EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IN THE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL INTEGRATION OF MINORITIES. THE SAMI PEOPLE: FROM NORWEGIANIZATION TO SELF-DETERMINATION

SUMMARY

The expansion of globalization, that became a widespread phenomenon, has brought fundamental economic, political, social and cultural changes. The development of technology, transport and communication has facilitated cultural exchanges among peoples and the trade liberalization has related economies. The free movement of persons, goods, services and the permeability of borders make possible the communication and contact with other peoples, civilizations and cultures, uniting people from different corners of the world, differentiated by nationality, religion, language, traditions and customs. But states have begun to feel threatened by the rapidity with which this homogenization is carried out and found the need to fight it by limiting migration and freedoms in favor of national security. But minorities and indigenous peoples have developed a collective consciousness, aiming at identity consolidation and community survival by preserving their distinctiveness, wishing at the same time, to actively participate in the social, economic, political and cultural life of the state in which they live.

Currently, we are witnessing an identity and cultural transformation era, the states being confronted with an ethnic diversity which they must learn to manage properly, emphasizing the mutual respect and acceptance of cultural differences within state borders, the integration in the state system and structures, without harming or diminishing in any way the distinct characteristics of different cultures. Briefly, they must ensure equality of all citizens, but also recognize and guarantee the rights of minorities or indigenous peoples to their own culture as a necessity in preserving their identity. However, the relationship between the state, majority and minorities has never been a simple one, always generating controversy and requiring pertinent solutions to accommodate them in the national system. Time and again, the interests of the three parts (state, majority, minority) were not consistent, resulting ethnic conflicts. Therefore, this controversial topic drew the attention, determining the state actors to find the right solution to transform diversity, from a threat to national security and territorial integrity, into a tool and advantage of economic, political, social and cultural development of the state.

However, the protection of minorities and indigenous peoples includes many aspects such as access to resources, cultural heritage, confessional freedom, access to education in the mother tongue etc., which should be taken into consideration. In order to ensure their protection and to bring all matters of interest under one umbrella, states and international organizations have tried to reach a consensus through various conventions and agreements to facilitate this task. Thus, organizations such as the UN, the Council of Europe, OSCE and the EU have addressed this issue over time.

Since its formation, Norway, a relatively small country with a small number of population was characterized by homogeneity and nationalist spirit. It is also economically stable, so the repercussions of the economic crisis were not so profound. Not being a member of the EU, helped the country to overpass the problems which caused the breaking of rhythm at the continental and global level. The welfare, stability and security, as main characteristics, along with the benefits provided by the Norwegian state to its citizens have turned it into an attractive destination for immigrants, who come in search of new opportunities. Besides these, the only indigenous population of Norway, the Sami people, developed a strong collective consciousness, which caused a vehement claim for their traditional rights, violated by the state for a long period of time. The Norwegian state faced for the first time issues such as integration and cultural diversity. Norway saw itself in the position to shape policies and find solutions to avoid discrimination and ensure equal rights for its diverse population.

The purpose of the present thesis is to analyze the socio-cultural integration of the Sami population in the Norwegian state, taking into account the rights and freedoms conferred by the various international agreements and conventions ratified by Norway, as well as translating and accommodating these provisions into the national legislation, emphasizing their important contribution to the economic, social, political and cultural development of the Norwegian state. The thesis examines also how the Sami identity has developed over time and how the education in the mother tongue, the access to land and traditional resources and the Sami national and international representation were modeling tools of identity, becoming more visible and more consolidated.

The first working hypothesis is that the Norwegian policy towards the Sami population has been marked by several stages, starting from a process of forced assimilation or norwegianization,

switching then to a more permissive policy since the 1970s and currently reaching a policy based on cultural diversity, representing a model for other states in a similar situation.

The second hypothesis is that the Sami people meet the specific characteristics of indigenous peoples and minorities, so it can benefit from all the rights given to these categories by the international and the Norwegian law.

The third hypothesis is that education in the mother tongue, the access to traditional land and resources, as well as national and international representation of the Sami population are key factors in identity preservation.

In order to test these hypotheses, the thesis is structured in two parts.

The first part, the theoretical one, aims to present the phenomena and stages that led to the creation of a collective consciousness of indigenous peoples and minorities, giving them more attention on the international agenda.

The first chapter is an overview of the principles that have led to the development of constructivism, a theory that revolutionized starting with the '90s the field of international relations. Constructivism underlines that states, like individuals, are in a world built by them, where the social facts are made by human action, based on their own ideas and perceptions so that the international reality is socially constructed and ideas are intersubjectively shared to shape behaviors and build identities and interests of actors, that are in a continuous process of redefining identity through interaction. The actors, be they states, ethnic groups or individuals shape their identities and interests in relationship with others.

The second chapter deals with the security issue addressed by the Copenhagen School. According to its theorists, one of the basic conceptual tools with which the security studies operate is that of sectors. They consider appropriate to extend the security agenda, from the traditionalist approach, centered on state and the military side, to other areas of interest, such as economic, political, environmental or societal aspects, considering that current threats are not only military, and the security of individuals becomes as important as state sovereignty and territorial integrity. One of the most discussed aspects of the analytical framework proposed by the Copenhagen School is the societal security, where the reference object is no longer the state from the territorial point of view, but identity. The stability and integrity can be easily endangered by ethnic or

confessional clashes, therefore, many countries tend to put legal or physical barriers and highlight the differences between the parts. Thus, any threat to the identity of a community is a threat to societal security. According to the Copenhagen School, the main threats of this kind are migration, horizontal and vertical competition, but we may also include in this category the negative discrimination (ethnic, confessional) or the positive, which can lead to the development of privileged groups when the interpretation of certain provisions is exaggerated. Therefore, the development of a collective consciousness and an identity spirit of minority groups, whether indigenous or resulting from migration, generates tensions and is an issue of societal security.

The third chapter addresses one of the most popular and controversial terms, namely globalization. Starting from its etymology, I attempted to bring forward an overview of the most relevant definitions given over time. Being an extremely complex phenomenon, as the world evolved, with new events occurring worldwide, the definition required additions, revisions and new meanings. Globalization has led to an intensification of social, economic, political and cultural relations and a global awareness that brought joint action. Hence, people from a society become closer with people from other societies, which implies the free movement of persons, goods, services, as well as cultural exchanges, environmental or medical issues that spread much faster. Even if globalization is a current topic, it also happened in the past, in various forms and names, even if not so complex, so I considered necessary a review of the stages that preceded the current phenomenon of globalization. Another objective was to analyze the main dimensions of globalization: economic, political, social, cultural, environmental, underlining both the advantages and disadvantages, as perceived by the supporters and skeptics.

Another recent and controversial concept is that of multiculturalism, as a direct consequence of globalization. Societies, becoming more interdependent and interconnected, are therefore more diverse, ethnicity or nationalism being key issues on the national and international agenda. This chapter presents the current definitions of the key concepts such as multiculturalism, minority, ethnic group or nationality, through the contribution of the main theorists in this field. One of the most representative authors, Will Kymlicka, makes a distinction between majority and minority interests in the state, and between the national minorities and immigrants who pursue different objectives.

The fourth chapter deals with the issue of minorities and indigenous peoples from the perspective of the main international organizations. Over time, the relationship between the state, majority and minorities was not easy and took different forms: elimination, assimilation, toleration or protection, requiring decisions and concrete solutions. In the contemporary society, the only viable solution is to protect and promote minority rights. This requires a degree of integration achieved with the help of minorities without undermining individual or collective identity. But this protection includes the access to resources, cultural heritage, confessional freedom, mother tongue educational system etc. To bring all these issues under one umbrella and to reach a consensus, states and international organizations have resorted to numerous conventions and agreements to facilitate this mission. Each organization has come up with their own tests and solutions, more or less effective. The chapter analyzes the documents with which the main international organizations operate: the UN, the EU, the Council of Europe and OSCE, starting from those that aim at the fundamental human rights to those specialized in minorities and indigenous peoples' rights, in order to clarify their international status.

The next chapters deal with the status of indigenous peoples and minorities under the international law and the applicability in the case of the Sami population, from the communitarian contribution, which is the basis of the theory of collective rights and rejects individualism, considering that the attachment to a community is vital for the development of moral character and profoundness. Communitarianism proposes the membership to a community where identity is defined by attachment, devotion and participation. With regard to indigenous communities, they share a common interest in land, which places them away from others and strengthens their collective identity, linguistic and cultural characteristics, common history and collective injustice. Because the right to self-determination is a fundamental right of indigenous peoples, I considered necessary a detailed analysis of its internal and external dimensions.

The second part of the thesis focuses on the case study, namely the Sami people of Norway. I chose to analyze the Norwegian Sami group because it is the largest, most complex and well represented, and unlike Sweden and Finland, Norway is the country with the greatest openness and involvement in the preservation and development of this ancient culture, being a promoter and a supporter of the role and importance of indigenous peoples and their culture to the economic, political, social and cultural development of the state, recognizing their inestimable global value.

The first chapter summarizes the Sami cultural background, such as: origin, occupations, traditions and customs, organization and development, education, art, religion, drawing an overview of the past, present and future of this population on national, European and international level. This chapter makes a clear delimitation of the territory occupied by the Sami, their number and their classification. It also seeks to determine the origin, the distinctive features and the main historical accounts of the Sami, followed by the description of the first forms of organization in Siida, with all that this entails: family, household, specific clothes, ancient religion based on shamanism, rituals, traditions, customs, reindeer hunting practice, the origins and development of the Sami language, forms of traditional art: duodji, stone carvings, literature and the distinctive musical expression, the yoik.

In order to understand how the Norwegian state is involved and acts to protect the Sami population, we must look first at the context in which the present policy of minorities, based on cultural pluralism, has developed and how it has evolved. To highlight similarities and differences between the Sami people and other minorities of the Norwegian state, I chose a brief comparative approach in the second chapter.

In the third chapter, I chose to analyze the three phases of the Norwegian Sami policy and to emphasize the characteristics of each, as follows: the norwegianization period, the economic and cultural integration and the cultural pluralism. The last and current stage presupposes numerous rights and freedoms for the Sami people, but also a complex process of accommodation in the national system. Therefore, I chose to direct the research towards issues of utmost importance for the Sami as indigenous people, issues that have created controversy, but started a model for other countries facing similar problems. The first such issue is that of integration of the Sami education in the Norwegian educational system, according to the Education Act and the Act on the Sami Language, which gives it official status alongside Norwegian. A second elementary issue in preserving the identity is the access to traditional land and natural resources. The Finnmark Act of 2005, through which the lands of the district occupied mostly by Sami is transferred from the state to an agency whose role is to manage the lands and natural resources in favor of the Sami. A third issue is that of the representation at national and international levels, where I considered the formation of the main Sami organizations, their functioning system, their main objectives and

role in representing the Sami internally and externally. The most important of these organizations are the Sami Parliament and the Sami Council.

Among the documents that support the recognition of the Sami identity and unity, the most important is the Nordic Sami Convention concluded between the Sami people and the three northern countries: Norway, Sweden and Finland. Therefore, I considered necessary a presentation of its formation and a detailed analysis of the structure on chapters, to highlight the status of the Sami people acquired through the eventual ratification of this Convention.

The last chapter summarizes the observations and conclusions of the research, hoping that it will facilitate the understanding of the issue of indigenous peoples and minorities protection in the case of the Norwegian state and the Sami population.

Keywords: Sami people, minority, indigenous people, self-determination, cultural pluralism

TABLE OF CONTENTS