

## **Social Exclusion and Islam: Social Exclusion in Interpersonal Relationships of Arab-Muslim Immigrants Due to Religion**

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**Abstract:** *The aim of the paper is to make known a complex – especially in recent years – issue very much apropos, the one of social exclusion of immigrants. The analysis focuses on the part of social exclusion in interpersonal relationships of immigrants as this evolves due to their different religion. The selection of Arab-Muslim immigrants is based on the fact that in recent years the issue of Islam has been in the center of attention not only in Europe but also all over the world.*

*Islam began as a religion, however during the years it has reached a point of being considered as a dangerous political creation by most Western countries. Politicization of Islam and the emergence of various Islamic organizations in Europe along with the terrorist attack of 9/11 have led to Islam-phobia, thriving of racism and social exclusion of Muslim immigrants.*

*The survey conducted approaches the issue through the personal experience of Arab-Muslim immigrants living in Greece, as well as through an interview conducted with the Head of the Greek Forum for Immigrants, Mr. Moawia Ahmed.*

*The issue of social exclusion has been quite complex and debated, carrying many approaches and interpretations depending on the perspectives and circumstances prevailing each time. One thing is for certain though, immigrants regardless of color, nationality or religion constitute an active part of each society and a serious approach to their problems, formations and actions is imperative in order for the society to function properly.*

**Keywords:** *Muslim Immigrants, Arabs, Islam – Religion, Social Exclusion, Interpersonal relationships*

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### **1. RELIGIOUS FREEDOM AS A HUMAN RIGHT**

The definition ‘human rights’ involves innate qualities of human existence and it derives from a ‘natural right’. It is an undisputed fact that through the international protective agreements concerning human rights and the respective international jurisdictional organs as well as the formation of a kind of global public opinion (Rivero, 1994:156) as a result of the technological and social evolution, there arise certain commitments of the state power (Chrisogonos, 2006). Generally, it seems that human rights ‘constitute the current international currency in ethical dilemmas, social requirements and political debates’ (Dragona-Monachou, 2000:228).

The essential thing during the consolidation of individual and social rights is man as an individual and member of the social whole. In this context individual and social rights basically become an end in themselves. Their significance, as far as the state is concerned, remains of secondary importance (Chrisogonos, 2006:47).

The protection of personal freedom, in a broad sense, is connected to a series of constitutional provisions (Articles 13-16 of the Constitution), which involve freedom of expression and generally intellectual matters as well as religious freedom which is consolidated in the article 13 of the Constitution, while similar are the provisions of the Articles 3 and 16 par. 2 of the Constitution. In practice however, as the repeated convictions of Greece from the ECHR (European Court of Human Rights) in similar cases show, there appear to be problems of non-respect as far as religious freedom is concerned (Ktistaki, 1999:225).

A series of principles derive from the freedom of religious conscience. Their common denominator is that the state not only can follow or not, directly a certain religion or non-religious or atheist convictions, but also it is not allowed to pursue indirectly the same result (Chrisogonos, 2006). In other words, the state, in principle, should remain religiously neutral. Only then can real religious freedom exist, otherwise there is just a situation of religious tolerance (Manessi, 1982:249-250), that is tolerance of pluralism of religious or atheist convictions which exist in society with a parallel promotion of the state religious (or atheist) ideology.

The first of the more specific consequences of constitutional consolidation of freedom of religious conscience is religious equality. In comparison to the general principle of equality of Article 4, par. 1 of the Constitution, religious equality has got a more typical arithmetic character. Furthermore, religious equality has got a broader context, since vehicles of religious freedom and consequently religious equality are foreigners (Chrisogonos, 2006:272-3).

At this point, it is important to mention a very basic right – freedom every individual possess: the freedom of worship. Paragraph 2 of Article 13 of the Constitution consolidates freedom of worship subjecting it at the same time to a series of restrictions which are of no concern at this point.

It can be said that exercise of worship is anything but unconstitutional, constituting an inalienable right for anybody. Nevertheless, no exercise of worship can exist if there have not been constructed beforehand the respective places or worship, something which has already been foreseen by the Constitution, since the period of the dictatorship of Metaxas (1930s).

## **2. FREEDOM OF WORSHIP AND PLACES OF RELIGIOUS EXPRESSION**

In the Article 1, 1672/1939, there is a provision which states that in order for any kind of place of worship to be constructed – apart from the permit required from the official authorities of urban planning – there needs to be a permit ‘of the appropriate recognized ecclesiastical authorities’. There should also exist a signed petition including addresses of the parties involved ratified by the Mayor. In fact, the Minister of Education has the authority to reject the demand if he rules that there are not ‘valid reasons for constructing or operating such premises’ (Chrisogonos, 2006:284-5).

This legal framework is ‘obviously unconstitutional’ (Chrisogonos, 2006:380-1). On one hand it is unconstitutional because of the intervention of the Orthodox Church during the process of construction of a place of worship which as a fact violates religious equality, and on the other, the people signing the petition are obliged to reveal their religious beliefs. Finally, the requirement of a previous permit insults the core of the individual right of exercising worship (Chrisogonos, 2006:285-6)

Arab-Muslim immigrants have to deal with quite a few integration problems with the ones related to their religion seem to worry them the most. The issue of management of their religious identity within a solely Christian environment appears to be critical. The construction of a central place of worship and a Muslim cemetery remains in the papers with continuous delays and postponements.

Muslims are in a constant effort to preserve their religious identity and claim equality for the right to express freely their religious beliefs. Their efforts for the construction of a central place of worship date back to 1979. Since then, there has been a series of political actions between the Greek governments and mostly Saudi Arabians who have been willing to fund the construction of the mosque. The decisions taken each time have never been materialized.

Religious activities are strictly supervised by the Ministry of Education and although there has been some progress in granting permits for places of pray, there have not been legal temples outside of Thrace in spite of the large and constantly increasing Muslim communities (Kanonidou et al, 2009).

## **3. ISLAM AND THE FIRST GENERATION OF IMMIGRANTS**

The picture Europeans have about Islam and Muslims has been undoubtedly affected by stereotypes deeply ingrained in history. From the very first moment of its emergence Islam became the impression of a big challenge for Europe. The theory of Orientalism as it has developed since the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century, has influenced until today the concept of Islam as it was

perceived by the West. The attributed characteristics to Islam and Muslim societies by the Orientalists appear to have escorted the first generation of Muslim immigrants who settled down in Europe in postwar years.

For Western Europeans, the arrival of immigrants at their countries served a specific purpose. There was a general idea that the migration movement constituted a temporary situation. The general idea of the whole venture was 'borrowing' for several years a number of workers who then would return back to their country of origin.

The first Muslim immigrants organized in communities based on their national origin, without the element of their special religious identity playing any kind of role during the process. However, since the 1970s the scene has been altered. Religion has started to become especially significant in the organization of the political, economic and cultural life of Muslim immigrants, even within the societies of western European countries.

The reasons leading to such a development are quite a few. There was initially an Islamic resurgence during the 1970s and 1980s in Muslim countries after the period of colonialism. The oil crisis in the mid-1970s and the beginning of the Islamic resistance in Afghanistan, were additional reasons for which immigrants of first generation turned to their religion.

Finally, the most important – perhaps – reason for Muslims turning to their religion has to do with the relevant or – in certain cases – absolute social and economic marginalization they were confronted with in the host countries. Consequently, religion can be, for Muslims of Western Europe, a kind of antidote against the isolation they probably feel within their social surroundings (Papageorgiou, Samouris, 2012:153-162).

Nevertheless, the emergence of the religious element in the identity of Western Europe Muslims in the next decades in combination with the gradual detachment of individuals from the particular society and culture of the place of origin, may result in the creation of a new category of citizens, the 'Muslims' in which the dominant element of identity would be the religious background of the individual and not his national origin (Papageorgiou, Samouris, 2012:124-126).

The emergence of the religious element in the identity of Muslims during the process of their intercultural approach with the Western European society depends on a series of factors and mainly from the more particular circumstances he has to deal with in his close environment. Generally, Muslim immigrants have got the same worries and pursuits with the rest of the Western Europeans. However, the conditions of 'pressure' created in recent years in the European and international environment have strengthened, in the bosom of Muslims, the need to redefine their identity and their relationship with Islam, the society of origin, the host society and generally the international community.

It appears that the turn of Muslims to Islam in recent years is the consequence of interactions of specific developments in a local, national, European and international level. This means that Islam does not automatically constitute the most powerful factor in shaping Muslims' identity, but only on occasion (Papageorgiou, Samouris, 2012:187-88).

In the beginning of the 1990s the relationships between Western Europeans and their Muslim fellow-citizens within the societies, entered a new dimension which related mostly with the conditions created by the complete transition from Cold War to the era of globalization. The abolition of the dividing line which during Cold War divided the world into East and West power zones as well as the revolution attained in the sectors of communications, transport and information technology altered the facts completely. The new globalized society exercises suffocating pressure on individuals and groups for constant adjustment in a constantly transforming world (Papageorgiou, Samouris, 2012:169-170).

#### **4. RESEARCH PROCESS**

The research part focuses on whether Arab Muslim immigrants feel socially excluded in their interpersonal relationships, in a European country such as Greece. The survey was conducted in the capital city of Greece, Athens, and more specifically in the areas of Dafni, Agios Pandeileimon, Patissia and Kallithea. The sample consisted of 75 people. There was an attempt to

collect 100 questionnaires however, this was not possible as there were many people who refused to fill in the questionnaire while some of the questionnaires were deemed not valid since there were double or more answers to the same question.

At the end of January 2014 there was an attempt, for the first time, to seek willing individuals of Arab origin and Muslim in religion to fill in the questionnaire in Arab cafeterias of the capital. A place of entertainment was considered more suitable for the task, in order not to bring people into a difficult position for the development of such a delicate issue, as it would be for instance, the act of stopping people in the streets or even seeking them in the improvised Muslim mosques of the city.

Contemplating the possible dangers being confronted with during the survey, it was considered wise to ask for the assistance of an Arab Muslim speaking the language and his religion would be the connecting link with the rest of the immigrants approached. So, Ali (not his real name), was the helpful and inestimable mediator during the entire survey.

The process of the approach was simple and was based on 'a plan' Ali had. We went to cafeterias where Arabs hang out as patrons exclusively. We started our conversation in English and a little Arabic and always ended up talking about religion and about how a Muslim immigrant feels in Greece. It was always surprising and pleasant to realize that gradually all the people in the cafeteria participated in the conversation and in the end when all became one large company it was the right time to ask to fill in the questionnaire.

The questionnaire was considered the best means for the task due to the fact that through specific questions it would be possible to analyze the results and find answers to the question posed in the first place. The questions involved matters such as, if they believe in God, how long they are in Greece, if they have friends of different religion, if they feel socially excluded, if they consider religion important in their interpersonal relationships and finally they were asked how they feel during their stay in Greece.

## **5. RESULTS**

### **5.1. Syria**

As mentioned before, the sample consisted of 75 people. 22. 67% of the participants have Egyptian origin, 2. 67% Algerian, 1. 33% Palestinian, 1. 33% Lebanese, 2. 67% Jordanian, 5. 33% Iroquoian origin, 3. 33% Sudanese whereas 10. 67% are Kurds whose country of origin was Syria or Iraq. The majority however of the sample are Syrians, 48%.

The percentage of the Syrians is very important since it approaches half of the percentage of the whole sample. 50% of the Syrians answered that they have been in Greece from less than a year to five years, a fact worth analyzing when taking into consideration the Arab Spring which began in Tunisia at the end of 2010 and spread to the rest of the Arab countries: Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Morocco, Algeria, Bahrain and Syria.

Anti-regime protests began in Syria in February 2011. The security forces were constantly making their presence felt resulting in the intervention of the Human Rights Watch towards the Assad regime 'to respect the right of the Syrians to protest'. While riots spread in Syria and President Assad did not seem to have the necessary solutions in order to deal with the challenge the country was facing, at the same time the UN, the USA and the EU along with humanitarian organizations condemned the violent riot controls and recommended self-restrain. The old regime continued its resistance until the end and so the civil war broke out with disastrous ramifications for the country and its people, one of which was the huge waves of Syrian immigrants fleeing to other countries.

This is the basic reason for the overwhelming majority of Syrians, half of whom have been in Greece since the beginning of civil war in their country, participating in the sample, and also the reason for examining these people as a different category separately.

It is deemed right to analyze some of the answers in specific questions. So, from the Syrian immigrants, 69. 44% very often or always feel socially excluded while 41. 667% have friends of different religion (most of them have already been in Greece for more than a year and up to five years). This shows that the category of Muslim immigrants in question have been trying to adjust and integrate socially.

Although the majority believes in God, the sample is divided in the question, if they consider religion important in their interpersonal relationships. Half of the sample consider it important and the other half not important at all. However, this answer reveals at the same time why approximately 50% of the sample have friends of different religion.

The ones who consider religion not important in the development of social relations are the ones who feel more comfortable in any kind of relationship with people of different religion. They feel more free and 'open' as far as this issue is concerned and they carry it into their relationships regardless of their level of faith – which by the way, seems to be quite considerable, at least for the 84. 21% of the Syrian immigrants who have been in Greece for only a short period.

In conclusion, it is safe to say that the Syrian immigrants who left their country due to the civil war, contact with the 'other person' is important for their social integration and their interpersonal and friendly contacts. They are aware that in all likelihood, they will not be able to return to their country of origin from where they left violently and suddenly, a fact which may make them more conciliatory in their communication with individuals from the host country. They feel the need to adjust soon enough and develop social relations so that they will be able to feel integrated in the society of the country.

## **5.2. The Sample**

To the first question concerning how much the participants in the survey believe in God, the majority of the sample, 86. 67% stated that they believe a lot. However, it turned out as a purely rhetorical question because after attending a course and a series of lectures about Islam it proved to be a redundant question for a Muslim. Most Muslims – if not all - consider their faith in God unquestionable. They are born Muslims and this remains as such until the end. Being a Muslim means that he declares his deep faith to God without subterfuges.

Thus, the high percentage to the previous question is normal. 13. 33% of the respondents who answered that they do not believe in God or they believe less than a lot, are apparently people who have been in Greece for years and have consorted with people of different religion or people who question the existence of God, or skeptics. It is evident that the constant contact with the different may make people redefine their concepts, theories and convictions and approach any kind of issues under a different spectrum each time.

From the participants in the sample, 14. 66% have been in Greece for less than a year, 38. 66% for more than a year while 46. 66% have been in Greece for more than five years. This means that 50% of the sample have been in Greece for many years and it would be safe to assume that the ones who have been in the country for years feel better in their stay, do not feel especially isolated and probably have friends of different religion.

However, it appears that not only half of the sample but practically most of the people, almost everybody in the sample, 90. 66%, have social relations with people of different religion. At this point and in order to have a better analysis of the results, it would be better to clarify the definition 'friend'.

Most definitely this definition involves strong emotional bonds and logically from the answers received it is understandable that the respondents referred to acquaintances and individuals with whom they maintain social relations in general, and not friends with the literal meaning of the word. In any case though, it can be understood that Muslim immigrants are willing to communicate with people of different religion despite the 'absoluteness' of their answers concerning their faith. Whether they do it in order to feel socially integrated, or because they feel like it without deceit or interest involved, the consequence is that there is no fear or denial of communication with the different, as it has been the case presented, as far as Muslims are concerned.

To the question whether they feel excluded, a high percentage, 30. 667% answered that they do not feel excluded at all, 46. 66% often feel excluded while 22. 66% always feel socially excluded. The numbers presented here are practically expected. One would anticipate that most answers would range between 'often' and 'never', however, a quite high percentage do not feel excluded at all. This answer was given by people who have been in Greece for more than five years which

means that their integration process has been normal and these people feel as part of the society they live in.

The word 'feel' unquestionably involves subjectivity. There are no objective facts or qualitative and quantitative surveys which are able to measure completely and show exactly whether Muslim immigrants feel socially excluded. This may depend on their psychological condition, with whether they have adjusted to their new situation and how much they accept it. The more compromised they are with the new reality, the more willing they will be to open up and communicate with the 'other person'.

To the question whether they believe that religion plays an important role in their interpersonal relationships, 52% believe so while 48% do not consider religion important in this part. The sample appears divided in this question although most of the participants believe in God a lot and the largest majority have friends of different religion. This may prove the aforementioned assumption concerning 'friendship'. It means that it is easier for the people who consider religion important in their interpersonal relationships to have contacts with the 'other person', the 'different one'. Nevertheless, it appears that the majority of the respondents have friends of different religion which means that these are whether superficial or otherwise the other side is not interested that much in the issue of religion.

Finally, 38.66% of the respondents stated that they have not felt well during their stay in Greece, 50.66% said they have been well while only 10.66% have felt excellent during their stay in Greece. Half of the sample has a satisfactory image from their stay in the country. The answers at this point were compared with the duration of the stay in the country and whether the respondents feel socially excluded in their interpersonal relationships.

The immigrants who have been in the country for more than five years are also the ones who often or never feel excluded in their relationships with Greek citizens and consider that religion is not important in their social contacts – with some differentiations at times. A fact which proves that Islam and being a Muslim does not differentiate an individual from the rest of the immigrants.

Arab Muslim immigrants behave as expected from an immigrant. The longer they are in the country the more integrated they feel in the society. They maintain social relations with natives and are willing to communicate with them and acquire social contacts. Therefore, the issue of different religion, Islam in this particular case does not seem to function as a deterrent and lead Muslim immigrants to their social exclusion.

Eventually, the duration of stay is probably the factor which deters, assuages or assists in the development of the rate of social exclusion in interpersonal relationships of Arab Muslim immigrants. But also the concept of immigrants concerning whether religion is an important factor for the creation of social relations is an important factor which determines the evolution of interpersonal relationships of immigrants.

Before closing the present paper with the conclusions of the particular survey, there is an interview that follows with the Head of the Greek Forum for Immigrants Mr. Moawia Ahmed who was very kind to speak and analyze significant aspects of the issue in question.

### **5.3. The Interview**

Mr. Moawia Ahmed, Head of the Greek Forum for Immigrants, was very kind to speak about the issue of social exclusion in interpersonal relationships due to difference of religion as well as other very important factors from which social exclusion begins for immigrants.

First and foremost, Mr. Ahmed mentioned language barrier as far as an immigrant is concerned. It constitutes the most difficult part for an individual, not to be able to speak the language of the host country because he cannot communicate with anybody and as a consequence he becomes a priori excluded.

Furthermore, the social, class or general background of an immigrant renders him, more or less, a little or not at all excluded. An individual migrating solely for employment to another country feels completely different from the individual who migrates to another country to study in a university, for instance.

Another matter is also the issue of class, an individual coming from a very poor background with no particular experiences other than his miserable everyday life is completely different from the individual who, for instance, has already travelled a lot and has been in contact with people from other countries.

In addition, integration for an immigrant in the host country has to do with his education. There is a completely different perspective in life for an individual who is illiterate from the perspective and tolerance of the individual who has broadened his horizons within the framework of an educational or even academic course.

Another matter which plays an important role is the issue of origin. Urban areas and rural areas are completely different especially in countries very big in size with rural provinces quite isolated where contact with people from different countries is very rare or non-existent.

Mr. Ahmed also explained that higher or lower rates of social exclusion of immigrants are dependent on the tolerance of the host country. When a country in need of labor force has 'invited' in a way people to cover vacant employment positions shows much more tolerance to the foreign element that arrives. However, the opposite happens with countries which have already had high rates of immigrants.

There is also another perspective as far as tolerance is concerned. It has to do with the culture of every country, the degree to which it is multicultural and whether its citizens are 'open' and tolerant to the foreign element.

Finally, the phenomenon in question also involves the 'background', the historical framework of the country from which every immigrant comes, because undoubtedly the issue of acceptance or not of an immigrant is not one-sided, it involves the host country but more importantly the country of origin of an immigrant.

More specifically, an individual from Saudi Arabia or Libya is substantially less likely to integrate in another country. In his country back home he has learned to live under certain pressure and very different codes. Such an individual would be less likely to have a correct and complete integration in comparison to another immigrant who comes from Egypt, Tunisia, Lebanon or Palestine.

Another determining factor for the issue in question, according to Mr. Moawia Ahmed, is how a society deals with religion. Egypt, for instance, is a multicultural country thus more tolerant than others. In fact, although its society is quite a conservative one, there has been a number of mixed marriages between Muslims and people of different religion.

At this point and in order to point out tolerance to difference of certain Arab or better Muslim countries, Mr. Moawia Ahmed mentioned the issue of homosexuals. He stated that in Muslim countries such as Sudan or Libya, homosexuals live more freely and receive larger acceptance than in Greece, for example, where this issue still remains a taboo and these people are quite excluded from the society.

Mr. Moawia Ahmed also spoke about the issue of political Islam. This debated issue has to do with change of mentality and the feeling of fear that prevailed in the host countries which he adds, pose the issue of religion of the others as transference from the country of origin to the country of migration. Fear, according to Mr. Moawia Ahmed is the worst factor. Since 9/11 a lot of things have changed throughout Europe. It is characteristic that authorities in many European countries ask from Imams not to preach in Arabic on Fridays because they fear the content of the sermons, in fact there are special relevant training programs in the countries.

On the other hand, there are extreme examples of Muslims who have decided to remain socially excluded by choice. There is, for instance, an individual who has been living in a foreign country as an immigrant and does not speak the language of his host country. This constitutes an extreme phenomenon. This particular person decided to isolate himself from his environment, created a very close micro-society around him and decided to spend his life in it. He gets by with the money he earns as an Imam or with the benefit of welfare and is not interested in having any kind of relationship other than the one with his closed ones or people of the same religion.

However, there is another side of the coin. It involves people who use Mosques differently. Apart from places of worship they use them as places of social contact. Within this framework, Mosques mostly after Friday prayers remain open and Muslims invite neighbors to eat all together and maintain social contacts.

Acts like these, assuage fear from both sides, develop social communication and assist in the familiarization of the 'different'. The issue here mainly involves the concept of transition and how an individual deals with the process. That is how he perceives the contact with the different which will lead him in coexistence. In other words, I invite the neighbor, we develop good relationships and this is good for both sides.

In Greece, the issue of social exclusion as far as Muslims are concerned, due to their religion, is basic and of completely different proportions from any other European country. Greece is the only European country in which there is not a central place of worship for Muslims, operation of mosques is forbidden by law.

The immigrant, according to Mr. Moawia Ahmed, lives in a constant effort to defend himself against the hostile climate around him and the fear he feels. The police often stops immigrants in the street to check them out because of their different color and not because they became aware of anything suspicious in their behavior, which often results in a bad behavior towards immigrants and their escorting to the police station for identification.

On the other hand, there is also the side of a misinformed society who is not always aware of the reality. Mass Media – among others – create false impressions and illusions concerning immigrants, resulting in a climate of negativity and suspicion influencing not only immigrants but also Greeks, according to Mr. Moawia Ahmed who concluded by saying that there is a mutual relationship of insecurity as a process between the two sides.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

The issue of Arab Muslims in relation to the social exclusion in interpersonal relationships is a complex one and difficult to be approached. There has been an effort in this particular project to shed light to certain aspects despite the difficulties and ambiguities arising due to the small sample and the narrow time margins available.

Nevertheless, regardless of the subjectivity involved in certain questions asked, the answers were quite clear in order to reach the following conclusion: Muslim immigrants seem to be quite willing to develop social relations with people of different religion.

It is a fact that Islam includes – in a way – two ideologies, a cosmic one and a religious one which many times converge and this characteristic is what frightens and troubles citizens of host countries of Muslims. Difference of Muslims in comparison to the rest social groups mostly lies in the special elements imposed by Islam as religion and as culture in certain expressions and customs of their faith (Papageorgiou, Samouris 2012:391). This different practice of their faith is what keeps most natives away from Muslim immigrants. Phenomena such as xenophobia, Islam phobia, indifference or superficial effort in the implementation of the act of isonomy and equality before the law are what lead many Muslims to alienation (Papageorgiou, Samouris 2012:380).

There has been a quite informative approach as far as the perspective of Muslim immigrants is concerned, which appear to be optimistic and hopeful that things can change in the future. Although there is a high percentage of immigrants who feel socially excluded, they are willing to make contacts and social relations regardless of other people's religion.

The need for social integration and acceptance is unquestionable almost for every individual who migrates. Social exclusion nearly excludes the process of integration and acceptance and does not appear exclusively in interpersonal and social relationships.

The reason for selecting this part lies in the conviction that the factor of religion, and especially Islam, due to the ignorance of most western societies concerning this religion, will put communication barriers. One can only hope that in the contemporary times we live, as well as the evolution of the west will not permit to remain trapped in religious issues excluding categories of immigrants from serious social integration and insurance processes such as economy and employment.



## **Social Exclusion and Islam: Social Exclusion in Interpersonal Relationships of Arab-Muslim Immigrants Due to Religion**

Unfortunately, many of the programs and research projects of NPO organizations dealing with the subject of social exclusion point out the fact that marginalization of individuals and groups is owed to the inability of the social system to integrate them and not to the inability of immigrants themselves to integrate.

Immigrants constitute part of the social whole of the society in which they migrate. The sooner this is understood by the proper authorities and citizens themselves, the faster and smoother immigrants will integrate and offer their best to the social whole without the fear for illegal activities and actions on their part.

Finally, Arab Muslim immigrants should be faced as a different group from the rest of the immigrants. Islam may appear foreign for the majority, people though are not as different as it is thought. Migrating to a society they share the same working, economic and social worries with the rest of the people.

The turn of Muslims to supporting networks which operate autonomously within Muslim communities and in most cases are related to Islamic movements and organizations, has to do almost exclusively with the alienation this particular group of immigrants feel.

There is no doubt that Islamic terrorism all over the world appears to be in existence and powerful, however it is wrong to identify it with immigrants coming to western countries for survival or social reasons. Islam is a religion full of challenges and different concepts which may capture the interest of anyone deciding to delve into it. So, it would be wise not to judge people, at least in interpersonal relationships, by their religion. There are always things one can say or do if he does not want to touch religious issues.

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