

## THE INVENTION OF THE ORIENTAL 'OTHER' IN EUROPEAN MODERNITY

PhD Candidate Lulzim Hoxha  
Lecturer at the "European University of Tirana"

### ABSTRACT

The construction of 'Otherness' through the oriental world, continued in the west for centuries after the crusades. With time, the antagonism against the Oriental societies started to escape the geopolitical and religious domain, and displaced in western culture, knowledge, politics and history. In different periods of western civilization, this antagonism (or dualism) with the oriental 'Other' was manifested in new forms, depending mostly on the socio-political context in the western world. By means of this paper, I'll try to describe the process in which western cultural theory re-invented it's category of otherness (basically the orient), in a way in which contributed in the construction of a certain image of the western world. In other words: by inventing a certain category of 'Otherness', western cultural and political theory constructed and reproduced a certain image of the European 'self'. Through a constructivist approach, I'll try to explain what is the role of the oriental 'Other' in the development of western political theory and what kind of forces influenced the western perceptions on the oriental world. The main references of this approach are authors of theories of nationalism and politics of identity such as Gerard Delanty, Eric Hobsbawm, Ernest Gellner but also the paper will be focused on the discourse analysis of several authors of western political theory such as Tomas Aquinas, Machiavelli, Montesquieu, Marx and John Stuart Mill. My claim is that the perceptions, considerations and analysis of these authors gave an important influence in the invention of the oriental 'Other' in western political theory. It also has to be noted the role of western travelers, diplomats and scholars, which until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century had a very limited information about the orient, therefore the construction of the orient in the western world had to be through an imagined identity that fits in the symbolic coordinates of the western *common sense*; namely through western cultural theory.

**Keywords:** Politics of identity, Orientalism, Constructivism, Discourse analysis.