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Editorial

Public religion and urban space in Europe

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Conflicts related to demographic and cultural change in Europe regularly find their expression in struggles over the presence and visibility of religious buildings and groups. As this editorial argues, these conflicts can best be understood from a postsecular perspective that takes into account overlapping and diverging histories of state-formation and secularization. The papers collected for this special issue on public religion and urban space demonstrate that many of the difficulties that European societies face in accommodating religious diversity stem from historically formed relationships between national political identities and religious identities. In many European cases, secularization did not entail a fundamental separation between religion and politics but the formal establishment of one single national church or two competing ones, but territorially based national churches. One of the consequences of these types of establishments is that certain religious traditions are generally described and experienced as fitting with the nation and others are not. The contributors to this special issue show in detail that the struggles of contemporary religious movements in Europe to become present in the public domain are related to commonly accepted understandings of where and how religion should manifest itself in the urban environment, based on the public life of religious traditions that are considered part of the nation.

Key words: religion, public space, Europe, migration, postsecular.

Introduction

Contrary to analyses that portray the modern city as a secular space, cities around the world show a wide variety of religious movements, buildings, and media. In many of the world's cities one encounters mosques, Hindu temples or mega-churches (Eade and Garbin 2006, 2007; Hassner 2003; Kong 1993; Kuppinger 2011), and in many cities, one comes across religious media, such as Christian billboards

or amplified Islamic recitations (Asamoah-Gyadu 2005; De Witte 2008; Hirschkind 2006; Larkin 2008). As several scholars have shown, the contemporary presence of religious movements in cities should be understood in terms of global processes and connections that facilitate the de- and re-territorialization of religion (Becker, Klingan, Lanz, and, Wildner 2013; Hancock and Srinivas 2008; Kong 2001, 2010; Pinxten and Dikomitits 2009; Saint-Blancat 2002; Tweed 2006).

This special issue builds on the work of the authors mentioned to analyze the contemporary obstacles that religious people and movements in Europe face to exercise their ways of worship publicly. The Swiss ban on minarets in 2009 has made clear that political conflicts related to demographic, religious, and cultural change in Europe regularly find their expression in struggles over the presence and visibility of religious buildings and groups specifically.¹ Even though religion is but one of the important organizing categories of transnational identity and performance (Levitt 2004, 2007; Vertovec 2009), socio-political conflicts in European cities regularly manifest themselves as religious clashes. Despite evidence to the contrary, religion in particular is experienced as the unbridgeable gap between different urban groups (Todorov 2010).

This special issue explores the question of how to analyze the comparable yet different religious struggles over public space in Europe. Though conflicts related to religion and space are certainly not confined to Europe, and the contributors do not suggest that Europe can be considered an uncomplicated object of analysis, this special issue argues that discussions on religion and urban space can merit strongly from an approach that compares European cities. As argued in this editorial, the religious and political struggles in European cities can best be understood from a postsecular perspective that analyzes societal debates on religious presence in Europe in light of the comparable yet divergent histories of secularization. Going beyond a notion of secularization as the formal separation of spheres, this issue reminds us that secularization in Europe also often entailed the nationalization of particular religious traditions. In many cases, these religious traditions were subsequently portrayed as coextensive with the nation in contrast to other religious traditions that were perceived as foreign.

One of the effects of the uneven appropriation and perception of religious traditions is that certain public religious forms and rituals have become commonly accepted as part of national cultures whereas others have not. As the contributions to this issue demonstrate, this has far-reaching consequences for the perception of (material-physical) presence of religion in cities. Depending on the historical relations between certain religious traditions and the nation—and the public display of such relations—particular religious forms and practices are seen as customary and relatively harmless to the formal separation between religion and politics whereas other religious forms and practices are perceived as problematic. From this follows, amongst other things, that we cannot analyze conflicts related to the public manifestations of (migrant) religious movements in terms of religious presence in religiously neutral societies but that we should include in our discussions the fact that in each city, particular notions prevail about the form and shape that public religion should have.

A postsecular perspective

Religion has become an established domain of inquiry for human geographers (e.g. Holloway and Valins 2002; Howe 2009; Kong 1990, 2001; Yorgason and Della Dora 2009), but the remarks of Habermas (2006, 2008) on the alleged emergence of ‘postsecular society’ have recharged critical debate among geographers in recent years (Hackworth 2012; Hopkins, Kong, and Olson 2012; Kong 2010; Wilford 2010). As a consequence of Habermas’ writings, these and a number of other scholars have taken up the concept of the postsecular to analyze current societal transformations regarding religion, democracy, diversity, and

citizenship (Braidotti 2008; McLennan 2010). In relation to these debates, scholars from human geography, urban studies, theology, anthropology, political science, philosophy, and religious studies have appropriated the term in their analyses of the urban (Beaumont and Baker 2011; Beaumont and Cloke 2012a, 2012b; Cloke and Beaumont 2013; Molen-dijk, Beaumont, and Jedan 2010).

In analyzing the societal struggles as they relate to the urban manifestation of religion, this issue aims to contribute to contemporary academic discussions regarding the postsecular and seeks to sustain the dialogue between the aforementioned academic fields. While taking seriously critique on the concept of the postsecular (Bader 2012; Beckford 2012), the term nevertheless is useful in constructing a debate about shifting relations between religion, the nation-state, and citizenship. Contributors therefore are not in favor of doing away with the term. Nevertheless, it is important to emphasize that the contributors to this special issue understand the postsecular neither as a definite break with a supposedly secular historical epoch, nor merely as a perceived persistence (or 're-emergence') of religion in the public spheres of European societies.

Instead, a postsecular perspective requires the recognition of the historical entanglements between modern nation states and particular religious traditions and the acknowledgment that 'the religious' and 'the secular' are mutually constitutive categories whose dialectic is closely related to the formation of modern political subjects. As Patrick Eisenlohr, for instance, has demonstrated for Mauritian society, secularity, and religion are best perceived as engaged in productive tension (Eisenlohr 2006). Governments and political agents co-define 'secular' and 'religious' domains and thus co-produce positions that legitimate certain political claims while foreclosing others.

Our portrayal of a postsecular perspective in this issue comes close to Knott's description of a new position in 'a dialectical field of religious and secular knowledge-power relations' (Knott 2010: 20). A postsecular perspective can be seen as a heuristic tool that helps us to unveil implicit understandings of certain religious ideologies, sentiments, buildings, and practices as problematic or even antithetical to democratic politics, while other religious traditions are portrayed as unproblematic on account of their historical relationship with the nation.

Migration, religion, and the nation

With the proposed focus on European societies, contributors of this issue do not aim to present Europe as the exemplary region to think through issues concerning the post-secular and citizenship but rather to historicize and contextualize European transformations so as to unpack prevailing notions about the postsecular and to flesh out the differences and overlaps in European societies.

As many authors have shown, migration to Europe has had a strong impact on the religious landscape of its cities (Kong 2010; Peach 2002; Peach and Gale 2003). In the period of decolonization after WWII, many European countries designed particular temporal arrangements with overseas citizens that made possible residence and citizenship in Europe (Castles and Miller 2009; Soysal 1994). In the 1970s, several European countries sought for affordable labor in the Islamic countries of North Africa. While some countries had colonial relationships with these North African countries, for many, the new influx of migrants introduced strikingly different urban populations with different cultural and religious concerns in an urban environment (Maussen 2006). What emerged

within these new urban configurations is what some scholars have described as a distinctive European Islam (Nielsen 1999; Ramadan 2003; Tibi 2002). In the 1990s, new migration patterns emerged as migrants from nations around the world arrived in European cities. In many cases, these migrants came from countries that had no particular colonial relationship with the European nation of arrival, yet they seized newfound opportunities to travel and work.² Some Europeans turned away from the traditional churches to look for spiritual centers, yoga-groups, and wellness cults (Davie, Heelas, and Woodhead 2003, Heelas 2005), while migrants often introduced or revitalized religious movements that had gradually diminished.³ Polish migrants boosted Roman Catholic mass attendance in London, for example, and transnational circuits of migration boosted evangelical Christianity across Europe (Adogame 2010; Burgess, Knibbe, and Quaas 2010; Freston 2010; Knibbe 2010; Martin 2010).

These migration histories are very important for understanding religious diversity in Europe. This special issue is not a plea to study 'history' for its own sake, however. As Doreen Massey has argued, analyzing the spatial element of globalization means thinking the temporal and the spatial together (Massey 2005: 89). Persistent political efforts to portray particular groups of religious people in European cities as outsiders and others as insiders involves narratives of religious-cultural origins and of linear developments that need to be addressed critically.⁴ All contributors to this issue therefore engage critically with popular temporal conceptions that haunt current political representations of religious presence in the European urban space.

Despite a growing number of studies exploring the effects of migration flows on European cityscapes, few authors address the

fact that urban religious transformations stir public debates about the religious character of national populations. Especially in European countries with large Islamic communities, for instance, politicians attempt to define citizenship in Christian-cultural terms, making it possible to portray Muslim migrants as the archetypal 'other' or 'alien' who is incapable of becoming part of society on account of differing cultural-religious background (Ceuppens and Geschiere 2005; Stolcke 1999; Silverstein 2005).

These conflicts reveal that discussions are not only related to political distinctions between legitimate and illegitimate and public and private manifestations of religion but also that in particular certain public religious manifestations are portrayed as more harmful or threatening than others to the fabric of society. This is clearly noticeable in the negative reactions to the building of mosques in many European cities compared to the undisputed (or even admired) presence of churches (Hatziprokopiou and Evergeti, this issue).

In discussing religious movements and their urban-material manifestations, this special issue engages with scholars who have explored the intertwinement of popular religiosity and the socio-material dimensions of urban space (Gilliat-Ray 2005; Hervieu-Léger 2002; Knott 2005, 2010; Kong 2001, 2010; Molendijk, Beaumont, and Jedan 2010; Yorgason and Della Dora 2009). Yet it wants to add to this literature an approach that highlights the necessity of understanding public manifestations of new (and old) religious movements while taking into account the historical descriptions of *certain* religious traditions as (possibly) coextensive with the nation and public space and others as not. Contemporary struggles by religious movements in European cities to become

visible and audible in the public domain are related to commonly accepted understandings of where and how religion should manifest itself, but notions of the 'proper place' of religion is generally related to the public life of religious traditions that are considered part of the nation and are perceived as part of the national heritage.

Different reactions to religious presence and visibility in European cities can thus best be understood from a postsecular perspective that takes in mind the overlapping *and* diverging histories of state-formation and secularization. Such a perspective shows that the political geography of religion in Europe exhibits both strong historical differences and similarities (Knippenberg 2006).

European histories

European nation-states have in common the historical demarcation of religion as a specific domain of social life whose relation to politics was fundamentally transformed with the advent of the modern state. In varying degrees, this transformation was spurred by desires to (1) end the power of the clergy; (2) put a halt to the religious wars; and (3) provide an interpretation of emerging Enlightenment ideas on individual and collective equality and freedom (Asad 2003; Casanova 2001; Saunders 2004; Van der Veer, and Lehmann 1999). In Europe, newly formed demarcations between religious and political spheres most often concerned intertwinements of legal-conceptual definitions and territorial-symbolic demarcations and was from the outset related to questions of political power. A major European development concerned the confiscation of properties of the Roman Catholic Church, specifically by upcoming European states (Casanova 1994).⁵

Whereas the historical processes described above can generally be grouped in the category of 'secularization,' Casanova has forcefully argued (2008) that critical factors should be taken in to account when using this concept. Among them is the notion that there is not one but that there are 'multiple and diverse historical patterns of secularization and differentiation within European and Western societies' (Casanova 2008: 104). Moreover, early modern political transformation in Europe did not result in secular 'democratic' states ensuring freedom of religion, but rather it led to the creation of different confessional absolutist states (Catholic, Anglican, Lutheran, Calvinist, Orthodox).

In effect, formal establishments between states and churches resulted in

either that of one single *national* church that claims to be coextensive with the nation or that of two (usually Catholic and Protestant) competing but territorially based national churches, along with an indefinite but limited number of religious minorities, ... (2008: 111, emphasis mine)

Seen from this perspective, the genesis of modern European nation-states did not provide a fundamental separation between religion and politics to ensure secular neutrality but essentially redefined the relationship between national political identities and religious identities (Asad 2003). Although one could argue that after World War II, the effects of these formal establishments have weakened, Casanova adds that:

[W]ithout taking into account this long historical pattern of confessionalization of states, peoples and territories, it is not possible to understand the difficulties that every continental European state has, irrespective of whether it has maintained formal establishment or is constitutionally secular,

and the difficulties that every European society has, the most secular as well as the most religious, in accommodating religious diversity, and particularly in incorporating immigrant religions. (Casanova 2008: 110)

This special issue on public religion and urban space in Europe focuses specifically on the urban dimensions of these difficulties of European states to accommodate religious diversity. The postsecular perspective advocated here creates room for a dynamic and historically varied notion of secularization and thus acknowledges Kong's (2010: 765) reminder that we should not apply the discourse of postsecularization in a totalitarian manner. As Kong's discussion of Casanova's disaggregation of secularization also brings to light, there are many historical and geographical variations of Casanova's tripartite description of secularization and thus arguably different manifestations of postsecularization in European cities (i.e., different ways in which religious ideas and practices are acknowledged or rejected as part and parcel of public life).

Moreover, state-governments often continue to play a decisive role in the maintenance of the boundaries between so-called old and new religions because of 'existing *neo-corporatist or pillarised European regimes* of selective cooperation between states and organised religions, ...' (Bader 2012: 19, emphasis in original). Bader continues: 'Corporatist regimes officially recognise these relationships between governments on all levels, including organised religions, but do so in unfair, exclusionary and rigid way, privileging old majority religions, whether *established* or not, and disadvantaging new minority religions' (2012: 19, emphasis in original).

The culturalization of national religious traditions

Similar political discussions regarding contemporary European multicultural societies are taking place, yet with locally diverging premises and outcomes. Depending on the historical trajectories, religious presence or absence in public space is regarded differently, with different implications for the urban environment and governmental measures but also with different implications for the meaning of religious performances for the practitioners themselves.

This last point is important because it also points to the fact that a strictly legalistic approach to the public manifestations of religion cannot help us to understand contemporary urban conflicts related to religion. Despite constitutional protection of religious diversity, the urban struggles of new religious movements are not about gaining a place in religiously neutral societies, but about achieving presence, physically and otherwise, in cities where particular notions prevail about the form and shape that public religion should have.

To be clear, it is not that conflicts should not involve abstract, normative discussions about the distinctions between religion, politics, and economy, but we do want to point out that in popular debates about the public manifestations of religion, distinctions between 'harmless, native' public religion and 'threatening, foreign' religion regularly creep in. As the articles in this issue demonstrate, our call for renewed attention to the confessional past of many European countries is related to the emergence of neo-nationalism and 'culturalization of citizenship' in several European countries (Geschiere 2009; Mepschen, Duyvendak, and Tonkens

2010; Zapata-Barrero 2009). Whereas one could argue that we are currently witnessing progressive disestablishments of European states and churches—which in theory should allow minority religious movements easier access to public space—the articles in this issue demonstrate that we cannot take such transformations for a fact. In the face of European unification, populations in many European countries identify strongly with the nation and with perceived national customs and symbols. More importantly, as certain religious traditions are identified more strongly with the nation and its population on account of their confessional past and perceived cultural/national familiarity, other religious traditions are likely to be portrayed as foreign or problematic, despite formal disestablishments.

The papers

This special issue starts with a contribution by Venetia Evergeti and Panos Hatziprokopiou, whose discussion of public religious practices of Pakistani immigrants and indigenous Muslims in Athens leads us through different yet similar European debates concerning mosques in European urban spaces. Their in-depth empirical material demonstrates that the spatial presence of Muslims in Athens is heavily influenced and obstructed by the omnipresence of Greek-Orthodox religiosity and the hegemonic perception of the Greek nation as Orthodox. Here as in other cases in this issue, questions of urban visibility and invisibility play an important role as migrants move between the desire for recognition as part of Greek society and the fear of hostility. This fear, moreover, is fueled by recent surge of anti-immigrant sentiments in the city enforced by the Greek economic crisis.

The discussion of public presence and visibility of Muslims in Europe is continued in the second article by Petra Kuppinger. Her analysis of the spatial trajectories of Muslims in Stuttgart (Germany) demonstrates that despite recurring notions of Islamic presence as alien to the city, in fact, Muslims occupy transient spaces or other permanent spaces than often assumed. Building on the works of de Certeau (1984), Bayat (1997, 2009), and Zukin (2010), her work reminds us of the fact that we should not focus exclusively on religious buildings or recognizable public rituals when we want to understand how people negotiate presence or claim spaces but also on everyday religious encounters that mark spaces as religious in a flexible fashion. Moreover, she argues that we should see these flexible spaces as places where ‘insiders’ who momentarily claim such parochial spaces and ‘outsiders’ can encounter each other, thus offering us examples of possible multi-ethnic and multi-religious urban futures.

The third contribution of this issue also addresses urban public space as an arena of potential contact between members of different religious communities, yet leads us away from Islamic movements to focus on Filipino migrants who take part in the Catholic *Santacruzán* procession in Padua (Italy). Drawing on in-depth research Chantal Saint-Blancat and Adriano Cancellieri demonstrate that the publicness of public space, cannot be taken for granted because such a space is characterized by structural hierarchies that influence the accessibility, temporary appropriation, and visibility of different groups. In Italian society, these structural hierarchies are amongst other things characterized by the dominant position of the Roman Catholic Church whose historical privileges as ‘national’ religion constitute their ‘spatial power’ to grant or hamper other religious

movements access to symbolically valuable urban spaces. As they show, the Roman Catholic Church thus plays an important yet ambiguous role in the public visibility of religious difference in Padua. On the one hand, the Church offers migrants a chance to become visible as part of the urban population of Padua by means of an established and recognizable ritual. On the other hand, diversity primarily becomes visible within a Catholic framework as migrants from other kinds of religious movements cannot easily claim the same spaces. As Saint-Blancat and Cancellieri put it lucidly:

the catholic hierarchy is thus split between a position of openness towards inter-faith dialogue, its role of mediation between other faiths and Italian society, and its fear of losing its monopoly at the heart of Italian religious space. (this issue)

The last paper of this issue draws attention to the fact that discussions related to religious diversity in cities generally presume that people who form part of the public life of cities are citizens and have the legal permission to move and dwell in the city. As Martijn Oosterbaan argues, such a perspective overlooks the fact that European cities are also inhabited by undocumented residents. Consequently, when asking how certain religious movements become public in European cities, we also need to ask how possibilities of becoming public are tied to exclusionary citizenship regimes. By way of research among undocumented Brazilian migrants who attend Pentecostal churches in Amsterdam and Barcelona, Oosterbaan argues that contemporary European transformations of citizenship regimes influence religious perceptions of stasis and movement within Europe. Possibilities for undocumented Brazilians to move or to stay somewhere is dependent on changing legislations in the European

union, the functioning of state-institutions, the family's origins, and on contingency. In the experience of Brazilian Pentecostal adherents, acquiring legal status to dwell or securing the possibility to remain mobile within this assemblage is dependent on their relationship to God. To analyze these relations between legislation, state surveillance, and religion, Oosterbaan introduces the concept of 'occult bureaucracies.'

Conclusion

The controversies and struggles that are portrayed in this special issue show that as contemporary religious movements and institutions strive for clearly identifiable places of congregation and worship, they force urban populations to re-consider the manifestations of religion. Whether we are referring to the conflicts about the construction of mosques, the ban on wearing Islamic religious clothing in public buildings (as in France; see Bowen 2007), or the creation of multi-faith spaces, controversial issues in European cities frequently involve utterances, material manifestations and physical practices in public space that question relationships between religion and other domains of social life. Interestingly, as Saint-Blancat and Cancellieri show (this issue), this does not necessarily entail struggles between different religious parties or between so-called secular and religious forces. In some cases, this is also related to intra-religious struggles, for instance, between different Roman Catholic communities. As this issue demonstrates, conflicts concerning public religious presence in cities are not merely about formal boundaries between religion and politics; they simultaneously concern the question *how*—according to its inhabitants—religion can and should manifest itself in the

urban environment. As argued, popular acceptance of religious presence is often based on the public life of religious traditions that are considered part of the nation. This pushes us to investigate and take into account the historical relations between states and organized religions, and the privileges and sentiments that follow from these relations, especially in times when citizenship gets defined in cultural terms.

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Notes

1. See the 2010 conflicts related to the closure of a Muslim prayer room and the rejection of a multi-faith room by Islamic students: 'Muslim students continue street protest over closure of prayer room,' <http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?storycode=410874>, accessed 3 May 2013.

2. Rotterdam has a large community of migrants from Cape-Verde, London from Brazil and Paris from Ghana, to give some examples.
3. To be clear, this does not imply that all people who practice religion inspired by eastern religious traditions formerly belonged to Christian churches.
4. Not in the least because the efforts to create 'cohesive cities' also may create or deepen rifts within presumed homogenous religious communities.
5. A good example of the intertwinement of legal-conceptual definitions and territorial-symbolic demarcations is the state's appropriation of church cemeteries in different European cities in the nineteenth century (Rémond, 1999).

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Abstract translations

Religion publique et espace urbain en Europe

Les conflits liés aux changements démographiques et culturels en Europe sont régulièrement exprimés à travers des désaccords au sujet de la présence et de la visibilité de bâtiments et de groupes religieux. Comme l'argumente cet éditorial, ces conflits sont mieux compris d'un point de vue post séculaire qui prend en compte l'imbrication et la divergence dans l'histoire de la formation des états et de la sécularisation. Les articles réunis dans ce numéro spécial sur la religion publique et l'espace urbain

démontrent que beaucoup des difficultés auxquelles les sociétés européennes font face quant à l'acceptation de la diversité religieuse, proviennent de rapports formés historiquement entre des identités politiques nationales et des identités religieuses. Dans de nombreux cas européens, la sécularisation n'a pas impliqué une séparation fondamentale entre la religion et la politique mais l'établissement d'une seule église nationale ou de deux églises en compétition, mais des églises nationales fondées sur le territoire. Une des conséquences de ces types d'établissements est que certaines traditions religieuses sont en général décrites et ressenties comme étant en accord avec la nation et d'autres non. Les contributeurs à ce numéro spécial montrent en détail que les difficultés des mouvements religieux contemporains en Europe à exercer une présence dans le domaine public sont liées à l'acception courante du lieu et de la façon dont la religion devrait se manifester dans le cadre urbain, basés sur la vie publique de traditions religieuses considérées comme faisant partie de la nation.

Mots-clefs: Religion, Espace public, Europe, Migration, Post séculaire.

Religión pública y espacio urbano en Europa

Los conflictos relacionados con el cambio demográfico y cultural en Europa encuentran regularmente su expresión en la lucha por la presencia y la visibilidad de edificios y grupos religiosos. Como

plantea esta editorial, estos conflictos pueden entenderse mejor desde una perspectiva pos-seglar que tenga en cuenta las historias superpuestas y divergentes de la formación del Estado y la secularización. Los trabajos reunidos en este número especial sobre la religión pública y el espacio urbano demuestran que muchas de las dificultades que enfrentan las sociedades europeas en dar cabida a la diversidad religiosa surgen de relaciones históricamente formadas entre identidades políticas nacionales e identidades religiosas. En muchos casos europeos, la secularización no implica una separación fundamental entre la religión y la política, sino el establecimiento formal de una iglesia nacional única o de dos que compiten, pero de iglesias con base en territorio nacional. Una de las consecuencias de este tipo de establecimientos es que ciertas tradiciones religiosas generalmente son descritas y percibidas como adecuadas para la nación y otras no lo son. Los colaboradores en esta edición demuestran con detalle que la lucha de los movimientos religiosos contemporáneos en Europa para hacerse presente en el dominio público está relacionada con conocimientos comúnmente aceptados de dónde y cómo la religión debería manifestarse en el entorno urbano, a partir de la vida pública de tradiciones religiosas que se consideran parte de la nación.

Palabras claves: Religión, Espacio Público, Europa, Migraciones, Pos-seglar.