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EUROPEAN ISLAMOPHOBIA: BORDER DRAWING (F)ACTS

Apstract: In this paper I discuss the issue and present the most known relatively recent cases of *Islamophobia* in the European transnational arena, and argue that *Islamophobia* is the most extreme incarnation of an Orientalist style of thinking, which functions as a border drawing activity with an aim to differentiate *Us* from *Them*. Acts that come out of the fear of Islam and negative labels of this religion and cultures Muslims live up to are seen as the products of the feeling of loss of an *imagined* transnational *homogeneity* in Europe, i.e. with a collective failure to cope with the rapid social and demographic changes *imagined* Europe is going through.

Key words: Europe and Islam, Islamophobia, Us vs Them, border drawing, violence

"Europe is no longer Europe…It is 'Eurabia,' a colony of Islam, where the Islamic invasion does not proceed only in a physical sense, but also in a mental and cultural sense. Servility to the invaders has poisoned democracy, with obvious consequences for the freedom of thought, and for the concept itself of liberty."[2]

In past two decades European societies have been shifting from being at least nominally politically correct towards becoming openly critical of religious and cultural expressions that are thought not to be in line with values 'treasured' in Europe. Islam, both as a religion and as a social doctrine and politics, has come under scrutiny and harsh criticism by certain public intellectuals, artists, and politicians. The criticisms of Islam range from mild pro-secularist comments to those critiques that may be clearly labeled as hate speech. For example, many far right politicians support their political activism and agenda by scaremongering European populations with Islam and its adherents. Jean Marie Le Pen, former leader of Le Front National, has been claiming for a while now that Islam is not compatible with secularism, which may sound as a

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[2] *Oriana Fallaci, Incisive Italian Journalist, Is Dead at 77*. Source: <www.nytimes.com>

mere pro-secularist political comment. However, Le Front National's political platform is strongly based on anti-immigration and, either openly or *between the lines*, on anti-Islamism (Hargreaves, 2007; Fetzer and Soper, 2005), which at times bursts into an islamophobic hate speech. For example, in 2003 former party leader Jean Marie Le Pen *warned* the French about Muslim immigration, whereas his daughter, who succeeded him as the leader of the party, in 2010 said that Muslims praying on the streets were like Nazi occupation.[3] Austrian Freedom Party, Flemish Vlaams Belang (Flemish Interests), Danish People's Party, Italian Northern League, UK's British National Party etc. base their political argumentation on an anti-immigration discourse and particularly on anti-Islamism. Most of those politicians go beyond 'the attempts' to 'protect' their national cultures, and claim that they wish to protect Europe from those who (allegedly) threaten it by their (allegedly) illiberal beliefs and practices (Mudde, 2007).

On the other hand, many scholarly accounts testify that Muslims living in the Western countries feel alienated from the societies and systems of the countries they inhabit (Akhtar, 2005; Allievi, 2005; Boubekeur, 2007; Bowlby ad Lloyd Evans, 2009; Cesari, 2007; Kaya, 2009).[4] Furthermore, "many are also alienated from the cultures of their countries of origin. Even if most of these unemployed and alienated Muslims are not particularly religious, Islam clearly plays a role in reinforcing their separate identity" (Sedgwick, 2006: 221). Arun Kundnani claims that new generations of Muslims living in Europe are creating a globalized Islamic identity that is distanced from the ethnic cultures of their parents (Kundani, 2008: 41). As for the emergence of the radical forms of political Islam, principally by young people, Boubekeur claims

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[3] *France's Front National enjoys renaissance under Marine Le Pen.* Source: <www.guardian.co.uk>

[4] A survey conducted by the Open Society Institute's in 11 cities across Western Europe found that 49 per cent of Muslim respondents (55% born in the country they live in) expressed cultural identification with the state (saw themselves as British, French, etc.). The question: *Do you see yourself as British, French, German etc*. was by 49% of the surveyed Muslims answered with 'yes'. However, the question: *Do most other people in this country see you as British, French, German etc.* was answered positively only by 24.5% of the interview.[4] Some surveys and field data reveal that there is a shift in the self-understanding of immigrants nowadays, and that third generation of Muslims living in Europe alienate from their ethnic ancestry or country of origin. *The Muslims in the European Union* report states that "today many see themselves collectively as *Muslims* – thus generating more interaction among ethnically/nationally-identified communities, with knock-on effects for established Muslim organizations and the potential for the establishment of new organizations". Source: *Muslims in the European Union: Discrimination and Islamophobia*. Brussels: European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia. 2006. 31

that these radical forms are often the expression of a lack of political representation and participation by those who are excluded and socially and culturally discriminated against (Boubekeur: 2007: 36).

It is obvious that nowadays in secularized Europe Muslims have gotten organized into collective identities, which have made their public representations become a source of *European* anxiety for two reasons: because of their religious otherness and their religiousness as such, which are seen to be opposites of European secularity (Casanova, 2010). Bhikhu Parekh writes that generations of young Muslims that have grown up in Europe "did not share their parents` inhibitions and diffidence, and well knew how to find their way around the political system. More importantly, they increasingly began to define themselves in exclusively religious terms, not as Pakistani or Algerian Muslims, as their parents had done, but simply as Muslims" (Parekh, 2008: 100). Hence, homogenization of Muslims living in European countries is taking place both on national as well as on international European level through transnational networking which helps create a transnational Muslim identity that is being performed as such whenever controversies related to Muslim communities arise.

One of the manifestations of the European anxiety towards this transnational Muslim identity and transnational Muslim groupings is fear, a phobia, often labeled as *Islamophobia*, which I here tag as the most extremist incarnation of an Orientalist style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between 'the Orient' and ... 'the Occident'" (Said, 1979: 2), which has to the with the current feeling of *loss* of imagined transnational *homogeneity* in Europe, i.e. with a collective failure to cope with the rapid social and demographic changes imagined Europe is going through. In the following pages I will offer definitions and present the most 'remarkable' relatively recent cases of *Islamophobia.* My argument is that cases presented here have come out from the Orientalist way of thinking and from Orientalist borders drawing discourses (Us *vs* Them), which have had a major impact in the process of shaping dominant collective views of Islam, and which indicate that in certain social circles in a European transnational arena there is a feeling of loss of something (homogeneity), which in fact has never existed in Europe as whole.

Europe about Islam: a brief intro into Orientalism

Europeanization is often seen and defined as an attempt to bring Europeans together through processes of political and economic unification of the countries that meet certain political, economic, and legal standards (Delanty and Rumford, 2005; Olsen, 2002; Ham, 2001; McLaren, 2006; Checkel and Kat-

zenstein, 2009). Europeanization is a process of structural change that affects political and social actors and institutions, ideas and interests (Featherstone, 2003: 3). This structural change has to do with the institutionalization leading to a European polity that provokes an unpredicted cultural dynamics and contestations over meaning and identity (Rumford, 2008: 23). New cultural dynamics that comes out of the process of Europeanization involves building myths of European common sociality.

German scholar Manfred Pfister writes that the most important strategy in myth building is minimizing the 'difference within' and, at the same time, maximizing the 'difference between', and that in the case of Europe the myth building involves "playing down the differences between the various European cultures and emphasizing what they share, their common cultural heritage and characteristics, while, at the same time, blowing up as large as possible the difference between Europe and 'the rest of the world'" (Pfister, 2007: 30). Minimization of difference within Europe is not a new phenomenon; it has roots in European history of encounters with Others. For example, at the colonial times difference between Europeans would diminished had, for example, two Europeans met outside Europe, i.e. on a colonized territory. Racial categorizations in the colonies made clear distinction between Europeans and natives, no matter which European country held the power in the colony in question, despite internal belligerencies and racist stereotyping between Europeans themselves. Colonization in some aspects brought Europeans, through negotiations and power sharing, closer together. For example, British PM at the time of colonization of the Middle East described how the British and the French collaborated in the project of conquering the region:

"When you have got a . . . faithful ally who is bent on meddling in a country in which you are deeply interested -you have three courses open to you. You may renounce— or monopolize----o r share. Renouncing would have been to place the French across our road to India. Monopolizing would have been very near the risk of war. So we resolved to share" (quoted at Said, 1979: 41)

This Orientalist style of thought existed in Europe prior to colonization: in the works of European scholars, in African and Asian missionary strategies of Christian churches from Europe, in trade affairs, international politics (relations with the Ottoman Empire) etc. For example, famous philosopher Francis Bacon described Turks as being without morality, without letters, arts or sciences (Curtis, 2009: 32). Immanuel Kant one of the most acclaimed philosophers in Europe, who wrote on perpetual peace among nations, in his essay *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime* (1784) displayed what we now label as stereotypes about various European ethnic groups, while about 'Orietals' he thought of as 'degenerate' and 'unnatural' (Kant, 1960). Such a picture of non-Europeans in the works of many scholars and philosop-

hers was contrasted with the image of Europeans (or some Europeans) as *knowing subjects*, and Europe as a place of knowledge and progress. Nowadays, political and economic standing of Muslims of Europe, their depiction in politics and the media, and the call for their emancipation from their cultural life that is seen as incompatible with Europe, testify that Muslim *foreignness* is singled out as the subject of intervention.

Policy makers, even when they have good intentions, tend to essentialize Islam. This is how the Chairman of the British Commission for Racial Equality viewed Islam in his foreword to the *Muslim Guide for Teachers, Employers, Community Workers and Social Administrators*:

"Islam is a way of life, with firm and clear views on a variety of issues such as hygiene, diet, education, the role of women and, indeed, life after death. The daily lives of Muslims, their manners and mores are all determined by these views" (quoted at Bauman, 1999. 101)

Furthermore, intellectual accounts that are meant to be unbiased, often essentialize Islam and its relation with Europe. For instance, Julia Kristeva in her book *Strangers to Ourselves* without any reluctance places Islam as a religion and a cultural reference across the notion of *the West*. She does not place Islam across Christianity or Judaism, but across a political construct that goes beyond its internal religious, ethnic, ideological differences (Kristeva, 1994: 99). Even when seen in an affirmative manner Islam is perceived as a monolith. Slavoj Žižek in his book *Iraq: the Borrowed Kettle* views Islam as follows: "Islam is indeed not a religion like the others, it does involve a stronger social link, it does resist integration into the capitalist global order – and the task is to work out how to use this ambiguous fact politically" (Žižek, 2005: 48-9).

Gerd Bauman writes that this style of thought reveals that cultural identities of Muslims "have been squeezed tight and compressed into one: A Muslim is a Muslim, whatever else he or she may be" (Bauman, 1999:101). I will here now recall again Said's definition of Orientalism as a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between 'the Orient' and ... 'the Occident'. This style of thought, even when intentions are good, paves the way to collective representations that construct *the Muslim* and *Europe* as oposites. When this style of thought produces discourses which defame Muslims, than we deal with *Islamophobia*.

Islamophobia: Definition

"In a strange way, Islamophobia is bringing us together. Muslims have no common language and come from many cultures with their own traditions that have nothing to do

with Islam. They will stand side by side in the mosque, but there are divisions. But now we are the common enemy and that is fostering relationships. The Pakistani, the Nigerian, the black convert from Jamaica – we are starting to see each other as brothers"[5]

Andrew Shryock writes that the term *Islamophobia* applies to any setting in which people hate Muslims, or fear Islam, and that this word reaches its most complex connotations when it is used to describe a sentiment that flourishes in contemporary Europe and North America (Shryock, 2010: 2). Sociologists Robert Miles and Malcolm Brown in their book *Racism* write that "where the Other is Muslim, civilization and religion as points of reference for nationalism are united, because the Muslim is identified as representing both a different civilization and an alien religion" (Miles and Brown, 2003: 163). These authors also claim that there is something unique about *Islamophobia*, because situations in which Muslims become a racialized group produce an amalgam of nationality ('Arab' or 'Pakistani, for example), religion (Islam) and politics (extremism, fundamentalism, terrorism).[6]

Racialization is omnipresent in Orientalistic and *Islamophobia* discourses. According to Runnymede Trust, British race equality think tank, *Islamophobia* exists if the following conditions are present:

1. Islam seen as a single monolithic bloc, static and unresponsive to new realities.

2. Islam seen as separate and other – (a) not having any aims or values in common with other cultures (b) not affected by them (c) not influencing them.

3. Islam seen as inferior to the West – barbaric, irrational, primitive, sexist.

4. Islam seen as violent, aggressive, threatening, supportive of terrorism, engaged in a 'clash of civilizations'.

5. Islam seen as a political ideology, used for political or military advantage.

6. Criticisms made by Islam of 'the West' rejected out of hand.

7. Hostility towards Islam used to justify discriminatory practices towards Muslims and exclusion of Muslims from mainstream society.

8. Anti-Muslim hostility accepted as natural and 'normal'.[7]

The Runnymede report published in late 1990s, in a way, introduced the word *Islamophobia* into the public discourse not only in the UK, but also el-

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[5] The words of Muhamed Umar, a publisher from the UK. *Islamophobia: Issues, Challenges and Action. A Report by the Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia.* London. Trentham Books. 2004. 4

[6] Ibid. 164

[7] Ibid.

sewhere in Europe and the US. Chris Allen, Birmingham University based researcher, argues that Runnymede report, with hindsight, is weak and flawed to a certain extent. Allen questions if the typology is relevant nowadays, more than a decade after the publishing of the report. Namely, while the Runnymede report focused on *Islamophobia* which at the time was becoming more explicit, more extreme and more dangerous, Allen claims that nowadays anti-Muslim and anti-Islam discourses have become less obvious "being hidden behind or even embedded within the debates and arguments surrounding issues that might more appropriately be understood as being issues relating to secularism, liberalism and tolerance" (Allen, 2010). The manifold nature of *Islamophobic* manners lead Chris Allen to suggest that there is a need to differentiate between *Islamophobia* as an ideology that informs and shapes our speech, attitudes and thoughts, and an *Islamophobia* which results in exclusionary and discriminatory practices including violence and abuse (Allen, 2010). The latest example of a disguised *Islamophobia* in Europe is so called *sexual nationalism*, coupled with homonationalism, or gay imperialism as some call it (Puar, 2007). Namely, there are tendencies showing that some countries question certain applicants for the legal residence and citizenship about their stances on the position of women, homosexuality, free expression of one's sexual orientation (the Netherlands, some German states, France to some extent). In many cases Muslims are targets of such policies and discourses of containment that locate Islam and ethnic cultures of some Muslims as intrinsically illiberal. Sexual rights thus have become an instrument for the consolidation of national identities, and are being used as a pretext for exclusion of those who might not subscribe to the values of so called *sexual democracy* (Haritaworn et al, 2008). On the following pages, some of the most extremist relatively new cases of *Islamophobia* will be presented.

Islamophobia: (F)Acts

In the past decade a series of attacks on Muslims, their institutions and places of worship took place. Here are only a few most recent attacks that took place in 2009 and 2010: on July 1, 2009, 32-year-old Marwa El Sherbiny was fatally stabbed 18 times during court proceedings in Dresden, Germany, by her 28-year-old neighbor, Alex Wiens, a Russian-born German citizen, who reportedly claimed to be a supporter of the National Democratic Party of Germany, a right-wing neo-Nazi organization. In November 2009, a Muslim cemetery in Manchester, England, was vandalized for the third time in three months. On May 10, 2009, inmates at Ranby Prison in Nottinghamshire, England, made a bomb out of fireworks, a fishing rod, and detonators, intending to kill fellow Muslim prisoners. In February 2010, the head of the French Co-

uncil of the Muslim Faith reported that racist graffiti was painted on the walls of the mosque in Sourgues, in the sixth such incident in 2010. A mosque in Haninge, Sweden, was vandalized six times during a six-month period in 2009—2010. Even though the police was notified about incidents, no progress has been reported towards the identification of the perpetrators.[8]

Islamophobia as a style of thought has been vastly exercised in past two decades in European media, politics, and even academia. For example, Michel Houellebecq, the French writer, came under critique for insulting Islam in his book "Atomised" (*Les particules élémentaires*). He was brought to court for publishing the following in his novel: "I know that Islam - by far the most stupid, false and obfuscating of all religions - currently seems to be gaining ground, but it's a transitory and superficial phenomenon: in the long term, Islam is even more doomed than Christianity".[9] In his book "Platform", the father of the character named Michel gets killed by Muslims. Michel in one of the passages says: "I had a vision of migrating flows criss-crossing Europe like blood vessels. Muslims appeared as clots which were only slowly reabsorbed".[10] Had these views been the thought of Houellebecq's characters only, one could claim that there was no problem, since they could have been regarded as mere fiction. However, the wording and the overall textual solution of the book proved that actually these views came from the author himself. Moreover, Houellebecq expressed his anti-Islamic sentiments in the courts proceedings stating that he had never displayed the least contempt for Muslims, and added that he had as much contempt as ever for Islam.[11] In an interview to *Life* magazine Houellebecq's expressed his view of the Quran: "In literary terms, the Bible has several authors, some good and some as bad as crap. The Quran has only one author and its overall style is mediocre".[12] The court in France cleared Houellebecq of inciting racial hatred, ruling that he did not express hatred towards Muslims, even though he did express hatred for Islam, however he did not call others to share his views or to discriminate Muslims.[13] Notwithstanding the court's rule, Houellebecq's case just heated the discussion on the limits of the free speech, which in a way marked the last decade when it comes to the issue of Islam in Europe.

Film director Theo Van Gogh and former Dutch politician and activist Ayaan Hirsi Ali in 2004 released a short (10 min.) film *Submission.* The film

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[8] *Violence against Musllims: An Update to HRF's 2008 Hate Crime Survey*. Human Rights First. 2010.

[9] Houellebecq, Michel. *Atomised.*

[10] Houellebecq, Michel. *Platform*

[11] *French author denies racial hatred.* Source: <news.bbc.co.uk>

[12] Ibid.

[13] *French author cleared of race hate.* Source: <news.bbc.co.uk>

features stories of four fictional female characters, abused in the name of Islam. Their stories are narrated by a single actress, dressed in a transparent chador covering her naked body painted with quotes from Quran. The film provoked both praise and criticism, as well as outrage among some members of the Dutch Muslim community. On November 2, 2004 Theo Van Gogh got assassinated in public. The killer, a Dutch Moroccan, left a letter calling for jihad against infidels, Europe, USA, and Hirsi Ali.

The limits of free speech *vs* blasphemy and defamation discussion reached its peak in 2005 when Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten published controversial cartoons of Muhammad (which many Muslims found insulting). Violence escalated in many Muslim countries, public protests were held throughout Europe (dozens died in the protests, the author of the cartoons got under constant police protection due to death threats coming from Islamic extremists). Opinions in Europe, in non-religious circles, were divided, ranging from full support to free speech notwithstanding defamation accusations, to contempt for insulting Muslims.

In 2010s, alongside media workers and artists, politicians also used different media to convey their anti-Islamic message. The Dutch case in this regard is interesting, since two films that portray Muslims as backwards and violent were produced in this country in last 10 years. Interestingly enough, Holland is taught to be one of the most tolerant countries in the world due to its tolerance for social groups which have been persecuted elsewhere and which find refuge in the Netherlands (religious and political minorities), as well as for its openness to homosexuality. For example, Geert Wilders, far right Dutch politician, wrote the script and openly stood behind a short film named *Fitna.* The film was released in 2008, and provoked outcry among Muslims worldwide as well as among many politicians, academics, public intellectual in Europe and elsewhere. This 15 minutes film features images of beheadings, women bashing in Islamic countries, pictures of girls being prepared for female genital mutilation, anti-Semitic hate speech by Islamic religious leaders, an excerpt of the 9/11 video. All these images went together with the quotations from the Quran, obviously taken out of the context and shown side by side with the uneasy images of violence and killing. The intention to horrify the spectator lies behind the images and speech that evokes the slaughter of Theo Van Gogh, a controversial director of the film Submission. Presented in the context of consecutive slide show of bizarre images and the Quranic verses this film had an aim to produce phobia among the spectators: phobia of the growing number of those who, should 'We' let them grow, will someday allegedly impose their world view on domicile Dutch and Europeans.

Melanie Phillips, contributor to the British newspaper *Daily Mail,* seems to be on a similar track with the abovementioned public personalities when it comes to seeing Muslims as a group that embodies illiberal values and politics.

In 2006 she authored the book *Londonistan: How Britain is creating a terror state within* in which she criticized British multiculturalism and cultural relativism which in her opinion secure grounds for the growth of Islamic extremism in Britain. Once a supporter of the liberal left in Britain, Melanie Phillips over time has turned into a conservative who embraces conservative anti-Islamic, anti-gay, and pro-Iraqi war politics. Phillips claims that: "Among Britain's governing class - the intelligentsia, its media, its politicians, its judiciary, its church and even its police - a broader and deeper pathology has allowed and even encouraged Londonistan to develop" (quoted in Ashley, 2011). In Germany, politician Thilo Sarrzin member of the Social Democratic Party of Germany, stirred up German and European political arena with his book *Germany is Self Destructing* in which he defamed Islam by stating that "there is no other religion with such a flowing transition to violence, dictatorship, and terrorism", and that Muslims are "associated with taking advantage of the social welfare state and criminality". In his book Sarazzin expressed his phobia of Islam:

"I don't want the country of my grandchildren and great grandchildren to be largely Muslim, or that Turkish or Arabic will be spoken in large areas, that women will wear headscarves and the daily rhythm is set by the call of the muezzin. If I want to experience that, I can just take a vacation in the Orient"[14]

Thilo Sarazzin got under critique by many politicians; however he also received support from some publicly known Germans as well as from 'ordinary' people. For example, a survey conducted by Emnid pollsters of Germany's *Bild am Sonntag* newspaper on September 5, revealed that nearly one in five Germans would vote for a political party led by Thilo Sarrazin.[15] Public intellectuals such as a Peter Sloterdijk and sociologist Necla Kelek (herself of Turkish origin) supported Sarazzin. Peter Hauk, head of Baden-Württemberg state's Christian Democratic Union parliamentary party, said that many CDU supporters strongly agreed with Sarrazin's views, and that it would not be acceptable to simply criticize him.

This sort of anti-Islamic social activism contributes to the mobilization of far rightists and to the creation of ultranationalist groups that seek ways to combat the 'spread of Islam'. In the UK, for example, *the English Defence League*, a far right group of activists formed in 2009, has openly advocated combating 'the spread of Islamic extremism in England'. The strategies this group in employing involve mostly street marches and Internet activism. The group

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[14] Source: <www. usatoday.com>

[15] *Germany: Broad Support for Thilo Sarrazin Anti-Islamic Views*. Source: <www. thetrumpet.com>

claims to be multicultural, and that it is gathering people of many faiths and races which oppose jihadist only, not all Muslims. There is an offshoot organization called *the Scottish Defence League* in Scotland. Furthermore, on the European level there is so called *Stop Islamization of Europe*, a political group, originated in Denmark, which opposes Muslim immigration in Europe. They say they want to prevent Islam becoming a dominant political force. This group has affiliated organizations in England, France, Germany and some other European countries including Russia and Poland. Unlike *English Defence League* SIOE does not approve of the concept of moderate Muslims.

It is not only far rightist who have making a stand against what they see as a primitive and tribal cultural practice. Over the course of less than six months spanning from October 2010 to the March 2011 the leaders of three most influential European countries proclaimed the death of multiculturalism. In October 2010 Angela Merkel sent a message to Muslims in Germany saying: "Now we obviously also have Muslims in Germany. But it's important in regard to Islam that the values represented by Islam must correspond with our constitution…What applies here is the constitution, not sharia….Our culture is based on Christian and Jewish values and has been for hundreds of years, not to say thousands".[16] Few months later, British PM David Cameron said that European nations need to replace 'passive tolerance' with 'an active, muscular liberalism'.[17] French PM Sarkozy put it this way: "We have been too concerned about the identity of the person who was arriving and not enough about the identity of the country that was receiving him". In another statement Sarkozy said: "It is out of question that French society should be influenced by Islam… This is a secular country".[18] As we can see, clear distinctions between Islam and European societies have been made by politicians who lead three European nations, which to a great extent influence agenda setting in Europe. Therefore, it looks like as if a new political course is taking place, making *the European* distance from *the Non-European*. We see mainstream politicians sending messages to 'non-moderate' Muslims to integrate, i.e. to melt into the majority society. *Islam issue* and immigration have become a regular topic of the pre-election agendas in much of Western Europe. Integration of foreigners and their offspring is almost a daily concern of many media houses throughout Europe. Islam has become a scare-crow for Europeans; it is being used for scaremongering for political as well as ideological purposes.

Markha Valenta, of Amsterdam University, claims that a false public memory of stable mutuality disrupted by the arrival of people of other cultures is

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[16] *German Muslims must obey law not sharia: Merkel.* Source: <www.reuters.com>

[17] *New Muslim policy needed: British PM.* Source: <www.nypost.com>

[18] *Sarkozy sets sights on defining role of Islam in a secular France.* Source: <www.france24.com>

behind these attacks on multiculturalism. This kind of discourse, in Valenta's words, presents us with a public 'memory' of a shocking change through which an imaginary life of stable tranquility and mutuality gets suddenly disrupted and scuppered by the arrival of people with values from other civilizations and cultures (Valenta, 2011). The aforementioned political statements prompt research on the relationship between Europe and Islam understood as cultural facts since there is obviously an identitarian dynamism that renders these two social entities as cultural opposites.

The cases presented above testify that *Islamophobia* functions as a drastic and extreme border drawing activity, which comes out as a product of interaction between *Us* and *Them*. It is true that Europe is not what it was twenty years ago. It is also true that some Muslim communities and leaders brought certain practices Europe which many Europeans consider conservative and not in line with social liberation logic of the XXth century. Proclaiming that 'multiculturalism is dead', and advocating the departure from 'cultural relativism' reveal the awareness that things are not as they used to be, and that certain moves need to be undertaken so that the feeling of security could get reestablished. Therefore, Islam is nowadays more seen as part of the problem, which is a view that does not bring solutions but brings only new problems, such as deepening of marginalization of Muslims, segregation of Muslim communities, rise of racism among members of the majority and through religion performed political radicalism and social conservatism among minorities, that in turn feed the racism of the majority.

Conclusion

Peter van Ham argues that "the first 'foreign' culture one comes across when traveling south or east from Europe is Islam, which may explain why the Muslim world has always been Europe's first choice Other, and occasionally its preferred enemy" (Van Ham, 2001: 209). European states (especially the Mediterranean area) have a long history of contacts, enmities, wars, conquests, missions with Islam. Muslims throughout this history have been seen as enemies of Christianity and European states. As early as mid-ninth century Pope John VIII announced that divine law prohibited any social links between the faithful and unfaithful (Muslims), and that those who made alliances with the Saracens (then name for Muslims) were considered enemies of Christ. Muslim presence in Sicily and Andalusia, and the later conquest of Constantinople as well as the proximity of the Ottoman Empire had for many centuries been a thorn in the eye of the European emperors and the Catholic Church, which then triggered the creation of narratives which made Muslims a scarecrow to Europeans (Mastnak, 2010).

Anti-Islam tendencies are nowadays incarnated in the process of drawing boundaries between *Us* and *Them*, between *the Muslim* and *the European*, between Islam, as a totality of 'strange' religious experiences, morals, world views, politics, and the enlightened and progressive secularism that 'conspicuously' embraces individualism, human rights, freedom of thought and expression etc. According to Barth, boundaries are drawn aiming at constructing homogeneity within the group and establishing cultural difference between groups (Barth, 2000: 30). In our case here homogeneity is being constructed through the process of discursive production of meanings about Islam, its alleged relation with the secular, with the West, with Europe, with individualism, with human rights, with the position of women etc. European universalism is seen as being under threat of Islam, that allegedly aims at becoming a social power that would change the social landscape and the morals of the realm of 'Us'. The feeling of loss, or of losing something the is intrinsically 'Ours', with the tendency of pointing fingers towards 'outsiders', embodies the politics of culturalization of secularism that takes place in the encounter with the Other. This feeling of loss, in a way, comes out of the consciousness that the Other is here, the s/he will not disappear, and that his/her very existence, life styles and world views question what 'We' stand for. Tentatively, and with a caution, we may conclude that *Islamophobia* as a style of thought does bring Muslim together, but we could set a hypothesis and ask if it brings common sociality to the *imagined* Europeanness through the employment of the feelings of loss of something that has never existed (homogeneity). This issue is yet to be examined in the future.

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Slaviša Raković

EVROPSKI STRAH OD ISLAMA: ISCRTAVANJE GRANICA

U ovom tekstu su analizirani i predstavljeni najpoznatiji relativno nedavni slučajevi islamofobije u evropskoj transnacionalnoj areni. Glavni argument je da je islamofobija najekstremnije ovaploćenje orijentalističkog stila mišljenja koje funkcioniše kao process crtanja granica između nas i njih. Islamofobni činovi i negativna značenja koja se pridaju islamu kao religiji i kulturama mu-

slimana u ovom radu su viđeni kao posledice osećanja gubitka *zamišljene* transnacionalne *homogenosti* u Evropi., tj. kao posledice kolektivnog neuspeha da se podnesu brze društvene i demografske promene kroz koje ta zamišljena Evropa prolazi.

Ključne reči: Evropa i islam, islamofobija, mi vs oni, crtanje granica, nasilje