Turks has not worked for years, Greeks have performed aggressive attitudes and hostility. To force two different nation-states to live together in the Island is not in favour of sovereignty, peace and stability. Due to the experiences, this project may create new conflicts and problems in Cyprus and it is against self-determination.

Assimilation is also implemented on Turkish minority group in Bulgaria in the beginning of 1980's. Communist regime of that time tried to eradicate the Turkish identity and the Turkish descent by changing Turkish names to Slavic ones and eliminating the cultural references, bringing penalties for the performance of traditions. Genocide in Bulgaria towards the Turkish-oriented citizens was an outstanding example of assimilation. In addition to that, Turks in Kerkük (Iraq) are forced to choose a new identity, Kurdish or Arabic. They are faced with violence to leave their houses and migrate to the southern regions of Iraq. Turks of Western Thrace (Greece) have faced with such unhumanitarian policies and violence for years, in producing the identity of "Muslim-Greek" instead of "Muslim-Turk".

In one sense assimilation is a process of boundary reduction that can occur when members of two or more societies, ethnic groups or smaller social groups meet.⁴

Factors affecting on assimilation of an ethnic group can be listed as below:

- Small sized group related to the total population,
- Being residence of the receiving country for a quite long duration,

⁴ Yinger, M. J. Ethnicity, New York, 1994, pp.39

- Residentially scattered group,
- Sharing the same language and religion of the dominant group or majority,
- Strong belief for the same biological origin with the majority,
- Inconvenience to shift to the homeland back,
- Having the members of high average level of education,
- Having the chances of economical high standards, sharing and fully participating in political life,
- Having legal opportunities in education and existence of upward social mobility,
- No limitation for intermarriage,
- Open-class society,
- Having not sufficient experience for discrimination,
- Getting the facilities for performing trade affairs and ownership,
- Common threats directed to the country they belong to,
- No sexual discrimination,
- Obtaining human rights and absence of xenophobia,
- Adequate housing facilities.

Well-educated and highly skilled people can more readily integrate. Religious or social discrimination, alienation, residentially isolated population, speaking and sharing different languages or religions, legal or political limits for citizenship, inmarriage instead of intermarriage, unequal opportunities in education are all the boundaries of full integration. Integration process can reduce aloneliness, desocialization, anomie and the sense of alienation by giving individuals a common identity. By common identity, we may pronounce national identity, which is above the local, tribal or communitarian positions. A heightened sense of ethnic and racial separateness leads to ethnocentrism, isolation and also desocialisation. That negative process is also termed as a "new tribalism".⁵

Subcultures, which are complementary and not contradictory to the national culture, can be seen as enrichment unless one accepts the dominant culture integral and complete in the level of a society. That enrichment does not

⁵ Ibid, pp.76

imply a dual or inflated identities or absence of national identity. The enrichment does not imply a dual or inflated identity. The tendency of "new tribalism", racial separatedness or ethnocentrism forces the social and ethnic groups to create anomie. Anomie occurs in a society that weaken the ties between social and ethnic groups. In other terms, disintegration causes anomic situations. Highly diverse and clashing values and norms or standards are the indicators leading to anomie closely related to disintegration.

As it is stated before, ethnic diversity and separateness must be additive instead of substitutive. Available ethnic realities depending of scientific facts but not political aims or external inferences may complement the rest, creating and promoting a unified and a meaningful nation-state. Otherwise, state may atomise and new global crowds appear in favour of the dominant states.

We must not forget the arguments distinguished on ethnic groups. It is useful to point out the views on ethnic groups. Knowingly ethnic arguments are replaced cold war tensions. Ethnic groups are distinguishable culturally. They are identified by others and by themselves as separate culturally.⁶

A tribe is not an ethnic group. A tribe is a combination of several extended families. The common usage of tribe sounds similar to ethnic group but it is different. Tribe reflects the kinship relations but an ethnic group does not. Ethnicity focuses much attention on cultural differences.

Every ethnic group is a social group but every social group is not an ethnic group, because ethnicity is closely related with culture, only one element of culture cans not identity an ethnic group. Ethnic characteristics differ from racial ones in that they are learned and transmitted across generations throughout socialisation. Racial characteristics are indexed biologically and transmitted genetically. Even though the two are conceptually different, unfortunately they often are linked. Culture of an ethnic group must differ from the dominant culture in every aspect of culture. Ethnic variations refer to have different cemetery, worship, high inmarriage rates, restrictions and disadvantages in establishing business affairs and firms, restrictions in owning immovable properties.

Ethnicity and race in some cases overlap. In the sense of Yinger, M.J., race is a strictly biological concept and has no value in the theory of ethnicity. General public tends to racial and ethnic lines as critically different from each other.

⁶ Yinger, M.J., pp.25

Ethnic groups are not necessarily to be a minority. A minority or an ethnic minority share and have special disabilities and disadvantages. Minority is transmitted by a rule of descent. Mostly members of the minority tend to marry within the group. They are subordinate segments of complex state societies. Definition of minority needs ethnic elements but every ethnic group may not be treated as minority. In some cases an ethnic group may be the majority of the society such as the **Blacks** in South Africa.

Some people to some extent unconsciously confuse the terms integration, assimilation and amalgamation. Integration in the sense of acculturation involves amalgamation. In that prospect, amalgamation occurs without force. Amalgamation occurs when no socially visible genetic differences separate the member of the groups. In other terms, groups are amalgamated to the degree that the genetic makeup of their members is drawn from the same gene pool.⁷

Amalgamation is to be mentioned on individual or group levels. It can be realised by intermarriage. Shifting of persons mixed ancestry from one group or ethnic group to another declines the separate identity. Amalgamated identity is something different from the former identities. In USA, Europe, South Africa, India and Switzerland, there are many examples of amalgamation.

Integration culturally has three processes and these process works interconnectedly:

- Presentation of the new models, techniques by innovators in a society.
- Acceptance of the innovations and the influence of the reactions.
- Integration is the last stage showing a particular consensus. By integration innovations, new models, techniques presented to a society accepted or protested to reach to a solution and become one of the elements of culture.⁸

Certain conditions claimed essential for integration:

- Promoting division of labor and professional differentiation,
- Working of democratic mechanism,
- Plurality of pressure groups,
- Rational mentality,
- Having equal opportunity in education and gaining status by his or her own success,

⁷ Yinger, M.J., Ethnicity, New York 1994, pp.150

⁸ Merill and Eldridge, Culture and Society, New York 1952, pp.116

- Implementation of social policies not only in working life but in all sectors of the society,
- To get rid of the conflicts on cultural identity,
- Promoting middle classes,
- Acculturation of the young generations,
- Strengthening family structures,
- Integrative messages given by mass media,
- Overcoming the conflicts on ethnic, religious and sexual discriminations.

On the other hand, human rights are the indicators of integration. To create and promote integration civil (rights to live), political (political participation, freedom), cultural (equal opportunity in education, religious rights and rights perform the style of life) and economical rights (to work as an employee or an employer, to be a self-employed, economical grants for unemployment, efforts and adequate rewards in return, social security, minimum wage, justice on income distribution) have to be obtained and freely used.

Our recent explanations openly put forward the fascinating term integration. On one side, integration occurs if anomie and separatedness is not effectable in a society.

For integration, there are some prime examples such as Switzerland, Holland, Belgium and to some extent USA. In Switzerland German, Italian and French originated people have integrated. Multi-cultural picture also involves guest workers and their families – it is hard to name foreign – oriented workers because they are residential groups and formed new ethnic groups – who are not in the status of guests in the host countries anymore. Those kind of ethnic groups are termed as exogenous groups.

In Belgium there are two main segments. Firstly, Flanders speaking Dutch and secondly, Wallons speaking French and bilingual people.

In USA, to some extent “melting pot” has worked for people identifying themselves as Americans in general terms. But due to the surveys many ethnic or racial groups tend to identify themselves by place of birth especially the majority of the ones who have not been born in US even though the Americanisation policies implemented efficiently.

USA may not be termed at "melting pot" except for its population from Europe, but it is much more than a tossed salad.⁹ Asian, Hispanic and Native population of USA are rapidly expanding and inmarriage rather than intermarriage process is available.

The majority of marriages in the USA are ethnically homogenous. Intermarriage rates are low but inmarriage rates are high. Among European Americans marriages cross ethnic lines are without any restrictions. Intermarriage is one of the important indicators for the absence of discriminative effect and segregation. Intermarriage rates have the lowest figures among the African Americans and Blacks when compared with Asian or Hispanic Americans. Most of them strongly oppose that kind of marriage. And in USA surveys show that 80 percent of the Catholic men and 83 percent of the women were married Catholics. Among Protestants 84 percent of the men and 80 percent of the women were married with Protestants or the ones who have become as Protestants.¹⁰

As the last paragraph of this article, I may say that if there are minimal sub-cultural and ethnic variations in a society-notably Turkey-, that society can be named as homogeneous, and reversely if there are maximum variations that societies are to be named as heterogeneous.

In Turkey, on cultural basis, mother tongue, religion and style of life are the three remarkable indicators of ethnic arguments. Due to the General Population Censuses of Turkey and to some investigations.¹¹ 91 % of the population have the Turkish Language as a mother tongue and 98.4 % of the population have the Islamic origin. Ethnic picture of Turkey does not show the evidence of multi-culturalism or multi-ethnicity. After declining the classical ideologies and separation of Soviet Union, "cultural pluralism and ethnicity" became the democratic alternative arguments against the nationalist views. Ethnic or cultural plurality is not an indicator of social progress or civilisation. In some cases if a society is multi-cultural and built out of formally equal ethnic groups and therefore not homogeneous in order to create a meaningful unified society, multi-culturalism is a source of strength. But reversely, it is the source of conflict.

⁹ Yinger, M.J., pp.165

¹⁰ Ibid, pp.162

¹¹ Özsoy, A. E., Koç, İ., Toros, A., "Türkiye'nin Etnik Yapısının Anadil Sorunlarına Göre Analizi", Hacettepe Nüfus Bilim Dergisi, c.14, Ankara-1992, s.109, s.109, Erkal, M.E., Etnik Tuzak (4. Baskı) İstanbul-1996