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## **The Strange Death of Europe Immigration, Identity, Islam by Douglas Murray, Bloomsbury Publishing Plc., London, 2018, 371 p. ISBN: HB:978-1-4729-4224-1.**

*Reviewed by Pelin Sönmez<sup>1</sup>*

This age created an ever-evolving mobility that migration (either voluntary or forced) became a priority issue for policymakers. Therefore, objective evaluations or constructive analysis are welcome in terms of reflecting both home and host societies' points. However, in *The Strange Death of Europe* organised within nineteen chapters, Murray, who is also a journalist, aimed to display the changes of migration and their effects by observing (mostly) home societies. In this book, he reveals a significant shift in European civilisation with two phenomena; the first, mass movement of people and the second, Europe's losing its faith to the beliefs, traditions and legitimacy. He described Europe as committing suicide due to the guilt for its colonial past and a transformation of European identity from ethics and beliefs to "tolerance" and "diversity", maintaining that those two made Europe of today as "no place".

For Murray the introduction of "guest-workers" scheme policies caused an unstoppable migration to Western Europe after the World War II, which changed the silhouette of some European capitals in the next decade- locals becoming a minority in their own city whereas Muslim population doubled. By exemplifying the case of London, he shows the census and statistics- in line with the speculations of how the profile of the city has radically changed and furthermore he indicated "tolerant and calm" reaction of British people. United Kingdom (UK) is, therefore a good example to see how immigration reflects upon demographics in a positive manner, because as a challenge to ageing population, rising population in the UK results due to immigration and to higher birth rates of immigrant women. However, Murray depicts European government's three excuses to mass migration policies including an ageing population, economic advantages and globalisation, refuting each of them on such rationale. Beginning with the economic advantages of migrants, he believes that mass migration had made a country poorer over the period, especially considering that all migrants are not well educated or well-adapted, stressing the importance of remittances. For ageing population excuse, Murray believes to bring in the next generation from abroad; however importing people from other cultures is highly associated with excessive time and tremendous costs.

Regarding the idea that immigration is unstoppable because of globalisation, he gives the case of Japan, which might be cited as an exception. As an economically powerful country, Japan is not so attractive for migrants due to its dissuasive policies of mass immigration. However, he ignores Japan's strategic position as an island country located relatively in peaceful Asian land compared to Middle Eastern, North African and European route, where there are many threats.

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Dangerous and tragic journeys of people crossing the Mediterranean and reaching islands or shores of Italy and Greece are the main themes of chapter 4 and 5. Murray starts the story from 2000's, putting the main focus on post Arab Spring policies of Europe. He blames European governments and the European Union (EU) for implementing conflicting policies such as "Mare Nostrum" of Italy or "Wir schaffen das" policy of Angela Merkel on the one hand and "Operation Triton" of Frontex on the other. His main point is dozens of asylum seekers that came to Europe without a careful assessment process and as a result. However, they succeed to be alive; they have no future at all, and they are not being respected by the Europeans at all. Here, Murray gives the example of EU- Turkey deal in 2016 that ease the pressure and slow the migration flow- especially as a result of 6 billion Euros EU payment. However, he did not mention that from the first tranche of 3 billion, only 1.9 billion Euros were spent by Turkey at the end of 2018. A careful reader or an expert on EU-Turkey affairs, for instance, can easily notice this misinformation and criticise Murray as he is a journalist and his mission should be revealing the real facts.

For Murray, European societies letting immigrants in, while having no idea what attitude to take towards them caused confessions by the political leaders to state that multiculturalism did not work out properly in Europe. Subsequent declarations of Merkel, Cameron and Sarkozy on this ground also reveal a slight fear of Europeans on cultural securitisation theory- that although immigrants are integrated to home society; pubs or churches are closed down in Muslim immigrant residence areas. This is argued by Murray quoting from Romy Hasan, as a transformation of "multiculturalism" to "multifaithism". The roots of this transformation is studied in chapter 7 and Murray refers the period of creeping up on *multifaithism* in the turn of the millennium while bringing out the first signals with a special case well before that. In 1989, just after the publishing of "The Satanic Verses" by Salman Rushdie in the UK, Iranian leader Khomeini gave a fatwa to execute him, leading to the creation of first organised Muslim "representative" organisations. The next chapter deals with the assassination of two Dutch public figure criticising Islam in 1990's- Pim Fortuyn and Theo van Gogh. For Murray, those events gave a "tough lesson" to Dutch society- which previously fostered religious doubt and produced rationalist thinkers, to be cautious on the subject of religion. Regarding this analysis, unfortunately, one cannot find measurable factors to show neither for reasons nor results. Therefore this evaluation may remind readers as being xenophobic.

In 2015, Aylan Kurdi- a 3 year old Syrian boy trying to cross the Aegean Sea with his family was found dead in Bodrum beach, and this became a revival for Europe on remembering its guilt in the past. Therefore, Sweden, Germany and the rest of European governments tried to pay their bail on the past sins of holocaust, colonialism or racism. However, for Murray, the guilt seems to be attributed to only Europe, as he depicts the example of Turkey and blames it too. Turks never feel guilt for "occupying" Cyprus in 1974 or the "ethnic cleansing" policy of Ottoman Empire towards Armenians; more surprisingly few people would use those against Turks- says Murray. By the case of Turkey, he explains European's psychological motives for feeling guilt, believing that young European people should no longer reward those "masochist" tendencies. So for him, the bail of Europe seems to be paid by comparing it with Turkish cases. However, this comparison with Murray's recommendation is quite absurd, because first Kurdi case is extremely humanitarian and second imposing that one guilty figure is guiltier than the other does not make the other innocent.

2015 was also the year for the EU to rebuild its borders for controlling migration since borderless Europe was established with the Schengen Agreement. The European Commission and Merkel together tried to persuade European governments on a quota system for refugees. Many



European governments were reflecting the will of their people by refusing the EU Commission and possibly reacting to Europe's role as the world leader that allows asylum seekers to stay and assist them in fighting the state even they are there illegally. Murray questions this reaction in chapter 13 and finds out general tiredness among people while describing it as "Europe losing its foundational story"- on religion and faith. This issue is also discussed with regards to demography in chapter 16, even implying that Europe's secular heritage was derived from Christianity, but now the European capitals became the new "international countries" without an explicit European spirit. Therefore, he asks for reactions of Europeans to this significant shift.

Sweden is another case to show the change of public reaction on migration. Discussed in chapter 15, Sweden was known as a safe haven for the world's asylum seekers, while after 1990s, when the country hosted tens of thousands of people fleeing from the Balkan Wars, the government has reluctantly tightened up its border procedures. Swedish public attitude towards migration revealed itself with the rising power of a far right movement called "Sweden Democrats" since the year 2000. In line with other examples narrated in chapter 17, such as retreatment of Merkel's "Wir schaffen das" policy in 2016 or Britain's decision on building a security wall in Calais, Murray refers to a change in European public attitude while underlining prevalence of humanitarian reactions to let people in.

Insisting that diversity would be advantageous only in small numbers of migrants, Murray suggests four alternative policies that ought to be carried out by European leaders. The first one is paying migrants to work in Middle Eastern Countries, and the second one is to process asylum claims outside Europe, the third is to organise the deportation of all those found to have no asylum claim and the fourth a system of temporary asylum. Each of those suggestions would be the result of careful, time consuming and careful planning because they are severe problems in terms of their scope and affect. However, Murray's explanations in line with its justifications are not satisfactory, considering the critical character of the issues mentioned. He also seems to ignore the speed and scope of the crisis in the Middle East after the Arab Spring.

The last chapter searches for answers to the question of "what will be?". Murray's displeasure of the new version of Europe is underlined here. He believes that any change from now on will be severe, because Europe lost the possibility of a soft landing for such changes. Overall, *The Strange Death of Europe* depicts a dark picture in terms of living with the migrants, -showing them as reference points to destroy European identity, rather than the opportunity to mutual understanding and cohesion. Although his argument with this book has the potential to be used by radicalised groups- already have used by some political figures, many others would oppose it with discretion, showing exactly what "not!" to do after reading it.