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BORDERS OF DIFFERENCES: A EUROPEAN CHALLENGE

> "I think, that this is entering my space unconditionally
> I am open to the best and the worst."
> **Jacques Derrida**

Introduction

The increasing political presence of immigrants in contemporary Europe has generated debate about the nature of multicultural and multi-religious societies. The demand for the recognition of cultural, religious, racial, and ethnic differences has occupied a central place in the post-national politics of today. From the beginning of the XXI century the liberal imperative to tolerate and respect cultural and religious diversity has entered into conflict with the sovereignty of the host society.

According to Arjun Appadurai, globalization and its consequences in the form of multiculturalism, encompasses five main areas: ethnoscapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, finanscapes, and ideoscapes. The ethnoscape means the landscape of persons which constitute the shifting world where we live: tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guest workers and other mobile groups who appear to affect the politics of and between nations, to a hitherto unprecedented degree [Appadurai 1990: 1-24]. According to Appadurai the homogenizing pressure of globalization paradoxically produces cultural heterogeneity. From his point of view, globalization involves the use of a variety of instruments of homogenization: armaments,

advertising techniques, language hegemonies, and clothing styles. For our goals, such instruments as "clothing styles" will be interesting in the context of European hijab debates. The relationships between homogenization and heterogenization or between universalization and particularization are not direct. Slavoj Zizek rightly points out that it is deeply misleading to posit rising globalization in opposition to particular identities, since the true opposition is between globalization and universalism. For him as a left-wing critic, the new world is global but not universal; it is an order, which rather than negating the particular, allocates each and every particular, a place [Zizek 1998: 988-1009]. Respect and tolerance for the ethnically different is a reaction to the universal dimension of the world market and hence occurs against its background and on its very terrain [Zizek 1997: 42]. Multiculturalism in Zizek's formulation is the form of the appearance of universality in its exact mirror opposite and is therefore the ideal form of global capitalist ideology.

European and American public discourses on Islam are closely linked with the debate on Islam's compatibility with the West and the deep differences between them. Islam is frequently associated with the Al-Qaida movement, the Palestinian and Iran issue, and the discussion of Islam as a religion has acquired a politicized approach. Several incidents in recent years have increased tensions between Western European states and their Muslim populations: the 2004 Madrid and 2005 London attacks, the murder of Theo van Gogh in 2004, the 2004 ban of the head scarf coupled with the 2011 ban of the "burqa" in France, the 2005 Paris riots, the 2006 Danish cartoon incident, and several high-profile murders, the 2011 killing spree in Norway by Anders Breivik. Local national minorities and immigrants were and are a source of cultural and religious differentiation and religion has also been seen as a historically and contemporarily important facet of the cultures of people arriving in Europe.

Diaspora

The phenomenon and concept of "diaspora" seems to be a relevant framework for deeper understanding of all kinds of cultural and religious differentiation in post-modern society. As Chantal Saint – Blancat wrote, this parallel process of settlement and transnational mobility is made

possible by the current spiritual extraterritoriality and vitality of religion. According to her view, "diaspora is becoming a true social laboratory in which a flexible category of belonging is developing" [Saint – Blancat 2002: 138-151]. She tries to answer the question: how are Muslims today reshaping their relations to time and space? Saint – Blancat's opinion is that we should distinguish two levels: the first is expressed through developments in interpretation of religious sources, demonstrated by the dynamics of conflict in religious de- and reterritorialization and the second level reflects the creation of a form of subjectivity through the development of collective memory and identity. Religious pluralism is a source for conflict inside (the struggles between movements and religious leaderships for control of codes of meaning and symbolic boundaries) and outside (Islam never was a religion of minorities) of the Islamic diaspora.

In the current discourse on diaspora some confusion arises because of the multiplicity of meanings assigned to this word. Diaspora is a community of individuals living outside their homeland who identify themselves in some way with the state or peoples of that homeland. At the same time, diaspora means communities whose members live outside a homeland while maintaining active contacts with it. Although diasporic communities may, and perhaps usually are, studied as ethnic minorities, they also justify analysis as actors in international politics, religious pluralism and social-cultural dialogue. Globalization and European integration are starting to be the source of growing diaspora everywhere. Today each country has its own diaspora which are different from many points of view. We speak today about "cultural diaspora" (Cohen), "fear diaspora" (Appadurai), "virtual diaspora", "crystallised diaspora" and "fluid diaspora." However, each of them is a religious diaspora at the same time.

Researchers have posed theoretical questions, the answers to which are of critical importance. "Does there exist a "*disposition*", a specific spatial and social organisation that characterizes and differentiates migrant groups, described under this denomination of diaspora, from other social and spatial "dispositions", produced by other migrant groups?" [Anteby-Yemini and Berthomiere 2005; 139-147]. Lisa Anteby-Yemini and William Berthomiere proposed three criteria as being characteristic of diaspora: the maintenance and the development of a collective identity in the "diasporised people", the existence of an internal organization distinct from those existing in the country of origin or in the host coun-

try and significant and real contacts with the homeland. These authors mostly wrote about Jewish diaspora which is an important consideration for the present article, but their criteria of diasporas are universal. Michel Bruneau defined three major types of diaspora: the entrepreuneurial diaspora (Chinese); the religious diaspora (Jews or Greeks) and the political diaspora (Palestinians, Tibetans), [Bruneau 1995]. Robin Cohen defined four types of diaspora from a territorial or state point of view: labour diaspora (Indians); imperial diaspora (British); trade diaspora (Chinese, Lebanese) and cultural diaspora (the Caribbean case), [Cohen 1997]. These types of diaspora are not pure and each kind has many common features: the imperial type is cultural too, the trade diaspora is religious at the same time, etc. The attempt to describe diasporic phenomena only by the dispersion of a population which originated from a one nation-state in several host countries is superficial.

The important feature of a diaspora is that it has imaginary territory where spiritual, cultural and social dimensions exist. Olivier Roy, the French expert on Islam, named this process an "imaginary ummah". Roy considers the formation of this new pseudo-ummah, with its distinctive identity, to be evidence of the deterritorialization of Islam. He adds, that "the new community may be purely ideal (with no ties other than faith), it may be based on traditional networks, but it always works as a reconstruction" [Roy 2002: 157].

The cultural and religious differentiation in Europe is connected with a situation, in which the potential origins of immigrants are culturally distinct from traditional European cultures, values and perceptions of democracy. When we try to define the borders of cultural and religious differentiation in Europe, we should find the key characteristics which make or create these borders. First of all, it is a new discovery that modern European values are not universal for everyone. While the societies of Member States share such values as pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity, responsibility and gender equality, inside states a wave of misunderstanding between the population of the host country and immigrants is increasingly apparent. Such values as fundamental rights, individual rights, the expression of freedom and its borders, family – gender relations, subordination of women to men, the borders of public demonstration of religious symbols and religious appearance, different understanding of religious tolerance/intolerance is

starting to be a field of disagreement in many European countries. This disagreement is not only theoretical; it is apparent in everyday European life. As a consequence of these theoretical and practical disagreements it is evident that national identity in Europe tends to be based more on ethnicity than on a set of civic values.

„Euro-Islam"

Such definitions as "Euro-Islam" are becoming more than a metaphor[1]. The wikipedia describes Euro-Islam as a hypothesized new type of Islam, which some believe is or should be emerging in Europe. This new kind of Islam would combine the duties and principles of Islam with contemporary European culture, including European values and traditions such as human rights, the rule of law, democracy and gender equality. But most often "Euro-Islam" is described as the reality of the presentation of present day Islam in Europe. Originally "Euro-Islam" was associated only with one actor – the Muslim minority, but later researchers revealed, and started to analyze, another actor in this reality – host-Europeans.

Many present day processes, tendencies and events are characterized by the presence of the Muslim population in Europe, where Christianity and secularization dominate spiritually. But principles of religious and secular life are not the same in the different countries of Europe. For example Anglo-Saxon differentialism is deduced from a strong individualistic and unequal family structure (e.g. inheritance law) and implies the "right to difference" but also materializes through the "difference of rights". As Reda Benkirane wrote, the French and Arab-Muslim models are fundamentally egalitarian. "French and Islamic universalisms however diverge on two points: the expression of the cultural difference and the legal status of women. The French model assimilates skin color, physical appearances and ethnic origins, but it can be intolerant to the cultural expression of diversity" [Benkirane 2004].

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[1] Metaphors are intellectual tools. In the present day research literature we find such definitions as "narrating space", "mapping identities", "the geography of identity", "contradictory mapping of space", "geographic or place-centered dramas of domination", "sovereignty without territoriality", "disappearances and strengthening of borders", "Euro-Islam", "virtual diaspora", and "imaginary ummah" which are very close to metaphor.

According to a recent Pew Research Center study about 6% of the European population – 44 million – constitutes Muslims. The study predicts that by 2030, this percentage will increase to 8%. Today Islam is the most studied religion in Europe. But at the same time, Islamic mentality in Europe is not static and stabile, it is a process of non-stop reconstruction looking not just to the future (nobody knows what kinds of challenges will meet new Islamic generations).

On this ground, Christianity as a religion should find answers to many questions, first of all, how far it is secularized or laicized. Peter Van der asks: why expect the Muslim to integrate into our world? Is our philosophy of life such an inspiration? Is consumerism the only thing that counts?

Various researchers have tried to find an answer to the question: what is the matter with Islam in Europe today, where over the centuries many different religious minorities including Muslims, though less numerous, have resided? The reasons for the present unusual situation are the following:

 – historically Islam has never been the religion of minorities or the religion of secular societies;
 – Islam has no tools and habits for adaptation to stay and develop in a state as the religion of a minority group;
 – Muslims need to learn that criticism is a part of the democratic process; and
 – European countries have had only a short experience of immigration from outside Europe.

At the same time, Europe, which is not only de-territorialized, but also de-localized, is becoming the location of permanent transgression where a new kind of Islamic community (imaginable, reconstructed, and developing with every new generation) appears. Islamic populations in Europe have created in every country, some kind of borderland: between host and home states (imaginable and real at the same time), between native and European identities and cultures. Jocelyne Cesari's view is that the "inability to hear one another" may be the greatest problem of the Euro-Muslim debate.

Nicolas Sarkozy in his presentation "Immigration: A Crucial Challenge for the Twenty-First Century" described two radically different positions to immigration in France, which are also typical for many EU countries – two extreme ideologies: zero immigration and wide-open

borders. He added that "in France, there is a deep divide between, on the one hand, the attitude on immigration that dominates in the elite, the ruling class, and the privileged, who tend to be in favor of open borders without conditions, and, on the other hand, the attitude of the "silent majority", which is confronted with all the difficulties of everyday life and is therefore much more reticent" [Sarkozy 2007: 103]. This view of a "divided society" has more economic and social dimensions than cultural and religious ones.

Jacques Derrida, who was the first of the European philosophers to open a public debate concerning European hospitality, willingness and capability to offer the other a welcome, represented "this very elite"[2]. Derrida examined the conflict between the law of hospitality (the demand of unconditional hospitality) and the laws of hospitality (the norms, duties and laws in society which form the basis of hospitable habits). Today we realize that ten years ago he showed us all the difficulties in realizing this project. Derrida foretold this potential situation and described it: "I say not as a rule, but sometimes, exceptionally, it may happen. I cannot regulate, control or determine these moments, but it may happen, just as an act of forgiveness, some forgiveness may happen, pure forgiveness may happen. Unconditional hospitality can't be an establishment, but it may happen as a miracle… in an instant, not lasting more than an instant, it may happen" [Derrida 2001:15-16]. Please notice how many times Derrida used the verb "may". He told us not about reality but about possibility, not about necessity but about potentiality. Derrida believes that it is only faith in the possibility of the impossible that must guide our decisions. In a 1997 discussion, Derrida described two steps to internal harmonization between law and laws. Firstly, we need to negotiate the hospitality within ourselves, secondly, negotiate this hospitality with him or her, because without that we cannot be hospitable to the Other. If you are at war with yourself, you may be allergic to the Other. A broader conclusion means that multiculturalism does not necessarily mean universalism. There is no place for "unconditional hospitality".

Luce Irigaray in the book "Sharing the World" adds that when we open the door for the Other, we should be ready to risk partly losing ourselves and at the same time we must be open to the possibility of transforma-

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2   *Of Hospitality: Anne Dufourmantelle Invites Jacques Derrida to Respond.* Stanford, 2000, Stanford University Press; A Discussion with Jacques Derrida." *Theory and Event* 5.1: 2001, Available: http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/theory_and_event/toc/tae5.1.html.

tion of our own values and ideals, which are most intimate to each of us. "Without changing our conception of desire and love, the family can be restored only from a moral foundation, even more rigid than the past" [Irigaray 2008: 59].

The situation of multiculturalism shows how many differences, limits and contradictions exist between immigrants and the citizens of host countries in a democratic society: values, individual rights, and the freedom of expression, family – gender relations, changes in the European religious landscape, different understanding of religious tolerance.

Religious image as border

Often the discussion about multiculturalism is reduced to simplistic debates such as "hijab: to ban or not to ban?" or "the construction of Minarets: to ban or not to ban?" It provides a space for critical reflections on the politics of ethnicity, gender and religion in France, the Netherlands, Germany, the UK and other European states. At the same time we are dealing with one of the most pressing issues of our time: the place of religion in public life.

At a micro level, research on particular Muslim women's veiling practices has shown how the adoption of a pious identity can be used as a creative means for carving out greater personal freedom within family and community contexts. For example, studies have shown how young South Asian women in the UK appeal to Islamic scriptures about the importance of education and women's rights in marriage to justify their desires to seek higher education or professional careers. As Charlotte Butler argues, "these women are using Islam as a tool to question traditional culture" [Butler 1999: 147].

Boris Groys in the work "Under Suspicion: A Phenomenology of Media" noticed that for such French philosophers as Jean-Paul Sartre, Jacque Derrida, Jacque Lakan an important thesis or postulate was «it is impossible to see, without being visible» [Groys 2006: 71]. The same idea belongs to Emanuel Levinas who said that the Other is not beside me but faces me. This thesis is fully applicable to the multicultural and multireligious situation which has developed in present day Europe. In the light of this notion the question arises: how do minorities perceive the public

norms of the majority? A significant part of the visualization of a person's religious image is the clothes which specify their confessional allegiance. For Islam and Judaism the unity of religious consciousness, behavior, rituals and the believer's external image is extremely important. The refusal of external displays of specifically regulated confessional forms of behavior and appearance is not compensated by internal, spiritual fidelity to religious truth. These are the religions of original literal reproduction of ritual, prayer, moral rules, behavior and appearance restrictions, and gender roles. Walter Benjamin noted that literal repetition and following a ritual is a way to personal self-sacralization, of individual identification with the sacrum. Religious clothes and religious symbols are the border separating believers of one confession from believers of another and from non-believers. A religious external image is a symbol of fidelity to God, of adherence to God's laws and of literal adherence to religious moral norms. The problem of the Muslim female «dress code» is at the centre of attention for the mass media. The attitude towards it is rather inconsistent. On the one hand, it is «a marker of true Muslim identity», «a symbol of original Muslim feminity» and «an acknowledgement of a woman's role in the preservation of family values»; on the another hand, it is an actualization of the "archaic", "fundamentalist", «a cultural challenge to the present» [Hussein 2007].

The wearing of Muslim face veils and headscarves in schools, universities and at work is a sensitive topic across Europe. France is the first country in Europe to publicly ban a form of dress, that some Muslims regard as a religious duty.

Some news:

"France banned headscarves from its state primary and secondary schools in 2004 under a law against conspicuous religious symbols that also included Jewish kippas and large Christian crosses. Nikola Sarkozy has said veils oppress women and are "not welcome" in France. Parliament has already passed a non-binding resolution condemning the full Islamic face veil as "an affront to the nation's values of dignity and equality".

"The lower house of Belgium's parliament has passed a bill to ban clothing that hides a person's identity in public places such as parks, buildings and on the street".

"The city of Barcelona has announced a ban on full Islamic face-veils in some public spaces such as municipal offices, public markets and libraries".

"In 2006, the Dutch government considered but abandoned plans to impose a ban on all forms of coverings that obscured the face – from burkas to crash helmets with visors – in public places, saying they disturbed public order and safety".

"The north-western town of Novara (Italy) is one of several local authorities that have brought in rules to deter public use of the Islamic veil, passing a by-law in January 2010".

"In late 2009, Swiss Justice Minister Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf said a face-veil ban should be considered if more Muslim women begin wearing them, adding that the veils made her feel "uncomfortable".[3]

Countries across the continent have wrestled with the issue of the Muslim veil in various forms such as the body-covering burka and the niqab, which covers the face apart from the eyes. The debate is taking place in the context of religious freedom, female equality, secular traditions and fears of terrorism.

The issue of the Muslim veil has passed through an evolution of arguments from the separation of the church from the state to the respect and equality of women. Later the problem developed into an argument of national safety and the possibility of visual identification of a person. From the point of view of Amnesty International, this prohibition is a «dangerous precedent» in so far as it infringes the right of the women wearing the niqab to freedom of expression and religious beliefs.

Alain Badiou is directly critical of the burka and niqab prohibition, viewing the categories of moral and immoral in the context of differences between secular and religious (Muslim) traditions. "We would cross the border of unambiguity" [Badiou 2004a: 28]. These words fully apply to the phenomenon described. From Badiou's point of view, according to the market paradigm "a girl must show what she's got to sell… She's got to show her goods, the circulation of women abides by the generalized model, and not by restricted exchange" [Badiou, 2004].

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[3]   W. Shadid and P. S. van Koningsveld. Muslim Dress in Europe: Debates on the Headscarf. Journal of Islamic Studies Volume16, Issue1, p. 35-61; Religious Voices in Public Places. Edited by Nigel Biggar and Linda Hogan. Oxford and New York 2009; available at: http://jcs.oxfordjournals.org/content/53/1/126.full http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/3459963.stm; http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/5414098.stm; http://www.mwlusa.org/topics/dress/banning_of_headscarves_in_europe.htm;

From retrospective positions, Badiou shows that any restriction on women's appearance and the liberalization of gender relations has never given the expected results and has later been forgotten. For him, "The problem in hijab is conspicuously religious. Those brats have made their belief conspicuous" [ibidem].

During several of the last centuries, Europe has remained close to the otherness of visual perception of the Jewish religious image. The exotic Jewish image from the European-Christian perception was step by step becoming a part of European cities and the cultural landscape of small places (shtetle), having passed stages of legislative prohibitions and restrictions. In Eastern Europe there took place a slow and gradual adaptation to the Jewish religious image, to the religious specificity of its color scale, to the inclusion of special ritual items in clothes. However this process faced prohibitions regarding the use and demonstration by Jews of expensive dress and jeweler's ornaments (the Lithuanian statute 1566). At the same time it was emphasized that Jewish clothes "should be distinguishing and visible for everyone" being a border or a demarcation line. Since the 18th century in Czarist Russia and its western provinces, there was a prohibition against wearing Jewish clothes in state schools as well as outside established areas of Jewish settlement. In other regions taxes were imposed on wearing Jewish clothes and even on their sewing and manufacture. Otherness formed a border in the public, European consciousness, which separated and identified this ethno-religious minority from the Christian majority. The Jewish case proves several ideas:

- prohibitions and restrictions in the religious sphere are not effective;
- the process of religious and cultural adaptation requires time. Prohibitions and restrictions do not accelerate this adaption, but rather raise public tension.
- this adaption should be a reciprocal process. Conclusions:

Multiculturalism as a socio-political construct and a theory of global demographic and ethnic migration and mutation today is a hot subject. In every society, local national minorities and immigrants were and are a source of cultural and religious differentiation. Religion has also been seen as a historically and contemporarily important facet of the culture of people arriving in Europe. This differentiation is connected with a situation in which potential sources of immigrants are culturally distinct

from traditional European cultures, values and perception of democracy. Among the most visible distinctions there are relations between an individual and a group (family), the social status of a woman and a daughter in the family, and a public demonstration of religious beliefs which are centered on patriarchal religious law. New spiritual borders divide not territories, but the cultural domain of values in the same space. Values professed by different inhabitants of a unique territory have become a powerful source of the demarcation and disintegration of spiritual borders.

Our general conclusion is that in the diasporic, multicultural context, the plurality of cultures and values is a source of tension. The demand for the recognition of cultural, religious, racial, and ethnic differences has developed first of all in order to recognize the culture and values of the majority. For many European countries a more important question is how to manage and estimate the process of cultural adaptation, how to find a smooth way for the adaptation of immigrants and their assimilation into the host style of life, rules and values in the public sphere. Europeans may attempt to reject multiculturalism as a part of European cultural policy, but they are not able to reject multiculturalism as reality, situation and process. Multiculturalism as a part of the last ten years of European cultural policy leaves a great deal of misunderstanding and social tension. The public demonstration of religious appearance and symbols and the specificity of confessional life styles is only one visible manifestation of forthcoming tensions.

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SUMMARY

Borders of Differences: a European challenge

The article analyzes borders of cultural and religious differences in multicultural society and some formulas of peaceful coexistence. A border as a meeting point of differences becomes a "transitional object" and an object of permanent transgression. The paper draws attention to the significance of the religious factor within existing multicultural contexts as well as highlights the impact that religious pluralism might have on identity. The author explores some key markers of the border of differences: values, individual rights, freedom of expression, family – gender relations, the changes in the European religious landscape and different understanding of religious tolerance. The author examines such problems as religious appearance, religious landscape and its visualization in public life. The otherness of religious appearance and public demonstration of religious symbols has become the subject of restrictive and prohibitive acts in a number of European countries. The problem of cultural adaptation, its borders, as well as dialogue and compromise possibilities between various cultural traditions are analyzed in the sense of European discourse.