



Mostafa El Ayoubi, Claudio Paravati (ed.) (2018). *Dall'Islam in Europa all'islam europeo. La sfida dell'integrazione* [From Islam in Europe to European Islam. The Challenge of Integration]. Roma: Carocci editore, 147 pp.

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Today Europe is facing multiple challenges on political, social and cultural levels. Many of these issues are at the centre of important debates and ideological clashes. In particular, the phenomenon of migration and the consequent challenge of integration have pushed European society to follow the wave of change and to rethink its identity in a logic of inclusiveness and recognition. One third of immigrants are of Islamic faith or culture and this has led Europe to re-evaluate the link between the West and Islam.

The book by Mostafa El Ayoubi and Claudio Paravati moves within this panorama and through prestigious authors that deal with religion, Islam, intercultural dialogue and immigration seeks to offer a multidimensional perspective in order to overcome those historical legacies that dominate public opinion. The book contains fourteen essays dealing with the theme of Islam from different perspectives. All of these moves from the same question: is there a European Islam? How can European society achieve its recognition?

The volume opens with the contribution of the historian Franco Cardini who addresses the issue of Islam in Europe between past and present, recalling how Islam is part of Europe as it has contributed profoundly to the construction of the European identity, supporting the need of a "new European homeland". The relations between East and West have in fact very ancient roots, as underlined by the philologist Mahmoud Salem Elsheikh. Arab-Islamic culture, present in Europe since before the ninth century, has left a very strong mark from both architectural and cultural point of view, passing from the Iberian Peninsula to Sicily, from Puglia to the Balkan Peninsula.

The stereotypical image that the West itself has created often prevents us from seeing significant contributions, both in the scientific and artistic fields, obtained from the encounter between these two civilizations. Tendency that contributed to the strengthening of "Islamophobia".

A part of the research is then dedicated to Islam in the Italian public space. Through his analysis, the sociologist Stefano Allievi has collected data on Italian Islam in a clear and precise way, offering the theoretical concepts to better understand a phenomenon that is often distorted also because of misleading

narratives from the media and some politicians talking about a “real Islamic invasion”.

Islam has become part of the Italian social space since the Seventies. Nowadays, from the demographic perspective there is a strong presence of second generations of immigrants: born and raised in Italy, Italian to all intents and purposes, but that due to their religion, end up feeling and being considered as strangers. Fragmentation, division and dispersion in the territory are just several of the problems that have arisen over time. The analysis of the Italian case is completed by the latest available statistics on religious minorities in Italy by Massimo Introvigne and PierLuigi Zoccatelli, who offer a complete and exhaustive overview.

The relationship between Islam and Europe passes through the phenomenon of integration. The sociologist Maurizio Ambrosini illustrates the different national models of civic integration, citing the example of countries such as France and the United Kingdom, defining integration as a “multidimensional process” that also calls into question the hosting society and its institutions. One of the main obstacles that emerges is the resistance to acceptance that is linked to the issue of racism. The sense of threat and invasion derives from the belief that «the state does more for immigrants than for Italians» (p. 56), fuelling the climate of intolerance.

Acceptance and integration also pass through the knowledge of religious experience and faiths as specified by Francesca Cadeddu, who suggests that Islam could be supported in Europe by making systematic the study, teaching and religious literacy. Successively, the concept of religious freedom and secularism comes into play with the contribution of Elena Bein Ricco who explains the difference between these two concepts, helping us to understand more the role of the religion in the European society.

A particular space is given to the “Italian Islam” by the political scientist Paolo Naso who analyses the relations between the Italian State and religious confessions through a historical excursus, focusing on the role of the representatives of Islam in Italy. The reconstruction of relations between Islamic associations and Italian institutions, which have often suffered slowdowns and accelerations in recent years, represents an added value to this volume.

One of the signs of the Europeanization of the Islamic religion is the construction of mosques, which has always been at the centre of political and ideological debate. The sociologist Enzo Pace to speak of in this sense of “aesthetic way to the recognition of Islam”: mosques as symbols that inevitably become part of the European identity. The mapping of mosques in some European countries offered to us within the volume confirms the importance of this aspect.

As the sociologist Karim Hannachi points out, the European Islam is a «process in the making, a complex, non-homogeneous, multiform phenomenon with unpredictable results due to the multiplicity of variables» (p. 100). Nevertheless, in order to promote a European Islam and at the same time to prevent radicalization it is necessary to take note of the fact that the meeting between the two identities represents an opportunity for both parties.

Islam has now become a topic that dominates public debate and the media. The writer and journalist Karima Moual talks about “reality and perception”, because it is not only important to talk about it, but also to pay attention not to favour a narrative far away from the reality of the facts. Indeed, we often tend to give voice to the “more conservative” part, leaving out the plurality of the other voices like those of the intellectuals.

Another of the topics that has certainly dominated the public debate is the one concerning the Islamic veil. The Islamologist Marisa Iannucci offers us a historical and religious analysis on the social implications, helping us to understand better a complex issue. Then, the essay includes a reflection on the discrimination related to the veil, following a negative narrative of Islam, as well as on the freedom of choice of women.

With reference to the Italian case, the contribution of the sociologist Khalid Rhazzali on the presence of Muslims in Italian prisons is interesting. The prison system must in fact face the needs that emerge from religious diversity and that require institutions to go beyond formal recognition.

The volume concludes with a space reserved for the theme of Islamophobia and radicalization, through the words of Mostafa El Ayoubi. Europe has indeed had to face a series of terrible terrorist attacks of a jihadist origin, focusing on the relationship between immigration and security. One of the consequences was the spread of Islamophobia in various forms. The author concludes that «radicalization and Islamophobia are two sides of the same coin» (p.145) and that the security approach adopted in Europe since 2001 has not worked. Paradoxically, international terrorism has increased, instead of diminishing.

In conclusion, this volume represents the attempt to provide the tools necessary to have a vision of Islam in its significant aspects, through different methodologies and disciplinary approaches. Its benefit lies in the desire to overcome the widespread stereotypes in the West and unmask the false beliefs fed by the media and politics. Furthermore, it proposes several ways out of the current situation where Islamophobia and racism hinder the recognition of Islam in Europe.