In Search of New Paradigms in Multiculturalism Debates: Introduction to Özensel's Rope Culture Model

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Abstract

Multiculturalism is one of the much-debated issues in the social sciences. Besides theoretical background of the concept, there are also different multiculturalism models keep also practical dimensions. For example, models like Melting Pot, Cultural Mosaic, Salad Bowl, etc. are generally referred when dealing with multicultural implementation within nations states. These are generally based on the socio-political and cultural background of Western World, specifically the US and Canada. Of course, multiculturalism models abovementioned could partly depict the implementations that would be evaluated as "multiculturalist" in non-Western societies. However, unique historical, cultural, political background of some of the non-Western countries and geographies encourage social scientists to develop original multiculturalism models. In the light of the arguments given above, current study proposes to shed light on one of the newly developed multiculturalism models, so-called Rope Culture, by one of the Turkish sociology professors, Ertan Özensel. To introduce shortly, Özensel recognized rope as a material that consists of many thinner strands. These strands represent ethnic cultures living in the Middle East and Turkey. Özensel believes that despite many problems among these ethnic and religious groups, historical legacy among them create a strong rope and the power of this rope is based on the power of unity. On the other hand, rope culture is the first multiculturalism model that centers on a 'religion', specifically Islam, unlike the other mainstream models that are based on secular notion and theories.

Keywords: *Multiculturalism, Rope culture, Turkey, The middle-east*

Çokkültürlülük Tartışmalarında Yeni Paradigma Arayışları: Özensel'in Halat Kültür Modeline Giriş

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Öz

Çokkültürlülük, sosyal bilimlerde çokça tartışılan konulardan birisidir. Kavramın teorik arka planının yanısıra, pratik boyutlara sahip farklı çokkültürlülük modelleri de mevcuttur. Örneğin Kültürel Mozaik, Eritme Potası Salata Kasesi gibi modeller , ulus devletlerin bünyesinde ortaya çıkan çokkültürlülük uygulamalarına yapılan atıflarda kullanılmaktadır. Bunlar, özelde ABD ve Kanada olmak üzere Batı dünyasının sosyo-politik ve kültürel arka planı üzerine inşa edilmiştir. Elbette bu modeler Batı dışı dünyada ortaya çıkan çokkültürlülük uygulamalarını kısmen betimlemeye yardımcı olmaktadır. Ancak Batı dışı ülkelerin ve coğrafyaların kendine has tarihi, kültürel ve siyasi arka planı, sosyal bilimcileri yeni türden çokkültürlülük modelleri geliştirmeye teşvik etmektedir. Yukarıda sunulan argümanlar ışığında, mevcut çalışma, bir Türk sosyoloji profesörü olan Ertan Özensel tarafından son zamanlarda geliştirilen Halat Kültür adlı çokkültürlülük modeline ışık tutmayı hedeflemektedir. Kısaca tanıtmak gerekirse, Özensel halatı, birçok ince ip tarafından oluşturulan bir materyal olarak kabul eder. Bu ipler Orta Doğu'da ve Türkiye'de yaşayan farklı etnik kültürleri temsil etmektedir. Özensel'e göre, aralarında yaşanan birçok probleme rağmen bu farklı etnik ve dini gruplar arasında güçlü bir halat gibi bir kaderi bir 'birlik' mevcuttur. Halatın gücü de bu birliğe bağlıdır. Öte yandan, bu model genelde seküler kavram ve teorileri baz alan diğer çokkültürlülük modellerinden farklı olarak din olgusunu, özelde İslam'ı merkeze alan bir modeldir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Çokkültürlülük , Halat kültür, Türkiye, Orta doğu*

Introduction

This study proposes to shed light on and investigate a unique model of multiculturalism, which is conceptualized as *Rope Culture*. Ertan Özensel, a sociology professor at Seljuk University in Turkey, conceived this multiculturalism model. The Rope Culture model – different from the mainstream Western multiculturalism models such as the Melting Pot, Salad Bowl, Cultural Mosaic, etc.–is based on Özensel's two-year long observations during his stay in Canada and the U.S., extensive studies on multiculturalism, as well as his experience as a sociologist in the multicultural milieu of Turkey.

The *Rope Culture* model, as we shall see, is based on the metaphor of a rope. To explain briefly, a rope consists of many thin lines. These individual lines are strongly tied to each other. It is almost impossible for each line to survive when separated from the whole. In other words, a thin line seems vulnerable by itself. On the other hand, because every line is physically linked with each other, their actions demonstrate the similar position. For example, if the rope is strained by an outside force, every line is strained. Likewise, when the rope is not in strain, each line gets relaxed. Lastly, bearing the burden of any weight becomes easier for a rope consisting of more lines than fewer lines working together.

According to Özensel, Middle-Eastern societies and specifically Turkish society consists of many ethnic cultures that 'were' strongly tied to each other. In Turkey the nation-state experience, starting in the 1900's, has shown that it is almost impossible for each ethnic culture to survive alone. Even the interethnic conflicts cannot deny the existing bond that transcends such conflicts. On the other hand, it is obvious that if the members of any ethnic culture are under strain, it has a negative consequence on the other ethnic groups in the country. Lastly, it has been observed in the Middle-Eastern countries for a long time that if the problems of any ethnic culture is not handled responsibly, the multicultural atmosphere and the socio-political life of the whole motherland is negatively affected.

Özensel's *Rope Culture* model tends to remind the historical bond of the ethnic cultures in the Middle-Eastern world. Compared to the situation today, under the Ottoman rule of four hundred years there were greater harmonious relationships among the different ethnic groups. Admittedly,

formation of nation states under the leadership of one ethnic group –the Turkish one – posed some problems. Yet, the Ottoman model appears to have had sustained a greater multicultural harmony by means of a shared historical legacy and insider sensibility.

In this paper, Özensel's *Rope Culture* model summarized above will be examined in depth. Some specific examples in Turkish society and historical period will be examined. In doing so, Özensel's own ideas will be used to distinguish the Rope Culture model from some of the Western multiculturalism models.

A Brief Summary of Current Multiculturalism Debates

Although "examples and trials of coexistence and multiculturalism can be seen in almost many examples of the ancient Eastern civilizations" (Yardim and Tecim, 2016, p.276), modern understanding of multiculturalism is based heavily on Western nation states and the consequence of nation state idea. To clarify, it can be said that nation-state formations have a restrictive effect on minority groups. As a major player, a specific ethnic group and its culture may benefit by maintaining the general socio-economic and political organization in a country. In some other countries that are established by many ethnic groups such as the US, Canada, etc., the status of individuals in the face of the state is determined by some of the other criteria. In the U.S., for example, if you are white with European ancestors, you have an advantage. It is hoped that beyond the policies in place today, more policies to level the playing field for other ethnic groups will be implemented in the future.

Of course, there are many reasons that prompt nation states to follow multicultural policies, which are distinct from nationalist or homogenizing policies. Especially, after the World War II and the greater promotion of capitalism, former differences between ideologies manifested as new ethnic and social movements. Minority groups or ethnicities in nation states started to raise their voices against homogenising and exploitative policies of the private sector and the state in question. In addition to the working class neighbourhoods in European countries, after the 1950's, neighbourhoods consisting of specific ethnic and/or religious groups came into existence. Like visibility of the minor groups in the streets their appearances on socio-economic life also rose. In time, protecting the rights

of the minority groups became a serious issue for both the nation states and the dominant ethnic groups. For instance, in the U.S. the need to guarantee equal rights for Afro-Americans as for the white citizens began to be seriously discussed in the 1960's.

In such an atmosphere, we might say that multiculturalism as a notion is a response by nation states that are willing to satisfy the demands of minor ethnic and religious groups. As Kymlicka (2012, p.1) has stated, "multiculturalism emerged in the West as a vehicle for replacing older forms of ethnic and racial hierarchy with new relations of democratic citizenship". It seems that, taking democratic approaches and implementations among different ethnic and religious groups into account were inevitable for multicultural societies. On the other hand, multiculturalism becomes an expectation that would recognize the differences in a peaceful way and would always refer to the motto of *living together* (Fleras, 2009; Jupp, 2011). Bhikhu Parekh, who is recognized as one of the most important thinkers of multiculturalism today, clarifies the theoretical background and framework of this motto in a very organized way. According to Parekh (2000, p.343), "multicultural societies throw up problems that have no parallel in history. The need to find ways of reconciling the legitimate demands of unity and diversity, achieving political unity without cultural uniformity, being inclusive without being assimilationist, cultivating among their citizens a common sense of belonging while respecting their legitimate cultural differences, and cherishing plural cultural identities without weakening the shared and precious identity of shared citizenship." If multicultural atmosphere in a country is discussed, it is almost impossible to ignore these criteria given by Parekh. On the other hand, the reflections of multiculturalism in late modern period demonstrate unique elements and processes in Europe. Especially, after the 1960's multiculturalism becomes one of the biggest platforms where Muslim minority groups are subjected to. Tariq Modood, a British Muslim scholar, is one of the well-known academics who intensively focuses on integration of Muslims and Muslim communities in Europe and multiculturalist policies (or problems regarding these policies). Beyond (but in relation to) the Muslims in Europe and Britain, Modood's following statements could could support the general understanding of multiculturalism discussed so far: "In a post-communist and allegedly a post-national era, multiculturalism

has been theorized as a paternalistic, top-down solution to the 'problem' of minorities, a dangerous reification of 'culture', or a new way forwards towards a politics of 'recognition' and 'authenticity' (Modood, 1997, p.vii).

Although multiculturalism has been a new concept (being discussed for four or five decades), living together has always been an issue in the history of humanity. From ancient times onward, there has been much discussion regarding multicultural living styles and proposed models in different parts of the globe. For example, as it will be seen in the following discussion, bureaucratic and juridical implementations in Ottoman Empire could provide some clues about a multiculturalist way of governing and living in pre-modern period. Actually, the case of Ottoman Empire brings us very different positions for the arguments on multiculturalism. Too often, any discussion of multicultural policies is presumed to refer to those of Western European countries and the Northern American continent. But non-Western countries have demonstrated other multiculturalist models that deserve attention. This paper, as indicated in the introduction, is an attempt to explore historical and socio-political perspectives of what occurred in former Ottoman Empire in order to open a discussion on a unique multiculturalist model and contemplate expanding of the relevant concepts within the scope of the internal dynamics of subjected region or country.

An Alternative Reading: Re-considering the Reasons behind the Theories and Policies on Multiculturalism
According to the interpretative understanding of social phenomena, concepts cannot be evaluated independently from the social reality shared by the members of any social group. In addition to the social background that helps thinkers to generate the concepts, researchers' own experiences and expectations are the other elements that help to make sense of the subjected concepts. Therefore, it is very difficult to claim neutrality or objectivity when dealing with the concepts explored by the social sciences. Even the first step of a social research, which is observation and picking of a issue, is determined heavily by the special character, theoretical background, or the scientific 'position' of the researcher involved. In other words, "from the beginning of a research to the main findings, social sci-

entists are not freed from their value judgments, expectations, experiences, etc., so they cannot be expected to avoid these, which could be named 'background', when maintaining scientific endeavour" (Alkın and Yelken, 2014, p.20).

In light of the preceding discussion, the status, role and the diversity of cultures ought to be considered in any conceptualization of a viable multicultural model. Beside the social backgrounds that determine debates on multiculturalism, governments consider political backgrounds in setting their political agendas. Such a multi-layered consideration could generate many different multiculturalist perceptions, models and practices. For this reason, understanding the implementation of a particular multiculturalist model anywhere in the world would be possible only by considering the socio-political and other backgrounds that prompt people or states to opt for it.

In addition to the current socio-political and economic background of any social structure, history has a crucial role in the uniqueness of multicultural perceptions and practices. When we look at the various current theories or arguments on multiculturalism, we notice that this factor is generally ignored. Even though the advent of nation states began with the 19th century, in many regions in the world, people from various ethnicities have been living as neighbours for centuries. Hence, in any comprehensive analysis of a multicultural situation, the routes and consequences of multiculturalism debates in such regions would provide unique "answers" and raise important "questions".

The Way That Goes to *Rope Culture* Model: Özensel's Position towards Different Multiculturalism Models

The expectation in the necessary social scientific endeavour envisioned above appears to have been satisfied by Özensel's *Rope Culture* model. Perhaps, this situation motivates him to conceptualize a new multiculturalism model by relying on many other process, experiences, etc. Özensel's research and observations in Canada in 2005[1] and in the U.S. in 2010 and

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[1] *After his research in Canada, Özensel writes a book on multicultural citizenship with Professor Mazhar Bağlı (2005). It is published in Turkey and has not been translated to English.*

2011[2] motivated him to identify multiculturalism as a social scientific concept, and distinguish different multicultural models in light of the internal (and historical) socio-economic and political developments of the countries he lived in. In turn, these experiences motivated him to develop a new model for his own region.[3]

Before discovering the *Rope Culture* model and understanding its originality, it would be better to briefly highlight Canadian and American multicultural models and conceptualizations by referring to Özensel's arguments.

In his article, *Canadian Multiculturalism as a Multiculturalism Implementation* (2012) Özensel outlines the uniqueness of Canadian multiculturalism by emphasizing four main points. First, unlike the US and other colonial powers, Canada never had the tradition of slavery. As a result, there has not been quite as much mutual resentment between Canadian blacks and whites as in the U.S. (Özensel, 2012). Second, having been founded by two colonial powers (Britain and France), the ensuing dual governing style that emerged in the early days played a crucial role for Canada's inclination towards multicultural policies (Özensel, 2012). Third, religious references, as Özensel indicates, were not significant in the establishment of Canada, a fact that discouraged any religious group from making superior claim to Canadian citizenship than another (Özensel, 2012). This third element is crucial for Özensel's new model for understanding the main differences between multicultural models in the North America and the Middle-East. Islam having been one of the core elements in the Middle-East, prompts Özensel to consider a different model where religion plays a crucial role. The fourth and the last historical factor that Özensel draws attention to is Canada's relative lack of interest in constructing a new iden-

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[2] *Özensel's other published works on multiculturalism are written after his one-year experience in the U.S.A. These works will be referred in the relevant sections.*

[3] *As it will be explored in the next section, Rope Culture model is not based on a simple imitation of multiculturalism models discussed in (and for) European countries and Northern American Continent. On the other hand, it does not deny the theoretical legacy of multiculturalism in Western resources. It rather reflects the differences among the socio-economic conditions of Western societies and Middle-Eastern ones after the triumph of nationalism and establishment of Canada and the US. That is why; this model is also fed by a historical background that encircles over one thousand years in the region where Özensel lives in.*

tity by mixing the values and life styles of different ethnic cultures as understood by the Melting Pot metaphor and multicultural model in the U.S. (Özensel, 2012, p.65).

For Özensel, these historical facts played crucial roles in constructing Canada's unique multiculturalism model we observe today. Especially, constitutional amendments brought about by the Liberal Party and its champion Trudeau during his almost 20-year-rule (1968-1984) over the country left a lasting impact on the form of multicultural society in Canada (Özensel, 2012). Some of the ideas and values associated with Canada's multicultural model inform the political and everyday life in the country and contribute to holding the society together. The articles determined by *Canadian Citizenship Forum* demonstrate how the consensus among different religious and ethnic groups in Canada is set up: "1. Equal rights and the belief of justice, 2. The belief of negotiation and dialogue, 3. Consensus and tolerance, 4. Supporting diversity, 5. Compassion and generosity, 6. Passion to natural environment, 7. Freedom, peace and change that is not based on violence" (as cited in Kymlica, 1998: Özensel, 2012, p.67). These ideals and values evident in today's Canadian society illustrate an extraordinary multicultural achievement in comparison to other countries that profess "multiculturalism". As Özensel observes, on almost every day in summer you can see the festivals that different ethnic or religious groups are involved in and thus practice their culture on the streets and roads in Canadian cities (Özensel, 2012). These are the platforms where the differences "participate" and "are recognized" both socially and individually. "It can be said that participation[4] is the key notion for Canadian model" (Özensel, 2012, p.64).

Multicultural model in the US, on the other hand, demonstrate some other unique dimensions. We can speak of several aspects of the modern American history that played a strong role in the formation of this model. Until 1776, Americans experienced exploitation and colonization by Britain. After the independence, the founding fathers tried to figure out how a social agreement among several existing ethnically European peoples could be achieved though they left out similar consideration for the Native

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[4] *"Participation" is a manner that encourages activity when "recognition" emphasizes an authority and affirmation over differences. In this respect, Canadian model focuses on activation of differences instead of recognizing them as the passive subjects supported by state.*

Americans and the Africans. American multicultural approach began with this historical legacy. Before the next two hundred years had elapsed, Native Americans, Africans, and non-white immigrants were all granted equal rights with the white majority by law, if not always in practice. Henceforth, by law, every American citizen would be recognized as an "American" without problematizing the particular ethnic culture he/she belonged to. This "Melting Pot" model does not anticipate the diverse cultural activities and life styles of different ethnic and religious groups threatening American cultural and historical legacy (as cited in Citrin *et al*. 1994: Özensel, 2014). When this multicultural model supports diversity, it also encourages a new kind of identity among migrant groups and prospective 'guests' in the US. Even though this Melting Pot model is related to the socio-economic and political history of the US, many say that the Melting Pot has not been implemented as expected. For instance, the recent conflicts between the state and Afro-Americans in Baltimore and Ferguson have raised serious questions as to whether the Melting Pot model has been successfully implemented across the board. However, these reactions and conflicts cannot wholly change the perception that the US has been managing a relatively successful multiculturalist policy, which is both lived within the country and 'marketed' all over the World.

The very brief overviews of the two multicultural models given above are enough to show the importance of the internal dynamics when constructing a concept and applying it into the socio-political life. Now, Middle-Eastern societies' and specifically Turkey's multiculturalism model developed by Özensel would be explored by also comparing it to the different models discussed in this chapter.

Rope Culture Model: Historical Legacy and/or Hope for the Future

Before exploring this new model, it is important to note that multiculturalism models are not only made by social demands, but also developed by the state authorities, which desire to provide a peaceful atmosphere in society and interchange process among different ethnic cultures. The state can play a crucial role by making relevant legal amendments and implementations, and in marketing of the chosen multiculturalist model, as illustrated by the examples of Canada and the United States. In this respect, models that target a multicultural society also keep and encourage 'hope"

for a better future of the country and for the people. In relation to this, a different perspective encourages us to think that 'hope' could be read as a 'project'. In order to provide a peaceful atmosphere, it could be said that states deal with multiculturalist implementations under the canopy of a social and political projects. In this respect, Özensel's *Rope Culture* model matches up with both historical legacy/internal dynamic –which were mentioned in previous part- of the Middle-East and the perspective of *hope* and *project* for a more peaceful region.

While discussing the present, the *Rope Culture* model also gives immense value to the 'past' and the 'future'. The past is important to understand the internal dynamics and historical legacy in terms of reminding people their roots and the emperorship, the Ottoman Empire, they lived in together. A desirable future is also an important goal to set in constructing a peaceful atmosphere for multiculturalist policies to succeed. That is why this is a three-dimensional model that focuses on the past, the present, and the future. The perspectives of *hope* and *project* could be evaluated under the dimension of future. In the light of the arguments above, it might be asserted that Özensel's *Rope Culture* model can be assessed by always remembering this philosophical and political background.

To understand this model in a more contract manner, the rope metaphor –like the Salad Bowl in Canada and the Melting Pot in the U.S.- deserves another look. Accordingly, a rope consists of many thin strands that are bundled up together. The power and the strength of the rope is based on the power and strength of each thin strand. To lift heavier loads, each strand contributes to the total power of the rope. In other words, the power of the rope is based on the stability of the thinner strands. On the other hand, there is a synchronized relationship among strands. If the rope is getting strained or let out, all of the strands move in the same way. Lastly, the rope loses its strength and usefulness when the strands are separated or plucked. Moreover, the individual strands by themselves cannot survive or be able to do what the rope could previously. At this point, it is important to point out that all the constituent thin strands are of equal strength.

When we look at the Middle-Eastern societies' ethnic diversity, it is possible to observe such a relationship as between a rope and its strands. Although the nationalist sentiments and movements in the 19th Century

politically affected the region, the lack of massive migration process let the leaders of the region to govern many ethnic cultures within the same territories. Even though the culture of the ethnic majority within each territory is often forced by nation state structures, this fact does not change the demographic features of Middle-Eastern societies radically. At this point, when we talk about the demands of minor ethnic cultures, a unique model should be supported by historical and religious elements just as the models of the Canada and the U.S. were fed by the other elements. Özensel underlines this necessity by his following statements:

"I consider that the lack of a comprehensive conceptualization over the cultures in the Middle-East and Turkey, or very limited evaluations that centers on a specific ethnic culture is the main problem behind today's social life. In fact, an approach that would properly define the cultural atmosphere in the Middle-East and Turkey would form a basis for different ethnic cultures to live together in a peaceful atmosphere" (Özensel, 2013, p.14).

Özensel points out that the Canadian and American models, while relatively successful, lacks the legacy of different ethnic groups having lived side by side for nearly a thousand years as in the Middle-Eastern and Turkish societies. With that realization, Özensel introduces the roots of his own model:

"Despite the differences on language, religion, ethnicity, etc. among the people in the Middle-East, it is seen that these people have been living together for Centuries. This historical togetherness maintained by some external dynamics such as wars, disasters, etc. pushes these people to share the same historical destiny. Many traditions have intertwined and many similar points on the social rituals have emerged. Within this context, it is possible to talk about a historical and cultural unity that covers many aspects of the social life" (Özensel, 2013, p.13).

The above statement is indeed about the "past" dimension of the *Rope Culture* model. Before introducing his model, Özensel gives the outline of the relevant historical background. In this context, Turkey's position is especially significant. Despite the radical political and socio-economic differences among ethnic cultures in this country, the current socio-political atmosphere shows that Turkey is historically a continuation of the former Ottoman Empire. Even though institutions and administrative models are not the same, historical roots of the people living in Anatolian geography

is still powerful and social life in Turkey has not been altered to pure secular understandings. This means that tradition and religion –specifically Islam- is still effective in addition to experience of former Ottoman emperorship.

At this point, Özensel's own definition of the *Rope Culture* model, which emphasizes the unique elements described above, could be given:

"The cultural structure and togetherness shaped by differences in Turkey could be defined as 'Rope Culture'. I make such a definition because I observe that cultural elements are intertwined; however, they also exist by their own strong features beside their enwrapped situation with the others. Thousands of lines that form the rope cannot survive lonely. By themselves, they seem very thin and week. The thing that makes the thin lines very strong is their togetherness and nesting. This strong rope is the picture of the strong cultural structure in Turkey" (Özensel, 2013, p.15).

In a narrow sense, we could say that nation state formation after the 1920's in Turkey was an attempt to bring about a homogenized nation led by ethnic Turks. Similar programmes have been repeated elsewhere in the Middle East as a part of nation state formation process. However, we might say that the public support for this old strategy for nation-state formation by privileging the ethnic majority and their culture have declined sharply over the last several decades. In addition to the erosion of support, the *Rope Culture* model envisages a more humane background when dealing with diversities. This point is actually related to the 'hope' dimension discussed above. Looking back on the relatively peaceful multicultural harmony of Ottoman period until the rise of nationalism in the region in the late 19th century, one cannot fail to notice the obvious harmonizing role played by the binding central element of the religion of Islam – it's beliefs, values, norms, and practices – and see in this a hope for a better future. As Özensel states:

"If we make an evaluation in terms of the religions, we can see the rooted past of Islam in this geography for almost fifteen centuries. That is why; it would be very realistic approach to recognize every cultural element in this geography as the 'primary component' and if a model is developed for the Middle-Eastern societies, Islam should always be considered" (Özensel, 2013, p.11).

This picture shows that in sharp contrast to other multiculturalist models discussed earlier, the role of a religion is one of the unique elements for

Özensel's model. If we remember that the modern identity as a citizen of a particular nation state is the central element of secular approach to multicultural implementations in West, the uniqueness of the *Rope Culture* model can be better appreciated. It is important to indicate that the *Rope Culture* is perhaps the first multiculturalism model that centers on a 'religion' despite the usual association of multiculturalism with secular notions of citizenship, human rights, etc. In other words, the multiculturalism model discussed in this study brings a new dimension to the literature by considering the effect of religion beyond the prevailing secular notions on the subject. This shows again the internalization of domestic socio-cultural dynamics in a region or society while dealing with social phenomena and concepts. In relation to the effect of one specific religion, the historical reality of a relatively 'peaceful atmosphere' among different ethnic cultures, including those of non-Muslims, in the Ottoman Empire[5] is a supportive argument for a strong *Rope Culture*. In light of these two factors, it should be noted that various ethnicities and religious groups in today's Turkey are potentially tied to each other as in a rope. The relative unity among them also reflects a unity of their destiny. Although in modern times certain mistakes on all sides have raised considerable tensions between the groups, when seen from the perspective of the immensely rich heritage of historical, cultural and religious bonds, each group can see the others as elements that enrich the whole.

Conclusion

This study proposed to show that debates on multiculturalism are not independent from historical and political facts of the regions in question. At the same time, this essay highlights that multiculturalism models are not only the consequences of social demands, but they also reflect the nation-states' 'hope' for a better society, where the differences are allowed to exist

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[5] *Perhaps, the roots of multiculturalism in history could be found in Ottoman history. Especially, the right of the minor groups and their equal status with Muslim and Turkish tebaa give many clues about multicultural policies. Peaceful atmosphere in daily life in Ottoman cities, especially in Istanbul, was one of the interesting historical facts. The interview maintained with Aron Rodrigue from Stanford University includes many arguments on the tolerance, peaceful social life among ethnic minorities in Ottoman Empire. Please see at. http://web.stanford.edu/group/SHR/5-1/text/rodrigue.html*

peacefully. In this respect, Özensel's *Rope Culture* model keeps many critical and important elements regarding discussions on multiculturalism. His own observations and opportunities for comparing different multiculturalism models encouraged him to conceptualize a new model for the Middle-Eastern societies and the contemporary Turkish society. Özensel not only deals with the theoretical backgrounds or structural differences among multiculturalism models but also attempts to draw a multiculturalist picture for a region that he belongs to by birth and upbringing. In this picture, different ethnic cultures living in subject areas are reminded that they had lived together under the same canopy since the nation state formations. After the nation-state formations, on the other hand, they continue to live together in a new atmosphere where a specific ethnic culture is glorified. Despite this fact, Özensel claims that differences in this region are strictly tied to each other and culture has an important status in this togetherness. In addition, it is perhaps the first multiculturalism model that integrates a still potent religious culture while the well-known models are based on just secular notions.

Özensel's model reminds us of the historical unity and the possibility of living together by consideration of the past, present, and the unity of a shared destiny. His rope metaphor is a reminder that each ethnic group, as a strand in a rope, can be enriched and strengthened by appreciating the value of the continued existence and strength of the others.

In the light of the arguments above, I believe that discussing the merits of the *Rope Culture* model and of many issues raised in the process is a social scientific responsibility for those who are living in the Middle East and Turkey and of any who would like to contribute to debates on multiculturalism. In any case, it is my conviction that the insights gained from a careful consideration of this model can benefit future policy considerations in the years and decades to come. All things considered, this text is an enthusiastic intellectual 'call' for paying heed to the internal social dynamics, as much as it is a presentation of a new multiculturalist model produced by a Turkish scholar.

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