Katica KULAVKOVA

Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Skopje

**Secularism and Post-Secularism –**

**The Two Great Religious and Civilizational Shifts**

Key words: *religious* *and* *civilizational shift*, *secularism*, *anti-secularism,* *post-secularism*, *theocracy, desacralization, religious identities, utilitarianism, post-Christianity, Europe*

**Introduction/Abstract**

When it comes to the relationship between state and religion, we could discuss two paradigms, which serve as the basis of two major “religious turns/shifts” in humankind’s more recent history: the secular (which unfolds at the turn of the 18th and the 19th century) and the post-secular (which unfolds at the end of the 20th and the first decades of the 21st century). The secular shift opposes theocracy (anti-theocratic position), whereas the post-secular urges for the renewal of theocracy (anti-secular position). In contemporaneity, both of these religious shifts surpass the limits of the religious code and are rendered as more encompassing civilizational shifts. The world today is faced with the conflict between the secular and the anti-secular paradigm, between religious traditions and religious fundamentalisms, and the result of that conflict will be key for the future of human civilization. Europe is at the centre of both religious and civilizational shifts, and it is therefore the focus of any debate regarding secularism and post-secularism.

**The first religious shift: the paradigm of secularism**

The first “religious shift” brought with it a separation of public discourses – a separation of the state, educational, cultural and political institutions from the religious ones, i.e. secularization of the (theocratic) state. The secular paradigm is not reflected merely upon the socio-religious map of the world, but more broadly, in science, art and culture. Civilization is recognised as “secular”. The European narrative of “secular civilization” encompasses the concept of “post-Christian civilization” and “religiosity” (Hoelzl & Ward 2008).[[1]](#footnote-1) Namely, with time, secularism, accepted mainly on European ground and in predominantly Christian societies, liberates society from the excess of religious tension and identification (collective and individual), thereby paving the way towards a modern and postmodern perception of identity and placing the focus on the trans-religious, trans-ethnic cultural aspect of citizenry. Up until the modern age (20th century), the three types of identity – ethnic, religious and cultural – presented an almost indelible and stable unity. Today, they have been substituted with (and reduced to) the liberal, fluid “civic identity”.

The secular model of the state opposed the excluding nature of the theocratic model, which instigated religious hatred, civil conflicts and global clashes based on religious grounds (the Crusades of the 11th and the 12th century, the French Wars of Religion in the 16th century). The secular religious shift is a component of the general historical and civilizational paradigm of the era of industrial capitalism, philosophical pragmatism and cultural modernism. It is a part of the civic paradigm of early capitalism which revised the inherited theocratic tradition of the indivisibility of religion from legislative and political government, of religion from education and culture. The secular worldview propagates civil liberties and human rights independent of the religious identity of the individual or of the ethnic community. Secularism, as a philosophical and political strategy, distinguishes society from state, and state from church, thereby placing religious identity within the area of immanent individual human rights (personal, intimate), as well as within the area of collective rights, including the right to atheism, religious indeterminacy and indifference.[[2]](#footnote-2)

The paradigm of secularism opposes the paradigm of theocracy (clericalism), of the centuries long practice of theocratic regulation of the medieval state. The theocratic state was attune and even subordinate to the monotheistic rule of the church and the official, dominant religion. It opposed religious diversity, alternative and minor religious identities and ideologies. The monotheistic theocratic concept shows/showed a tendency to radicalization as a result of intolerance – not only towards alternative religions, but also towards alternative interpretations of religious dogmas within its “own” religious paradigm (let us remember the concept of the Spanish Inquisition). As a consequence of such a rigid, vulgar, pragmatic and political tendency, the theocratic concept (1) nourished the animosity between different monotheistic religions (Christianity, Islam, Judaism); (2) caused the creation of internal religious factions, sects and identities; (3) reflected itself negatively on the sacral dimension of religion.

The secularization of Europe in the 19th and 20th centuries unfolded differentially and in several ways. While Western European states saw a gradual and moderate secularization of its institutions, the Eastern European states chose a more radical form of secularism, including even atheism (Albania). “Eastern European secularism” was more restrictive in respect to individual human rights and media liberties, but it reflected positively on the notion of religion as a collective tradition and an intimate human right. “Western European secularism” led to a revision of the ethical, and even aesthetic, values, all of which reflected in the domain of culture and mass media, thus elevating the principle of *freedom of speech* into a cult maxim of modern society. On the other hand, the moderate Western European secularism initiated the process of desacralization and “scientization” of the European spirit, whereas the radical and rigid Eastern European secularism prompted a series of interesting spiritual liberties: atheism and moderate atheism (the decline of religious passions and differences), the decline of the visibility of religious identities, the appearance of a new sacralization, an authentic, intimate spirituality, and even renewal of pagan and hybrid forms of religiousness.

In Western Europe, the secular religious shift brought into question the inherited medieval, imperial, and colonial tenets of Western European civilization, including the notion of *national identity*. Namely, until the end of the eighteenth century, national identity had been defined through the prism of religious identity, while, from the nineteenth century onwards national identity has been (for the most part) perceived as a civil and transethnic category not necessarily related to religious affiliation. In this respect, all significant sociocultural currents (in Western Europe) have been a reflection of a relativized ethno-religious identity, including civil society, democracy, and decolonialization. On the other hand, Southeast Europe (Russia and the Orthodox Balkans) continued the tradition of ethno-religious identification (origin, language, culture, religion).[[3]](#footnote-3)

This situation has brought about the dethronization and societal marginalization of Christianity on the European continent, where it has been the dominant religious paradigm for centuries. The beginnings of post-Christianity are located in the philosophy of modern society and the paradigm of “secularism” (anti-clericalism), which calls for distance between public and state affairs and religious institutions. Renouncing the theocratic model of ruling, modern Europe (America, Australia) has positioned confession within the domain of the private and has drawn a formal, constitutional and legislative distance from church institutions.

But, in contrast to Europe and the so called “Western world”, in many parts of the world, especially those marked by the Islamic religious paradigm, the presecular (theocratic, shariatic) model of public and state organization has been preserved, and with it, the conservative approach towards the treatment of ethno-religious and cultural identity. The conservative paradigm of theocracy has transformed into a legitimate anti-secularism and has not only not brought about a social marginalization of Islam and “post-Islam”, but on the contrary, it has emphasised the role of Islam in public and state affairs, including in the identification of individuals and social communities (ethnic, religious). Moreover, even within the Islam community there has been conflict between separate Islamic discourses (Sunnis versus Shiites).

The continuation and transfer of medieval theocracy in postmodern circumstances restored and renewed anti-secularism and post-secularism as a vital and powerful paradigm. It has shown that secularism is not a global phenomenon, that it has been partially introduced and that it has divided contemporary human civilization into secular and anti-secular. The last two decades, especially the 21st century, have seen the reappearance of anti-secularism on the social and civilizational scene. In Europe, this is in the form of post-secularism, considering the fact that it is unfolding in the context of suppression of secularism and renewal of the role of Christianity, but within completely new surroundings of chaotic and fluid identity parameters (to ethnic, religious and civil identities, we now add the hybrid and “new” gender and trans-sexual identities).

Yet, despite all differences between the Western and Eastern European secular modus, secularism can be deemed a common modern European tradition. Secularism is a gain of modern Europe, unlike post-secularism, that enormous civilizational temptation that distances contemporary Europe from its cult values (liberal, civil, democratic): freedom of expression (both verbal and non-verbal), civil identity, and individualism. Europe today is already in a process of de-Europeanization. The loss of modern European identity is occurring hand in hand with the second European religious shift – post-secularism. Europe is facing the new face of religious identity; it clashes with the growing presence of Islamic identity on European grounds, partly migrated from the Middle East (also Africa), and partly already assimilated as a component part of the new European identity.

Therefore, we cannot treat the question of the new European civil and civilizational identity and at the same time ignore the question of the European religious identity (the contact and conflict between Christianity and Islam in contemporary Europe). The second religious shift of post-secularism points to the phenomenon of post-Christianity and to the new “Christianization”, in light of the coming inter-religious and inter-civilizational dialogue in Europe.

**The second religious shift:**

**the paradigm of post-secularism (new theocracy)**

Less than two centuries later, between the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, a new religious shift came about. Now reversely posited, it is commonly referred to as a “post-secular” shift (as a broader notion), although the close, but not altogether synonymous terms *trans-secular* and *anti-secular* are also used.[[4]](#footnote-4) It is difficult to call this shift “new”, as its paradigm is in many ways conservative and similar to the pre-secular, theocratic and clerical paradigm. That is why this second religious shift is more precisely determined as anti-secular: it supresses secularism and it constitutes itself as resistance towards the secular model of the state and not as a completely new form of relationship between state and religion. Still we set it apart as a second significant religious shift, because it undermines the established secular system in Europe, because it brings into question secularism and installs itself as the dominant world philosophy and (even) as an anthropological and civilizational constant. Besides, the re-establishment of the non-secular paradigm of rule is occurring within new civilizational, informatic and technologic circumstances, and therefore it is necessary to study its social function in contemporary society.

Post-secularism is a historical shift that brings back religion in European society with a flourish and in a very utilitarian manner: first, religious creed is being presented as ideological creed and is being infiltrated in the political ideology and developmental strategy; second, the religious codex of ethical norms is being adopted as profane and exerts its influence on the country’s legislation; third, religion moves from the private and personal domain into the domain of the collective, public, institutional; fourth, the practice of ‘formal’ religious conversion is being renewed (under financial, legislative, political and psychological pressure); fifth, new maps of geostrategic dominance are being drawn, with the help of indications of religious dominance; sixth, collective religious memory is subject of manipulation. This is a time when new borders of freedom are being drawn, when religious and civilizational differences are returning to their *conservative* positions (a process of so called “re-traditionalization’). New conservative interpretations of religious cannons are becoming more rigid, more massive, more aggressive, more manipulative, taking into consideration the global, fast and effective role of new technologies and the media in the distribution of information.

As liberal capitalism grows stronger (suppressing the values of industrial capitalism and the open civil society), so the secularism of the modern democratic states weakens. Theocracy in the countries in the European surrounding (Turkey, Middle East and central Asia, the Mediterranean African states), on the other hand, intensifies.[[5]](#footnote-5) As the theocratic paradigm in Europe’s neighbourhood is being restored, the processes of migration and the refugee crisis intensifies; the demographic and the religious structures of European states change, and religious differences intensify, elements of interreligious intolerance emerge, especially on the line of Christianity – Islam – Judaism. Definitely, the question of religious identity, which was on the very margins of European civilization, is being renewed nowadays, with all its delicacy. The religious sensibility of European societies at the beginning of the 21st century is not the same as at the beginning of the 20th. This is the many indicator that Europe is witnessing a religious shift and the establishment of a new religious paradigm.

The more secularity is marginalized, the greater the role and the power of religious discourses, institutions and subjects in society becomes, thereby creating conditions for the substitution of democracy by theocracy (Taylor 2007). With the reinforcement of the theocratic rule (regimes, ideologies, strategies), the secular state is not only repressed, but also a series of other consequences ensue: the conflict between interreligious and intrareligious tensions intensifies, religious feelings and identities become the subject of manipulation, armed conflicts based on religious grounds are instigated, the visibility and iconography of religious identity in heterogeneous areas intensify, religious and civil anxiety in traditionally Christian environments begin to spread: fear of the Other, fear of violence, a feeling of jeopardy, excessive fear of hurting the religious feelings of the Other (especially the Muslim), new forms of religious conversion and assimilation…

The European response is less Islamophobic in a religious sense of the word, as it is posited antagonistically against a *worldview* that is spreading under the banner of Islam. The hypersensitive religious paradigm of islam is perceived as an antipodal cultural alternative and a radically non-European “lifestype” (Žižek 2015).[[6]](#footnote-6) European society manifests anxiety and opposes the sudden *theization of civil consciousness*, regardless of whether it has been imported or not. There is an encounter and a clash between civilizations, between the European and the non-European civil consciousness. Islam is becoming a parable of all things non-European, of an alien cultural alternative, not just an alternative. It is perceived as a brutal codex that limits human liberties and freedom of speech, a source of sexual and gender discrimination (by suppressing the rights to equality between women and men), and as an anarchic patriarchy, and a parade of superiority. That response inevitably leads to the concept of “endangerment” of the European civilizational gains, and a need to defend them. That is how the second religious shift of post-secularism contains elements of public resistance towards radical anti-secularism (fundamentalism, sharia law), but also elements of renewal of traditional, Christian, European religious consciousness. The discourse of endangerment, nourished by the global (anti)terrorist atmosphere, is the first symptom of the conflictual consciousness in contemporary Europe.

Post-secularism diminishes the distance between state and religious establishments and beliefs, and aims at “state desecularization”, renewing theocratic discourses of power (and powerlessness), whereby the educational, cultural, national and security policies are being articulated in accordance with the dominant religious convictions and institutions. Desecularization brings the autonomy of the modern democratic state into question. Furthermore, liberal theocracy/clericalism represents a threat to the system of acquired civil rights and liberties, even to authentic religious values. Namely, the religious utilitarianism from the turn of the century is a confirmation of the fact that the politicization of religion profanes its core values and disrupts the autonomy of church institutions. The coarse, public, and utilitarian “theocratism” contradicts true religious and spiritual values. The excessively vocal and visible religious belonging and correctness is intended more for the others than for oneself; it is more political than religious and creates the illusion of religiousness more that it really is. In secular systems, religious identity was an intimate human right and an inherited family tradition. In post-secular systems, the principle of religious intimacy and freedom is infringed. In fact, as Hristova-Baševska concludes in a research – secularity and the church stand in harmony: the prominent normative and legal stipulate of “the church is separated from the state” served as the church’s first chance in history to exist in harmony with itself. In short, secularity (at least when it concerns Christianity as a doctrine) does not rival sacrality, but on the contrary! (Bashevska 2006).

Within the framework of the post-secular shift, the religious identity has been pragmatized to such an extent that it is vulgarized, and, in that way, it loses the charm of the sacred, the sense for sacredness is declining, and humanity is, once again, depriving itself of its metaphysical dimension and spirituality. With the increased presence of theocracy in public social life, the presence of sacral consciousness and spirituality decreases. History informs, once more, that the secular state encourages the process of sacralization of the individual – and vice-versa – the desecularization of the state blocks the immanent process of sacralization and humanization of humanity.

In fact, one of the consequences of the current *desacralization* of the European being is the creation of a social atmosphere devoid of a sense of higher spiritual values, susceptible to mass manipulation and domination. Paradoxically, desacralized Europe (Carl G. Jung, Paul Ricoeur, René Girard) has clashed with the need of a new, “pragmatic sacralisation”, and the process of de-Christianization is experiencing an inversion into something that might be termed as new Christianization. The metaphysical and mystical communication with the sacred has lent its space to a more practical religious discourse, one which contains elements of religious retort/response (intolerance, blasphemy, extremism, religious violence and militancy). The marginalization of the sacral in the post-secular age is currently compensated for by religious utilitarianism. Deprived of the subtle and intimate contact with the sacred, Europe is opting for politicization and instrumentalization of religion. Religious utilitarianism nowadays, based in quasi-manifestations of religiosity and religious extremism, has come to mean an excess of politics, and a shortage of sacredness and spirituality.

**Post-secularism versus secularism**

The typological differences between the secularism of the modern and the post-secularism of the postmodern European state can be summarised in the following way:

- If modern society was established upon the substitution of religiosity, then, nowadays, in conditions of increased role of religion (religious consciousness and religious institutions), it is possible to talk about a substitution of democracy. The tendency of desecularization has been covered up in certain states, while in others it is obvious, but in essence, it represents the same *theocratic ideology* characterized by absolutist and feudalist elements. In those states and regions where the secular concept had never been practiced, this shift is less evident. However, religious pragmatism has developed to its maximum potential here, while the discourse of power has been antagonized upon the confessional basis.

- If the paradigm of modern “post-Christianity” is synonymous with the secularized society, then, the “post-Christianity” of postmodernism and the 21st century cannot be exhausted by the process of state desecularization alone. The new model, unfortunately, restores interreligious antagonism as an intrinsic trait of every radical religion. History has demonstrated on several occasions, and continues to do so, that the monotheist faiths are susceptible to religious radicalism – and this one is further susceptible to political and other practical manipulations – all of which precede interreligious and interethnic conflict. Postmodern civilization is not resistant to religious radicalism, but on the contrary.

- If the secular religious shift was a response to the medieval marriage of state and church, the current religio-civilizational turn is not a simple reaction to modern European secularism. Pluralist, it has simultaneous manifold manifestations: (a) as an attempt at desecularization of the state (in theocratic regimes); (b) as a strategy of utilitarian theization of society and profanation of the sacral; (c) as a marginalization of religious diversity in the interest of the major religions; (d) and as a paradigm that generates religious radicalisms and fundamentalisms, Christianophobia, Islamophobia, Judeophobia.

**Civilizational implications of the post-secular religious paradigm**

If it is true that not every religious shift is necessarily civilizational, but that every civilizational shift is religious, then we raise the question of whether post-secularism is a purely religious shift or it is a civilizational shift with religious implications. Namely, postescularism is reflected not only on religion, but also on science, education, culture, art, media, politics, existentialism, the social establishment, fashion, alimentation… It is stimulated by old (local) theocratic traditions embedded within new (global) ideologies and intends to forge a problematic, and pseudo-human civilization – based on the unbearable rift between technological advancement and spiritual regression (a fundamental desacralization of humanity, its humane aspect and its historical consciousness). Post-secularism is an all-encompassing historical *clash of civilizations* *and cultures*, initiated in the clash of religions, and then expanded to all areas of social and political reality. This shows that the paradigm of post-secularism, complemented with elements of anti-secularism, is a characteristically *religio-civilizational shift*.

Besides, post-secularism does not concern Europe alone, but the world at large (especially the Mediterranean, the Middle East, and Africa). Post-secularism is followed by a deep *crisis of European civilization*. It implies not only the tendency of desecularization, but also *a tendency of post-Christianity and de-Christianization*, which, in turn, is a response to the increased Islamic pragmatism, and the “orientalization” of Western European civilization. The power of this strategy was initially felt in the areas of former Yugoslavia, when the great “Balkanization” of Europe occurred.

Postmodern Europe, not only failed to learn to be more indifferent towards the religious phenomenon, but it also increased its religious sensitivity. Instead of marginalizing the religious factor, in our time, Europe is *obsessed* with religion. Such an obsession is amplified in conditions of a migrant and refugee crisis. This “religious obsession” does not only narrow down to a threat of substitution of the dominant religious matrices, Christianity with Islam. It has to do with a tendency of religion to become hypersensitive. Along with the emergence of discrete, verbal, and individual reactions to the newly-arisen religious discourses, came political, institutional, even extreme, responses to others’ religious matrices. Fearing domination of a non-European religious matrix, Islam, Europe is increasing its Christian consciousness.[[7]](#footnote-7)

Religious discourses still constitute an essential aspect of European reality, even if they are mere replies to atheism and radical fundamentalisms. A *pragmatic presence of religion* is heralded, along with a hyperdetermined religious coexistence, and a politicized religiosity, the dark side of which casts a shadow over all gained civil rights and freedoms.[[8]](#footnote-8) Therefore, new interpretive strategies are urgently needed; they should aim to deconstruct the mechanisms of the new brand of pragmatic theocracy, which includе: political and religious mechanisms, social, cultural, media, ethical, demographical, security, and humanitarian mechanisms.

Contemporary “secular world” (Taylor) “is characterized not by an absence of religion—although in some societies religious belief and practice have markedly declined—but rather by the continuing multiplication of new options, religious, spiritual, and anti-religious. . .” (2007). The narrative of “post-secular theocracy” implies a set of religious, demographic, cultural and political transformations:

*First*, secular Europe is on its way to become a historical anachronism. Namely, Europe is faced with two types of “revisions of secularism”: one revision is moderate and discrete, while the other – radical and visible. The first religio-civilizational performance is post-secular, whereas the other is anti-secular. Hence the need for appropriate strategies for their condemnation or (at least) alleviation.

*Second*, dramatic events are taking place along Europe’s “edges”: - migrant routes (including the Mediterranean and Balkan routes) are being renewed; - a complex and massive refugee and humanitarian crisis is occurring; - social migrations have a political and geostrategic background; - we are at the onset of a new economic, demographic and religious imperialism; - a new religio-political codex brings into question the traditional democratic values, including freedom of speech; - religious conservativism and fundamentalism is returning, so we can talk about a “medievalization” on the historical scene.[[9]](#footnote-9)

*Third*, as result of the politicization of religion and theization of politics, new state constructs of theocratic and ethno-religious character have been forged in Europe (e.g., Bosnia and partly Kosovo); - the concept of civil identity is being revised again – this time through the prism of ethno-religious attributes; - the presence of Islam in traditionally predominantly Christian areas of Europe is on the rise; - the utilitarianism and visibility of religious iconography, which has started issuing messages that are not purely religious, but political as well (and with elements of religious imperialism!), is increasing; - theocracy is strengthening the monotheistic religions’ positions; - the media rhetoric is being militarized and “theocraticized”; - dramatic ethnocides of ethnoreligious minorities in the Middle East are occurring; - mass migration, refugee and humanitarian crises are happening; - the threat of advancement of a new holy war (jihad), and sharia regime is exceeding state boundaries, developing into an attempt that has transnational designs (Islamic State).

*Fourth*, Islamophobia is a social and cultural response to the de-Christianization of the entire Orient and Africa, but also a symptom of the new theization, even Christianization of Europe (the European historical consciousness is reflected as Christian, so the concept of post-Christianity is brought into question). So, Islamophobia has dimensions of a general socio-cultural phobia against the “Eurasian” and “Afro-European” hybrid.

The second religious shift of anti-secularism (understood as radical post-secularism), not only brings into question the borders of Christianity, but also “the borders of Europe” and of contemporary civilization in general. The era of post-existence is over. A new era of anti-existences and antirealities has begun, including anti-secularism, anti-Christianity, and anti-humanism. This age requires an appropriate interpretation, methodology, and strategy to resolve the crisis. The answer must not come too late.[[10]](#footnote-10) Undoubtedly, at the onset of the 21st century, religious is ever more present, more visible and more explicit in its presence within the European reality.[[11]](#footnote-11) The European political *mise-en-scène* is determined by the bipolar religious *mise-en-scène*. Neither the ideology of a tolerant religious awareness, exemplified by the cultural policies of religious pluralist diversity, which UNESCO supported, nor the new “religion of solidarity”, for which Umberto Eco (2015) pledged, have the power to substitute the polarized and antagonized religious consciousness.[[12]](#footnote-12)

**Post Scriptum: proposals for the resolution of the crisis**

What can the humanities offer as a possible resolution of the crisis caused by post-secularism?

1. To seal a civilizational deal, a type of *Pax Religiosa*, or a *Declaration on inter-religious tolerance*. Such a Deal would raise the voice of reason against the abuse of religious tradition, differences, sentiments, and institutions for the encouragement of religious radicalism and fanaticism. It should also prevent the eventual global “clash of the religions”.
2. To adopt a *Universal declaration of secularism* by UNESCO, with the aim to avoid further strengthening of theocratic mechanisms. The new secularism should not exclude the religio-sacral dimension of humanity, but neither should glorify it. Religious identity is intimate, even when it stands as a collective trait. It should be freed from the bonds of political and state institutions and diminish its visibility in society.
3. To *Strengthen intercultural dialogue* instead of radicalize multicultural policies which generate cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and religious segmentation and isolation of different communities within a single state.
4. To *Enrich religious utilitarianism* by means of appropriate cultural and media policies that would promote public awareness for the necessity of discretion in the practice of religious rights and liberties. In terms of media priorities, along with television and social networks, film, theatre, and literature should also be taken into consideration. In this respect, the media should also promote policies of reconciliation and forgiveness, instead of encouraging a traumatized religious memory.
5. European solidarity (and compassion) with the plight of the migrants and refugees could grow into a new universal *“religion of solidarity”*, a new system of moral values that would replace the dominance of the (mono) theist principle by rendering the value of empathy supreme. As trans-religious and universal categories, empathy, solidarity and humanism should prove to be the right response to religious radicalism and a basis for new developmental strategies focused on humanism and peace in the post-secular world.

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1. Hoelzl and Ward. (ed.). *The New Visibility of Religion. Studies in Religion and Cultural Hermeneutics*, London: Continuum, 2008. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The United States *Constitution* (1789) does not mention secularism nominally; rather, the Articles of the Constitution implicit the secular status of the country (Amendment I says that the “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof”, whereas Article VI says that “no religious Test shall ever be required as a Qualification to any Office or public Trust under the United States”. In practice, however, there is a symbolic presence of Christian elements (in the act of swearing on the Bible in court processes, in the inauguration of the new president of the country). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The situation in the Balkans dramatically deviates from this tendency. According to Macedonian sociologist of religion Ljupka Hristova-Baševska, PhD, the region of the Balkans and especially the countries of Orthodox religious orientation, saw the development of a **reverse process**: a strong connection between the religious and the ethno-nationalist. The familiar relationship between a certain Orthodox church and a certain ethnos, whose expression of which is the church ethnophyletism (as articulated in the idiom “the immeasurable love of the Mother church for its people”), has, according to her, its basis in the way these churches determined their institutional course. Namely, unlike the Roman Catholic Church (which had a centralized structure) the Orthodox churches were founded upon ethnic and state-territorial principles. Therefore, as the various Orthodox churches began to form upon ethnicity, the interweaving of church ideology and folk culture intensified (myths, legends). The Serbian Orthodox church is at the forefront of this: “The Serbian Orthodox church not only contributed significantly to the mythologization of the medieval Serbian state in the nineteenth century, but also works on the sacralization of the Serbian people themselves, elevating them to the status of “people of God”, into the twentieth century, and during the period of Socialist Yugoslavia (...) The church ethnophyletism, which culminated in the idea that the church is a link that firmly binds a social collectivity that shares the same blood and history, clearly suited the nationalist circles”. (Ljupka Hristova-Baševska, 2008) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Jürgen Habermas is among the first to talk about a “post-secular society” (14 October 2001, in his acceptance speech for the German Publishers & Booksellers Association peace award). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. According to Slavoj Žižek (2015), “criticism of Islamist terrorism must develop simultaneously with criticism of liberal democracy.” [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. In only forty years, the “green transversal” has made its way, through Europe’s entryway, to its living room. What is more, the tendency of *pan-Islamism* expresses religion as an identity determinant. By restoring sharia and millet systems, a new kind of globalism is being established – *fundamentalist Islamic transnationalism*. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. The traditional monotheistic religions, historically burdened by self-idealization and self-glorification (Christianity is Christianocentric, while Islam is Islamocentric!), are now in a state of exclusion and conflict. (Umberto Eco 2006, “Monotheism and Polytheism”, “New Religion”, in: *Nedeljnik,* Special issueMarch 2006) [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. François Laruellе uses the term “irreflective philosopheme” (*un philosophème irréfléchi*). (Laruelle, *Philosophie et non-philosophie* [*Philosophy and Non-Philosophy*]) [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Psychiatry has diagnosed new pathological conditions upon an ethno-religious principle, introducing the term “narcissistic personality disorder”. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Europe is in the process of losing the stability that characterized it following the period of the Second World War. Europe is confronted by the imperative to modify the centuries-old laws that were founded upon the secular and Christian concept. It faces a disintegration of the inherited imagological stereotypes (secular, traditional, rhetorical, communicational, gender, ethical and legal stereotypes). It also faces a crisis of cultural and religious identity, as well as a crisis of tolerance and inter-religious coexistence. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Let us remind ourselves of the bloody attack perpetrated by ethno-nationalist and anti-Islamist Anders Behring Breivik in Norway, on 22 July 2011, as well as the terrorist equivalent that was carried out in Paris, on 2 January 2015, in relation to the controversy surrounding the satirical weekly magazine *Charlie Hebdo*. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Umberto Eco expected that a new transformation of the map of radicalized monotheistic faiths to form a global atmosphere of solidarity was coming about. However, considering how the migrant crisis has surpassed the limits of a “refugee crisis”, the resolution to this transformation cannot be sought in the strategy of the “new religion of solidarity” alone. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)