Muslims in Poland and Eastern Europe

Widening the European Discourse on Islam

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edited by
Katarzyna Górak-Sosnowska

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Introduction

While Islam has been firmly placed on the global agenda since 9/11, and while it continues to occupy a prominent place in media discourse, attention has recently begun to shift towards European Muslims, or – as some would prefer to say – Muslims in Europe. Apart from the usual concerns – mostly articulated in the media – on the radicalization of Muslim youth, their failure to integrate into mainstream society and so forth, a vast body of academic literature on Islam and Muslims in Europe has sprung up since the late 1990s. This discourse and body of literature on Muslims in Europe, however, are confined to the west of the continent, viz. the old EU. This gives the impression that Europe stops at the banks of the Oder. Central and Eastern Europe – both new EU members and other countries – has been placed outside the realm of discourse, i.e. outside Europe. That is why it seems proper to let Central and Eastern Europe have its say.

This book aims to fill this gap by describing Muslim communities and their experiences in Central and Eastern Europe, both in countries with marginal Muslim populations, often not exceeding 1% (e.g. Hungary and Lithuania), and in countries with significant Muslim minorities, sometimes proportionally larger than in France (e.g. Bulgaria). Some of these countries have a long history of Muslim presence, dating back to the 14th century in the case of the Tatars (e.g. Poland and Ukraine) and the 16th century in the case of the first Muslim arrivals in the Balkans (e.g. Romania, Slovenia) during the Ottoman era. In other countries (e.g. Slovakia), Muslims have arrived only recently. What all these countries have in common is a Communist past inside the former Eastern bloc. This consisted mainly in being excluded, to a large extent, from the outside world – i.e. the so-called First World (meaning the West) – in economic, political and cultural terms. Thus, Central and Eastern Europe attracted only few immigrants from outside its own regional borders, which still may be observed in the ethnic and national structure of the countries. Another important factor is that none of the Central and Eastern European countries ever had any colonies. In fact, some countries were partitioned by local superpowers, while others emerged only after the collapse of the Soviet bloc. On the other hand, most of these countries have an autochthonous Muslim population which became a vital part of local cultures and societies in their Central and Eastern European homelands.

In the light of the above, it seems obvious that there is hardly anything except Islam that could constitute a common denominator for Eastern and Western European Muslims. Similarly, it is disputable to what extent the Central and Eastern

European experience could be translated into Western European realities. None of the Central and Eastern European states (except for the former Yugoslavia) faces any significant challenges related to its Muslim population – both autochthonous and immigrant – which might be attributed to the marginal role played by the Muslim populations. Institutional framework of mutual relations has been worked out for centuries, not decades. On the other hand, the Central and East European experience is clearly missing from the wider panorama of Muslim lives and realities in Europe. To some extent, this might result from the fact that most of the literature on Central and East European Muslims has been produced in local Slavic or Finno-Ugric languages, making it practically inaccessible for Western European readers. However, as that old adage goes – where there's a will, there's a way!

The book is a result of a collective effort of 23 authors from Central and Eastern Europe, and beyond. It comprises 21 articles divided into two main parts, prefaced by an introductory chapter. The first part is devoted solely to Islam in Poland, since this is the place of origin (and, consequently, expertise) of the majority of authors. Moreover, this project is co-funded by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The second part covers most of other Central and East European countries: other states of Vyšehrad community (Hungary, Slovakia), former European USSR republics (Lithuania and Ukraine), former Yugoslavia (Serbia, Slovenia) and other Balkan countries (Bulgaria, Romania). Apart from the articles based predominantly on secondary sources, which aim to systematize and analyze the knowledge on Muslims in Central and Eastern Europe, there are also several articles that use authors' own qualitative and quantitative data gathered especially with this book in mind. Most of the articles offer a contemporary perspective and thus go beyond the ethnographical and historical tradition of studying Muslims in Central and Eastern Europe. Moreover, some tackle the issue of Muslim newcomers (labor immigrants, refugees) or Islamic converts, which in itself is a new field of study, as the bulk of local research focuses on the autochthones only.

Introduction is always a good place to express a few words of gratitude. First of all, I would like to thank all the authors for their work, often pioneering in nature, effectively meaning starting the research from less than a scratch. While I had no problems with finding authors for the Polish part, the wider Central and Eastern European perspective was provided by authors who responded to my call published on several mailing lists. To all of them go my words of gratitude for their will and trust. Sometimes I had to Google an author for a "missing" country, which is yet another indicator of how few researchers cover a number of particular Central and East European states in terms of their Muslim population (conversely, there would not be any problem with finding an author specializing in Muslims in e.g. France or UK, as it is, in a way, common knowledge who is researching these communities and from which perspective). Professors Jolanta Sierakowska-Dyndo and Halina Rusek provided, as reviewers, not only their comments and insights, but also their understanding of the strict schedule of the publishing process and time constraints. In order to make the texts more reader-friendly and ensure the language is English (not only English-like, hopefully!), Jan Kłoczko proofread them. In order to make the book Central and

Eastern European and at the same time Islamic, Wiktor Dyndo designed the cover using a typical Polish ornament from a scarf of a highland woman, while Beata Kryśkiewicz cared for the project's website. Thank you for your time and work. Last but not least, I would like to thank Professor Kristen Ghodsee for granting the permission to reprint her article on Muslims in Bulgaria.

This is, according to my knowledge, one of the very few English language books providing an overview of Muslims in Central and Eastern Europe. It might have some gaps, as every exploratory work has. I am open to all thoughts, insights or comments sent to my email address at: ✉ katarzyna.gorak@gmail.com. The book is also available online on the website of the Faculty of Oriental Studies of the University of Warsaw (http://orient.uw.edu.pl) and selected e-book sites – so that the effort remains accessible after the published version is out of print.

Note on transliteration

Bringing under one roof articles from various geographical regions of the Islamic world is always accompanied by the challenge of standardization of names and words of Arabic origin which were adapted to local languages. This applies also to the case of Muslim minorities in the Eastern Europe.

If a word of Arabic origin was adapted to a local language, in this book it is used in the local version. Thus, parallel to *dhikr* there is also *zikr*, or even *zikier*. Similarly, the Arabic *tariqa* might also be spelled as *tariqat* or *t'eriqat*, reflecting its Turkic or Chechen origin. The Arab root is always provided in brackets. On the other hand, Arabic words referring to the core of Islamic religion, such as Qur'an or *shari'a*, are used in a standardized version throughout the text, even if their transcription in local languages is different (e.g. Koran, *szari'at* in Polish).

While the English plural suffix -s is easily distinguishable in the most common words like *hijab* or *adat*, a non-Slavic reader might find it hard to guess whether e.g. *dżynejs* or *siufkaczs* are in singular or plural form. As non-English words tend to be written in italics anyway, the plural suffix -s is left unchanged, so *adat*s and *dżynej*s.

Last but not least, in order to retain the Eastern-European flavor, I decided to keep all the Slavic and Finno-Ugric diacritics in the text and additionally Cyrillic in references. Since European readers are definitely well used to the German *ß* or Spanish *ñ*, why shouldn't they embrace the Lithuanian *ė*, Slovak *č*, or Polish *ł*.

Katarzyna Górak-Sosnowska

Muslims in Europe: different communities, one discourse? Adding the Central and Eastern European perspective

There is an old Polish saying, "każda pliszka swój ogonek chwali"[1] meaning that everyone emphasizes their good points. Being a representative of a country of approximately 40 thousand Muslims (for around 38 million citizens) puts the author in a difficult position. The European academia may not be expected to pay equal attention to Muslims in Poland as in France, UK or Germany. Almost all countries of the old EU have either bigger Muslim populations or a larger proportion of Muslims in the society (usually both). On the other hand, Bosnia and Herzegovina or Albania have a far higher percentage of Muslims in the population, and they also seem to be on the periphery of the European discourse on Islam.

This chapter aims to discuss why Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) is absent or represented marginally in the European debate about Islam and Muslims. It starts with a brief presentation of the ethnic structure of CEE countries and its impact on perception of Others, in particular Muslims. Then it explores possible linking points between different Muslim communities across Europe. Finally, it tackles the issue of research on Muslims in CEE – its limitation and challenges. The concept of CEE is used both in a narrow and wider sense. In the first case it refers primarily to the Vyšehrad Group countries (i.e. Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia). For a wider background it will also embrace the wider CEE, which includes Slavic and Finno-Ugric countries of the former Soviet bloc.

Exploring Muslims of Central and Eastern Europe

A closer look on the distribution of Muslims in Europe reveals a white spot stretching from Finland in the north through the Baltic states and Vyšehrad countries to Moldova and Romania in the south-east. In none of these countries does the number of Muslims exceed 100 thousand, nor 1% of the population. At the same time, most of these countries have a very long history of encounters with Islam and Muslims, reaching back to the 10th century, only 300 years later than the first ever Islamic

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[1] Literally: 'Every wagtail praises its tail'.

appearance on the European continent in Al-Andalus and Sicily. So, in Hungary there were Böszörménys, who most probably arrived from Central Asia in the 10th century and remained Muslim until most of them were forcefully baptized, resulting in the disappearance of the community by the 13th century. Starting from the early 14th century, Lipka Tatars, who arrived with the Mongols, inhabited parts of Lithuania, Poland, Belarus, Ukraine and Romania. In the 19th century small Tatar communities migrated also to Latvia and Estonia, but this time from Europe. The Tatars were a diverse group and soon they adapted to the local ways of life. Exogenous marriages (in the past), linguistic assimilation and limiting religion to the private sphere are just a few examples of their integration, or even assimilation into local cultures. Except for the Crimean Khanate (1441–1783), which was the longest lasting Tatar state in Europe, and few cases of rebellions (such as the rebellion of the Lipka Tatars in Poland in 1672), they always remained loyal to their European host countries which soon became their homeland. In the European history they are mostly mentioned as warriors who fought for Polish independence and supported Napoleon in his war against Russia (Maréchal 2003: xvii).

In the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Moldova the Muslim presence is a recent phenomenon, and as newcomers they need to work to gain recognition and institutionalization of their religion. Slovakia is most probably the only European country without a mosque (Macháček 2010: 307). In Moldova the Muslim community has just been officially recognized by the state, a move which despite being controversial shows the improvement of political climate for the emerging Muslim community (Radio Free Europe 2011).

The south-eastern part of Europe is much more diverse when it comes to the percentage of Muslims in the population. In Croatia, Slovenia and Serbia the percentage does not exceed 3%, while in Albania and Kosovo almost everyone adheres to Islam. This includes both the Islamized autochthonous population like Pomacs in Bulgaria, Albanians or Bosniaks, as well as Turkish population which settled in the Balkans after the retreat of the Ottoman army in the 19th century. The Muslim population in the Balkans is very diverse and often internally divided along ethnic or linguistic lines. Religion did not always play the role of the decisive identity factor. Often it was language, as in the case of Kosovar Albanians or Sandžak Muslims in Montenegro, or ethnicity – as in the case of Macedonian Muslim population, which is dominated numerically by Albanians, but also comprises minorities of Turks, Torbeş (Slavic) and Roma Muslims (Kandler: 601–604).

Just a short glimpse of Muslim communities in CEE reveals their great diversity, with Islam and their autochthonous character being the sole common denominators. What is more, there are hardly any similarities to the also diverse Muslim communities of the old EU. Attempts to merge the CEE and Western European Muslim perspective would be risky, or very hard to implement. The perspective of a Muslim immigrant or citizen of a West European state is hard to standardize with one of a Muslim fellow countryman, whose family has been living for centuries in his village or town of Central or Eastern Europe. The discrepancy is reflected e.g. in the social distance between Tatars and immigrant Muslims in Poland, who run their separate

organizations, have different goals and compete with each other for being the representatives of Islam (Górak-Sosnowska 2010). The Tatars have the historical advantage of being the first in Poland, and their religious union (Muzułmański Związek Religijny) is the official representative of Islam in Poland[2]; the immigrants, on the other hand, outnumber the Tatars at least thrice, and some of them (especially the Arabs) have better access to religious sources, i.e. the orthodox Islam.

Picture 1: Number of Muslims in European countries
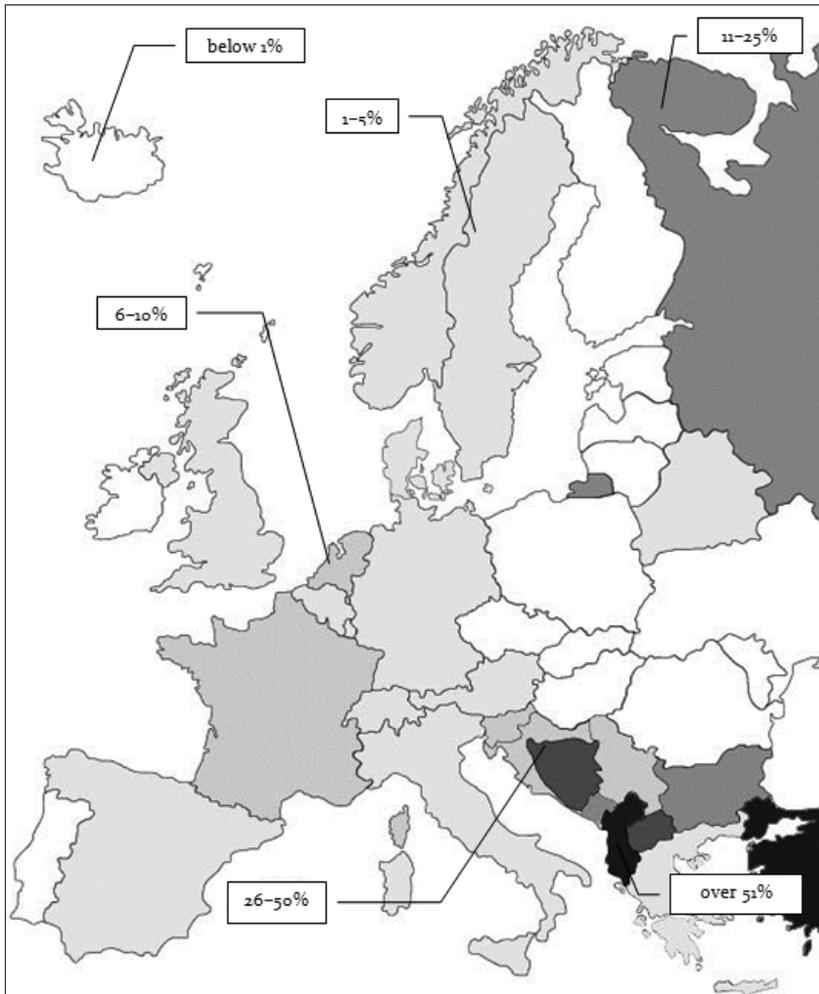
Source: updated from Górak-Sosnowska (2009: 55).

[2] To be precise, another Muslim religious union was registered in 2003 by the Ministry of Internal Affairs. This time it was Liga Muzułmańska w RP (Muslim League in Poland), an

The same sort of tension is observed in Lithuania – here it is the "ethnic Lithuanian Islam" that is recognized by the state. Newcomers from the Muslim countries are perceived as a competition in acquiring the state funding, but most of all a challenge to the local religious practice, deemed "un-Islamic" by the Arabs (Racius 2001: 182ff). It is worth noting that Muslim immigration does not always lead to tensions with the local community. Bulgaria can serve as an example (Zhelyazkova 2004: 2). Immigrants constitute there a minority within the Muslim community, and its ethnic (Turks, Pomaks, Roma, Tatars...) and denominational (Sunni majority + Shi'a, Alevi, Sufi...) diversity facilitates the absorption of immigrants. It is the Head Muftiate that presides over all Muslims in Bulgaria, regardless of their ethnic or denominational background (Merdjanova 2010: 63).

The discrepancy between CEE "own" and "immigrant" Muslims is also noticeable in the perception by the wider public. According to a survey carried out in Lithuania,[3] 39% of respondents would not like to have a Muslim in the neighborhood, but only 17% would object to a Tatar neighbor (Etninių tyrimų institutas 2010: 3). Only 11% of Bulgarians would accept a marriage with an Arab, but 22% would not mind marriage with a Bulgarian Muslim; similarly in further questions on social distance Bulgarian Muslims scored about twice as much favorable answers as Arabs (Pamporov 2009: 30ff). In Poland no surveys on this issue were made, but the split between "our old Muslims" and "those" immigrants is noticeable in the media discourse (Górak-Sosnowska 2010a). Interestingly, "the" Muslim usually evokes more negative attitudes than a clearly indicated autochthonous Muslim (e.g. Tatar, Bulgarian Muslim). This means that the stereotype of one's "own" Muslim is constructed differently than the "immigrant" one, especially in regard to the place of religion. CEE's "own" Muslims do not belong into "the" Muslim stereotype. So, according to the already quoted survey, when it comes to the stereotype of an Arab and a Bulgarian Muslim, the first is religious, fanatic and rich, while the latter hard-working and kindly-spirited (Pamporov 2009: 95–97). Religiosity is not a distinctive feature of a Bulgarian Muslim at all.

Transplanted discourse and the Muslim Other

The division between immigrant and autochthonous Muslims brought up another feature of the ethnic structure of the CEE states. Unlike the Western Europe, CEE has not been a popular destination for immigration. In fact, most of these countries are international suppliers of labor force. The countries of CEE never had a colony, so

organization representing mostly immigrants, which has been established in order to represent their interests. Giving the fact that the MZR is the official representative of Islam in Poland by the Law of 1936 on the Relation of the State towards the Muslim Religious Union (Dz.U. Nr 30, poz. 240), the legal status of Muslim League has been unclear, more by: Nalborczyk (2005) as well as Nalborczyk (2011) and Pędziwiatr (2011) in this volume.

[3] I would like to thank the following persons for access to resources in Slavic and Finno-Ugric languages: Liliana Bugailiskyte (Lithuania), Inna Simonova (Latvia), Daniela Stoica (Romania) and Denitza Vidolova (Bulgaria).

there was no historical link to any particular non-European region. After the World War II they became isolated from the outside (i.e. Western world). Even though they kept in touch with fellow-socialist and communist countries from Africa and Asia, they attracted only a limited number of immigrants. Most often these were young people who came to CEE to study. Many of them stayed in CEE after graduation, often married local women, and currently belong to middle or upper-middle class. After 1989 when the Soviet bloc collapsed, CEE opened up its borders, but no significant immigration flow took place. The states were too weak and vulnerable to attract foreigners, while the recent socialist past was also not really a pull factor. CEE is also geographically too far from Muslim majority countries to become the last stop for desperate illegal migrants.

Access to the EU of some CEE countries in 2004 and 2007 translated into a moderate interest in immigration. Comparing to the old EU, the new member states (as well as the rest of CEE) have lower GDP per capita and provide less social capital for a foreigner to settle down and live. Slavic or Finno-Ugric languages are hardly known outside CEE and Russia, while the working knowledge of English or French in CEE is lower than in the Western part of the continent. This limits possible professions of a foreigner to physical jobs (no need to communicate) or international companies (everyone communicates in a foreign language). Relatively low attractiveness of CEE comparing to Western Europe refers not only to Muslim migrants, but any Non-European migrants.

The table 1 below provides an overview of ethnic structure of CEE states. The Vyšehrad countries are the most homogenous, with majority ethnic group building up from 86% (Slovakia) to 98% (Poland) of country's population. In the former USSR republics there are dominant ethnic groups, but also significant Russian minorities (from 5% in Lithuania to 28% in Latvia). The population of former Yugoslavia reflects the Balkan melting pot, even though there is a clear dominating group in every country. Other Balkan states are homogenous to a great extent; however, there are significant minorities in each (except for Albania). As one can notice, all other national groups come from the neighboring countries, or are local ethnic communities (e.g. Gorani, Gagauz, Roma). In none of the CEE countries is there a significant external minority, populous enough to make it into the above-quoted statistics.

The CEE countries are in the earlier phase of encountering the Other – provided it is a linear process – as compared to their Western counterparts. Most of the Others constitute citizens of neighboring countries, often enjoying a status of national minority. There are indigenous ethnic groups, which also have been living there for centuries and became familiar to the mainstream society, or even merged to become a part of local cultures. The "distant" Others – that is newcomers originating from countries with significant cultural distance – started arriving only recently, and their number is still marginal. Except for the Vyšehrad countries, other CEE states easily qualify as multicultural; however, it is a sort of a borderland-multiculturality, which does not necessarily translate into greater tolerance towards (distant) Others.

Table 1: Ethnic structure of Central and East European states

	Country	Dominating nation (%)	Other significant ethnic and national groups (%)	Muslims* (%)
Vyšehrad	Czech Republic	Czech (94)	Roma (2), Slovak (2), Silesian, Polish, German, Ukrainian	0.1
	Hungary	Magyar (90)	Roma (4), German (3), Serb (2)	0.2
	Poland	Polish (98)	German, Ukrainian, Belarussian, Lithuanian	0.1
	Slovakia	Slovaks (86)	Hungarians (10), Roma (2)	0.1
European ex-USSR	Belarus	Belarusian (81)	Russian (11), Polish (4), Ukrainian (2)	0.5
	Estonia	Estonians (69)	Russians (26), Ukrainians (2)	0.3
	Latvia	Latvians (60)	Russians (28), Belarusians (4), Ukrainians (3), Poles (2)	0.4
	Lithuania	Lithuanians (85)	Poles (6), Russians (5)	0.2
	Ukraine	Ukrainians (78)	Russians (17)	0.6
ex-Yugoslavia	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Bosniak (48)	Serb (34), Croat (15)	40.0
	Croatia	Croat (90)	Serb (5)	1.3
	Kosovo	Albanians (88)	Serbs (7). Gorani (3), Roma (2)	90.0
	Macedonia	Macedonian (64)	Albanian (25),Turkish (4), Roma (3)	29.0
	Montenegro	Montenegrin (43)	Serbian (32), Bosniak (8), Albanian (5)	18.0
	Serbia	Serbian (83)	Hungarian (4), Bosniak (2)	3.2
	Slovenia	Slovenes (83)	Croats (2), Serbs (2)	2.4
Other Balkan states	Albania	Albanian (99)	Greek (1)	99.0
	Bulgaria	Bulgarian (84)	Turkish (9), Roma (5)	12.2
	Moldova	Moldovan (76)	Ukrainian (8), Rssian (6), Gagauz (4), Bulgarian (2), Romanian (2)	0.2
	Romania	Romanians (90)	Hungarians (7)	0.2

Source: US State Department (2011), for * estimates from various online resources.

Direct contact with "distant" Others, i.e. non-European peoples, is limited. At the same time the indirect exposure – especially through media – is comparable to the one in the wider Europe. The media discourse on Islam focuses on international politics and situation in the Western Europe. Only seldom is there any counterbalancing

information on local Muslim communities. The CEE discourse on Islam is therefore in most cases transplanted, that is, it refers to peoples and events from outside the CEE, with no relation to local reality. The views of CEE audience (except for the Balkans) on Islam are therefore shaped by external factors. Usually well integrated and easy-going local Muslims fall victim to this transplanted discourse. The fear of the coming "Eurabia" and "stop Islamisation" campaigns[4], which also struck a fruitful ground in CEE countries, seem to refer to an external and unreal threat: it neither seems that the CEE will achieve a similar immigration level to the one of the old EU in the nearest (or even distant) future, nor has the autochthonous Muslim population ever caused any significant problem, socially or ideologically. The old immigration from socialist Muslim countries is well integrated, while the newcomers hardly matter (in fact, one cannot argue that they belong to the lowest social strata, since no adequate research was made, and even if, they could hardly be a burden to the welfare system or a competition to the locals on the labor market). Similarly, there was no threat of radical Islam either in the form of *da'wa* or violence. The situation in the Balkans is different, as Islam is embedded into politics and national identity.

One can therefore assume that an average CEE citizen had neither met a "real" Muslim (due to their marginal numbers, also because the opportunities of traveling abroad are limited, comparing to the old EU), nor could have heard about any problems caused by the local Muslim population. However, asked about his national likes and dislikes, he or she will point to Muslims as one of the least liked groups. In Lithuania Muslims are the 4th least desirable ethnic or religious neighbor and scored only better than Chechens (also Muslims actually), Jehovah's Witnesses and Roma people (Etninių tyrimų institutas 2010: 3). In Romania people indicate the highest social distance to Arabs and Roma, and the only significant difference is that they would more opposed to an Arab visiting Romania, and a Roma living in Romania (TOTEM 2010: 13). Moreover, Arabs are the least liked group of immigrants (twice less liked than Asians and South Americans; Alexe, Păunescu 2011: 124). In Latvia around 38% of people believe that Muslims should be denied entry to their country, and 44% would only allow Muslims to enter Latvia as tourists (Pilsoniskās izglītības centrs 2010: 12). In Poland, according to annual CBOS surveys, Arabs for many years score – interchangeably with Roma – the last rank in national preferences of the Poles (CBOS 2011).

It might be called a "Platonic Islamophobia" – a negative attitude towards non-existent Muslims (Górak-Sosnowska 2006). One of the very few comparative surveys on this topic, the *European Values Study* clearly shows the difference between the negative attitude towards Muslims in CEE and the old EU. The data is from 1999, that is

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[4] In Czech Republic there is an association AntiMešita o.s. ('Anti-Mosque'), http://www.antimesita.eu, registered by the Ministry of Interior in 2010 and http://eurabia.par-lamentnilisty.cz – an internet portal launched in 2005. In Poland the Stowarzyszenie Europa Przyszłości ('Association Europe of the Future)' was registered in 2005 and became popular thanks to its website http://www.euroislam.pl and an anti-mosque campaign in the Warsaw district of Ochota. Since both promote themselves as pro-European, one can argue that the anti-Islamic sentiment is used in order to build up and strengthen the European identity. And

before the 9/11 World Trade Center attacks which fundamentally changed the Western perception of Islam (not mentioning the local terrorist attacks in London and Madrid), and before the EU accession of some CEE countries, which must have had an impact on the attitude towards Others. On the other hand, the old EU already had its numerous Muslim communities and experienced first challenges related to the growing Islamic presence. The Western discourse on Islam was hardly prevalent in CEE. Still, the difference between these two regions is obvious.

Chart 1: Europeans who would mind having a Muslim (and Roma) neighbor (1999; %)
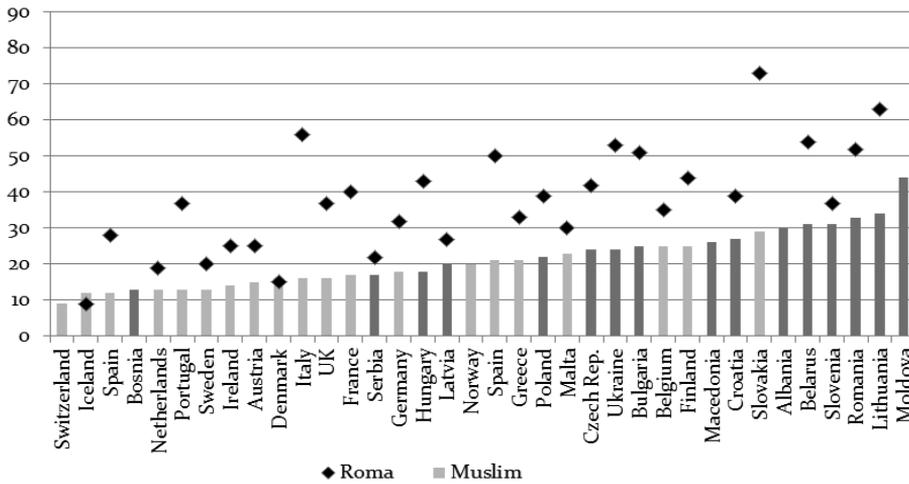
Source: European Values Study (1999)

Limiting this narrative to Muslims only would not be fair. As a reference point, the data on the Roma people was added to the graph. The two trends are correlated – i.e. societies that would welcome a Muslim neighbor also would be more open to a Roma one, as compared to societies that would object to a Muslim neighbor. The same discrepancy between CEE and the Western Europe is visible in the case of other minorities included in the study, not only ethnic or religious ones, but also e.g. gay people, people with mental illnesses, or the HIV-positive. This brings back the homogeneity (or borderland-multiculturality) issue. Lack of exposure to Others can be one of the factors reinforcing a growing fear of diversity.

even more as both organizations see the 'Islamic threat' that was overlooked by the old EU. More on that in the case of Poland in: Górak-Sosnowska (2010a). Anti-Muslim sentiments are also present in several neo-conservative websites such as *Europa 21*, http://www.europa21.pl, ran by a foundation. There is also a Romanian website *Contradictii si absurditati in Coran*, which "is intended to show that Islam has been falsely created by a pedophile Muhammad, rapist of slaves, caravan robber, killer, who wrote Qur'an in order to satisfy his vicious and psychopathic appetites", http://coransicontradictii.blogspot.com. There used to be a Romanian SIOE website (the Stop Islamisation in Europe campaign), currently there is one in Polish (http://sioepolska.wordpress.com) and Russian (http://sioeru.wordpress.com).

Different Europes, different Muslims

The history of contacts between Europe and the Islamic world goes back to the birth of Islam, that is the 7th century. During the 14 centuries, the patterns of mutual relations and positions were fluctuating. Stefano Allievi illustrates it by splitting the history of European-Islamic relations into five phases. Two of them comprise together over one millennium. The three latter refer to the last several decades. The phases are not monochronic, as their course depends on the country and the generation of Muslims.

Table 2: Phases of relations between Islam and Europe

#	Phase	Description
1	Islam and Europe	From the birth of Islam to early 16th century, confrontation and exchange between European countries and Islamic world.
2	Europe and Islam	European domination in the Islamic world, including the colonial presence.
3	Islam in Europe	Labor immigration from Muslim countries to Europe, staring after World War II.
4	The Islam of Europe	Consolidation of Muslim communities and integration in European societies; the forming of Muslim middle class, being at the edge between Europe and countries of origin, and their unique identity.
5	European Islam	Creation of a unique European Islam which is different from Islam in Muslim countries, grounded in 'citizenization'. Its form depends on Muslims and the non-Muslim environment.

Source: adapted from Allievi (2009: 10–12).

European countries with relatively short history of Muslim immigration (e.g. Italy, Spain), in which the majority of Muslims have the status of immigrants, are in the third phase. Countries with advanced institutionalization of Islam (e.g. UK, France) are in the fourth phase. The European Islam seems to be, to a large extent, a future phase.

The phases seem to display the relations between Islam and the old EU (only). One could attribute the Mongol invasion which led to Tatar settlements in the Eastern Europe starting from 13th century to the first phase, but to which phase belongs the 600-years long Tatar presence in the Eastern Europe? The 8 million Muslim population in the Balkans – both autochthones and immigrants, who arrived to Europe between 14th and 19th century (Parzymies 2005: 25f) – far earlier than labor immigrants to Western Europe – are also not included in any phase. Despite their long presence

in Europe, most of the CEE Muslim communities should also not be included into phase 5, since they either inhabit multicultural countries of former Yugoslavia, which after years of conflicts and partition are in the process of negotiating and defining their national identity (Kosovo, Montenegro, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina), or, as minorities, inhabit countries which are in the process of nation building, which indirectly influences the position of Muslims (Bulgaria; Kandler 2005: 598). In other CEE countries, one can speak about Muslim citizens, but their presence (in terms of numbers) is marginal, and so is their influence on social life, not to mention politics.

Despite these facts, it may not be claimed that Muslim presence in CEE, especially in the Balkans, is not a sort of European Islam. Only if the definition of European Islam by Allievi was more inclusive (i.e. not build on the concept of citizenship, understood far wider than enjoying certain legal status), one could easily state that European Islam is not a project, but a reality. Limiting European Islam just to the old EU helps to maintain and enforce the image of Islam as the "Other", standing apart from the collective historical memory of Europe and simply not belonging there (Larsson and Račius 2010: 352f).

It seems to be too hasty and too superficial to claim that the absence of CEE Muslims in the European research on Islam and Muslims in Europe is caused solely by the way the "Muslim Other" is constructed. Nor is it to be explained by the marginal number of Muslims or political closure of CEE until 1989 (even though CEE, regardless of whether we discuss the new EU member states or other countries, are, in a way, on the periphery of Europe – at least from the Western European perspective). To a much larger extent, it seems to be caused by the scope and access to the research on Muslims in CEE.

A straightforward reason for the absence of Central and Eastern European Islam in the mainstream research is the lack of access to relevant literature or fieldwork. Field research would require fluency in Slavic or Finno-Ugric languages, as the working knowledge of English is much lower in Southern and Eastern Europe as compared to Western Europe.[5] A local facilitator would also be desirable, since access to Muslim communities in some CEE countries might be limited due to their marginal number or their living in closed rural communities that view outsiders with suspicion. In CEE countries with marginal Muslim population the challenge of the fieldwork is to actually find Muslims. It is not that one could encounter a respondent just across the street, if statistically one person in a thousand is Muslim. They could also be simply bored with new researchers, new questionnaires to be filled, new interviews to be given. This is also due to a new trend of writing BA or MA theses in social sciences and humanities about Islam. There are many online requests of students who seek Muslim respondents for their papers. Poland has a few "on-duty Muslims" – Tatars, converts and immigrants – who are usually referred to if an essay has to be delivered for the end

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[5] Except for Croatia and Slovenia, the declared working knowledge of English in the EU countries of Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe ranges between 11% (Latvia) and 23% (Estonia, Romania). In Croatia 41% of the respondents declared that they can have a conversation in English, while in Slovenia – 34%. The EU25 average for English is 30% (Eurobarometer 2006 :144).

of term, or an article to be written. Since it happens that Muslims are misquoted or misrepresented in the media, many of them hesitate to talk to a researcher or journalist. A good way of getting in is to be referred by an insider. Still, it requires establishing a network of contacts. The groups where the access is relatively easy are the Chechen refugees, since they remain in refugee centers and are relatively numerous (approximately 5 thousand in Poland).

The literature on local Muslim communities (if existent) is published in local languages, and therefore it is hardly accessible to foreign researcher. In consequence, CEE Islam is popularized worldwide by a couple of Westerners who got interested in this part of the world,[6] or Easterners who have been living in the West.[7] Now and again, CEE is included into a wider framework of studies on autochthonous Muslim communities – Tatars (Baltic states, Poland, Belarus) and Turkic peoples (Balkans, Hungary). A step forward seems to be the *Yearbook of Muslims in Europe* (Brill, vol. 1, 2, 2010–2011). The first volume offers country profiles of all European countries, while two out of six articles in the second part refer to CEE issues (Islamic education in Bulgaria and in the Balkans).

Browsing the literature on CEE and "Western" Muslims, one may conclude that approaches differ significantly. The Western approach focuses on migration studies, while the Eastern on ethnology and history. The focus is enforced by the subject of study. In the case of Muslim immigrants and their children, it is crucial to investigate the integration and acculturation processes, institutionalization of Islam and emerging Muslim identity. The question is how the traditional cultures of origin adapt to secular and liberal Western realities. The research questions in the case of autochthonous Muslims of CEE are different – which language they used to speak, how their sense of ethnic and national belonging was changing over the centuries, how are they dealing with recent immigration from Muslim countries. The core is not about acculturation, it is rather about preserving tradition. Western postmodernity is not so much a challenge, nor a reference point, since it has not yet developed in large parts of CEE; nor it is threatening Muslims more than any other religious group.

Moreover, the models of religiosity of CEE and immigrant Muslims differ. It is most clearly reflected by the tensions between the Tatars and immigrant Muslim communities in Poland (Górak-Sosnowska 2010b) or Lithuania (Račius 2001). The co-existence used to be peaceful and of mutual benefit until the late 1990s, when the

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[6] See e.g. Neuburger, M. (2004). *The Orient within: Muslim minorities and the negotiation of nationhood in modern Bulgaria.* Cornell University Press; Ghodsee, K. (2009). *Muslim Lives in Eastern Europe: Gender, Ethnicity and the Transformation of Islam in Postsocialist Bulgaria.* Princeton University Press; G. Larsson (ed.) (2009). *Islam in the Nordic and Baltic countries.* Routledge. History of Eastern and Southeastern Muslim communities was extensively researched and documented by Harry T. Norris in his books: *Islam in the Balkans: Religion and Society Between Europe and the Arab World*, University of South Carolina Press 1993; *Islam in the Baltic: Europe's Early Muslim Community*, Tauris Academic Studies 2009; *Popular Sufism in Eastern Europe*, Routledge 2011.

[7] See e.g. Minkov, A. (2004). *Conversion to Islam in the Balkans.* Brill; G. Nonneman, T. Niblock, B. Szajkowski (eds.) (1997). *Muslim Communities in the New Europe.* Ithaca Press; Eminov, A. (1997). *Turkish and other Muslim minorities in Bulgaria.* Routledge.

autochthonous Muslims helped their fellows in faith to find their place in CEE societies, while the immigrants (mostly from Arab states) provided the autochthones with religious education. The Arabic language has never been native to any of the local CEE Muslim communities, and since they lived on the periphery of the Islamic world and for many years had limited access to the global *umma*, even basic Arabic knowledge is marginal, not to mention understanding the original text of Qur'an. This often refers also to local religious scholars, who have been far from fluent in Arabic. Muslim newcomers therefore offered access to religious sources that were out of CEE Muslims' reach. However, this initial symbiosis soon transformed into mutual moralizing. CEE Islam of the autochthones has been influenced by local Christian and Slavic cultures. It is reflected both in some of the rituals and practices, as well as in limiting religion to the private sphere. As Kristen Ghodsee explains:

> On a more everyday level, few Bulgarians who would call themselves Muslim refrain from drink or pork, and most generally ignore a variety of practices associated with being a proper Muslim. The proponents of "orthodox" Islam trace the roots of this laxity in the local Muslim culture to lack of education and lack of critical reflection on what it means to be a Muslim in Bulgaria (2010: 19).

The "orthodox" Islam that Ghodsee is referring to is known in Bulgaria either as Arab Islam or as "true" Islam and means the Salafi/Wahhabi practice imposed on autochthonous Muslims in Bulgaria. This of course provokes resistance among the locals. This Islam is not only "imported" and therefore unfamiliar, but also would not work in the European setting. As one of the Polish Tatars explained:

> I am not fond of Arab-Islamic culture, because I associate it with religion classes held by Arabs. That wasn't a nice experience, that's why often I didn't take part. Arabs imposed on us their interpretation of religion, they told us what is allowed and what not [...] Arabs didn't understand at all that we live in Poland, that we have 21st century. They are from another world. I am Muslim, my ancestors were Muslim, but I keep away from Arabs, because they don't understand us (quoted in: Górak-Sosnowska and Łyszczarz 2009).

Even though "orthodox" Islam tries to make footholds in the old EU, the social setting is completely different and hardly comparable. It is not a fight against secularism of Western Muslims, but against the folklore and "ignorance" of CEE Muslims. In fact, secularism of CEE Muslims is lined with ethnic folklore and assimilation to local Slavic or Finno-Ugric cultures, and not devoid of ethnicity – as in the case of changing religiosity among second and further generations of Muslim immigrants in the West (Mandaville 2002: 24). Thus European Islam of CEE is ethnic and far from being universalistic, while in the West – universalistic, and therefore abstracted from ethnic or national elements.

The question arises – are these two groups comparable at all? The researchers from CEE are only partly in better position, because they still could adapt Western

methodology and investigate recent Muslim immigration or contemporary autochthonous Muslims. This is, however, very hard, as no sufficient research base exists. It is also easier and more convenient for the CEE researchers to follow a well-trodden path and concentrate on what has always been the research priority – e.g. ethnology and history of local Muslims.

Conclusion

Even though CEE worked out its unique model of European Islam, in which autochthonous Muslim communities contribute to local and national cultures of their homelands, the picture seems to be hardly transferable to Western European realities. The opposite scenario seems much more probable – that CEE states will have to use some of the experiences of Western Europe in order to manage its immigrant Muslim communities, or respond to some common challenges across Europe, such as discrimination against Muslims, bad media or institutionalization of Islam.

At the same time, CEE experiences with its Muslim population can definitely enrich Western discourse on Islam. Not only do they indicate that European Islam has been a fact for centuries, but also challenge the deterministic approach, according to which it is Islam which hinders integration of Muslims in the mainstream society of the West. Far more probably the socio-economic conditions of Muslim immigrants are being translated into their very low cultural capital, pulling them down in the social structure.

While Muslims in the Western Europe are well known in CEE, both to researchers[8] and – through mass media – to wider public, CEE Muslims hardly ever have made it to the consciousness of the Western academia. On the other hand, the dynamically evolving research on Muslims in Europe and vast literature on this topic made several Western researchers compelled to look further to the East. Joint projects that combine Western and CEE perspective on Islam and Muslims might be of mutual benefit, and erect another bridge between the two parts of the European continent.

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[8] E.g. in Poland there are at least seven academic books on Muslims in Western Europe written by Polish authors: A. Parzymies (ed.) (2005). *Muzułmanie w Europie* ('Muslims in Europe'). Warszawa; Górak-Sosnowska, K., Pędziwiatr, K., Kubicki, P. (eds.) (2006). *Islam i obywatelskość w Europie* ('Islam and citizenship in Europe'). Warszawa; Nowaczek-Walczak, M. (2012, in print). *Życie codzienne w muzułmańskim Mardycie.* ('Daily life in Muslim Madrid'). Warszawa; Pędziwiatr, K. (2005). *Od islam imigrantów do islamu obywateli: muzułmanie w krajach Europy Zachodniej* ('From Islam of Immigrants to Islam of citizens. Muslims in countries of Western Europe'). Kraków; Widy, M. (2005). *Życie codzienne w muzułmańskim Paryżu* ('Daily life in Muslim Paris'). Warszawa; Zawadewicz, M. (2008). *Życie codzienne w muzułmańskim Londynie* ('Daily life in Muslim London). Warszawa; Kielan-Glińska, I. (2009). *Muzułmanie w laickiej Francji. 1974–2004* ('Muslims in laic France. 1974–2004'). Kraków; Nalborczyk, A. (2003). *Zachowania językowe imigrantów arabskich w Austrii* ('Linguistic behavior of Arab immigrants in Austria'). Warszawa.

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Marek M. Dziekan

History and culture of Polish Tatars

In Poland, Islam is an old phenomenon, deeply rooted in the history and culture of the country. Polish-Lithuanian Tatars, who make up the core of Polish Islam, were celebrating about 10 years ago their 600th anniversary of settling on the Polish territory.[1] Under the year 1397 in Jan Długosz's *Annals* we can find the first record in Polish historiography concerning Tatars living in our land, which is the symbolic starting point of the history of this ethnic group in Poland.

The first Tatars appeared in Polish lands in the 14th century, in Lithuania (Great Duchy of Lithuania), where Muslim captives of the Golden Horde lived in several settlements. They were called Polish Tatars, Polish-Lithuanian Tatars, *Muślims* and *Lipka* (the last one comes from Turkish *Litva Tatarları*). Those first Tatar-captives were joined by emigrants from various regions of the Golden Horde (later – the Great Horde) as well as by small groups of followers of Islam from Caucasus, Azerbaijan and Turkey. Since that time to this day, Tatars have always been present in the life of our country, which can be easily traced in the history of Polish warfare. An interesting event took place in the mid-16th century – an anonymous *Traktat o Tatarach polskich* ('Treatise on Polish Tatars') was written on Istanbuls' dignitaries' request by a certain Tatar who was on his pilgrimage to Mecca in the years 1557–1558. It described the situation of Islam believers in Polish lands.

The beginning of the 17th century was particularly unfavourable to Tatars. In 1609, a wooden mosque in Trakai (Lithuania, Pol. Troki) was destroyed as a result of incitement by Catholic priests, while in 1616 a pamphlet titled *Alfurkan tatarski* ('Tatar Alfurqan') was written by Piotr Czyżewski, depicting Muslim beliefs and customs in

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[1] Many comprehensive works in Polish have been published on the subject of Polish-Lithuanian Tatars' history and culture by S. Kryczyński, A. Miśkiewicz, P. Borawski, A. Dubiński and others. Works in English: Bohdanowicz, L. (1997). The Polish Tatars. In: *Tatarzy muzułmanie w Polsce*. L. Bohdanowicz, S. Chazbijewicz, J. Tyszkiewicz (ed.). Gdańsk; Gawęcki, M. (1989). Ethno-Cultural Status of the Polish Tatars. *Central Asian Survey*, 8(3); Dziekan, M.M. (2007). Polish-Lithuanian Tartars: History, Traditions and Beliefs, In: *8 Mezinárodní Konference Ošetřovatelství v multikulturní společnosti, Praha 10.–11. května 2007*. Praha; Jakulyte-Vasil, M. (2008). Tatars' Assimilation/Integration in the Social Fabric of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. In: *Orientas Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštijos Visuomenes Tradicijoje: Totoriai ir Karaimai / Orient in the Social Tradition of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania: Tatars and Karaims / Orient w tradycji społeczeństwa Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego: Tatarzy i Karaimi / Ориент в общественной традиции Великого княжества Литовского: татары и караимы* (Special issue of Lietuvos istorijos studijos, 6). Vilnius.

a deformed, harmful way. In 1630, as a response, Azulewicz – a Polish Tartar – wrote *Apologia Tatarów* ('The Apology of the Tatars'), but unfortunately the text was lost. Nevertheless, the 16th and 17th centuries were the time of the highest immigration of Muslims into Polish lands. Some sources estimate the number of Muslims in Poland at that time at around 100 thousand.

Since the Battle of Grunwald (also known as the 1st Battle of Tannenberg, 1410) until the World War II, Polish Muslim-Tatars had their separate units in Polish army. Therefore the main occupation for Polish Tatars was military service. That Polish rulers respected Tatars is proven by the fact that they were often raised to the rank of nobility for their deeds (Dumin 1999).

Their participation in the Battle of Grunwald on the Polish-Lithuanian side became a reason for the Teutonic Order to accuse Poland and Lithuania of favoring paganism. Tatars took part in all of the important events in the history of Poland. During the Kościuszko Uprising (1794) the most meritorious ones were Col. Mustafa Achmatowicz and Col. Jakub Azulewicz, while the regiment of Col. Samuel Ułan took part in the January Uprising. The name of Tuhan-Baranowski is related to that uprising as well. Later, the year 1919 saw the creation of a Regiment of Tatar Uhlans. The Tartars fought also in the World War II (1st squadron of the 13th Regiment of Vilnius Uhlans, created in 1936) during the Invasion of Poland, as well as in the Vilnius County National Army (AK). It should also be noted how important Tatars were in the shaping of Polish uhlan tradition.

Over the centuries of living in Polish lands, Muslims never had their own religious organization. They showed a great initiative in this field during in the 1920s and 1930s: there were 6 thousand believers in 19 religious communities in Poland at that time. The first religious organization of Polish followers of Islam was the Muslim Association of the Capital City of Warsaw, registered in 1923. Two years later the All-Polish Muslim Convention took place in Vilnius, during which the autocephaly of Polish Islam was announced, and the Muslim Religious Union in the Polish Republic was created. Moreover, a separate *Muftiate* for Polish Muslims with its residence in Vilnius was appointed; Jakub Szynkiewicz (1884–1966), one of the most eminent figures in the history of Polish-Lithuanian Tatars, became the Mufti.

In 1926 the Cultural and Educational Association of the Tatars of the Republic of Poland was formed in Vilnius. It worked towards popularization, research and preparation of publications on the history and culture of Polish Tatars, and had over 20 branches in the whole country. In 1929 a Tatar National Museum was established in Vilnius on Leon Kryczyński's initiative, and in 1931 the Tatar National Archive was founded. Both these organizations were active in publishing, as also were individual communities. During the period between the World Wars, Polish Muslims had three periodicals, each with its own character. Chronologically, the first one was "Przegląd Islamski" ('Islamic Review') which was mostly devoted to general Muslim topics. It was published in the years 1930–1932 and later in 1934–1937 by the Muslim community of Warsaw. In 1932, following an effort of the Cultural and Educational Association, the first volume of "Rocznik Tatarski" ('Tatar Annual') came out. Its editor was Leon Najman Mirza Kryczyński and it had an academic profile. It ceased to exist in 1938,

when its third and last volume came out. Finally, the third magazine of Polish Muslims in the said period was "Życie Tatarskie" ('Tatar Life') edited by Stefan Tuhan-Baranowski. It maintained a popular, confessional profile and its main goal was the education of the poorest groups of the Polish followers of Islam.

After the World War II, the first magazine of Polish Muslims related to the Muslim Religious Union and the Tatar movement was "Życie Muzułmańskie" ('Muslim Life'), with Selim Chazbijewicz as the editor-in-chief, published between in 1986–1990. Since the 1990s many other magazines started to come out, such as "Rocznik Tatarów Polskich" ('Annual of Polish Tatars'), „Tatarzy Rzeczypospolitej" ('Tatars of the Polish Republic'), and "Przegląd Tatarski" ('Tatar Review'), and others.

As of today, Muslim communities exist in Warsaw, Białystok, Bohoniki, Kruszyniany, Gdańsk, Poznań and Bydgoszcz. Muslims have three mosques: wooden historical buildings in Kruszyniany (18th century) and in Bohoniki (mid-19th century) near Białystok and a modern one in Gdańsk (built in 1990). There is also a Muslim Centre with the house of prayer operating in Warsaw. The above-mentioned data relates to the Muslim Religious Union in Poland.

The Islam of Polish-Lithuanian Tatars

The 600 years of existence in the Polish lands is at the same time over a half of millennium of geographic separation from the Muslim community and an increasing influence of foreign cultures – a typical diaspora situation. Most of sociological definitions of "minority" say that one of its most characteristic features is its attitude towards assimilation and acculturation processes common in such situations.

In the case of Polish-Lithuanian Tatars a question arises whether they are a national, ethnic or religious minority. This issue has been tackled many times, although no agreement has been reached (see e.g. Kamocki 1993; Gawęcki 1989; Miśkiewicz 1990: 159–163; Jasiewicz 1980; Warmińska 1999). Nevertheless, Polish Tatars are a religious minority in the first place. The religious factor turned out to be the most durable in the history of this ethnos. The Tatars were never a closed community and since their very beginning they engaged in marriages with local women. Because of that, the Tatar culture was gradually influenced by the local one, which led to the disappearance of many external determinants of belonging to the Islam civilization.

Tatars are followers are Sunni of the Hanafi school. Their beliefs partly consist of some Turkish pre-Islamic traditions as well as some Christian elements taken from local Slavic population. However, those influences were not enough to even partially efface the Muslim nature of this ethnic religious group, even though their contact with the centres of the Muslim religious life in the Middle East was sparse.

Islam religious doctrine is contained in five pillars of Islam (Arab. *arkan al-Islam* or *arkan al-Din*), but it also covers belief in life after death, resurrection, the Last Judgement, heaven and hell, angels, devils and demons. In this work, I leave out the detailed description of all of the Muslim dogmatics and customs and focus on how it differs from its Polish-Lithuanian version.

One of the most important religious imperatives for any Muslim is the prayer (Arab. *salat*). Since Polish-Lithuanian Tatars belong to the Turkish people, it is mostly the Turkish language by (or directly from) which they took the names of various Muslim rites. The morning prayer – Arab. *salat al-subh* or *al-fajr* is *sabah namaz*; noon prayer, *salat al-zuhr* – *aule namaz*, afternoon prayer – *salat al-'asr* is *akinde namaz*; evening prayer – *salat al-maghrib* is *achszam namaz*, while nightly – *salat al-'asha* – *jeccy namaz*. A primary condition for conducting prayer in Islam is the ritual purity, obeyed by Polish-Lithuanian Tatars. In the case of smaller dirtiness Muslims use minor ablutions, in Arabic called *wudu'*, which Tatars call *abdeś* (from Tur. *aptes*). Major ablutions, Arab. *ghusl*, are *gusiel*. During the prayer a Muslim has to be facing Mecca. This direction is called *qibla* (*kybła*) – in a mosque it is indicated by a special niche, *mihrab*. However, the warrant of five prayers during the day was not observed too strictly. Polish Tatars uphold all of the rules common to the Islam followers. Believers are summoned for the prayer by a *miezin* (Arab. *mu'adhdhin*), who sings the *azan* up from the minaret (if the mosque has one), or from a special balcony inside the temple. The Friday prayer is directed by *imam*, also named *mołła*. The main element of such a collective prayer is the recitation of particular Qur'an suras and so called *zikier* (Arab. *dhikr*). The name is related to the prayer of Sufis, Muslim mystics. Tatar *zikier* has varied content; it is usually a kind of litany in which the Islam prophets from Adam to Muhammad are mentioned together with other remarkable figures from the history of Islam, like 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib or other Imams.

One of the pillars of Islam is the pilgrimage to Mecca, *hajj*. This requirement of Islam was the hardest one to meet for Polish Muslims; therefore only few had the privilege to call themselves *hajji* – a pilgrim. In the history of Tatars on Polish-Lithuanian lands only several of them managed to reach the holy cities of Al-Hijaz, which was why they usually set their own, local holy sites. Such pilgrimages ware named *zijaret* (from Arab. *ziyara* – 'visiting'). The most significant of them is Łowczyce in the vicinity of Nowogródek town. Its cemetery holds the grave of the saint Kontuś (Kontej), also called Ewlija Kontuś. Muslims believe that it possesses a great power of healing, which is why in the 1920s and 1930s Tatars who lived far as well as Christians and Jews used to travel there. The legend of Kontuś is one of the few stories which has survived intact to our times. It contains motifs known from folk literature of the Middle East (Borawski and Dubiński 1986: 238).

Another site related to a cult of a local "saint" is a mountain near Bohoniki, called Szorcowa Góra (Mount of Szorc), where a certain pious man, whose hermitage was located on the top of the mountain, is worshipped. "It seems though – writes Kryczyński – that in this case the Bohoniki Tatars have assimilated a tradition relating to some Christian hermit" (2000: 177).

The belief in angels, devils and other spirits plays an important role among Muslim tenets. The notion that there are angels and devils and that they have an influence on human life is common among Muslims. The view on minor spirits is slightly different in the beliefs of Polish-Lithuanian Tatars. The most important good spirits are *dżynej*s, while the evil ones are *fierej*s. The name *jinn* was attached in Tatar beliefs to the good spirits, while *fierej* became a counterpart of Arabic *ghula* or *ifrit*. Tatar

books mostly speak of *fierej*s which do harm to men. Every living man has his *fierej*, which can bring illness upon him. Similarly to *ghula*s, they live in remote places, in cemeteries and abandoned temples, and are most harmful after the evening prayer.

One of the greatest sins that a Muslim can commit is the departure from the faith. Such cases were rare among Polish-Lithuanian Tatars and the consequences were far less dramatic than it is stated by the Muslim law, by which apostasy should be punished with death. Ostracism and hostility were the elements that have been "converted" in the first place.

The most important Muslim holidays are the beginning of the year, held at 1st Muharram, *'Ashura* – 10th Muharram, *Hijra* holiday – 1st Rabi' al-Awwal, *Mawlid al-Nabi* (the Prophet's Birthday), 12th Rabi' al-Awwal, Night Journey Festival (*Al-Isra wa-al-Mir'aj*)– 27th Rajab, fasting in the month of Ramadan, Night of Power (*Laylat al-Qadr*) 19th, 23rd, 25th, 27th Ramadan, Festival of the Breaking of the Fast (*'Id al-Fitr*), 1st Shawwal and Sacrifical Feast (*'Id al-Adha*) – 10th Dhu al-Hijja. The most significant of those holidays celebrated by Polish Muslims is the Festival of the Breaking of the Fast named *Ramazan Bayram*, and Sacrifical Feast, *Kurban Bayram*.

Ramazan Bayram lasts for three days which Muslims spend on praying together under the leadership of the *imam*. The poor are particularly taken care of in that period, with alms being distributed to them. The *imam* receives on this occasion a special contribution called *zakat al-fitr*. After the celebration Tatars go the cemetery, where they pray for the dead and give away *sadoga*, mostly in the form of candy.

The greatest Muslim holiday – *Kurban Bayram* – is celebrated similarly. This holiday, held at the end of the pilgrimage to Mecca, is a commemoration of Abraham's sacrifice. To Muslims it symbolizes resurrection. A Muslim who can afford a sheep buys one on this occasion. The sheep is sacrificed in a ritual afterwards and eaten together. Many invite their poor relatives or help any other person in need.

Among the holidays mentioned above, Polish Muslim often also observe *'Ashura* (called *Aszurejny Bajram*), commemorating the death of the son of Imam 'Ali, Al-Husayn near Karbala in contemporary Iraq (680), as well as the Prophet's Birthday (*Miewlud*) and the Muslim New Year. Like the ones before, these holidays consist mostly of collective prayers and meetings, which are not only Qur'anic recitations, but also involve pious stories from the history of Islam.

Tatar-Muslims also celebrate much less official holidays. These are mostly the holidays devoted to the cycle of life. The same way that the official religious holidays give rhythm to the entire Muslim community, the life cycle rites, which usually are "rites of passage", give rhythm to each individual and every family.

The birth, by Tatars called *nifas* (from Arabic) is an important event, but not celebrated sumptuously (this statement applies to virtually the whole Muslim world). There are many magical beliefs concerning newborns. As Kryczyński writes:

> the child can be taken outside for the first time only on Thursday. Its nails cannot be cut for a year's time. No objects can be moved over the child and it should not behold a mirror. Moreover, an empty cradle should not be rocked. (2000: 241f)

Shortly after birth, the child is registered by a *qadi* in the mosque. Giving the child a name – the ceremony of *azan* – is a symbolic inclusion into the Muslim community. It is held in the parents' house. A bathed child should be put on a table with two burning candles, Qur'an, bread, salt, honey and cheese nearby. A special prayer – *nijet* (from Arab. *niya*, 'intention') – is said afterwards by an imam, who repeats the child's name three times to make it remember its name until the Judgement Day. He then holds the child by the index finger and recites the Muslim creed, *shahada*, sings the summoning to prayer, *adhan*, to his right ear and another summoning, *kammiet* (from Arab. *iqama*) to the left. The rite ends with a special prayer.

Circumcision is called *siunniet* (from Arab. *sunna*, Tur. *sünnet* – 'tradition'), by Tatars. Even though it is a custom often regarded as a one of the most distinctive for Islam, it is not really obligatory but only "advised". The prophet is usually quoted that he came to convert people, not to circumcise them. It was formerly done by specialised ritualists called *siunnietdży*, who were often Jews. In the 20th century the custom was abandoned by Polish Tatars. Circumcision of women was never done by Tatars.

The *Lahi* ceremony, held at the pupil's completion of the Qur'anic teachings of reading the holy book, is also of religious nature. After finishing such a course, a boy who knows the Qur'an by heart is called a *kurandżej*. The celebration of the completion of learning led by a *hodża* (the teacher) is usually held in the classroom, and one of its most important elements is the prayer, starting with words "La ilaha illa Llahi", after which the custom took its name. Subsequent celebrations take place at the house, where the *kurandżej*'s parents throw a feast, and the boy shows off his knowledge of Qur'an.[2]

Islam marriage is not a sacrament, but a contract concluded in the presence of God. The Tatars call the ceremony the same as marriage – *nikiah* (from Arab. *nikah*). It is usually held in the house of the bride. Beside the closest family of the married couple, the ceremony is joined by the *mołła* and two witnesses called *wiekil* (from Arab. *wakil*, 'plenipotentiary') or *szehit* (from Arab. *shahid* – 'witness'). A small celebration is held in the presence of *mołła* and groom's male friends in the house of the groom before the wedding ceremony. *Mołła* reads a suitable prayer and then leads the groom three times around the table, which is probably a custom taken from local Slavs (Bohdanowicz et al. 1997: 70). Afterwards, everyone goes to the house of the bride, where the guests are greeted by a bride's kinswoman with bread and salt; groom – by the custom known also in Poland – is showered with corn, which is said to bring prosperity and wealth in the future.

The room where the ceremony is held contains a table with two candles, water, bread and salt on it. *Mołła* and *wiekil*s, sit behind the table while at the opposite end the young couple stands on a felt or a sheepskin. In the Middle East and in Maghreb this function is played by a carpet. As Selim Chazbijewicz writes, it is:

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[2] A detailed description of particular levels of initiation in the knowledge of Qur'an and the celebration of *Lahi* is given by Kryczyński (2000): 214–217.

a relic from the times of the Golden Horde. [...] Felt symbolized home [...], wealth and stabilisation. This is exactly what a young married couple needs and the custom survived to our days. (in Bogdanowicz et al. 1997: 70)

The young couple should be facing Mecca, which is south. During the ceremony, *mołła* asks the groom about the amount of *mahr* (Tatars call it *nikiah*), the sum of money that bride will get in case of a divorce. This payment is described as "brideprice" or by the Turkish derivative term of *kałym*.[3] Currently this payment has a purely symbolic character. After a speech to the married couple, *mołła* says the prayer and warrants to *enharem* (Pol. 'zaharemić') the bride, which means putting her veil on. After more prayers, during which the couple hold their hands with a characteristic interlace of fingers, *mołła* gives them the wedding rings, while they receive wishes from those who are present.

Once the ceremony is over, the married couple goes to the groom's house, passing "gates" on their way, at which they have to redeem themselves – an element taken from Slavic wedding ceremonies. The whole event ends with a traditional bridal feast. It is currently getting more popular to get married in a mosque, which seems to be an influence of the Christian tradition.

As it seems, the most important Muslim rite from the cycle of life is the burial ceremony. According to the religious law, a Muslim needs to be buried within three days after his death. First what has to be done with the deceased (Tatars call him *miejt*, from Arab. *mayyit* – 'deceased') is a ritual washing over of the body. Close family members also undergo ablution. The body of the deceased is washed on a special board. After the washing, the nose and ears are clogged with cotton wool, and the body is enfolded with three shrouds called *sawan* (from Arab. 'wardrobe'). *Hajji*, or Muslims who made their pilgrimage to Mecca, are enfolded in *ihram*, a special pilgrim clothing. Formerly, small scrolls of paper containing prayers, *daławar* (from Arab. *dua* – 'prayer' + Tur. suffix pl. *-lar*) were put under *sawan*. The body is then put on low platforms called *tabut* (from Arab.) and covered with a black or green shroud. The shroud, with the name of the deceased written on it, is often used as a gift for a *mołła* or a mosque. Someone present at the ceremony reads the Qur'anic sura *Ya. Sin*, called *jasień* by Tatars, and a prayer called "*dua* of carrying out" (Polish: 'wynośna *dua*') is said afterwards. The night watch around the deceased begins just after these activities, with prayers said by the men only. The climax of the pre-burial rites are prayers called *deur*, devoted to omitted daily prayers and Ramadan fasting. Excerpts of Qur'an are also recited. Those who are present during the prayers adopt the sins of the deceased.

On the second or third day the deceased is buried in a graveyard which the Tatars call *miziar* or *ziereć*. Muslims should be buried without a coffin. This custom was respected by Polish Tatars for many ages but it seems to be slowly abandoned nowadays. The dead are buried with their legs directed towards Mecca. According to the

[3] See 'płatności małżeńskie' in Staszczak (1987).
[4] A detailed description of all Muslim cemeteries existing in Poland, Lithuania and Belarus is covered in the work of Andrzej Drozd et al. (1999).

Muslim law, the grave cannot be high and can stand out from the ground no more than a hand's width. This restriction was not actually respected too strictly and contemporary Muslim graves do not differ from the Christian ones (with the exception of symbols and writings). There are currently seven Muslim cemeteries in Poland – three in Warsaw and one in Bohoniki, Kruszyniany, Lebiedziew and Studzianka each.[4] The oldest graves are shaped similarly to the ones in the Middle East – they are simple stones with inscribed name and the date of death. Graves that resemble the Christian ones started appearing at the end of the 19th and in the 20th century, often containing portraits of the deceased, which is contrary to the Islam doctrine. It is an explicit element showing how acculturation processes were at work in the Polish-Lithuanian Tatars culture.

Women are not allowed to participate in the burial – as *Shari'a* states – although among contemporary Muslims this restriction is not really respected. *Mołła* says the final prayer for the dead, called *dżenazie namaz*.

After burying the grave, the mourners move 40 feet away from the grave and the one running the rite gives the deceased some tips concerning the eternal life and reads a *tałkyn* (from Arab. *talqin* – 'instruction, teaching') prayer. At the end, the family of the deceased gives away *sadoga* (from Arab. *sadaqa* – 'alms') to everyone present. This custom tends to change into a wake taking place on the graveyard in the vicinity of the grave. For forty days after the death *jasień*s or *kuran*s for the soul of the deceased are recited, and on the 40th day the burial rites near the grave are repeated. Even though it is against the Muslim law, Polish Muslims visit the grave of their loved ones during the All Saints Day.[5]

The Polish-Lithuanian Tatars sacral architecture is surely an interesting topic as well. Those mosques that were built before 20th century are usually made of wood, often painted green. As was already mentioned, there are two such temples in Poland. A typical Tatar mosque is characterized by A. Drozd as follows:

> Although the existing iconographic material is mainly representative for the temples built in the second half of the 19th century, when their appearance might have been influenced by administrative regulations and non-Tatar designers, we are able to reconstruct the essential features of the "archetype" of a Tatar mosque in the old Republic of Poland. The structure was rectangular or on a nearly square plan, covered with a hipped roof with a signature-type minaret in the center, an apse-type *mihrab* on the south wall and separate entrances for man and women. It had two rooms: a prayer room and a women's gallery. (Drozd et al. 1999: 16)

Externally, they often did not differ from the Catholic and Orthodox churches, except for their crescent and sometimes a star. *Mu'adhdhin* announced the time of prayer not outside, as it is in the Middle East, but from the inside of the temple. A contemporary mosque in Gdańsk is built in Ottoman style, with a high minaret. There

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[5] On burial customs and cemeteries see also: Kryczyński (2000: 245–253); Kołodziejczyk (1998: 25–31); Drozd et al. (1999).

were 17 mosques in Poland during the interwar period and there were plans for a mosque in Warsaw, never realised.

It is unique for Polish Tatars that women were not obliged to cover their faces, as well as there was no polygamy. Julian Talko-Hryncewicz brings up the story by Polish poet Władysław Syrokomla about a single Tatar, an émigré from the Niemież village, who in the 17th century married his second wife in Wolhynia, leading his fellow worshipers to perceive him as a criminal and demanding capital punishment for him (Talko-Hryncewicz 1924: 43). Polish-Lithuanian Tatars did not strictly obey the Muslim prohibition concerning alcohol, what is often mentioned by various authors, even those with Tatar origin.

The superficial sphere of the rites, which is not really important for the folk religiosity, was also mixed with some elements of Christian culture. Tatars took many superstitions from the local people:

> they avoided growing crops on the first Wednesday after the Easter and after the Whitsuntide, to protect the crops from destruction by hail; they did not feed the cows on the Midsummer Day, fearing that they might lose their milk. (Borawski and Dubiński 1986: 202)

The influence was working in both directions, which is why in already the half of this century Polish peasants were participating in the rain summoning rites. They believed in the effectiveness of such sacral-magical actions, having their origin in the Old Turkish traditions on one hand, and Old Arabic and Muslim on the other. Christians participating in the rites with the prayer as its crucial element were, naturally, praying separately (Borawski and Dubiński 1986: 202). The offering of a ram, done during the *Kurban Bayram* – Feast of Sacrifice – had similar goals. In case of a drought the ram was slain in with a "Tatar method" to summon rain (Gawęcki 1989: 59). In the old Poland, Polish people often used the help of Tatar healers, called *fałdżej*s (Borawski and Dubiński 1986: 205).

Therefore in the sphere of rites Tatars retained their original customs and beliefs, although these were affected to a certain level by a local culture, even though they also affected it themselves, to a smaller extent. This shows that we are dealing with a case of acculturation, or intercultural integration.

The literature of Polish Tatars is a perfect example of this phenomenon (See A. Drozd et al. 2000; Dziekan 2002: 185–191). It covers several genres:

— *tefsir* (from Arab. *tafsir* – 'commentary') – Qur'anic texts with their translation into Polish or Belarusian and attached commentaries;

— *tedżwid*s (from Arab. *tajwid* – 'recitation') – Qur'an recitation handbooks;

— *kitab*s (from Arab. *kitab* – 'book') – consisting text on various topics: *hadith*s, prayers, ritual rules, legends and so on;

— *chamaił*s (from Arab. *hamala* – 'to carry') – practical Muslim handbooks, prayer books with a less official character than kitabs;

— and finally *daławar*s (from Tur. *dualar* – 'prayers') and *hramotka*s (from Belarus. – 'writing'). The first ones were paper scrolls with prayers, which were put

under the shroud of a deceased one while *hramotka*s were a kind of amulets that were supposed to guard one from misfortune.

Religious literature of Polish Tatars, a phenomenon unique on a global scale, arose mainly in the local languages, although it often contained Arabic, Ottoman-Turkish and "Tatar" elements. Nevertheless the writing was done with Arabic letters adjusted to the requirements of Polish or Belarusian language.

*Muhir*s are another interesting phenomenon from the borderline of literature. The name comes from Arabic *muhr*, 'seal'. Andrzej Drozd has given an exceptionally accurate characteristic of *muhir*:

> In the Polish-Lithuanian Tatar's culture *muhir* is a decorative board or a fabric with an inscription or representation – symbolic or realistic – of an object or a site which was regarded by Tatar's belief system as having sacral or magical value. In the Tatar religious and material culture, which respected the Muslim-wide (precisely: Sunni) prohibition of figurative representation, *muhir*s have taken a role similar to the Christian religious paintings: just as the "holy pictures" decorated the insides of houses and temples and were a sign of the owner's and author's piety. They also had a magical role: the protected the house and their inhabitants from misfortune. (Drozd et al. 1999: 38)

Other aspects of the folk culture

Because of the above-mentioned amulets, Polish people often considered Tatars to be sorcerers. "Magical" practises of Polish-Lithuanian Tatars (Drozd et al. 1999: 44–47) were generally healing formulas used against various illnesses as well as complicated prognostic methods. Those who specialised in "sorcery" were called *fałdżej* and *siufkacz*. The first name comes from Turkish word fortune-teller (from Arab. *fal* – 'divination' + Tur. suffix defining the occupation). The second term has an onomatopoeic origin and it comes from a distinctive blowing used during those practices. Because of their occupation they were often accused of contacting *fierej*s, which is why they were not only respected, but also feared. *Fałdżej*s aided themselves with entries from *chamaił*s, mostly their *fałdżej*-parts. Divinations of all kind were called by the Tatars *fał*.

Tatars' healing magic methods do not differ much from the ones present in other cultures. The first one involved reading Muslim prayers and blowing on the patient. Such technique was supposed to cleanse the body by "blowing away" the sickness that came from the air. The second most popular method was fumigation. A page from a prayer book or a specially written amulet was supposed to be burned on coals and the sick one was expected to inhale the smoke while listening to specially chosen prayers. This was a way of dispelling "charms". Another use for cards with writing was to wash away the text and drink the used water. Many amulets and charms were supposed to guard a man from evil powers. These were called *duajka* and *hramotka* and were usually worn under clothes.

The language of Polish-Lithuanian Tatars

The followers of Islam who have been coming to Poland since 14th century (the biggest immigration of Muslim to Poland took place in 16th and 17th centuries; some sources assess the number of Muslims in Poland at that time at 100 thousand people) brought various languages, cultures and customs with them. However, as a result of acculturation and assimilation processes, Tatars forgot their mother tongues (mostly from the Kipchak group of Turkic languages) around 17th/18th centuries and started using Polish or a Polish-Belarusian dialect with some Turkish lexical elements. In case of the Tatar language, it is in fact a complete process of linguistic assimilation, although it was not forced by a Polish or Belarusian majority, but rather by the circumstances that the immigrants found themselves in.

Tatar language was not uniform. As Czesław Łapicz writes:

> just as the ethnic composition of the Tatar settlers in Lithuania was varied – temporally, spatially and socially – used dialects were varied, bonded together by their belonging to the Kipchak linguistic group (1986: 49).

Additionally – what I regard as extremely important in the case of Muslims – spoken language of the Oriental newcomers had no characteristics of the "sacred" language. Even if certain elements of the religious rites were done in the mother tongue, the liturgical language for all Muslims, which includes Polish Tatars, was always Arabic, although their familiarity with the language of Qur'an was superficial. In a limited sense, this function could have been fulfilled by Ottoman-Turkish, in which a rich theological literature was created, although this language was known only among a small group of educated people. It should be noted that the lingual assimilation did not cover the Arabic writing, which will be mentioned below.

Thus I have to agree with Czesław Łapicz, who warns against focusing overly on the role of mixed marriages and military service of Tatars as the catalysing factors for language assimilation or even as its direct and most important causes, as was widely suggested by older authors. The author underlines the absence of a "national unity" of Tatars and the lack of "national language" (1986: 39–60). It seems that my hypothesis regarding the "holy language" does not contradict Łapicz's statements and can even be regarded as supporting them from a different research perspective.

The history of Polish Tatars is a perfect example of co-existence of two different cultures. They influenced one another, borrowing various elements and leaving out the others. Tatar language succumbed to assimilation, since its knowledge turned out to be too negligible for survival, while the ignorance of local language would make the contacts with local community extremely difficult. Folk customs became mixed, probably because not all of their elements were suitable for the new living conditions. Nevertheless, the religion was still there, remaining the most durable determinant of self-identification for Tatars as Polish Muslim followers. One can wonder whether such successful process of acculturation was enabled by Polish tolerance towards their

Muslim neighbors. Six hundred years of Tatar history in Poland show very scarce signs of discrimination, which was mostly displayed as some legal restrictions imposed by some of the Polish and Lithuanian rulers. The openness of Christians could be a factor that encouraged Muslim openness, since they felt no danger about their existence.

Awareness of the history of Polish Tatars might help in answering the contemporary Europe's question about the borders of acculturation: when (and whether) can we regard an intercultural integration process as complete or successful. Muslim minorities in the Western European countries are increasingly facing this problem. Polish Tatars, whose historical and cultural situation is obviously different, can nonetheless provide and example of how Muslim minorities can develop when inhabiting a culturally differing region. Therefore one can hope that those groups will forget their mother tongue and accept English, French or German. It may expected that they will adopt many external elements of the Western lifestyle and culture. However, one has to keep in mind that they will remain followers of Islam – a religion that shaped their cultural identity. In this way Islam becomes a factor that should not be overlooked. It has always played and still plays an extremely important integrational role, to a degree which was rarely reached by the Christian culture, as can be constantly observed in contemporary world.

During last decades a strong "orientalization" of ceremonies can be noticed, and they seem to be getting more like the ones described by the orthodox works on Muslim law. This tendency is partially caused by the fact that Polish Muslims travel to the Middle East more often on their pilgrimages to Mecca. The fact that representatives of the Tatar community are being sent to study in Arabic countries can be regarded as a manifestation of this trend. The last one to finish such studies in Medina is Imam Ahmad Tomasz Miśkiewicz (of Polish-Tatar origin). On March 20, 2004 he was appointed a *mufti* during the 15th Congress of the Muslim Religious Union in the Polish Republic.

Therefore, the ethnographic description of Polish-Lithuanian Tatar's life is mainly a description of a world which does not really exist anymore. Many of the mentioned beliefs have their origins in Old Turkish tradition and folk Islam, which, just as folk Christianity, is being slowly abandoned. The new generation of Muslims is more critical towards their ancestors' legacy, verifying it with their current knowledge, which can lead to a complete unification of Polish Islam with Arabic or Turkish Islam.

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Janusz Danecki

Literature of the Polish Tatars

The literature of Polish Tatars reflects their complicated history. A specific trait of the Polish-Lithuanian-Belarusian Tatar population is their use of Arabic script for the notation of their Slavic language as early as the 15th century. Originally Mongol, but Turkic speakers, they gave up their native language while retaining the Turko-Arabic script which they adapted to the language of the people to whom they paid allegiance. They lived, however, in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and thus they had the choice of at least three languages: Polish, Lithuanian and Belarusian. Lithuanian was not used, so they used either Polish or Belarusian. The languages belong to different groups of Slavic family: Polish is a West Slavic language (together with Czech and Sorbian), while Belarusian is an East Slavic language belonging to the same group as Russian and Ukrainian. Polish Tatars lived on the borderline between Polish, Russian, Belarusian and Ukrainian language spheres, and their speech was influenced by these languages, which led to a number of sociolinguistic phenomena, such as diglossia and pluriglossia, or, perhaps, bilingualism and multilingualism.

The situation was further complicated by Arabic script. Since the system of notation of the language in Arabic is far from perfect, sometimes it is difficult to establish with all certainty which language is used in the given source. It could be either Polish in its eastern variety, Belarusian, a mixture of both or perhaps yet another vernacular that formed in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth).[1] Recent studies, and especially the works of P. Suter (2004) and A. Danylenko (2006a, 2006b, 2011) shed additional light on the linguistic character of the literary output of Polish-Lithuanian Tatars. It is posited that two different languages – complimentarily distributed with regard to specific genres – were used by them. So on the one hand, Lithuanian Tatars used Polish primarily in confessional writings, viz., in the so-called *tefsir*s, i.e. Qur'an copies written in Arabic with an interlinear translation in the spoken eastern form of Polish. The other language was the so-called *rusьkyj jazykъ*, commonly identified with Middle Belarusian, or Polissian,[2] which arose in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The Lithuanian Tatars themselves sometimes identified

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[1] It was called *prostaja mova*, see: Danylenko (2006a).
[2] The term introduced by A. Danylenko denoting a common language based on Belarusian and Ukrainian vernaculars. Danylenko stresses that "one can legitimately assume that the Lithuanian Tatar 'rus'k'ij jezik' tended to demonstrate in that time a solid configuration of Polissian features" (Danylenko 2006a: 93).

their language as Rus'ian. Thus, the compiler of a Lithuanian Tatar *kitab* of 1631 wrote: *ja xōdīna s'ujū knihū is fars'ijskōhō i s tureckōhō jazika na rus'k'ij jezik perelōžil* ('I, Xodyna, translated this book from the Persian and Turkish languages into the Rus'ian language').[3] The language was the vernacular of the local population and not much can be said of it. Fortunately, the literature of the Tatars preserved it in its initiatory phase. It was used by the Tatars in a number of texts, first and foremost in the *kitab*s. Thus, Polish-Lithuanian-Belarusian Tatars contributed to the recording of the developing Polissian vernacular in the Grand Duchy. The language later evolved into Belarusian and Ukrainian, while the official language of the Duchy became Polish.

The use of Slavonic languages by Tatars in the Polish-Lithuanian Duchy is attested at least from the 16th century, although it cannot be excluded that it was used earlier, just after the Tatar population settled in Poland at the end of the 14th century.

Classical manuscript literature

The literature of the Tatars is predominantly of religious character. It is preserved mainly in the manuscript form. Only recently there have been attempts to reconstruct this literary output, i.e. to transliterate them from Arabic script into the reconstructed original language form.[4] The process of reconstructing the language(s) only began and it might prove fruitful for the history of the Polish language, and especially for the vernacular Belorusian/Polissian. The works of S. Akiner, A.K. Antonowicz, A. Drozd and Cz. Łapicz are the first step towards their assessment. There is yet another feature of these languages worth further research: borrowings from a number of languages of the Islamic world, first of all Ottoman Turkish, Persian and Arabic, although residues of Mongol also are to be found (Drozd in Drozd, Dziekan, Majda 2000: 17–21). Since the language of the Muslim liturgy is Arabic, the texts are bilingual: Arabic is frequently supported by Polish and/or Polissian translation.

The literature is, in most cases, anonymous. Characteristic are numerous legends and stories of various origin: Mongol, Islamic and Christian. One example of Mongol/Persian account is the story of Baghdad Khatun, originating in historical and partly legendary account of a beautiful Mongol princess called Baghdad Khatun (executed in 1335) notorious for plotting against her husbands – first Hasan Buzurg, and then twice against her second husband Abu Sa'id, the Ilkhanid ruler. Shortly after Abu Sa'id married her niece and elevated her to the rank of principal wife (in 1333–34), Baghdad was accused of poisoning him in and was beaten to death in her bath.[5]

The Tatar version has all the traits of a legendary story with the plot left out. Hasan Buzurg is presented as a entrepreneurial man from the Jala'irid tribe who divorced Baghdad Khatun in 1325 on the demand of the Ilkhanid ruler Abu Sa'id. Baghdad married Abu Sa'id and gained a high position in the court of Abu Sa'id. For

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[3] Antonovich (1968: 125), cf. Danylenko (2006a: 92), quoting Miškinienė (2001: 101).

[4] Among the most promising attempts one should count Shirin Akiner's (2009).

[5] A detailed presentation of Bagdad Khatun's life based on sources is to be found in Nilgün Dalkesen's PhD dissertation (2007: 179–197).

this favor, Hasan Buzurg was bequeathed large lands, and after Abu Saʿid's death he founded his own empire in Anatolia. The legend must have reached the Tatars through Ottoman sources, and since the princess was of Mongol stock the story became popular.

Peculiar and characteristic of the Tatar literature is the story of Kontej (also referred to in a diminutive form as Kontuś), a poor shepherd and a servant to a rich Tatar gentry man called Łowczycki. Łowczycki's daughter committed a grave sin, since she converted to Catholicism. To expiate this sin, Łowczycki decided to perform pilgrimage to Mecca. In Mecca, it turned out that he ran out of money and could not return home. Desperate, he went to a *shaykh* and asked for advice and help. The *shaykh* told him to seek help with a man who was praying in the mosque. In this man Łowczycki recognized his servant Kontej, who promised to transfer him to Lithuania in a miraculous way. However, Kontej asked him not to reveal his secret to anyone. Back at home Łowczycki started to revere his servant in an unusual way which made his wife wondering why he does it. She to began nag and implore him, so eventually Łowczycki told her the story. A few days later Kontej died. Since that time the Tatars began to revere Kontej as a saint (*ewlija*; Kryczyński 1938: 267–269; 2000: 232–235). Its sources go back to the Muslim Middle Ages, already Ibn Battuta is said to quote the legend.

Typical Islamic legends include e.g. the story of Alexander the Great, the tale of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus, King Solomon's ring. Usually they were recorded in *kitab*s and *chamaił*s.

The influence of the Christian – Catholic and Orthodox – environment on the Tatar religious literature is preponderant. It was only natural that Christian tradition was, on the whole, acceptable to Muslims, which usually was not the case as far as Christian attitude toward Muslims was concerned. The religious writings contain excerpts originating directly from the Holy Scriptures. These were based mainly on the Polish Arian translation of the Bible by Szymon Budny, the so-called *Biblia nieświeska* from 1572, used until late 19th century. One of the lengthiest Biblical motifs is *Historia "mirska" o stworzeniu świata* (a history of the creation of the world) based on the Pentateuch, Qur'an and *Qisas al-anbiya'* as well as Old Polish sources.[6]

The religious literature prevails. Of course, religious texts are mostly based on the vast theological, religious and canonical literature of Islam: Arabic and especially Turkish. Usually these are translations or free renderings of various Muslim texts such as the Qur'an (usually appearing in *tefsir*s and *kitab*s), *Qisas al-anbiya'* but also different prayers (*dua, munajat* etc.) and invocations (*ziker* i.e. *dhikr*).

*Kitab*s

The word *kitab* derives from the Arabic *kitab*, which means a book in general. The Polish Tatars use this word to define a special type of religious literary anthologies,

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[6] The complicated reconstruction of his text is presented by A. Drozd (1996b: 95–134).

usually untitled, containing Muslim legends, ritual prescriptions, stories and moral precepts, apocrypha and other narratives, but also texts in Arabic (and rarely in Turkish) such as fragments from the Qur'an, prayers. *Kitab*s are by far the most important type of religious literature of the Polish Tatars because of their essential role in the Tatar religious life and the wealth of information contained in them. There is a large variety of *kitab*s. They are written in Arabic script, contain a lot of Arabic texts, usually prayers or quotations from the Qur'an, but the main body of text is written in the Polissian language. Most of the *kitab*s still remain in manuscript form, and only some have been studied and edited.

The number of extant and known *kitab*s does not exceed the number of 30. A. Drozd (Drozd, Dziekan, Majda 2000: 50–54) enumerates 24 of them. The oldest one, from 1631, is lost; it is known only from scanty descriptions. A number of studies devoted to *kitab*s by authors such as S. Akiner (1973, 1978, 2009), A.K. Antonowicz (1968), A. Drozd, M.M. Dziekan, H. Jankowski, Cz. Łapicz (1986, 1991) and others.

One of the first descriptions of a Tatar *kitab* now lost was prepared by Jakub Szynkiewicz. It appeared in the first volume of *Rocznik Tatarski* (1935: 188–194). The *kitab* once kept in the Kruszyniany mosque was dated in the colophon to 1792. The *kitab* begins with the genealogy of Muslim prophets and Muslim dynasties. It is followed by a religious part presented in a typical anthological form without any visible logic of arrangement. So at the beginning there is an exhortation on the importance of the 36th sura of the Qur'an, the *Ya' Sin* sura. Then comes a homily of 'Ali, a story of the prophet Ibrahim, a presentation of God's names, names of the Prophet Muhammad, and account of Abu Jahl's attempt to murder the prophet.

The most recent publication of such a relic by Shirin Akiner appeared in 2009. It is a comprehensive study of a *kitab* from the British Library (OR 13020) of 125 pages, dated 1831, by an unknown author. Akiner classifies the Belarusian Islamic language as a jargon that was used by the Tatar community, supplementing the Belarusian standard language of the time (2009: 357) with Polish interferences on phonological and lexical levels. This is what Danylenko refers to as Polissian. The text was partially transcribed. There are three main themes in the *kitab*:

— religious (fragments of the Qur'an, prayer, Islamic doctrinal interpretation, the creation of the world);

— ritual (funeral rituals, Ramadan);

— pastoral (a didactic story, a conversation between prophet and God, sermons).

The Milkamanowicz *kitab* of 1781 is one of the largest: it counts 556 pages. It was analyzed by Czesław Łapicz. The text consists of the following parts:

— Invocation and the *shahada*,

— The third revelation to prophet Muhammad,

— *Ziker*,

— Religious admonishments and a list of the Muslim prophets – dogmas and rituals of Islam,

— Ritual purity,

— Gods attributes,

— Types of prayers,

— Creation of the world,
— The ideal Muslim,
— Reward and punishment,
— Interpretation of the Qur'anic *ayat*s,
— Meaning of prayers and good deeds,
— Meaning of fasting (*sawm*),
— hymns to God and the importance of the *Ya' Sin* sura,
— Names and epithets of God,
— A story of two students of Jesus,
— The martyrdom of Agabus,
— Ocean of human deeds,
— The Last Day,
— Creation of day and night.

One of the last *kitab*s published in Poland was the Bajraszewski *kitab* in 1982. Peculiarly, it was written in Latin alphabet, and the author used typewriter to copy it.

*Tefsir*s

The word *tafsir* means in Arabic a commentary to the Qur'an. However, Polish Tatars use the word *tefsir* or *tepsir* to define texts of the Qur'an in Arabic with interlinear translation into Polish. It seems that the word *tefsir* was understood as translation (Polish *tłumaczenie* means interpretation, and this is what the Arabic word *tafsir* means, as well as translation). *Tefsir*s are voluminous, usually around 500 pages, since they contain the complete text of the Qur'an and its Polish, and partially also Turkish translation (the former written with Arabic characters). The translation is literal, sprinkled with additional commentaries and explanations. The first *tefsir*s appeared either at the end of the 16th or the beginning of the 17th century. The exact number of extant *tefsir*s is unknown, probably no more than twenty have been preserved (Drozd, Dziekan, Majda 2000: 13).

The earliest remaining *tefsir* comes from the end of the 16th century, now in private collection (Drozd, Dziekan, Majda 2000: 48). It is not yet a typical Tatar *tefsir*, since it contains only the Arabic text of the Holy Book with its translation into Ottoman Turkish. It cannot be excluded that it was the prototype for the later *tefsir*s with Polish translation. Another old copy of a *tefsir* with Polish text is dated 1069 A.H., i.e. 1658–1659 A.D. and is kept in the Belarusian Academy of Sciences in Minsk (Drozd, Dziekan, Majda 2000: 13; Titowiec 2004: 231–236).

*Chamaił*s

Chamaił derives from the Arabic plural *khama'il*, meaning something which is carried about, just like an amulet. It was a typical tradition of the Tatar Muslims to carry amulets called *hramotka*s and *nuska*s. In Tatar tradition *chamaił*s are, however,

something else: they designate prayer books containing not only *hramotka*s and *nuska*s, but also a number of other texts: essential prayers in Arabic and usually a collection of divinatory texts (*fał*), including interpretations of dreams. Additionally, there are instructions on how to perform prayers, and a description of Muslim dogmas and practices. They seem to be a sort of *silva rerum*, containing all necessary and interesting information for a Muslim. It should be noted that Ottoman Turkish *dua kitaby* were the prototypes of the Tatar *chamaił*s (Szynkiewicz 1935: 141; Drozd 1993: 49). Their *silva rerum*-like character is confirmed by the way they were collected. Warsaw University library has an Ottoman Turkish *dua kitaby*, previously thought to be a *chamaił*, as stated in 1870 by the librarian Józef Przyborowski: it contains a number of prayers and spells as well as an interesting tale about a thief (*harami*) in the commentary of the thief's prayer (Majda 1994: 17–19).

From the point of view of their contents *chamaił*s may be divided into:

— personal, containing personal notes and information, a sort of family book;

— *molliński* (*małniński*) *chamaił* – i.e. a *chamaił* belonging to a *mołła* (*mulla*) or used by him;

— *fałdżejski chamaił* – serving the diviners called *fałdżej*s;

— *chamaił*s used by *siufkacz*s (shamans, quacks).

Usually, the *chamaił*s contained as many texts as possible with preponderance of certain types of texts. Hence sometimes the difference between *chamaił*s and *kitab*s becomes blurred, since both may contain similar, or even the same texts. Such is the case, according do A. Drozd, of a *molliński chamaił* from the Orda village from the end of the 19ᵗʰ century (Drozd 1993: 50).

*Chamaił*s were copied by Muslim Tatars who knew the Arabic script. Sometimes they were composed throughout the lifetime of its author-copyist. Such is the case of the Aleksandrowicz *chamaił* and the unfinished *chamaił* of Lut Muchla (Konopacki 2009).

An exemplary case is the Sobolewski *chamaił* described by A. Drozd (1993: 48–62). The history of this *chamaił* is typical for this sort of Tatar religious literature. The main text was written or copied by Alej Bajraszewski, a *siufkacz*, between 1904 and 1914 in the Orda village. After Bajraszewski's death it was passed down to Kozakiewicz family. Józef Kozakiewicz supplemented the original 78 folios of the *chamaił* with additional prayers. So at present, the *chamaił* contains 100 folios. After his death in the 1980s, it was inherited by Romuald Sobolewski, who lived in Poland.

The method used by the author is typical for this kind of literature: the Arabic text is provided with *szerch* (Arab. *sharkh*) i.e. an interpretation in what seems to be a typical Polissian vernacular. According to A. Drozd, the text is in 60% Arabic, in 31% in Polissian (which he calls Polish-Belarusian) and in 9% Ottoman Turkish (Drozd 1993).

This *chamaił* contains usually the so-called *jasienie*, i.e. occasions – usually 40 – in which the *Ya' Sin* sura is to be recited. Only few fragments (pages 186–188) contain typical magical text for the *fałdży*.

Another one is the *chamaił* of Aleksandrowicz, which was described in detail by Marek M. Dziekan (1997: 27–35). It is a manuscript bequeathed to the Arabic and

Islamic Department of the University of Warsaw by Barbara Hirsz, a descendant of Stanisław Szachno-Romanowicz, who bought it in 1928 in Klecko from the daughter of A. Aleksandrowicz. The dates appearing in the manuscript are between 1876 and 1923.

It is a typical "family-book", i.e. it was expanded by a number of persons. The language, according to M.M. Dziekan and S. Szachno-Romanowicz, is Polish with only a few Polissian (or Belarusian) texts. It starts with two pages of incantations against all kinds of illnesses, followed by a page of notes on domestic affairs from the year 1881, prayers in different languages, description of the days of the month and then an exposition of where the soul is present in the human body during the month. Interpretation of dreams is repeated a few times. A large part is devoted to *planetny dualar*, the text of which was edited by S. Szachno-Romanowicz.[7] *Planetny dualar*s define all sorts of magic actions against *jinn*s and *fierej*s – evil ghosts working against humans and inflicting grave illnesses upon them. The planets define here the signs of Zodiac. The majority of texts is, however, untypical for a *chamaił*, since they are of magical character, such as interpretation of dreams and horoscopes.

In the second half of the 20th century Tatars began to write *chamaił*s in Polish; often they were typewritten. There are at least such *chamaił*s dated 1971, 1979, and 1986. Tatars who copied *chamaił*s was the Białystok imam Lut Muchla (d. 1979), who left an unfinished *chamaił* described by Maciej Musa Konopacki (2009: 42–48). His aim was to prepare a *chamaił* containing as many texts as possible.

*Tedżwid*s

Tajwid in Arabic means the art of reciting the Qur'an. The Qur'an was assiduously copied in the Tatar community, and copies of the Qur'an are among the most popular manuscript books in Tatar collections. The first printed translation of the Qur'an prepared for the Tatars was prepared in 1830 by D. Chlewiński and I. Domeyko. It could not be printed due to the political turmoil of that time. It was published only in 1858, however, Jan Tarak Murza Buczacki was named as the translator.

*Tedżwid*s were rare as independent books, usually they were Ottoman Turkish texts with interlinear Polish or Polissian translation. Still, the rules of *tajwid* were incorporated into *tefsir*s or texts of the Qur'an.

The tradition of *tedżwid*s is continued to these days. In 1929 appeared the *Practical manual of reading Arabic*,[8] and in 1935 *Tadžwīd. How to read the Qur'an* by Jakub Szynkiewicz was published (2nd ed. 1995). The most recent *tedżwid* is a book containing Arabic transcription of selected suras from the Qur'an prepared by Islam Musa Czachorowski, *Al Fatiha i 13 sur świętego Koranu* ('Al Fatiha and 13 suras of the Holy Qur'an', 2010). As it is for all *tedżwid*s, it teaches the Tatar Muslims how to

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[7] His version was reedited by Marek M. Dziekan (see Szachno-Romanowicz 1997: 7–26).

[8] *Praktyczny podręcznik czytania po arabsku* (the author was probably Ali Smajkiewicz). Vilnius 1929.

correctly read and pronounce the text of the Qur'an. A professional Orientalist Professor Marek M. Dziekan was consulted in the preparation of the text.

Polemical literature

In the beginning of the 17th century a Polish author writing under the pseudonym of Piotr Czyżewski/Czyżowski published an anti-Tatar pamphlet titled *Alfurkan tatarski* (1616), reedited in 1640 and 1643 (Suter 2004). The longish title of the book itself bears testimony to the books' contents. The Tatars are said to be "neither nobles, landed gentry nor dukes, they are slaves of this state". Czyżewski calls them unbelievers and enemies of the holy cross. Their military campaigns are defined as abuses and criminal acts.[9] Estreicher quotes another Czyżewski – Matias (pseudonym?), who wrote a pamphlet against the Qur'an: *Alkoran To iest, Zakon abo wiara zabobonney y obłędliwey Sekty Machometańskiey* ('Alkoran, that is the rules or the faith of the superstitious and insane Mohammedan sect').[10] These are, however, rare examples of attacks against the Islam and Polish Tatars in Polish literature.

These assaults were condemned by Tatars themselves in *Apologia Tatarów* (1630) written by a certain Azulewicz. Unfortunately, the print did not survive to our times.

Modern Tatar literature in Polish

Modern Tatar literature in Polish started to appear in the beginning of the 19th century. Again the starting point of the literary output was the religion of Islam. During the period of the Filomat circle in Vilnius, a Polish Tatar, Józef Sobolewski, published the *Presentation of the Mohammedan Faith* ('Wykład wiary mahometań-skiej czyli islamskiej z części Koranu i przykazań proroka chadisiem zwanych...', Vilnius 1830), based on Tatar *kitab*s.

As Poland regained its independence, large groups of Tatar Muslim population lived on its eastern borderlands. Soon they organized themselves: the year 1925 saw the establishment of The Muslim Religious Union (Muzułmański Związek Religijny). Cultural and literary life flourished. In 1932 the first volume of the journal *Rocznik*

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[9] Original title page: *Alfurkan Tátárski prawdziwy na cztérdzieśći części rozdzielony ktory zámyka w sobie początki Tátárskie y przygnánie ich do Wielkiego Xięstwa Litewskiego przy tém iż w Wielkiem Xiestwie Lit. Tátárowie nie są szlachtą áni ziemiáninámi áni Kniaziámi, tylko Kozińcami Skurodubámi y niewolnikami tego páństwá. Do tego sposób życiá, obyczaiow, spraw wypráwy ná żołnięrską, postępkow y zbrodni Tatarskich. Nadto pokazuie się droga do pohámowánia y uskromienia ich od tak znacznych excessow. Aby narod nasz Chrześciáński od tych bezbożnikow, iako nieprzyiacioł Krzyża swiętego, dalszych krzywd i obelżenia rozboiow, naiazdow y stácyi wyciągánia nie ponosił. Alfurkan ten Tatarom zgodny do czytánia, ale też y do upamiętánia, y popráwienia. Teraz nowo przez Piotra Czyżewskiego (ktoremu Assan Alejewicz Tátárzyn z Wáki Oycá zabił) zebrány y do druku Tatarom wszystkim gwoli nadány w roku 1616. Abysz łacniey zrozumiał, co wtey książce iest, odwróć kartę tę, obaczysz.*

[10] http://www.estreicher.uj.edu.pl, no. 27907.

Tatarski ('The Tatar Annual') was published. It was "a scientific, literary and social journal devoted to the history, culture and life of the Tatars in Poland" and it was published under the auspices of the Central Council of the Cultural and Educational Union of Tatars in the Republic of Poland. Leon Kryczyński was its first editor-in-chief, and the editorial board consisted of: Konstanty Achmatowicz, Dawid Janowicz-Czaiński, Olgierd Najman Mirza Kryczyński and Sulejman Murza Murzicz. The title page was also in Turkish and French. Only three volumes of the journal appeared. The 3rd and last volume was published in 1938 and contained a monograph of Stanisław Kryczyński *Tatarzy litewscy. Próba monografii historyczno-etnograficznej* ('The Lithuanian Tatars. A historical and ethnographical monographic essay').

After the World War II it was continued as *Rocznik Tatarów Polskich* ('The Annual of Polish Tatars'). The revived version was founded in 1993 by Selim Chazbijewicz and Ali Miśkiewicz under the auspices of the Union of the Polish Tatars (Związek Tatarów Polskich), later: the Union of the Tatars in the Polish Republic.

Another journal was the monthly *Życie Tatarskie* ('Tatar Life') which was published from January 1934 to August 1939 by the Cultural and Educational Union of the Tatars (Związek Kulturalno-Oświatowy Tatarów) in Vilnius. The editor-in-chief was Stefan Tuhan Baranowski. The aim of the monthly was to create an opportunity for the Polish Tatars to voice their opinion in their own press. It presented the contemporary life of the Muslim society in Poland, the life in the Muslim world, often in the form of articles and features from various Muslim, and especially Arab, countries. The journal was an occasion for the Tatars to present their political views. Of course, religious articles also appeared. The literary part, which contained original literature (Dżingis chan – a novel in episodes by S.T. Baranowski) of the Tatars and translations, was quite interesting. One of the actions undertaken by the publishers was the participation in the erection of the Warsaw mosque – a plan which never materialized due to the outbreak of the World War II.[11]

The World War II divided the Tatar communities between Poland and Soviet Union republics – Belorussia and Lithuania. Many of them were displaced and resettled into different regions of Poland. Under the strict antireligious policy of the Soviet Union and the Polish moderately harsh policy in this dimension the Tatar cultural life ceased to exist. Only after the rebirth of the MZR cultural and literary life began to flourish.

The Union (MZR) publishes the quarterly *Przegląd Tatarski*, *Muzułmanie Rzeczypospolitej*, *Pamięć i Trwanie* ('Memory and Survival') which is a social and cultural annual published in Białystok. The main aim of the journal is to present the history of Polish Tatars. "Memory", say the editors, pertains to the past which never should be forgotten, and "Survival" is a link to our present times, to the reality we live in. It covers a variety of subjects, from reporting actual events in the Tatar life to discussing cultural aspects covered in longer features.

Świat islamu ('The Word of Islam') is also a cultural and social journal devoted to the Muslim faith, Muslim practices (prayer, pilgrimage, *Laylat al-qadr*, fasting), but

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[11] A detailed description of the monthly is presented by Mielczarek (1993: 109–116).

also to the history of Islam in Poland as well as to distinguished Muslims in the Polish social, political and cultural life. The editor in chief of *Świat islamu* is Józef Konopacki. *Życie Muzułmańskie* was in a way a continuation of such interwar journals as *Życie Tatarskie* and *Przegląd Islamski*. It was published between 1985 and 1991, and was a religious as well as a cultural journal.

In 1993 the publication of *As-Salam*, a Muslim social and cultural journal, was initiated. Until 2011, 23 issues have been published. The journal is linked at present to the Institute for the Study of Islam, related to the Muslim League in the Republic of Poland. In 2010 the same institute published the first number of *Al-Haya* (most probably meaning Life (*al-hayat*) and not Shame (*al-haya'*)), a Muslim magazine for women.

In the post-war period the Tatar community remained fully integrated with the Polish society. The Tatars commenced their literary activity, mainly as poets. Two poets: Selim Chazbijewicz and Islam Musa Czachorowski achieved recognition in Polish literature.

Selim Chazbijewicz (b. 1955), a scholar and university professor, is the author of a number of poetical works in Polish: *Wejście w baśń* ('Entering a Tale', Olsztyn 1978), *Czarodziejski róg chłopca* ('The Youth's Magic Horn', 1980), *Sen od jabłek ciężki* ('A Dream Heavy with Apples', 1981), *Krym i Wilno* ('Crimea and Vilnius', 1990), *Mistyka tatarskich kresów* ('The Mysticism of Tatar Borderlands', 1990), *Poezja Wschodu i Zachodu* ('Poetry of East and West', 1992), *Rubai'jjat albo czterowiersze* ('*Ruba'iyyat* or Quatrains', 1997), *Hymn do Sofii* ('Hymn to Sofia', 2005).[12] The poems predominantly relate to Islamic motifs, cf. poems: *Dzieci muzułmanie* ('Muslim children'), *Dziękuję Allahowi* ('I thank Allah'), *Komu sedżde czynisz* ('To whom you make the *sajda*'), *Młodzi muzułmanie* ('Young Muslims''), *Modlitwa przedwieczorna* ('Early Evening Prayer'), *Muzułmański portal* ('Muslim web-portal'), *Nasza religia* ('Our religion').

Islam Musa Czachorowicz (Musa Caxarxan, b. 1953) from Wrocław is a renowned poet writing to Polish literary journals, such as *Odra*, *Poezja*, *Kultura*, *Odgłosy*, *Kultura Dolnośląska*, *Lietuvos totoriai* as well as Muslim periodicals such as: *Rocznik Tatarów Polskich*, *As-Salam* and *Życie Tatarskie*. His literary work consist of several volumes of poetry: *Nie-łagodna* ('An Un-Meek One'), *Ile trwam* ('How long I last'), *Chłodny listopad* ('Cool November'), *Dotknij mnie* ('Touch me'), *W życiu na niby*, ('In fantasy life'), *Samotność* ('Solitude'), *Na zawsze – Навсегда* ('Forever'), *Rubajaty stepowe* ('*Ruba'iyyat*s from the steppe', 2009), *Poza horyzontem* ('Behind the horizon', 2010).

In 2010, Islam Musa Czachorowicz prepared the first anthology of Tatar poetry: *Tatarskie wierszowanie* ('Tatar verses'). It contains over one hundred poems by twenty poets and among them: Selim Chazbijewicz, Anna Kajtochowa, Iza Melika Czechowska, Tamara Jabłońska, Józef Mucharski, Zenaida Półtórzycka. The older generation is represented by the late Dawid Daniel Miśkiewicz, Roman Popławski and

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[12] Selim Chazbijewicz, http://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Selim_Chazbijewicz (accessed: 29.07.2011).

Stefan Radkiewicz. The young generation of poets includes: Michał Mucharem Adamowicz, Ramazan Osman Jakubowski, Elwira Szehidewicz and Katarzyna Ziółkowska.

The activity of Polish Tatars had an important influence on the emergence and development of Polish Middle Eastern studies. They were the inspiration for the Filomat circle in Vilnius in early 19th century, and later inspired an essential part of the work of eminent Polish researchers of the Middle East, such as Piotr Borawski, Andrzej Drozd (1993, 1994a, 1994b, 1994c, 1994d, 1995a, 1995b, 1995c, 1996a, 1996b, 1997a, 1997b, 2004), Aleksander Dubiński (1981, 1986), Marek M. Dziekan (1997), Henryk Jankowski (1995), Tadeusz Majda and many others.

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Michał Łyszczarz

Generational changes among young Polish Tatars

After the dramatic events of the World War II which brought about the death of millions, shift of borders and the accompanying forced resettlement – the two latter being a consequence of the Yalta order – Poland became a nearly homogenous single-nation country.[1] Only few traces remained of the old mosaic of cultures and, among them, one of the smallest ethnic groups in the country – Polish Tatars – to whom I would like to devote this chapter.[2]

This work is divided into two parts. In the first one, I want to present some basic definitional issues; I also included there a short methodological note. In the second part of the article I discuss basic generational models of the young generation of Polish Tatars, emphasizing the overwhelming influence of Islam on the shaping of ethnic identity.

Figures related to the population of Tatar community in Poland raise many doubts. Throughout the years, inflated estimates, talking about 4–5 thousand people, were spread by the media, part of the academia and even by the official statistics.[3]

[1] At the end of 1930s the percentage of ethnic and national minorities in Poland was about 35% of the general number of inhabitants. After the World War II ethnic minorities constituted only about 2% of the society (Tomaszewski 1985: 31–51; Łodziński 2010: 17–23).

[2] I took the name „Polish Tatars" to describe an ethnic Tatar group which to a larger degree is useful for sociological analysis than the popular in Polish historical literature term "Lithuanian Tatars" or "Polish-Lithuanian Tatars". Emphasizing Polishness is connected with present, post-war Tatar community living in Poland, i.e. the group to which I devoted my research. It seems to be more useful than referring to Lithuanianess relating to the lands of Poland before the partitions, especially The Grand Duchy of Lithuania – the oldest and the biggest area of Tatar settlement. Mentioned Lithuanianess, and it accompanying Belorussianess can also be identified with present national identification and nationality of Tatars who live by the eastern borders of Poland – the citizens of independent Lithuania and Belarus.

[3] *Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of Poland* from 1991–1992 in index of members in selected religious associations in Poland included members of Muslim Religious Union giving the number of 4 thousand people (according to the data from 1988); in next editions of *Statistical Yearbook* from 1993–1994 appeared the number 5,135 people; in 1995 it was 5,193; and in 1996–2002 it was 5,123 (data from 1995). Since 2003 Central Statistical Office resigned from publishing data about the number of members of MZR. In a short period of time (1995–1998) in the index members in selected national and ethnic associations in Poland were also included the data on the number of members of Association of Polish Tatars. Similarly to the case of the members of MZR *Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of Poland* estimated the number of APT on 5 thousand people (according to the data from 1994). Data referring to 5 Polish Tatars can be

These data, although they are deeply rooted in the society's consciousness, may not be uncritically accepted. A well-known researcher of Polish Tatars history – Aleksander A. Miśkiewicz – estimates that Tatars on the Polish lands could be counted at about 5 thousand people only until the outbreak of the World War II (Miśkiewicz 1990: 11; Miśkiewicz and Kamocki 2004: 86–88), whereas after its end that number decreased to about 3–3.5 thousand (1.5–2 thousand Tatars resettled from the Eastern Borderline). In the pre-war times state authorities did not favor retaining ethnic identities other than Polish, or demonstrating religious commitment. The presence of Tatars was not accounted for in the official lists because the representatives of this society showed a deep degree of assimilation and did not demonstrate their own ethnic autonomy. Those actions led to the perception of Tatars as a relic religious group with ethnographic elements rather than as an ethnic community (Jasiewicz 1980: 145–157; Kamocki 1993: 43–47). As a consequence, they were customarily defined as "Poles of Tatar origin". The appearance of this category was, in a certain way, a result of the changes in Tatar identity after the World War II.

Within those 3–3.5 thousand Tatars living in Poland after 1945 there were two distinct groups. The first one – less numerous – included those Tatars who were aware of their own autonomy and fully identified with the Tatar ethnos and, which is also important, were practicing Islamists. That group was strongly integrated, because it was formed mainly by Tatars who lived in a settlement agglomeration in Podlachia (Podlasie), who had contact with significant symbolic space to maintain the tradition – mosques and cemeteries in Bohoniki and Kruszyniany. The situation of Tatars who were resettled into the Western Lands after the World War II was completely different. Repatriates from the East were scattered and isolated from Tatar settlement centers in Podlachia. That group comprised of people who only had the awareness of, more or less distant, Tatar origin. Characteristic for them was the weak connection to tradition and cultural heritage and, above all, a considerable degree of secularization and detachment from Islam.

As a result of mixed marriages there were even cases of conversion into Christianity. In spite of passing of a few decades, estimates talking of about 3–3.5 thousand Tatars living in post-war Poland may still be regarded as an accurate figure, determining the general number of people with Tatar roots. This number is not reliable enough though to be the point of departure for a research on religious commitment of young Tatars. I focused only on those Tatars who fully identify themselves with the Tatar ethnos and practice Islam, so the members of the former group. That is why I find the data obtained from the representatives of a religious community belonging to Muslim Religious Union (Muzułmański Związek Religijny) as a rather accurate figure, allowing for an approximation of the number of Tatars – the data allows to narrow down the estimates only to Tatar-Muslims. According to those data, published recently by Polish Central Statistical Office (Główny Urząd Statystyczny), only about 1,000 people belong to one of the nine Muslim religious communities in

found in the National and Ethnic Minorities Committee of Sejm (Polish Parliament; Nijakowski and Łodziński 2003: 65).

Poland (Gudaszewski and Chmielewski 2010: 106). The great majority of these people, although not everyone, are Tatars. Isolating this small group of representatives of Tatar community, counting only 1,000 people, requires a deep ethnic identity analysis of the research group. Here it might be useful to apply the typology of elements comprising the identity of Polish Tatars, suggested by Katarzyna Warmińska. According to this concept, the Tatars' sense of belonging to their own group has a comprehensive nature, so it is built by the ethnic factor (Tatarness), strongly linked with national and ideological elements (Polishness) and religion (Muslimness; Warmińska 1999: 12). On the margin of a discussion on the number and structure of identity of Polish Tatars, it needs to be mentioned that only 448 Tatars confirmed their ethnic identity in general census declaration in 2002.

Definitional and methodological issues

The key theoretical problem which requires explanation in the context of conducting further analysis is the concept of defining the term generation. A term extremely popular in social discourse, it is understood in various ways. The easiest attempt of systematization and clarification of semantic range of this term leads to discerning six types of outlook on the generation, depending on the point of view of individual fields of science. The following concepts of generation are regarded as its most basic meanings: biological, psychological, demographic and historical. More complex constructions, and also the ones more compatible with the ethnicity and studies of religion, are the definitions of generation based on the emphasis of cultural specificity and social factors. A synthetic overview of different ways of understanding the term generation is shown below (Fatyga 2005: 193–197; Kamińska 2007; Garewicz 1983: 77; Ossowska 1963: 47–51; Mannheim 1992–1993: 156–158; Mikułowski-Pomorski 1968: 268–270). Basic definitions include:

— b i o l o g i c a l – understood as genealogical cycle of successive generations connected by age dependency, which influences the place taken in the scheme of relationship.

— p s y c h o l o g i c a l – based on the indication of existing series of stages of life connected with formation of the individual's identity. Separation of the individual stages is possible thanks to the characteristic regularity of the person's development, from which each has its own specific features. Inter-generational relations, especially coming from one stage of life to another, is connected with occurring of border situations, often proceeded in the conflict way.

— d e m o g r a p h i c – defined as the category of people who are nearly of the same age, connected with the statistic regularity stating that three generations (assuming that father's average age is 33) occur in one century.

— h i s t o r i c a l – placed in a specific way in the history and separated as a result of existing events important for the broader group of people (generational experience). The experience of unity found in the historical moments, perceived as essential in the public awareness, triggers the integration of people around commonly experienced

values. The relevance of these events is concealed under the form of mythological stories about the fate of the generation, which forms the group identity.

On the other hand there are definitions especially useful from the perspective of religiousness and ethnicity:

— cultural – related to the continuity and division of the social role within the framework of specific culture. So understood, generation means a set of people with a similar social status, whose place occupied in the socio-cultural system is legitimized due to tradition and inheriting values. In this meaning, generation assumes existence of a certain normative community, unified, for example, by common interests.

— sociological – is, according to Maria Ossowska, formed by a number of expressions, of which the most important for sociological studies are biological, cultural and historical conceptions. The specific element of sociology is, however, the recognition of existence of a characteristic type of bonds which links them. A detailed analysis of this subject was done by Karl Mannheim, who believed that, apart from the abstract product, which potentially is the generation of people born in the similar time, who are united by social and cultural conditions from the youth times, there also exists a real generation. The second type of generation is created when a suitable historical situation exists, so strongly influencing the sense of common generational experience that these people, through conscious group participation, function in the social perception independently of people born earlier or later. Thanks to the bonds created, the representatives of the real generation establish a community based on the similar way of thinking and on the relation to professed values.

Religiousness is one of many characteristic features of society. The unusualness of this phenomenon, when compared against other types of social activity, stems from the fact of huge diversity of attitudes towards religion. An individual's attitude to religion is not homogenous. Continuous existence of religion is guaranteed by an unceasing need for the existence of *sacrum*, and also by the functional usefulness of religion which help to adjust to changing society. These changes, occurring as historical regularities, define the direction of transforming the forms of religiousness, as well as adapting the structures of the society's reality, determined by the space-time context. The relation to religiousness is formed in a dynamic way, which is conditioned by the processes of historical changes influencing the form of culture and the means of its transmission.

When trying to briefly define the specificity of religiousness of the young generation, it is not difficult to notice the increasingly visible influence of globalization, especially the accompanying expansion of secularization trends. Progressing changes of religiousness concern mainly the young generation, for which tradition and cultural heritage, passed from generation to generation, become a redundant burden, an anachronism which does not fit the fast pace of life influenced by the mechanism of secularization. As Margaret Mead noticed, young people rebel against the so far unquestionable authorities, recognizing them as unfit for the era of global change. The fade of significance of older generations, followed by an ever more noticeable decrease in the role of parents in upbringing, resulted in a violent separation of progress, characterized by acceleration of life and sudden technicization, from tradition. For

the young people it is mainly entertainment, provided in an unlimited amount by the popular culture, which has become the identification ground and also the factor which conditions the ways of spending free time. The present world took on a prefigurative character, where young people and the culture addressed to them present the way of mankind's development (Mead 2000: 96–133). Commercial character of these changes and also the primacy of material values are the symptoms of a crisis of religiousness, which afflicts especially the young generation. The religiousness of young generation depends on the series of differentiating factors, of which the following are assigned crucial importance: age, sex, place of residence and, connected with it, social and family background and educational environment in which young people grow up (Wysocka 2000: 52).

Chart 2: Changes in the level of religious commitment of the young generation's representatives.
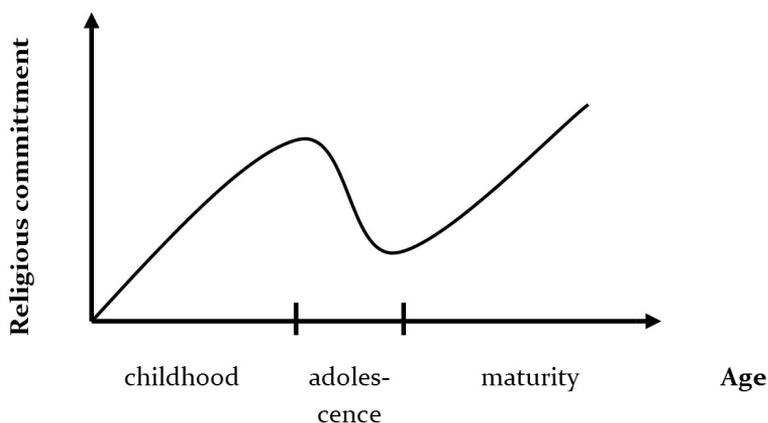
An individual's religiousness is a dynamic process which changes as a result of life experiences. In characterizing the young people's spiritual development, we can single out three basic periods: childhood, adolescence and attaining maturity. Young generation is in such unique situation that during a relatively short period of adolescence – from the whole life perspective, as it lasts just a few years – a strong shock occurs, weakening the religiousness, related to a tempestuous time of growing out of childhood. As far as child's religiousness significantly reflects its parents' relation to religion and tradition based on cultural heritage, so in the adolescence period peer groups (strongly rooted in broader social context which comes under the influence of the mass media) have more impact on forming the philosophy of life. In the second period of life, the attitude of young people towards religion and wider – to the spheres of life – is characterized by departure from most of the truths regarded by people of authority as socially essential. It shows in the selective treatment of the elements of religious doctrine and significant moral indifferentism. The relation of young

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[4] Own elaboration on the basis of the scheme of religious life development by Zenomena Płużek (quoted in Nowosielski 2008: 74–81).

generation to religion is generally characterized by a smaller level of commitment than the adults (especially grandparents), because commonly recognized role models lose their significance. The religiousness of young people shows, therefore, strong tendency towards autonomization, among others, because the period of adolescence is characterized by a rebel attitude which favors counter-cultural actions. Not until after a few years do young people reach a relative emotional maturity which lets them start an individual search for own spirituality of more intellectual character. It is worth paying attention to the fact that the discussed processes, with regard to complexity of factors influencing the picture of religiousness in Poland, progress slower than in the Western European countries. The graph of dependence between the level of religious commitment and the age of the representatives of the young generation shows the discussed regularity.

In preparing this article I used empirical material collected for the needs of my doctoral dissertation (Łyszczarz 2011: 427). The empirical studies were of qualitative character, and among the techniques I used the biggest significance had the unstructured interviews, based on the author's instruction form. The basic part of studies is made up of 41 interviews preceded by 11 pilot interviews. I also prepared the analysis of Tatar's publications and documents (including religious writings) and used the participant observation technique, recorded on photographs. I conducted the surveys in all the largest Tatar population centers, mainly in Podlachia, Tricity (Gdańsk, Gdynia, Sopot) and Warsaw. The people whom I examined were only Tatar-Muslims, among whom I selected two research groups: representatives of the young generation and seniors-leaders of the Tatar society – who act as social experts and informers as well, and whose retrospective opinions about their own youthful religiousness remarkably enriched the collected empirical material.[5] Numerous quotations coming from the respondents' statements illustrate the thesis of the article.

Basic generational models of the young generation of Polish Tatars

The main element distinguishing Tatars from Polish cultural environment is Islam. The Muslim religion, after the disappearance of folklore and use of Tatar language, became the most meaningful element of Tatar identity. The existing dependence between Islam and Tatarness is proven by the fact that practically all Tatars who left Islam in the past years – as a result of slow secularization or conversion – lost also the feeling of bond with the Tatar community, and their ethnic identity became weak. The process of leaving Islam, and, in consequence, abandoning Tatarness is especially visible in case of small Tatar centers which appeared after the World War II in the Western Lands. The symptomatic example seems to be especially the disappearance of a once resilient religious commune in Gorzów Wielkopolski.[6] Knowledge of the

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[5] In choosing the research sample the snowball technique was used.
[6] In Gorzów Wielkopolski regular prayers stopped after the death of imam Bekir Rodkiewicz in 1987, while since the death of Rozalia Aleksandrowicz in 2008 this religious community does not have leader.

results brought about by the destructive isolation from the main Tatar hub in Podlachia allows to understand the influx of Tatars to Białystok, observable since the 1950s.

An ethnic community wanting to preserve its own identity had to counteract the dispersion which threatened its existence. Moving away from Islam is also visible in case of Polish Tatars who married Poles. In mixed Christian-Muslim families, as a result of strong environmental pressure, children are often raised in a way which does not allow to adopt the religious norms and Tatar heritage. It is easier for the representatives of Christian majority to inculcate their own tradition because Tatars, being in minority, are forced to make concessions in order to avoid potential conflicts which could ruin the harmony of family life:

> Parents say that they would prefer a Tatar. They say that it would be easier for me, because there won't be any differences. It's more difficult for mixed marriages, because the religion has to be divided, some festivals have to be celebrated. This is a problem. I don't get much pressure but parents told me about it. It's different with grandparents, they can't imagine that I'm with a non-Tatar. They are afraid that the identity will disappear when I marry a Pole. [interview 28]

> Relations between Tatars are for sure the best for keeping culture and tradition. Unfortunately, there is less and less of them, because our society diminishes fast. It can be seen especially in the Western Lands, where young people don't have any chance to find a Tatar partner. It's better in Podlachia, there are still a lot of Tatars. Białystok became our centre, only in this place we needn't worry about the future. [interview 12]

The awareness of this situation is not unfamiliar to the leaders of the Tatar community who confirm the necessity of persuading young people to preserve the marriage endogamy, and also they condemn religious conversion. Leaving Islam is regarded as a step unbecoming to a Tatar, equal to betraying the tradition and the will of ancestors who, despite unfavorable circumstances, persevered in Muslim faith. The awareness of ethnic separateness in case of Tatars does not mean isolation. The feeling of historical bonds with Poland, patriotism and strong attachment to the Polish culture is very strong:

> Though I'm not really a religious person, I appreciate the role of Islam. This religion united us and created the community. We lived as a minority, we were Polish patriots, but there was awareness that thanks to Islam we are Tatars. It was Islam that allowed us to preserve the uniqueness and no Tatar hides it, because thanks to ancestors we can be proud of Tatarness. [interview 21]

The result of that process is a long-standing cultural assimilation, causing the religiosity of Polish Tatars to become adapted to Christian cultural conditions. Tatars fully accept the reality of life in Poland, even though it demands flexibility and self-discipline in order to preserve religiosity. This amazingly positive relation to the

Polish culture has far-reaching consequences. The characteristic symptom of it is, e.g. the phenomenon of including Catholic festive rituals, recognized as typically Polish elements of culture, into symbols of importance to Tatars. That is why in Tatar houses one may encounter Christmas trees, and All Saints' Day is a good occasion to visit *mizar*s – Muslim cemeteries:

> We are assimilated, we have a Christmas tree, we prepare gifts. Tatar tradition mixes with Polish tradition. It's important not to forget about our origins and culture. When children were little we had to have a Christmas tree so that they wouldn't feel sad. What would other children at school say? What did you get on Christmas Eve? And she would say – nothing, because she doesn't celebrate it. It can't be like that. Why should we put children into stress. Christmas tree is Polish – it's our culture and Tatar holidays are religion and tradition. For me this division is clear. I visit graves every year on 1st of November, because everybody goes there at that day, and also, it's a day off work. It's also adapting Polish habits, but we don't light candles because our religion doesn't permit us us to. We only put flowers and we pray. [interview 33]

Tatars care about maintaining correct relations with Christians. It can be seen in commitment to the inter-religious dialogue, formalized in the activities of the Common Council of Catholics and Muslims (Rada Wspólna Katolików i Muzułmanów). Strong bonds with Polishness, however, became the reason of less positive relations between Tatars and Arabs. People from the Middle East, in spite of common ground of religion, have a different culture – as a result, their religiosity in Poland may be treated as orthodox. Arabs, in most cases, could not understand the specificity of Tatar's attitude to the issue of faith, thinking that this is a result of a long-term neglect and of ignorance, and not of cultural differences and influence of external factors on religiousness.

> Our religiousness evaluated through ages away from Islam and we aren't so orthodox. Every Tatar tries to cultivate Islam as properly as he can, because his knowledge isn't too big, and as conditions of the environment allow him. [interview 24]

> Arabs criticize us for too long Friday's prayer, that *imam* tells not only obligatory *fard*, but also voluntary *sunna*. Arabs think that *sunna* can be recited in your thoughts. We think differently. Tatars don't know Arabic and if *imam* doesn't recite the prayer, people won't to do it by themselves. We have a tradition of long Friday's prayers because for many Tatars it's the only prayer during the week, so we have to do it piously. If *imam* leads voluntary prayer, there's nothing wrong with it, Quite the opposite. But prayer is talking with God. Arabs have different tradition, we respect it, but we would like them to understand us. [interview 15]

Relative isolation of Arab community and weak contacts with Polish community result in that for most young Tatars the feeling of bond with Middle-Eastern peers in faith and Arabian-Muslim culture has a minor meaning. Arabian customs are treated, in most cases, as irrelevant to Polish social and cultural conditions:

> For me Islam is important, not Arabic culture. Arabian culture influenced Islam – it's obvious. [...] We live somewhere else, thousands of kilometers away. We are not Bedouins. As every Muslim, I appreciate Muhammad for the whole message which was revealed to him but it doesn't mean that I have to behave like Arab. My religiousness is based on Qur'an and *sunna*, but because I was born a Polish Tatar, I interpret from the perspective of our culture. Maybe because of that I have such a big sentiment to Tatar culture, not much is left from it. [interview 39]

> Islam contains general truths, but our religiousness was formed in other time and place. It has to be remembered. [...] We, Tatars, have a different culture and lifestyle. Those are the differences which are visible when we look at Arabs. [...] I live in Białystok, not in the desert. It's not only about religion, but about people who interpret it in their own way. Arabs do it radically and we do it more moderately. We managed to separate religion from other spheres of life, the conditions of life Poland made us to do it. [interview 40]

When I began analyzing the identity of young Tatars, the generational factor was brought to the forefront of my research interests. It influences the relation of the young generation to Tatar tradition in a significant way, as well as the level of religious commitment which determines self-identification of the studied group. The awareness of belonging to one generation is typical for the peers with similar attitude to life – Tatars are not an exception in this case. This regularity is expressed in the specificity of creating the image of yourself, which is placed in a broad frame of culture. The identity understood in this way focuses on the most important, from the Tatar ethnicity point of view, issue of Muslim religiousness and the approach of young people to their ancestors' tradition. During the analysis of the attitude of young people to religion, the problem brought to the forefront is that of passing on religious values in the family, which, to a large degree, determines the shape of religious commitment of the children. Their attitude towards broadening their knowledge about Islam and Muslim rites depends on parents' discipline:

> The attitude of young people to religion is conditioned on what they see at home. If father and mother pray, go to mosque, than children do the same and are religious too. For me, my father and my grandfather were my role models, I didn't became *imam* (like them) which I really regret. [interview 13]

Undoubtedly, the participation of young Tatars in religion classes and service in mosque initially is forced upon by parents. Only later the mechanism of inner

commitment appears, strengthened by the contact with Tatar peers, which intensifies young people's conviction of religious activity. The breakthrough comes during teen years, when, while they move on towards adolescence, their religious enthusiasm weakens. To a considerable degree this is related to the change of school environment, graduating from primary school to junior high school and making new friends. At that time the influence of non-Muslim environment is extremely strong. The adolescence is characterized by change of the value system and role models – the mutiny against parental authority, rejecting tradition as a sign of being culturally different. For people of that age it is more important to feel integrated with their peers than with their family. The symptom of change is the will to blend in with the social environment and the weakening of bonds with Muslim religion, which, in this case, is the main determinant of traditional values.

> Modernity threatens young people. Media write about pathology and they also take part in it. Young people don't think about what is right and what is wrong, because at this age you think about having fun. I also was young, I remember it well. The role of parents is crucial, if they bring up children well than a child will grow up on a good person. It's more difficult for parents nowadays because that have to gain authority. In the past, school and *imam* helped in it. The worst is with teenagers, when they start junior high school, when they are 15 they think they are adults and that they can do whatever they want. It's the same for everyone, no matter if it is a Pole, a Tatar, Catholic or Muslim, from Warsaw or Białystok. It's the regularity. Then you should use discipline, in the past it was effective and young people were more clever. But discipline is not popular at present because children are raised unstressed and it has negative effects. [interview 31]

Religious enthusiasm comes back with age, but not every Tatar experiences this. Rediscovering religion is a sign of attaining some kind of maturity. The most common potential reason of this change might be the prospect of settling down and having a family in the future. Discovering religion for the second time, which accompanies becoming independent and entering the adulthood, is in general more smooth and gradual than its abandonment during the period of youthful adolescence. This trend is observed especially among the representatives of the older group of the young generation, including students and college graduates.

> A young person doesn't think much about religion because it's too abstract. I also thought like that. Only in a certain way a person becomes more serious or not, because some people are still immature like children. When I was young, all the religiousness was constituted by two or three visits to mosque in a year. [interview 36]

Certain repetitive identity scheme which expresses itself in a differentiated religious intensity and ambiguous relation to tradition becomes visible among the representatives of the young generation of Polish Tatars. A good symptom of the observed

regularity might be the options of social activity which are typical for individual age categories. The analysis of collected empirical material allowed to discern three basic models of generational identity, named conventionally: *pupils*, *buńczuk* and *halaka*.

Pupils are the youngest group of Tatar youth. This group is made up of Tatars who attend primary school, who often experience problems typical for adolescence. It is characterized by a relatively low level of attachment to tradition and Tatar culture, what is the result of immaturity and lack of developed pride of their ethnic origin. Pupils' reserved attitude towards Tatarness can be explained by the fact that they are exposed to negative attitudes of peers at school and in their place of residence. For the representatives of this category of the young generation, Tatarness and Muslim religion constitute the dimension which sets them apart from Christian environment. A growing feeling of strangeness makes otherness, at this stage of life, has an especially negative perception and often becomes the reason for conflicts. *Pupils* are relatively poorly integrated; the only forms of their social activity within the ethnic group are limited to the activities inspired by the leaders of the Tatar society. The youngest of my respondents turned out to be the group with the lowest level of religiousness, characterized by a relatively low level of religious knowledge and practice limited to participating in Bayram festive ceremony.[7] The representatives of this category declared, moreover, that they do not pray at all or that they do it occasionally. The relatively low level of religiousness among *pupils* shows in the perception of Ramadan as the time of calmness and winding down of social life, and not a real fast, or treating the pilgrimage to Mecca as unfeasible, an abstract:

> No, I have never thought about that. It's difficult to fulfill. After the pilgrimage you have to change your lifestyle, you shouldn't drink, smoke and I'm not ready for that. To go to Mecca you have to be very religious because it can't be treated like a trip. Frankly, I don't think I would ever go there. [interview 28]

The group of the youngest respondents, in most cases, questioned the sense of deep sacrifice in the name of religion, such as praying five times a day, abstinence from alcohol or a diet without pork meat. This type of Islam religious commands were regarded as too severe or even unfeasible in Polish cultural conditions:

> I don't pray every day because I don't have time. I pray only at festivals. After school and in the evenings too I don't think about religion. It's my free time and that's it. I don't feel the need of often prayer. [interview 23]

The influence on this, undoubtedly, had the low religiousness of parents and upbringing without proper emphasis on the spiritual issues and passing tradition. The reasons of this situation can be also seen in the negative experiences in the religion classes at school, in which a considerable part of the young generation participates.

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[7] Kurban Bayram (*'Id al-Adha*) and Ramazan Bayram (*'Id al-Fitr*) are the most important religious festivals in Islam.

The second generational category is *buńczuk*. With this term I define generally young Tatars who study at a college, who display a stronger or weaker bond to a community gathered around Song and Dance Youth Ensemble "Buńczuk" (Młodzieżowy Zespół Pieśni i Tańca "Buńczuk"). The popularity of the group made me extend the name to the whole category. This group has already put behind them the concerns related to the adolescence and is mainly characterized by developing pride in their own ethnic background and discovering Tatarness. Young people are not ashamed of their origins and, quite to the contrary, they treat them as an exceptional element of their own identity which can be envied by other people. In this period young Tatars develop the strongest integration, they often meet, they nurture close contacts with their peers; there is also a considerable social activity within the Tartar community. Students take part in the activities of "Dernek" society, as well as become members of the above-mentioned ensemble "Buńczuk". This group is characterized by a still relatively low level of religiousness, showing, however, growing tendencies. Students generally declare their attachment to religion and they try, though in a basic way, to fulfill the duties put on the worshipers by Islam. The level of religious commitment of the youth from the *buńczuk* generation is rather moderate, the attitude to religion is often selective and, in most cases, limited to rites and its family character. Islam is not interpreted as a religious doctrine, but rather as a set of beliefs passed down from ancestors, which as a result of long historical processes was hued with local specificity:

> You know, I have never thought why I am a Muslim. The easiest answer is because my parents are Muslims. The case is not so easy when I think why we, Tatars, are Muslims. If we those centuries age left in the steps of Mongolia and didn't go to conquer West then we would probably be Buddhists at present. So, our Muslimness is in some way historical coincidence. [interview 20]

Islam is regarded by them as a true religion professed thanks to the existence of a strongly embedded tradition which is passed from generation to generation. They appreciate the role of Muslim religion in shaping Tatar identity, but they believe that adopting this faith was, in old times, a historical coincidence. Still, students declare their attachment to prayer, they pray usually once a day. They also try to regularly participate in Friday's prayers in mosque. Members of the *buńczuk* category display a more serious approach to the duty of fasting during the month of Ramadan than *pupils*, although they practice it in an incomplete way, often interrupting for a couple of days or giving in to the opportunity to drink alcohol:

> During Ramadan I try not to do some things. It's difficult to fast completely when you study, because during lectures I wouldn't bear. That is why I resigned from my pleasures, I didn't party. If it come to food, I tried to eat only healthy food, not eat too much. [interview 5]

Students, to a large extent, are aware of their own religious immaturity. That is why they postpone their decision to make a pilgrimage to Mecca until distant future.

Respondents from this group have a positive perception of religious education, they appreciate knowledge about Islam and Tatar tradition, and also – which may be surprising at first glance – the opportunity to meet each other and spend time with other Tatars. Religious education was mainly appreciated because it was a great opportunity for integration and strengthening the feeling of Tatar identity.

The oldest generational category is formed by young adults, i.e. people aged 25 and more. As the name of this group I took the term *halaka*, which relates to the debating meetings devoted to the issues of faith, often held together with Arab students. They let young Tatars to enrich their religious knowledge and, most importantly, to realize the role of global religious community of super-ethnic character (*umma*):

> To understand what is Islam I began my own searches – I read a lot, now the Internet helps me in it. [...] Not only I felt it, there was several of people, few Poles in it, who were preparing to conversion on Islam. We organized *halaka* meetings in order to search knowledge and Muslim integration. The meetings took place once a week at Arabs' from Muslim Students Society [Stowarzyszenie Studentów Muzułmańskich] in Poland. [...] We became close to each other. [interview 39]

Halaka are mainly university graduates – young people who have a job and plan to set up a family in the near future, or they have just set it. They display a noticeably weaker link to their peers and younger Tatars, which results from finishing education, and also weakening the processes of group integration by the school. *Halaka* generation experiences a typical for adulthood increase in the number of duties and lack of free time, which impacts the shape of social relations with the Tatar community. The social activity of this group in not as vibrant as that of the *buńczuk* generation, but it is rather systematic through work in the structures of Muslim Religious Union or Association of Tatars in the Republic of Poland (formerly Association of Polish Tatars), and, above all, by teaching religion to children and Muslim youth. A characteristic feature of this group of young Tatars is the increase of religious involvement. Islam, whose role in the period of teenage angst was minimized, becomes again an important part of life. Discovering religiousness by some of the respondents, especially in Białystok, was possible due to halaka meetings. For the most religious representatives of *halaka* generation, Islam ceased to be a distinguishing feature of Tatarness, and it became an individual way leading to salvation. In pious people, the attitude to religion evaluated, moving on from the sphere of traditional rites, via cultural heritage, to a mystical experience. For a relatively small group of the most religious people religion constituted the main goal in life; they devoted much time to fathom the Qur'an and to pursuit religious knowledge, and Islam became for them the "guiding post" which tells them how to live and function in a society.

> Islam is for me a key point, a kind of compass. A person often gets lost in life's troubles, religion is for me the last hope. When I completely don't know what to do I take Qur'an and look for the solution. In difficult situations it's a kind of support, a "guide-post" what to do. It lets to feel better and see where you made a mistake. [interview 20]

Most often, an increased religiousness results from individual research, already mentioned halaka meetings or the intention to become ready to raise children in the spirit of Tatar and Muslim traditions. Young people described by me as *halaka* aim to practice Islam in the form close to the Qur'anic ideal, attempting to faithfully fulfill prescribed religious duties such as praying five times a day or observing a strict fast during the month of Ramadan, connected with donation of fasting alms to the poorest members of religious community (*zakat al-fitr*). To a large degree, religious maturity of young adults also shows in the willingness to embark on a pilgrimage to Mecca at the first possible opportunity:

> I would really like to go to Mecca. From what I heard from the people who went there it's a really amazing place. It's a huge experience, people change. I know few Tatars who stopped drinking alcohol when they came back from Mecca. The pilgrimage it's an expense but once in a lifetime you can make such a devotion. [interview 39]

Conclusion

The identity of the young generation of Tatars, with respect to the fact of being born in a Tatar family and growing up in a relative respect towards the relics of culture, tradition and rites, is strongly connected with Tatar tradition. The faith of ancestors, awareness of family history and its noble origins plays a significant role. Podlachia and, especially, Bohoniki and Kruszyniany occupy a special role in the collective mind of young Tatars:

> I like Kruszyniany the most. I plan to go there for some time and I can't find any free time. I missed that place, because I haven't been there for a long time. You need to go there to pray in silence and solitude, visit the mosque, and tell the people who died. I visit Bohoniki more often because it's closer [...] but it's different than in Kruszyniany. In Bohoniki there are my relatives' graves [...] visiting there often means seeing my family in Sokółka. [...] And Kruszyniany are a silence and solitude. When you go there alone and sit in peace, think [...]. It makes an incredible impression, you can calm down there. [interview 30]

These places are regarded as the Tatars' little homeland. Local mosques and cemeteries, directly connected to Muslim rites, are an unusual space which is accompanied by a symbolic valorization which influences the shaping of a strong feeling of their own distinctiveness, manifested in the pride of Tatarness. A positive relation to tradition is shown by the memory of the beginning of settlement in Polish lands, glorious historical events in which Tatars took part throughout the ages, and also the awareness of the participation of ancestors in wars waged by Poland.

> Sure I'm proud of my origins. In Poland not many people are Tatars, but I am. My great-grandfather was in the 1st Cavalry Troop within the 13th Vilnius Uhlan

Regiment and fought in 1939, so it's something to be proud of. We, Tatars, don't have anything to be ashamed of! [interview 24]

A domestic dimension of Tatar identity can be seen in holiday celebration. Kurban Bayram and Ramazan Bayram are the opportunity to keep close contacts with the community members and also to prepare characteristic dishes present in Tatar houses for ages:

> For me, festivals are cleaning and cooking and later resting with my family. I pay my attention to this family dimension. Because religiously, they are not so important for me, we go to a mosque, there is a crowd of people, stuffy, prayer is longer than on Fridays. Yes, it's quite tiring. [interview 18]

Apart from the role of a transmitter of knowledge of their own group's history, the family significantly influences the passing down of cultural traditions and the process of transmission of a complex value system, with Muslim religion at its core. That thesis is confirmed by the research, clearly showing the connection between the level of individual religiousness of the representatives of the young generation with the atmosphere at home, especially with the focus of parents and grandparents on raising children in respect to Islam. The attitude to piety, formed in this way, often determines the relation to the sphere of *sacrum* present among young Tatars:

> When I think of religiousness of young people the comparison comes to my mind – to driving a car. Young people drive fast, often really fast. They hurry a lot in life, they forget that in a car there is also a mirror allowing you to look behind you. In a mirror you can see how our tradition disappears. The youth often forgets about that. Later, after some time, they will wake up like their parents and then, it can be too late because tradition may not exist any longer. They start to seek blindly for who they are, who they grandparents were, what is the place of religion in life. They don't appreciate us, old people, because we are like a brake in a car – needed only in sudden cases, in case of emergency. [interview 31]

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Halina Grzymała-Moszczyńska, Magdalena Trojanek

Image of the world and themselves built by young Chechens living in Polish refugee centers. Intercultural conflict.

A metaphorical expression "image of the world" implies that a person codes in their memory phenomena and events taken from their own experience. On the basis of those events and phenomena, their brain creates a "reflection" of reality as perceived by them (Gurycka 1991). Antonina Gurycka quotes Miller, Galanter and Pribram's (1980) definition of an image, a term used by them to analyse the relationship between a human being and his environment:

> an image is the entirety of knowledge which an organism collected and organized and which concerns the organism itself as well as the world in which it lives. An image is more than an idea. By using this term we mean mostly the kind of representation which has an individual character [...] The notion of image includes all that the organism learns – assessments equally with facts organized with the use of notions, pictures or relations that the organism managed to work out (Gurycka 1991).

The aim of the research which forms the basis of this article was to identify the consequences of forced migration for one's image of the world and self-concept. With the help of the interview technique, Manford Kuhn's Twenty Statement Test (TST) and Antonina Gurycka's Mapa Mojego Świata,[1] we tried to reconstruct how young Chechens perceived the present reality and their place in it. The research group consisted of 32 people between 13 and 18 years of age who had been living in Polish Centers for Foreigners Applying for Refugee Status for at least 2 months. Our main research interest was in the way the refugees related to the new reality – which of its elements had been accepted, what their relation to the elements of the old reality was

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[1] Mapa Mojego Świata ('My World's Map'), is a drawing technique used to examine the general cognitive structures of an individual. It allows to learn the elements which constitute one's image of the world and tell how the person perceives those elements. The task of a person examined is to draw their world with the use of graphic signs and the rules given in the manual. One's image of the world consists of objects (important people, values, institutions, events, etc.), the relations between them and the person's relation towards them (negative and positive emotions, fear, a sense of control).

and what emotional attitude was connected to them. The new socio-cultural context which the refugees found themselves in because of the forced migration resulted in disorientation, a sense of instability and loosening of social bonds. A new situation requires making new decisions, using new strategies and reorganizing one's cognitive structures. The aim of the research was thus to set diagnosis concerning the psychological and social functioning of a young refugee in their host community.

In this article we are going to present the areas of one's image of the world in which, in a forced or voluntary way, two mutually foreign cultures clash. We are especially interested in showing the moments leading directly to an intercultural conflict. It is an inherent – or even inevitable – aspect of functioning of the contemporary European societies, which are every year becoming more and more diverse and intercultural. Choosing this subject was on the one hand the result of our willingness to sensitize people to the problems and tensions that may arise and, on the other hand, to show the real dynamics of the relation *Me* vs. *the Other* and *Us* vs. *Them*. According to Izabela Main, the aim of scientific research on refugees is to "become a source of knowledge, identify problems, analyze practices, indicate good practices, change reality and social awareness, make diagnosis and prognosis and create strategies of integration" (2008). The author adds that "Analyzing and doing research on the situation of refugees coming from different countries is the precondition to prepare good integration programs, evaluate and improve them in order to help people and communities integrate well with the Polish society" (Main 2008). The key term here is *integration*, i.e. a situation in which a foreigner preserves the most important elements of their native culture and, at the same time, takes over certain characteristics of the culture of their host country. A way to achieve this desirable situation is a mutual meeting and getting to know each other, as well as looking for areas in which the dichotomy Us–Them could be eliminated.

In the course of our research project we met many people working for the refugees. Often, it was only after a longer discussion and our inquisitive questions that very specific problems with cultural contact came to light – especially problems resulting from cultural differences. Their claim that in a situation of intercultural conflict "no problems are observed" is caused either by a willingness to hide facts unfavorable to the image of a particular school/refugee center/police station/city, or by ignorance, passivity and indifference. It was difficult for them to notice and understand that "experiencing the presence of *the Other* is less dramatic and severe than a sense of being culturally and ethically different" (Paleczny 2007). It could be sensed that the representatives of those institutions expected foreigners to adjust to their new reality. We had an impression that according to some of our interviewees "equal" was synonymous to "the same". We are afraid that such an attitude dominates in the Polish society, which is in turn reflected in the behavior of foreigners. It is illustrated by the following statement of a young Chechen girl: "I am a guest and I have to adjust. Polish kids are making fun of me so it's better not to stick out". Another young girl separated two areas of functioning with her outfit (and probably also with her norms of behavior): she would wear fashionable, tight trousers at school and put on a long skirt the moment she set foot in her house. The strategy of "culturally" separating the private

sphere from the public sphere seemed to have been used by the refugees often. Consequently, there arise questions as to whether it is a pro-integration strategy safe for well-balanced functioning or whether the arising conflicts and disparities lead to a feeling of alienation and incoherence in the perception of the world and oneself.

According to Florian Znaniecki, cultural diversity is natural and positive, as cultures are complementary and mutually enriching, creating world-wide and universal cultural system. Znaniecki (2001) claims that:

> a contradiction between cultural systems as elements of the objective world of culture does not exist at all; it is a mere illusion of a purely social origin which occurs only because some people consider one system important and the other unimportant, different, or – quite the contrary – they reject the first and accept the second (in Paleczny 2007: 175).

Even if we consider this optimistic hypothesis true, on the level of social praxis we will encounter an internal and external conflict actually experienced by individual human beings, which results in mutual reserve, reluctance or even hostility. How to avoid such attitudes? We are going to try to answer this question on the basis of the observations and interviews which we made with young Chechens living in Polish refugee centers.

Refugees from Chechnya

Refugees constitute a specific group of Muslims who arrived in Poland after 1989 (it was only in 1991 that Poland acceded to the 1951 Geneva Convention). They come from such countries as Bosnia, Afghanistan, Iraq and Chechnya.[2] The situation in Poland is definitely more favorable to integration than in the Western Europe, where in certain countries Muslims constitute 5–10% of the population in Poland – only a fraction. First refugees from Chechnya arrived in Poland in the 1990s, but it was only in the year 2000 that they – in a short period of time – became a dominant group of foreigners seeking asylum in Poland. Although officially the war in Chechnya has ended and the process of normalization is under way, the people of Chechnya are still running from persecution and violation of human rights. At present, Chechnya has a status of an autonomic republic and is a part of Russian Federation. Both Chechen wars at the end of the 20th century resulted in great damage and brought complete destruction to the country (it is estimated that around half of the population of Chechnya in their reproductive age is unemployed). A few hundreds of people of this one-million nation live in exile – in Georgia, Poland and other Western European countries. The conflict in Chechnya lasted for so long that the young generation has not experienced living in peaceful environment at all. Many Chechen children who

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[2] 95% of the refugees living in Poland are citizens of Russian Federation, most of whom are of Chechen descent (based on http://apps.who.int/globalatlas/default.asp).

arrive in Poland have never gone to school; their lives consisted mostly of endless migration (both within and beyond their country's borders), constant sense of instability, uncertainty, threat and omnipresent violence (Kosowicz 2008).

What needs to be taken into consideration is that immigrant community is not representative of the whole nation. Intercultural contact caused by forced migration may lead to the disintegration of social network, distortion of various cultural habits and a necessity of intellectual and emotional control of the situation by big groups of people. Bearing in mind the historical and political tension is especially important while analyzing cultural contact (Królikowska 2009: 13). However, sometimes the circumstances of migration strengthen awareness and national identity, as well as allow to observe one's own culture from a distance and notice cultural differences and the sources and meanings of particular practices. For this to happen, certain conditions of cultural contact must be fulfilled. As Jadwiga Królikowska puts it,

> to commune with a separate culture is attractive and enriching when an individual is aware of the fact that any time they can end this contact or determine its scope, also when it does not require changing one's cultural identity (2009: 10)

An attitude of openness and understanding for *the Others* on the part of Polish people is necessary to make the process of adaptation smooth and efficient and, in consequence, turn Poland into a multiethnic civil society.

The refugee experience

The situation of Chechen refugees is completely different from the situation of Muslims who have come to Poland of their own free will. In the anthropological perspective, "refugees" are a group of people sharing the same experience, the so-called "refugee experience". Because of the diversity of factors and ways of life, one must be careful in making any generalizations about this construct. Liisa Malkki suggest the following understanding of the phenomenon:

> The refugee experience concerns those who are first in a stage of painful exclusion from their old community and then forced to cross certain thresholds (connected with their escape, administrative procedures, staying in a refugee center) to be included again, but this time in a different society (in Ząbek and Łodziński 2008: 55).

Refugees, therefore, find themselves in a transitional phase in which "you are someone and at the same time you are not." It is not only a psychological state; it results also from a specific social and economic situation. It corresponds with the period of a so-called cultural shock, which begins a long-lasting process of adaptation (Ząbek and Łodziński 2008: 56). Ewa Wysocka describes the situation of refugees in the following way:

A refugee is both devoid of a possibility to come back home and unable to move on, which means that they function in a situation that is permanently temporary or lasting too long. [...] Thus, the refugees neither gain a new and permanent place to live in, nor have a chance to look for it; that is why, in a psychological sense, they are neither settled nor can they aim at settlement; it is because they either do not have the necessary competences or their motivation has been distracted. (2007)

Translating the above deliberations into everyday practice, the situation of Chechen refugees in Poland is as follows: they have ran away from Russia because their health and lives were exposed to great harm, their families have low socio-economic status and they need financial, psychological, legal, medical and educational help. In refugee centers, only their basic needs are fulfilled, such as accommodation, food or education for the children. Refugees wait for a couple of months before their applications for the refugee status are investigated. Staying in a refugee center becomes an additional strain for at least three reasons. Firstly, the living conditions in Polish refugee centers are poor. Secondly, the centers do not guarantee enough privacy and force people to be in constant contact with a big group of strangers, often from a different cultural background. Thirdly, staying in such a center means legal incapacitation and a high sense of dependency on the help and decisions of the staff. It is common that the refugees staying there have no influence on where they live, what they eat and how their children are educated. The sense of temporariness and instability affects especially children and teenagers. Most of them come to Poland after spending a few months in some other country of the European Union and "expect the unexpected" trip to the West. Chechen people are neither prepared nor being prepared to live in a completely culturally different society.

Cultural contact vs. conflict

A starting point for the analysis of an intercultural conflict is the term cultural contact. The term refers to many situations but there is always an event which leads to a change – starting from a cognitive change and ending with a wide process in which the individual and common identity is verified. The event is about experiencing otherness, which entails organizing new contents in relation to those that have already been at our intellectual and emotional disposal (Królikowska 2009: 11). However, it must be emphasized that, because of the mass media, relatively frequent contacts with foreign cultures are superficial and distanced; they also do not result in a disclosure of deeper cultural content. The lack of closeness and openness is a consequence of people treating their culture as something particularly precious and intimate, something which must be protected from accidental observers and a potential lack of respect. People from the outside are at most allowed to learn behaviors that are only seemingly traditional. It results in a consolidation of simplified versions of culture and a lack of its deeper understanding (Królikowska 2009: 11). Cultural contact

may also lead to a conflict, when in a situation of mutual dependence a person notices and reacts to a divergence of needs, values and goods between themselves and the other person. A different behavior is perceived as acting against one's own values and principles. It is a result of an unconscious assumption that the others feel, think and speak as we do. Negative emotional states, such as tension, impatience, frustration or a need to make additional effort, also create favorable conditions for conflicts to escalate (Matsumoto 2007). Charles Moore is the author of a concept called the circle of conflict, which consists of five types of conflicts and their causes:

— relationship conflict – miscommunication, misperceptions, stereotyping.

— values conflict – different ways of life, ideology, worldview, religion, different criteria for evaluating ideas.

— structural conflict – unequal control, ownership and distribution of resources, unequal authority, geographical, physical and environmental factors that hinder cooperation, destructive patterns of behavior or interaction.

— data conflict – lack of information, misinformation, differing views on data's relevance, different interpretations of data.

— interest conflict – perceived or actual competition over interests, procedural interests, psychological interests.

We are going to use the abovementioned concept in the categorization and analysis of the conflicts which were a part of the young Chechens' images of the world.

Relationship conflict

The majority of conflicts described by our interlocutors were conflicts involving interpersonal relations. They were caused by communication barriers and mutual misperceptions. In an intercultural context, communication is characterized by high level of uncertainty resulting from the lack of language knowledge and differences in non-verbal communication. Even if the vocabulary of a language is known, the ambiguity of messages and their dependence on cultural context lead to mistakes, misinterpretations and misunderstanding of intentions. Relaying on stereotypes too much and the selectivity of perception which results from stereotyping discourage from looking for hints that could enable understanding messages in accordance with the intentions of one's interlocutor. It is "language" that is definitely the most frequent answer to the question about problems which young Chechens encounter in Poland. One of the respondents presented the dynamics of her relationships with Polish peers who, after a period of curiosity, openness and kindness, show some sort of "boredom" with *the Other* or even hostility towards them. Original willingness to help – lively, strong and spontaneous – faded after it had turned out that it is not single gestures that matter but systematic help, constant explaining of words, patient repeating of incomprehensible messages or even lending school equipment. Not to mention trying to understand the other perspective and getting to like it.

The interviews revealed that there had been situations in which the refugees were subjected to openly expressed aversion. In two cases nasty remarks were coming from

peers. One of the boys admitted in an interview: "the most difficult for me is that they laugh at me, call me names". The other respondent, when asked what she would like to change in her environment, answered: "I would like Polish people to change and I would like girls and boys not to touch each other. At school Poles use bad language, they argue with the Chechen people. They do not want to make friends with us, they say *ugh* when we come up". At the end of the interview she said: "my problem is that they offend me at school". Unfortunately, the signals of aversion were received also from adults, also the teachers. One of the respondents mentioned a famous case of Chechen girls who had been beaten in a nearby town, adding: "In [the name of the town] people are intolerant but there are problems here too. In our block there is a woman who doesn't like us, yells at us and calls us names. What are we going to do? I'd rather she wasn't here. Bad people". The last three sentences of his statement are particularly important – they show his helplessness against stigmatizing and marginalizing behaviors. The respondent was not able to give the circumstances in which the verbal aggression on the part of the woman occurred. On the other hand, his emphasizing that the invectives were directed at "us" not at "me" suggests that the respondent perceives the situation as aimed against all the people living in the refugee center, or all the Chechen people as *the Others*. By asking the rhetorical question: "what are we going to do?", the respondent shows that he does not know the motives of the Polish woman offending the Chechen people. An explanation seeming most probable for him was his impossible to change *otherness*. In the face of such a situation the only solution he finds is "I'd rather she wasn't here", as he is probably aware of the fact that it is not possible for him, his family or the other people living in the refugee center to leave. The situation described above is an example of a hidden conflict caused by misperceptions, misunderstandings, prejudices, generalization and stereotyping.

A different respondent admits that at school there are people "who hate" and people "who like" but "I am rather not liked because I'm a refugee from Chechnya". Her confession is very worrying, as it explicitly indicates a sense of rejection and stigmatization caused by the possessed refugee status. In the process of stereotyping the inhabitants of refugee centers it is not a refugee label that matters but their nationality. Before coming to Poland the respondent expected a different treatment – understanding, tolerance and being given a sense of security. Instead, she experienced a form of persecution, although it was persecution in their homeland that her family had run away from. On the one hand it is dramatic, on the other – adaptive – that the respondent came to terms with the stigmatizing effect of the "refugee from Chechnya" label: "for me it's normal. I got used to it".

The consequences of being unwanted, rejected, foreign may create favorable conditions for negative adaptive strategies, such as separation, withdrawal and rebellion, or slightly more positive strategies, e.g. tasks-oriented adaptation or uncertainty avoidance. All of them, to a more or less large extent, may have a disintegrating influence on identity. Experiences of stigmatized people may activate and sustain negative self-concepts which are connected with a sense of being inadequate to the expectations and requirements of new social environment and new cultural patterns. In such a situation, isolation and shutting oneself in a secure and accepting world is

considered the best solution. It initiates a vicious circle – *the Others* perceive themselves as isolated by the society (so they isolate themselves from the society) and the society perceives *the Others* as isolating themselves (so it isolates them). It is extremely difficult to stop the vicious circle and it requires a situation in which the forces pulling an individual towards the dominating society will be greater than the forces pushing it away. Those forces clash in the area of intercultural communication and it is the course of the communication that the shape of established relations depends on.

What enhances intercultural communication is a conscious and intentional analysis of one's own behavior and the behavior of the other person. The internal analysis consists in becoming aware of one's attitudes, habits and cultural expectations. Attention focused on the behavior of the other person is, in turn, a way to remove uncertainty, which in the case of intercultural communication is connected with deciphering culturally coded message. What strongly supports openness and mutual understanding is education. According to Ewa Wysocka, educational activities should be aimed both at the "access" community and the "leaving" group. On the part of immigrants, their aim is to eliminate language barriers (provide with linguistic competences), socio-cultural barriers (teach social skills and cultural competences). On the part of the accepting community, the aim of education is to change social attitudes towards immigrants (eliminate stereotypes, prejudices, discriminatory practices) through enhancing social awareness, shaping tolerant attitudes and pointing out the benefits resulting from including immigrants into socio-cultural system (Wysocka 2007). Education of such a thematic scope is called multicultural or intercultural education, which is defined by Danuta Markowska as:

> an educational process whose aim is to shape the understanding of cultural differences – starting from subcultures in one's own community and ending with the cultures of geographically distant communities – as well as preparing verbal interactions with the representatives of other cultures. (1990)

Jerzy Nikitorowicz (2000) emphasizes that intercultural education aims at eliminating situations in which members of particular cultures could become hostages of their own cultural conventions as, according to him, homogeneous culture may have a captivating effect. Intercultural education is therefore especially important in the societies in which homogeneous understanding of culture has developed over centuries. Poland is such a country.

Values conflict

Relation conflict is closely related to values conflict, as the area of communication reflects deeper layers of culture which are, so to speak, the basis for "coding" the observed practices and messages. One of the reasons why a conflict occurs, is underestimating the role of culture and interpreting the motives of somebody's behavior

according to one's own judgment. This minimalism reveals itself in the attribution of a person, not culture, as the reason of somebody's behavior. A conflict-enhancing mechanism is illustrated by a case of an open conflict between a Pole and a Chechen, which took place at school: one of the Chechen students attacked and severely beat a Pole who offended a Chechen girl. In Chechen culture defending woman's dignity is a duty of every man. In the face of insults, the young Chechen man reacted according to his cultural norms, which are definitely more tolerant of physical aggression than the Polish norms. The conflict is also an example of cultural differences in the way of expressing emotions and reacting to a conflict situation.

The situation brought repercussions among both Chechen and Polish students. One of the Chechens said "we have problems with breaking the law, acting like hooligans". Another respondent, when asked what he would like to change, answered that he would like Chechen people "to live peacefully here". In our opinion, the boy considered Chechen people responsible for the conflict, which is also an official stance of the teaching staff. Yet another respondent mentioned fights as the most essential problem and said that she would like people not to argue, adding that "Polish people look down on [Chechen people] and Chechen people are aggressive". It is in this way that she explained that the reasons of conflicts lay in different national characteristics.

The abovementioned example shows how the perception of the others' behavior as unfair and unjust activates the mechanisms of resistance and hostility, or even leads to physical aggression (the attack of the Chechen boy). A Polish student offended a Chechen girl, and even though his words did not directly concern the issue of otherness, they still could have been interpreted as contempt and hostility towards the whole ethnic group. Such an interpretation is highly probable considering the specificity of the Chechen culture. What should also be taken into account is that the first couple of months in a new country are inevitably connected with mistakes, disorders of functioning, a sense of helplessness and other aspects of the so-called cultural shock. Different types of "abnormal" behavior among refugees sustain negative beliefs on otherness and, in consequence, lead to treating it as such. In the face of it, different kinds of aggressive strategies on the part of young Chechens are in fact defense or deterrence strategies, whose aim is protection against a label of "weak, incapable, useless" (Szyniszewska 2007). A sense of helplessness is strengthened by an inability to refer to one's own culture in order to deal with current problems. Previous cultural patterns proved inadequate in a new place, not to mention the omnipresence of the dominant culture and the pressure to adjust on the part of the host community.

The situation of "intensified chaos", as well as a sense of stigmatization by the host community, results in using adaptation strategies which negatively influence one's individual development. One of them is assimilation strategy, which consists in resignation from one's individuality and culture. Wysocka calls this strategy "a silent adaptation", as it is supposed to make an individual not express their otherness to the environment. This strategy results from a lack of self-belief and self-confidence and may strengthen a tendency to self-destructive behaviors (addictions, suicide). A different strategy is separation, which is characterized by ethnocentric glorification of one's own group and culture. Such way of interaction is connected with the

exploitative factor (manipulation or direct destruction) aimed at oneself or the environment (violence directed outside and self-aggression as the results of migration; Wysocka 2007: 48).

What should also be taken into consideration are the factors connected with the community which an individual comes from. Here we can also talk about forces of attraction and repulsion, which does not mean a positive feedback between the two processes. Strong bonds with a country of origin do not necessarily have to lead to functioning on the fringes of the host community. However, many times the emigrants (especially those from a completely different cultural circle) are forced to at least partially change the behavior shaped by their culture. A frequent solution is preserving the rules and values of the country of origin in a private sphere; in turn, the rules of the host society are accepted as long as they allow the realization of dreams and plans. The appeal of a new environment is therefore assessed according to instrumental categories. One of the ways to reduce intercultural tensions in the area of values is avoiding defining a conflict according to value categories and searching for superior goals which all the parties identify with.

Interest conflict

Of all the types of conflict encountered in social life, interest conflict is the most frequent. It occurs in a situation of alleged or actual competition for the fulfillment of needs. A starting point to its solution is focusing on the interests of particular parties (what is the aim?), and not on their positions (what to demand?). In the course of the negotiation or mediation process, it turns out that leaving initial expectations behind allows to find a solution that is beneficial for all the parties. Very often it is a long-lasting process, as it requires constant searching for new options and means to fulfill the needs of both parties.

The consequences of interest conflict affect mostly adult refugees, who are discriminated against in employment as those who "take jobs from the Polish people" or "live off of Polish social benefits". The abovementioned alleged rivalry emanates on the young generation. Young Chechens who look more affluent that one could expect from a refugee are also objects of critical remarks and suspiciousness. Moreover, it is often the case that young Poles consider it unfair that the Chechens are treated individually and less strictly as far as test assessment or tolerance for absence at school are concerned. In one of the interviews, the respondent, asked for difficulties which her peers encounter in Poland, answered "Poles tease us, don't like Chechens. For example, they come up to us and say: you gotta give us money. Poland's ours." The "money" they mean is supposedly exorbitant charge for a possibility to stay in Poland and use the country's resources. The abovementioned behavior is obviously a result of not knowing the scale of the real – minimal – support of Poland's government. The symbolic "fight for resources" is illustrated by a so-called "Chechen bench" in one of the schools. During breaks young Chechens sit on a bench which, so to speak, constitutes their territory. In a situation of increased tensions, Polish peers do not allow Chechens to gather there, thus taking away from them a substitute of freedom and familiarity.

The most frequent desire expressed by our interviewees was the willingness to study. Those who had access to education in Poland were very happy of that; those who were still waiting for this opportunity felt sadness and regret. The first couple of months in a new country is a period of particularly intensive acculturation stress, but limiting the access to educational institutions and, in consequence, contacts with the host society only makes the period of adaptation longer and strengthens a sense of alienation and suspension in time and space. Carrying out everyday activities connected with school duty or personal interests is a good way to obtain a sense of security and stabilization. Education process, although it is full of stressful situations, allows to leave behind tensions and fears connected with past experiences. If education is presented to young people as an important resource and investment in their future, it will strengthen the sense of control over their lives and give life meaning. On the other hand, all kinds of stimulating activities (sport, games, art classes, etc.) allow to relax and support the process of dealing with difficult situations. Additionally, team work teaches the rules of common life and stimulates the development of school competences.

Because of limited financial means and human resources, the Polish system of refugee integration lacks systematic actions aimed at young foreigners. Informal education and recreational or therapeutic activities are very seldom. Sometimes they are taken up by school, rarely by the refugee center, and most often by local non-governmental organizations. Young people spend most of their time among other refugees, or rather in the reality of a refugee center. Although the center provides them with shelter, it does not fulfill a very important human need, i.e. a need for privacy, identity and familiarity. Living in a refugee center is like living in a limbo between exclusion from the community of origin and acceptance into a new community (the country of asylum). Also in normative respect the refugees live in a limbo – on the one hand, Polish social and legal norms do not yet apply to them (although they have to learn them and adjust); on the other, while staying in a refugee center they are subjects to the Chechen culture. That is why we considered depriving young people of a possibility to become appreciated by their school peer group particularly disadvantageous to their psychosocial state.

The school is a transcultural area in two ways. To begin with, it is the first, and often the only area connecting a refugee with his new cultural reality. Secondly, going to school gives refugees a sense of continuity – a sense of participating in a certain coherent and determined process of gaining knowledge about the world, which has begun in their homeland and is continued in exile. An ideal option for the refugee children would be a possibility to be taught by the teachers of the same nationality, especially at the beginning, when the language and culture barrier is the strongest. It would enable refugees to start learning in their native language and smoothly change into the language of the host country. On the one hand, it would lessen the risk of cultural misunderstandings – on the other, a person integrated into the host society would make it easier to understand the norms and culture of the host country. An adult of the same nationality as refugee students (and not necessarily a teacher) present at school, would lower the acculturation stress of young people taking first

steps in a foreign cultural reality as well as minimize the occurrence of processes alien-ating a particular national or cultural minority.

Many of the young Chechens mentioned also an especially strong need to arrange and participate in artistic and religious events connected with their cultural heritage. Such initiatives are undertaken by young people much more willingly than by their parents. However, the lack of organizational support in the institutions (the school and refugee center) made it impossible to accomplish the undertakings. An assump-tion can be made that a cultural transfer requires normalized and stable living condi-tions, in which people have a sense of safety and control over their current lives. The staff of refugee centers does not stimulate refugees to work on their inner integration, not to mention integration with the local community. Having and creating something 'own' is for minority groups an essential factor building their self-esteem. That is why we emphasize the importance of the organizers of cultural activities, who can be recruited from the group of refugees or from the outside (pedagogues, workers of local cultural centers, volunteers, etc.).

Data conflict

Most of the examples of data conflict were the result of misinformation or a lack of information. A tremendous lack of information about refugee rights and the proce-dures of granting refugee status as well as legal and social regulations for functioning in Poland were often a hotbed of adaptation problems, frustrations and conflicts. Chechens who come from Russian Federation use cultural scripts of their home coun-try in which an administrative worker, a representative of Russian government, is associated with a potential threat. He is also a tool of power – it was him, not law, that the resolution of a particular matter depended on. What is more, Chechen culture may be categorized as a culture characterized by the acceptance of great authority dis-tance, in which absolutized power and obedience to all forms of control are obvious. One of our respondents was sure that there is a relation between triggering conflict situations and receiving "a negative". That is why one must "be careful", not disrupt social order and cause problems. There was a hidden fear behind her claim that if "the authorities" learnt that a young Chechen had gone against the teacher's orders at school or got in conflict with a Polish peer, they would consider him not deserving a residence permit.

The cultural context which the respondents come from is connected with highly hierarchical, paternalistic social system, in which male roles ale clearly separated from female roles. It can be observed in the scope of information and the way it is given. It may result in hiding some information from a person of opposite sex; certain ques-tions may even be perceived as violating personal boundaries. Another issue from the area of gender role division is that women are not allowed to speak in the presence of men. Although among young people this rule is not strictly obeyed, a girl cannot cor-rectly answer a teacher's question if a boy has already been asked this question. Such a situation would be humiliating for the boy who, because of the girl's answer, would

be exposed to ridicule for his lack of knowledge. Unfortunately, in Chechnya not much attention is paid to the education of girls, who are taught mainly resourcefulness, patience and submissiveness. The abovementioned situations may cause frustration and are examples of data conflict, values conflict and structural conflict. The typologies are clearly not easily separable, especially when conflicts arise from multidimensional culture.

Structural conflict

Structural conflict occurs whenever we deal with destructive patterns of behavior or interaction, unequal authority and unequal control over the distribution of resources. In the case of structural conflict, there are certain systemic and procedural difficulties in searching for the solution of a conflict situation. Let us go back to the incident of aggression that took place at school and analyze its context.

We had a chance to talk about problems in the school both with the director of the refugee center and with the school's educator. The educator said rather vaguely that the school does not really manage the foreign students. She was not able to communicate with the Chechens to whom – according to her – nothing got through. The communication problems were thus caused not by a linguistic barrier but by the lack of students' willingness to listen to the educator's orders. The consequence of the situation was that the educator ceased trying to communicate with the teenagers. In particularly difficult situations the school turns to an *imam* and asks him to intervene. His intervention has usually short-term results. According to the educator, the problem is lack of access to sanctions against foreign students (e.g. the students cannot be suspended). According to the school's authorities, the best solution would be to move a part of the foreign students to a different school. For the authorities, the direct reason of the conflict is too large a number of Chechen students who feel strong and self-sufficient and thus have no motivation to integrate.

Dividing the group would be a structural solution – it would weaken the power of Chechens and strengthen their marginalization. They would probably not "cause problems" any more. The teaching staff did not try to come up with fair and mutually acceptable procedures of mediation in conflict situations (apart from the intervention of an *imam*). Instead of concentrating on the problem of the conflict (intercultural differences, growing hostility and incomprehension), they emphasized insurmountable dissimilarities between the Polish and Chechen positions. Their only solution to the problem was separation and weakening one of the positions. During our visit to the school, we had a chance to observe a sign of segregation: after classes Polish and Chechen students had two separate snowball fights. Maybe we should be happy that it was not a Polish-Chechen fight, although – as it turns out – such "fights" happen quite often. One of the respondents, who is also a student of the school, said:

> I really like my school, teacher, class tutor, that's why I'm friendly, I don't have conflicts. When there is a conflict everyone gets offended and then I talk with Poles, I come up to them 'cause I speak good Polish and I can make them make

up with Chechens to get them stop talking. Other girls from Chechnya under-stand me. We are in Poland and we must be careful. That's why we must be good.

This 14-year-old girl took up the role of cultural mediator, filling in for the school's educator, teachers and parents. It seems that she performs this function eagerly and voluntarily, fulfilling at the same time the expectations of the school community. It is possible that originally she was sent to perform this role because of her language skills. What is more, it is difficult to speak of freedom of choice when we consider the second part of the girl's statement. Such expressions as "we must be careful", "we must be good" show that the respondent is convinced that it is the Chechen side that should adjust to the expectations of the dominant society and initiate an agreement in a conflict situation. Most probably, the respondent perceives her role as an obligation which – taking into consideration the statements of the other students – does not result only from her personal conviction of the rightness of mediation activities but is to a certain extent expected or imposed from the outside by the host society. To quote one of the respondents: "Polish people say: Poland's ours". Young Chechens do not have their space at school. There is no dialogue that could help to create the rules of common life. At the very beginning foreigners notice the dividing line – "us" vs. "them" – which is perfectly symbolized by the "Chechen bench" that we mentioned earlier.

Another example of structural conflict in the realm of social roles and connected with values conflict was quoted by a Chechen girl who had been in Poland for 3.5 years. The respondent had a positive experience at the beginning of her stay: Polish girls came up to her at school and suggested showing her around the building and the surroundings. They have been friends since then. Everyday life of the respondent is filled with numerous duties: studying (3rd grade in junior high school), help with household chores, taking care of her siblings, additional lessons of Arabic language, prayer. Asked about school, she repeatedly emphasized that learning is very important for her. She would like to study information technology and then work "to help her family". Her mother does not accept the girl's plans and encourages her to get married.

According to the respondent, other Chechen girls have similar problems and are married off against their will. Boys, in turn, "do not want to learn but to get married although they don't have anything". The respondent does have a boyfriend who is currently staying and working in France and with whom she talks on the phone from time to time. They have known each other for a year. The respondent openly admits that she does not like her boyfriend and that she is not ready to get married. Her mother, on the other hand, thinks that the girl is "too old". Marriage is not beneficial for the respondent not only because of the lack of a proper candidate ("there are no nice boys any more 'cause Chechnya is at war and all the best boys have died") but also because the present candidate does not agree for the respondent to take up a job after they get married. The girl justifies it by saying: "we cannot work when we have a husband".

The above story shows a conflict situation resulting from a big divergence between the girl's native culture and the culture of her host country. It must be

stressed that not all Chechen families share the opinion that a woman/wife should not study and work. Nevertheless, a strong attachment to the rules, often sharpened by migration, and preserving them is a way to cultivate tradition, values and lifestyle of the homeland. The first generation of migrants considers faithfulness to the rules the only way to survive in a foreign country; the second generation, on the other hand, notices the inadequacy of such behavior in the face of the demands of today's world. In consequence, they experience two fears: a fear of being negatively assessed by a strange group if they do not adjust to the group's expectations and requirements, and a fear of being negatively assessed by their own group if they are identified as a member of a strange group (Grzymała-Moszczyńska 2000). Bending to the will of their families gives young migrants recognition and a sense of security. The cost of it is often a lack of individual development, which requires leaving a closed native community and taking advantage of what a host society has to offer. In the case of Muslim women, getting closer to the Western lifestyle is often treated as standing in opposition to the family and may lead to exclusion (Szyniszewska 2007).

We cannot call Chechen culture a homogeneous system because social stratification on the one hand, and the "natural" process of change and the pathological influence of war on the other, caused that different groups in the same society perceive their rules and tradition differently. However, a clear division of gender roles as well as unequal status of men and women seems to be a social fact that appears with variable intensity. The respondent is also in a situation of conflict between her personal aims and wishes, and the family's expectations. From what the respondent says, it does not appear that she can be excluded from the community for her disobedience. Nevertheless, the respondent seemed extremely worried by her situation, especially as the decision of her getting married or not was to be made soon (because of the respondent's age and the fact that she was finishing the junior high). Marriage meant for the respondent not only giving up school but also having to move to France and go through the adaptation process again. Additionally, her lack of French language knowledge would be another factor making her dependent on her husband. Despite the abovementioned fears and difficulties, the respondent asked about her future, answered with confidence: "I will be in Chechnya and I will work. I will have a family and children for sure. In 10 years I will be there...".

Summary

Both the case described above and the overall analysis of the research confirmed how important a role the family plays in shaping the identity of the young generation. It is done verbally (values, beliefs, history, traditions of their group of origin) and through imitation, when children learn to perform social roles and determine their future. That is why the attitude of parents towards the host society, as well as the strategies they use, are so important in the acculturation process. If parents use the open strategy (integration, assimilation) and incorporate the elements of the host country's culture into the educational process, it is easier for their child to shape an

identity synchronized with this culture. A lack of conflict positively influences the relations with other socializing agendas, such as school or peer group, and helps to achieve professional success in the host society. When there is no conformity between the culture of a child's family and the culture of the people around them, the child is a subject to inconsistent socializing impacts, which entails a sense of constant conflict and a necessity to choose between the circle of family's values and adjusting to the environment. In addition, both choices are connected with big social costs. If a family lives in an ethnic ghetto (which is the case with refugees living in refugee centers), it is – to a certain extent – able to protect the child from tensions resulting from experiencing cultural divergence. However, discovering and realizing cultural differences inevitably comes during adolescence – through media and peers. It creates opportunities to compare and verify the values considered obvious and stable before. If the divergence between the culture of a child's family and the dominant culture is small, an adolescent may make a synthesis and develop a bicultural identity. It is very difficult, however, if there are considerable differences between the cultures and the family's attitude is closed to modifications. In such a case, a young person has to face a necessity to stay loyal to their family at the cost of independence or a chance to follow their own path (Szyniszewska 2007).

The young people interviewed within the research project quite often described situations which they considered stressful and threatening. They concerned mostly peer relationships with young Poles. The relationships were often superficial and changed into interpersonal conflicts. Young Chechens were trying hard to prevent them but the most frequent preventive strategy was getting used to the prejudices of the people around them and/or isolation. A majority of the respondents were aware of their cultural identity and otherness but they did not accept situations in which this otherness may trigger conflict. Young Chechens were inclined to emphasize similarities in the psychological and social functioning. Cultural differences were treated as marginal, although what could often be found in their statements was a certain expectation that their cultural identity and a right to cultivate it would be respected. The minimization of cultural differences did not mean giving up individuality but only a resignation from showing it off excessively while staying loyal to one's beliefs.

The abovementioned conclusions are based on the declarations of our interviewers. They also described situations which indicate a tendency towards aggressive behavior among the young Chechens. Physical or verbal aggression was often the effect of interpreting the behavior of Poles as affecting their honor or the honor of other Chechens. Nevertheless, what dominated in the research group was an attitude of understanding towards the misunderstandings resulting from cultural differences and language barriers. What is more, the respondents were often coming to a conclusion that they themselves were responsible for both the occurrence of conflicts and for easing them. They were convinced that they were disturbing social order just by staying in Poland. This conviction is probably a result of their experiences as, despite being passive and submitting to the expectations of the environment, they met with hostility and rejection.

The young refugees who are in the care of their families do not directly participate in the process of obtaining a refugee status and are thus partially exempt from playing

the role of "a real refugee". However, we were frequently told about situations in which their host community perceived and treated young Chechens as a group of *the Others* or *refugees*, and not as a community of individuals. The symbolical stigmatization of the minority group is constructed on the basis of a "difference" often understood materially. A sense of being stigmatized by the dominant group automatically arouses fear and distance and, in consequence, makes it difficult to incorporate the elements of the new culture to one's own identity.

Isolation negatively influences not only social but also individual functioning. The withdrawal strategy – the most frequently chosen by our respondents – entails a risk of taking over negative identity, which is characterized by feeling inadequate and abiding by tendencies that stand in opposition to the socio-cultural environment. While interviewing, we did not meet with anything that could indicate taking over a negative identity. It was despite numerous statements showing that intercultural contact on interpersonal level is very prone to conflict. While mentioning conflict situations, the respondents were always willing to eliminate or ease them. We did not meet anyone expecting the environment to adjust to their needs. Quite on the contrary, the respondents were often eager to accept the position imposed upon them by the host society; they would withdraw or sever the relations only when their identity was threatened.

The respondents' identity structures are only developing. That is why there is still a chance to incorporate the elements of the new culture while working on the developmental crisis of identity. Merging individual elements of the native culture and the new culture is a very difficult process and it requires a deep knowledge of both cultures as well as emotional distance. Meanwhile, the results of the research indicate a strong cognitive and emotional relation with native groups and culture. Moreover, such factors as relatively few opportunities to have contact with Polish culture, low level of the received psychological support, territorial and linguistic isolation and a lack of motivation (e.g. financial) to stay in Poland, make it difficult to create a bicultural identity.

Some of the respondents' images of the world showed a significant difference between their pre-emigration and post-emigration reality. There were no positive or negative relations between those two, which allows to conclude that either the respondents were indifferent to the new reality or the forces of attraction and repulsion on the part of the host society were even. Indifference occurs when, on a cognitive level, young people perceive their new country as something temporary (a stop on their way) or a place in which they could wait for the end of the armed conflict in their homeland. The respondents either wanted to stay in Poland or were planning to come back to Chechnya as soon as possible (although in most of the cases they did not believe in such a possibility). However, even a sense of temporariness or aiming at maximal isolation from the host society does not exempt the refugees from the necessity of receiving signals from the new reality and taking a stance on them. Thereby, their indifference most probably results from a very limited intercultural contact, coming down mostly to the time spent at school.

The research indicated that, despite the awareness of being different and feeling pride of their cultural identity, the young refugees felt acutely stigmatized by the

representatives of the Polish society. The respondents experienced that a label of "the other/a refugee" does not help to create positive partner relations with the new environment and that it evokes different – often contradictory – reactions: mercy, fear, irritation, help, interest, incomprehension. In between the lines we read that the refugees would like Poles to first perceive them as similar and only later take into consideration their nationality or legal status. On the one hand, such a perspective results from almost no identification with a refugee status imposed upon them be the political situation in their country; on the other, it is caused by an emphasized in the Chechen culture rule of equality and respect towards everyone – both the members of one's community and the representatives of other nations and religions.

Therefore, it is understandable that there are tendencies to isolate inside one's national community as, trying to merge with their host society, the young people experience inequality. The inequality is caused by a lack of communicative resources, not much knowledge of the new culture and its social norms, little social capital, difficult financial situation, etc. A willingness to build partner relations must come from both parties of a cultural contact. What is essential here is the awareness and sociocultural sensitivity of the representatives of the host country, who should pay close attention to the situation of refugees in Poland and all over the world. In such a context, it is worth taking into consideration the educational or even moralizing role of anthropologists who are for the right to cultural identity and equality. The inevitable engagement of anthropology in social practice and politics arouses many ethical problems (Nowicka 2009: 29). However, according to Ewa Nowicka, anthropology originated from engagement in the defense of certain values, among which tolerance to diversity played the most important role (Nowicka 2009). Wojciech Fenrich also claims that the scope of responsibility of an anthropologist is widening, as he is no longer an anonymous ethnographer whose only task is to describe accurately the examined patch of social reality. In turn, he takes a role of a mediator who is supposed to enable the agreement between the new and the familiar. His voice in defense of the weaker, physically or culturally threatened communities is frequently better heard than the voice coming from those communities (2009: 132). As Ewa Nowicka writes,

> changes in thinking about the otherness, despite falling into the extremes of relativism, led to a breakthrough: from treating otherness in the categories of strangeness – that is incomprehension, ridicule, disgust, aversion and threat – to perceiving it as otherness that is understandable, justified, logical and safe. In this way, a revolution took place in the natural human approach towards otherness, which brought an attitude of a scientist – descriptive and open to the reception of meanings given by other cultures. (2009: 29).

Unfortunately, the acceptance and description of cultural differences does not indicate how we should behave in the face of those differences. Meanwhile, social practice requires having an attitude and indicating the borders of tolerance and moderation of judgments. Social practice requires a compromise in which various opposing, or only superficially opposing, arguments would be engaged. Wojciech Fenrich

puts it in simple words: „Our moral convictions and customs are only one of many others, close to us there are numerous other moralities and practices which we do not share. Their peaceful coexistence constitutes good that is worth putting above the top-down imposed uniformity" (2009: 139).

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Karolina Łukasiewicz

Strategies of reconstructing Islam in exile.
A case of Chechens in Poland[1]

Refugees and asylum seekers during migration process and settling in a host society bring their culture with them (Malkki 1995). One of the essential elements of culture is religion. It performs several functions in the refugees' lives. On a social level it defines collective identity and strengthens an emerging community. On an individual level it provides a meaning to the loss experienced by refugees and allows them to understand current events (Scudder 1973; Oliver-Smith 1992). In exile religion is reconstructed; the social and individual level is redefined and renegotiated with ethnic-based communities. Jeremy Hein (2006) called it an "ethnic origin" hypothesis. First generation of exiles reproduces their culture, including religion, predominantly based on "ethnic patterns", whereas "1.5" or second generations, i.e. people either born in exile or those who went through education system in exile, renegotiate their religiousness with the host society. The latter is comprised of both dominant majority and ethnic minorities (Morawska 2004, Brubaker 2004). Asylum seekers and refugees apply different strategies in the process of reconstructing their religion. The strategies are shaped firstly by the situation of religious life in the sending country; secondly, by biographical experiences of asylums; thirdly, by the context of receiving country; and fourthly, by transnational communities in which asylums are settled (e.g. Vertovec 2009; Portes 2001; Glick-Schiller 2008).

The aim of the article is to analyze the strategies applied in Chechnya and in exile to reconstruct religious life. I will describe the process of reconstructing religious life and identify different reconstruction strategies and factors which determine them. In the analyses religion will be discussed from the social and anthropological perspective (Durkheim 1990). My analyses are based on experiences of Chechen exiles in Poland. I will begin with explaining the focus of my research on Chechen community in Poland. Next, I will present the methodology on which my study is based. I will shortly describe the Chechen society and Islam in Chechnya in order to identify some strategies which are reproduced in Poland. Finally, I will describe two main strategies of reconstructing Islam in exile, i.e. reproducing patterns from Chechnya or renegotiating new spirituality with host societies members and transnational communities. Then I will analyze expressions of Chechen religiousness in exile, i.e. Muslim

socialization, religious celebrations (e.g. Ramadan), rites of passage and Islam in virtual space. In the end, I will analyze factors influencing the process of reconstructing Islam in exile.

Research focus

Reconstructing Islam within communities of refugees in Poland is worth studying for several reasons. To begin with, Poland, similarly to other Eastern-European countries, is rather homogenous in ethnic and religious dimensions. As a result, there are few studies of Muslim-in-exile communities. This paper may contribute to filling in the blank. Second, Poland after entering the EU and the Schengen Area became the Eastern border of the Union. All migrants who intend to enter the Western EU countries need to cross Poland. Some of them, e.g. asylum seekers, are forced to stay in the country due to Dublin II regulation. For this reason Poland may be distinguished from other Eastern-European countries. It all leads to a slow transformation of Poland from a country of emigration into a country of immigration. The number of immigrants, including Muslims, increases. Third, the enlarging Muslim communities and lack of multicultural education within host society may in some parts of the country lead to ethnic and religion-based conflicts.

A study of reconstruction of Islam among Chechen communities in exile is important, since Islam practiced in Chechnya has gone through a number of transformations during Soviet times, wars and Kadyrov regime. Traditionally it was influenced by *adat*s, i.e. clan laws, while during first and second Chechen war Wahhabi Islamists entered Chechnya. Nowadays the religion is redefined by the president of the Chechen Republic and the definition is imposed on the nation. In exile it evolves under the influence of some local and transnational Muslim communities. These transformations are deep and noteworthy. Second, nowadays the refugees in exile gain transnational tools, e.g. Internet, to reproduce their culture, including religion. The process is unique in the history of migration (Castles and Miller 2009). Third, the Chechens are a good subject for observation due to their strong traditions of preserving their culture and religion in a hostile environment. The ways in which the traditionally preserved religion is redefined in a society different from the original one are a complex and interesting issue. Fourth, Chechen refugees are rather unknown to Polish society. Sometimes they are associated with Islam, but not many people are aware of the influence of *adat*s on practicing Islam (Firlit-Fesnak and Łotocki 2008). Finally, in the turbulent times when Muslims and Chechens are sometimes accused of terrorism it is crucial to gain some knowledge and understanding of the life of people in exile.

Theoretical influences

In my analysis, I apply the concept of "strategy" to express the structural pressures and chances experienced by social actors on one hand, and their agency on the

other (Bourdieu and Wacquant 2001: 101–131, Swartz 1997: 98– 110). Agency indicates the best possible choices people make within structural conditions. Social actors are able to shape their lives and maneuver among different structural conditions. According to Pierre Bourdieu's definition, strategies are not necessarily rationally planned, but derive from socialized dispositions or habitus related to cultural, social and economic capital (Bourdieu and Wacquant 2001). Strategies reflect attributes socialized in a particular culture. I also apply the concept of "reconstruction" to capture changes that take place in practicing Islam by Chechens. These changes derive from transformations of Islam during Soviet times, wars, Kadyrov regime and finally in exile.

Finally, I explain strategies applied by Chechens in Poland in terms of transnationalism. Portes, Escobar, Radford defined the novel element at present as:

> a frequent and durable participation of immigrants in the economic, political, and cultural life of their countries, which requires regular and frequent contact across national borders. Such contacts are made possible by innovations in transportation and communications technology unavailable to earlier generations of migrants. (2007: 13)

Vertovec et al. (2004) and Portes, Escobar and Radford (2007) identify three main dimensions of transnationalism, i.e. sociocultural, political and economic practices related to at least two countries.

Methodology

Analyses presented in this article are a part of a broader research project on Chechen adaptive strategies in exile. It was based on: 1) 47 qualitative in-depth interviews with Chechen exiles in Poland, 2) participant observations 3) desk research and 4) analysis of Chechen internet forums. The interviews were conducted with refugees who live in four Polish cities: Warszawa, Lublin, Białystok and Łomża.[2] In the interviews I focused on people who spend couple of years in Poland, since the process of settlement is long-lasting. All my informants declared to be Muslim. Basic characteristics of my informants are presented in the table 3 below.

Fourteen of my informants had higher education. The rest had either graduated from high school or from primary school. Three informants had begun to study in Chechnya, but had to stop because of the war. Fifteen interviews were taken in Polish and all the other in Russian. Most of the interviews, thanks to the great hospitality of my informants, took place at their homes. Part of my research was conducted with an assistance of a Chechen interpreter who explained to me the complexity of Chechen culture and introduced me to some of the informants. My interviews were conducted between June 2008 and 2010. Interviews were followed by participant observations in

[2] The cities and towns with the largest Chechen population in Poland.

a refugee assistance center run by an NGO, my informants' homes and during celebrations important for Chechen communities, e.g. a wedding. I analyzed Chechen Internet forums and websites, e.g. Amina.com, Chechenyafree.ru and KavkazCenter.com. Data collection and analysis were based on the grounded theory approach (Bryant and Charmaz 2007, Charmaz 2009). I introduced computer assisted content analysis based on empirical data coding system. All conclusions presented in the article derive from the triangulated data.

Table 3: Basic characteristics of Chechen informants

	Women	Men	Total
Age			
18–25	1	1	2
26–35	7	8	15
36–45	7	5	12
46–55	7	4	11
56–65	4	3	7
Lenght of stay in Poland			
less than 6 months	2	0	2
1–3 years	7	6	13
4–6 years	13	13	26
7–9 years	1	2	3
over 10 years	1	2	3
Family situation			
unmarried	3	3	6
married without children	3	2	5
married with children	17	14	31
single parents	5	0	5
Number of children			
0	3	4	7
1	2	2	4
2	9	7	16
3	5	3	8
4	4	2	6
5	2	2	4
6	1	1	2
Legal status in Poland			
asylum seekers in the process of acquiring refugee status	2	4	6
refugee status	9	5	14
Tolerated Stay Permit, subsidiary protection	14	10	24
permanent residence	1	2	3

Chechen society

Chechens are described as a patriarchal (e.g. Gammer 2006, Derluguian 2005, Luzbetac 1951), rural (Tishkov 2004) and tribal society (Arutyunov 2002) divided culturally into two geographical areas of conservative highlands and more liberal flatlands (e.g. Arutyunov 2002; Sokirianskaia 2005).The characteristics of Chechen society usually include extended, patrilineal family structures (Gammer 2006), and a "conservative, rural lifestyle" based on *adat* (clan) laws. Family and collective values are crucial elements of 'Chechenness'. The family extends to *taip*[3] (from Arab. *t'aifa*, i.e. group, community) structures governed by the rule of respect to elders. Close social relations and strong solidarity are expressed in traditional Chechen hospitality, present in every Chechen home. In exile in Poland my Chechen informants usually emphasized that since Chechen population in Poland is rather small, the *taip* affiliation is not that important. Nevertheless, similarly to Sokirianskaia (2005) I could observe a presence of *taip*s in Chechen everyday life. When Chechens in exile meet each other (whether in reality or on the Internet forums), they begin their acquaintance by asking about their *taip* affiliation. Other elements of 'Chechenness' include sense of honor, freedom, traditions, such as dances, music, cuisine and 'Chechen etiquette' (Adger-Adayev 2004:213). The Chechen identity is reproduced through Chechen language. The latter is sometimes combined with Russian, the official language taught at schools in Chechnya. Chechen language and customs were traditionally learned at home. For hundreds of years, Chechens as a nation did not have their own state and were, against their will, incorporated first into Russian Empire, then into USSR and finally into Russian Federation. As a result, the process of Chechen socialization was traditionally assigned to the private sphere, while Russian culture and socialization took place in the public sphere. This situation influences Chechen adaptation strategies in exile. Crucial element of "Chechenness" is Sunni, Sufi Islam, under strong influence of *adat* laws. Chechens often discuss distinctions between *adat*s and *shari'a*, sometimes favoring the first one over the second (Wilhelmsen 2005: 36; Jaimoukha 2005: 87).

Islam in Chechnya

It cannot be clearly stated when Islam spread in Chechnya. Some scholars say it was in the 14th century, others point to the 17th century (Jaimoukha 2005: 123–124; Zelkina 2000). Based on some archaeological evidence, Jaimoukha suggests that in some regions of Chechnya Islam and Christianity could have co-existed "between the

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[3] The word *taip* is spelled in number of ways. I apply spelling used for example by Derluguian (2005) since it reflects the original Arabic spelling. *Taip* members declare to have a common ancestor.

eighth and eleventh centuries, with an admixture of ancient rites and rituals" (2005: 123). The process of Islamization of Chechen tribes was long-lasting and proceeded differently in the lowlands and highlands (Zelkina 2000).

> Only by the second half of the eighteen century had Islam become the official religion in virtually all the Chechen *tuqums*,[4] although in 1770, during the military campaign of General Medem, the Russians noted the practice of 'a mixture of Christian and pagan rituals in the Upper Sunia areas'. (Zelkina 2000: 34)

Chechens accepted Sunni, Sufi Islam. Sufism corresponded to mystic tribal Chechen traditions:

> Mystic Sufism in its regional form appears to combine asceticism, the search for personal union with God, submission of the novice or *murid* (*murd* in Chechen) to the sect's leader, and the glorification of *ghazavat* (*ghaazot* in Chechen; from Arabic ghazawat, pl. of ghazwah = raid, incursion), or holy war, as a defense against foreign occupation. (Jaimoukha 2005: 124)

Islam in Chechnya was divided into two *t'eriqat*s (from Arab. *tariqa*), Naqshbandi in the eastern regions of the country and Qadiri in the west. Naqshbandiyya merged with traditional Chechen nationalism and soon shaped the social structures of the Chechen society (Gammer 2006: 18–19). According Jaimoukha (2005: 124), in the 19th century almost all Chechen society belonged either to the Naqshabandi or Qadiri *tariqat*s. In the 19th century Naqshbandiyya led an anti-Russian resistance with Imam Shamil as the leader. Sufi practices in Chechnya were traditionally expressed in a musical dance, *zikr*. It was practiced as a manifestation of Chechen national identity (Ro'i 2000: 409).

> *Zikr* is composed of a melange of quotes from the Qu'ran, passages of mystic poems and invocations of the (99) names of God. Two forms of *zikr* are extant. The Naqshaband practise a silent, individual *zikr*, while the Qadiris, individually or in groups, practise the loud *zikr*, with dances and songs meant to induce ecstatic fervor in the participants (Jaimoukha 2005: 125).

Zikr was practiced in front of Shatoi fortress on April 18, 1864. On that day 4,000 Chechens gathered to protest against the imprisonment of Kunta Haji, a religious leader and mystic who founded Qadiri *tariqat*. Kunta Haji promoted non-violent Chechen resistance to Russian domination in Caucasus. (Jaimoukha 2005: 52). The activities of *tariqat*s were not limited to religious practices (Gammer, 2004: 196). Traditionally, during Russian domination in the 19th and 20th century, they ran a secret

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[4] Chechen social structures consist of *taip*s. Their representatives are delegated to councils of nine *tuqum*s, which make up Council of the Country, i.e. Mehk Khel (Adger-Adayev, 2004: 175).

education system including basics of Islam and Arab language, distribution of books and religious pamphlets. Sufi leaders secured obedience to *shari'a* and *adat* laws among Chechens. They also opposed "state sponsored atheism" (Gammer 2006: 196). Modernization introduced in Chechnya undermined the clan structures. The resulting void was filled by *tariqat*s, "agents of modern nationalism". As a result, they became objects of ever stronger persecutions. Finally, before deportation of the whole Chechen nation to Central Asia in 1944, the leaders of Islam communities were arrested and killed. Nevertheless, Sunni social structures survived the exile:

> Adherence of the Sufi orders actually increased among Chechen and Ingush during their period in exile, perhaps as a way of demonstrating their protest against the deportation or ensuring their group solidarity. The *tariqats* became a symbol of national affiliation and an effective instrument of community survival (Ro'i 2000: 407)

According to Brigit Brauer, who studied Chechen exiles in Kazachstan (2002):

> The single most important factor that contributed to the Chechens' spiritual survival of these extreme hardships, which also enabled them to maintain their own culture and collective identity, was their strong belief in Islam. "Faith is given by Allah", says Mukhammad-Huseinibn Usman Alsabekov, who is a member of the presidium of the Spiritual Administration of the Muslims in Kazakhstan and the deputy of Kazakhstan's main mufti. "The Communists could take away books, madrassahs, and mosques, but they couldn't take away the faith from the Chechens". Although the Chechens were not allowed to gather and pray in public, they met secretly to do so at home where they also celebrated their religious holidays. Fortunately for the Chechens, the Qur'an was never prohibited by the Soviets, and some people had managed to take their holy book with them from Chechnya.

The religion in Chechnya, as well as in other USSR republics, was subjected to the policy of Sovietization. Any expression of religiousness was defined as an attack on the social order. After the 1950s, when Chechens were allowed to come back from the exile in Central Asia, new anti-religious campaigns were introduced repeatedly. As a result, Chechens led their lives in two conflicting spheres. One was the public sphere controlled by the Soviet legal system, and the other was the private sphere defined by *adat*s and *shari'a* laws. In spite of the Soviet policy Chechens preserved their traditions, national identity and practiced Islam. In 1970, 90% marriages within Chechen community were religious, 99% of funerals were organized in accordance with Muslim traditions (Gammer 2006: 191–192). Almost all boys were circumcised (98%) and consecutive generations were taught Islam at home. One of my informants born in exile in Kazakhstan recollects lessons in public school in Chechnya:

> In my school class there were 30 kids: Chechens, Armenians, Ukrainians and

Belarusians. Once in a time teachers from Moscow visited us in order to spread some propaganda. They taught us that God does not exist. All kids listened very carefully. After the lesson teacher asked: "So kids... do you believe in God?" And we always answered: "Yes. This is how we were taught at home". [Lora, 48 years old, 5 years in Poland][5]

Islam underwent strong socialization in a private sphere during Soviet times. The changes continued throughout Perestroika. At that time the Chechens intensified their social and economic relations with the Middle East countries and predominantly with Saudi Arabia (Ciesielski 2003: 298). The better-off parents were sending their children to receive religious education in the Arab countries. Educated youth introduced new, orthodox version of Islam in Caucasus. Finally, some Chechens began practicing Wahhabism during wars with Russia and the short period of independence. At that time Islam marked the cultural border between Chechens and Russians. During wartime the only military and social support for Chechens came from the Middle East. Stanisław Ciesielski defines the meaning of Islam in the wartime as follows:

Emphasizing some aspects of religion and a world-view served to draw a line based on military, political, religious and cultural divisions. Fighting and death gained new meaning due to Islam. They became transcendent and opened the doors to paradise. The Chechens were inspired by *Mujahideens* and their wars with Russia. [...] Islam was predominantly a platform of internal consolidation. Islam reverting to pure forms of religious practices and calling for establishment of the Islamic state suited the role better than Sufi Islam. (2003: 298)

Salafism introduced by Saudi Arabs supporting Chechnya resulted in strong criticism toward traditional Sufi practices. Consolidation of social and economic cooperation between Chechnya and Arab Countries produced religious training camps for Chechen youth, where they readied themselves to die in war, hoping for eternal salvation. Between the first and the second Chechen war, during the short period of independence Aslan Maskhadov legalized *shari'a* courts and introduced Islamic law in the public sphere.

During second Chechen war Chechens received no support from the Western countries or international organizations. Only Arab countries sent reinforcements (Ciesielski 2003) – Arab Wahhabis coming in for *jihad*. During the hardest moments of wartime, Islam provided meaning to thousands of Chechen deaths. At that time two visions of religious practices clashed – orthodox Wahhabi Islam and traditional Sufi practices. Before going to war, Chechen men practiced *zikr* in the squares of Grozny as a symbol of national identity. Wahhabi Islam was more a symbol of transnational Muslim unity. On April 16, 2009 Russian Federation officially ended the count-

[5] Names in quotations as well as some biographical facts enabling recognition of my informants are changed due to privacy and safety reasons.

er-terrorism operation in Chechnya, but the new social order was already introduced in 2004, after the assassination of Ahmed Kadyrov, when his son Ramzan seized the power in the republic. According to the current president, Islam brings peace in Chechen republic. Ramzan Kadyrov attempts to revitalize a redefined version of Sunni traditions in order to oppose it to Wahhabism. He vows to "exterminate terrorism and fundamentalism, and Chechen culture will then be reborn" (Ash 2010). One of the symbols of the new social order is the biggest (according to Kadyrov) mosque in Europe which was built in Grozny. Ironically, Kadyrov, who has been installed by Russian authorities, introduces *shari'a* laws in Chechen republic which sometimes are more important than the federal regulations, e.g. polygamy or blood feud.

Polygamy became a publicly debated issue in Chechnya. It is defined as an expression of patriotism. During the wars, a great number of Chechens died and now the nation needs to be repopulated. Giving birth became a public and not a private issue. Polygamy is then perceived as a tool to rebuild the Chechen nation (Sierstad 2008, Kaliszewska and Falkowski 2010, Ash 2010). Polygamy has never been particularly popular in Chechnya (Derluguian 2005). The Chechen definition of masculinity is based on being the sole breadwinner to the family. Polygamist marriages, allowed to men, imply that they have to take care of all their wives and children. In Chechnya the unemployment rate is high and a great number of men is unable to take care of one wife, therefore the strategy cannot be commonly accepted (Murtazalieva 2005).

Similarly to polygamy, blood feuds and honor killings are accepted by the Kadyrov regime. Chechen men experienced much violence during brutal wars. Many of them are still filled with aggression which nowadays is sometimes directed towards women. After the war it is easy to express aggression towards women, since social control aimed at the protection of women is now undermined. The reason for that is the fragmentation of extended families. In 2009 in Grozny bodies of seven women were found. The women were killed by a shot in the head. Kadyrov explained in media that they must have disgraced the honor of their families and deserved death: „If a woman runs around and if a man runs around with her, both of them are killed" (*Stop honour killings!* 2009). In exile, the aggression towards women is still strong when Chechen man cannot fulfill their breadwinner function and the patriarchal order of a family is endangered. Ramzan Kadyrov accepts honor killings and aggression toward women (Seierstadt 2009, Kaliszewska and Falkowski 2010, Littell 2011). Moreover, he defines it in terms of protecting honor of families. In his opinion, Chechens in diaspora are deprived of honor or tools to preserve it.

> A Chechen [in diaspora] knows he's not a man, when his daughter has a police number saved in her mobile. Every Chechen fears that his daughter would call the number. Show me one man who's not afraid of it! Even if today he thinks he's a man, tomorrow he may not be a man anymore, because he will not be able to be responsible for his child. He will not be able to say *dark* [Kadyrov imitates a sound of a shot] and shoot it in the middle of her forehead. And he pretends to be a serious guy? He covers himself with shame! Today he is a man and tomorrow he's not a man anymore! (Littell 2011: 133–134).

A strong sense of honor entitles Chechen men to practice "honor killings" and exert violence towards women. My Chechen informants were unwilling to discuss the issue since it touches upon a Chechen taboo. Nevertheless, the reason why, according to Kadyrov, Chechen men in diaspora are deprived of honor is also the reason why some Chechens might not be willing to take the risk of committing an honor killing. Since it is against the EU law, they could easily be deported. Furthermore, honor killings are expressions of social control over women. Since in exile Chechen extended families are fragmented, social control is weaker.

Another tool to promote new, redefined vision of Sunni Islam is the activity of the Center for Spiritual and Moral Education and Development. The institution resembles *tariqat*s in terms of its activity, but contrary to them it is led by the government and acts in the public sphere (Szeremiet 2010, Ash 2010). Young men employed in the Centre reprimand women on the streets of Grozny for improper clothes or the lack of a head scarf. They also instruct people on *shari'a* (Ash 2010, Szeremiet 2010, Kaliszewska and Falkowski 2010). Another institution active in Grozny is the Center for Women Pride (Ash 2010). It conducted a survey on women abductions. The results showed that in 2009 40% of women declared to be kidnapped before wedding. Abductions are traditionally inscribed in the Chechen culture. Nowadays they are also an expression of aggression to women and do not necessarily end up with a wedding. According to Kadyrov, honor killings are inscribed in Islam, however abductions are more related to *adat*s. Some of my Chechen informants in Poland declared that their weddings in Chechnya were preceded by abductions. According to the Chechen tradition, if families of future spouses do not reach agreement about conditions of the wedding, a bride is send back to her family. In Poland this tradition sometimes leads to conflicts, ending with police interventions.

Transformation of Islam in Chechnya, from private sphere Sunni tradition influenced by *adat* laws, through orthodox Wahhabism to Sunni traditions in a public sphere as redefined by Kadyrov are then reconstructed in exile. Some people reproduce patterns of Islam they practiced in their homeland, others reconstruct their religious life under the influence of the local context in exile and transnational communities.

Islam in exile

Chechens in exile apply two main strategies of reconstructing their religion. One is reproducing patterns of Islam they practiced in Chechnya, i.e. either orthodox (Wahhabi Islam) or traditional Sunni Islam. The other is practicing Islam redefined under the influence of the new host environment, i.e. either more orthodox than at home, or more traditional. Accepting orthodox Islamic practices, whether at home or in exile, is described as "(re)Islamization" (Gammer 2008). (Re)islamization in exile takes place under the influence of local or transnational Muslim communities. It can be exemplified by the Chechens who settled in the capital of Poland – Warsaw. They established close relations with Muslim immigrants from the Middle East. Chechens

pray in their mosque and some Chechen girls start wearing *hijab*s. This way of clothing is not practiced even in Chechnya under the Kadyrov regime. Moreover, some Chechens in exile become more conservative than at home. No matter if it is a (re)islamization model, or the other influenced by *adat*s.

Oscar Handlin (1991, 2002) in his classic works on immigrants in the US observed that religious conservatism is a strategy of dealing with alienation and uprooting. Immigrants tried to root themselves in religious, ethnic institutions (Scheffer 2010). On the other hand, the conservatism may derive from social control of an ethnic community. Alejandreo Portes (1998) discussed functions of social capital. He pointed both at the support that is given by the community and the strong social control it exercises. Chechen refugees in exile experience many problems, e.g. in entering the labor market or finding an accommodation. Local Chechen communities serve the material, informational or social support. They increase refugees' social capital, but also the social control over them. The control includes practicing Islam. It depends on the community if they practice orthodox or adat influenced Islam. It is worth mentioning classic work of Thomas and Znaniecki on Polish peasants in the US (1920). They observed that in the US Polish traditional, "folk" Catholicism transformed into spiritual religiousness. The strategy reminds spiritual (re)islamization which leads to abandonment of *adat* influences.

Muslim socialization in exile

Reproduction of any form of Islam in exile is possible through socialization of children. Historically in Chechnya, the process took place in the private sphere of families, but nowadays it became a public issue. Chechen families in exile reproduce patterns of socialization that they have experienced in their home country. They teach their children the basics of Islam. The religion is defined as an element of 'Chechenness'.

My children learn Chechen language and traditions two hours a day. They learn at home, from their relatives. They cannot gain this kind of education at school. Sometimes they are even punished at school for learning the Qur'an; for example, my uncle asked a school headmaster about possibility for our children to practice *namaz* while other kids have religion classes. They [school administration] did not have a free room for that. *Namaz* needs to be pure, and at school they don't have conditions for our kids to be in private. Private, pure space is needed to practice *namaz*. [Lidia, 50 years old, 4 years in Poland]

My children were born Chechens and they need to remain Chechens. They are not chameleons to change accordingly to conditions they experience [laugh]. The most important thing I teach my son is Islam. I teach my girls decency and respect. They need to be obedient and respect their parents, brothers and the community. [Zulfia, 37 years old, 5 years in Poland]

Many elements of Chechen patriarchal socialization coincide with Muslim socialization. Therefore in its social aspects, orthodox Islam and *adat* influenced version of Islam are comparable. The process of socialization is easier when a local Muslim community is numerous, i.e. is comprised not only of Chechens. In traditional Chechen socialization members of the extended family are engaged. The elders in a family are the keepers of a common history, including religion, and teach younger generations. In exile Chechens manage the lack of family members by entering transnational space. Due to modern technologies, parents can easier teach Islam to their children. My informants watched regularly Chechen TV and some of them used the Internet to learn more on *shari'a* or proper religious celebrations. Despite religious socialization at home, some "1.5" or second generation Chechens search for their own definitions of religious roots and their own identity. The process usually takes place in transnational space reached by the Internet. Krystyna Romaniszyn (2008: 135) noted the "reislamisation of Muslim youth who rediscover the religion of their ancestors as an asset and value which becomes the core of their identity".

Religious celebrations in exile

One significant social aspect of religious life is celebrations such as Ramadan. During the holiday Chechen families visit each other and in the end they traditionally celebrate over a mutton-based dish. In exile the celebration changes predominantly with the passage of time. The more institutionalized a Chechen community is, the bigger celebrations it can organize. Some of my informants celebrated the end of the holiday with their relatives in West European countries. There the celebrations are grand, since Chechens in western diasporas have a much better financial standing. In Poland Chechens visit each other and prepare jointly traditional Chechen food. Sometimes those who have relations with some other Muslim communities (e.g. immigrants from Middle East in Warszawa, or Tatars in Białystok or Lublin) celebrate together. In that case the celebrations are influenced by a local Muslim tradition. It also happens that Chechens make an attempt to include local native communities into their celebrations.

In 2010, the local Chechen community together with an NGO (Fundacja Ocalenie) wanted to organize a multicultural festival for all inhabitants of Łomża connected with celebrations for the ending of Ramadan. Łomża is a small town in Eastern Poland. Since there were two refugee camps in the town and nearby, hundreds of Chechens settled there. Łomża is an ethnically homogeneous town and, similarly to the whole Eastern region of the country, it has a relatively high unemployment rate. The Ramadan festival was meant to be an opportunity for Chechen minority and native Polish majority to get to know each other. Nevertheless, local authorities canceled the permission for organizing the festival just before the celebrations. It happened in the context of ethnic based conflicts in the town.

Another expression of Chechen religiosity in exile is the reproduction of religious-based rites of passage. They are defined both by *adat*s and *shari'a*.

Rites of passage

Chechen rites of passage are rooted in Islam and *adat*s. One of important moments for the whole community is welcoming of a new-born child. After a period of isolation and purification, the baby is introduced to the community. In accordance with Muslim traditions, a baby boy should be circumcised. Yaccov Ro'i (2000: 81–82) analyzed census data, proving that even during the communist era (in 1970) 98% Chechen boys were circumcised. Practicing the tradition in Poland is difficult in some Chechen communities, e.g. in Łomża. Chechens in some areas of the country cannot obtain services of a professional *imam*s, while circumcisions in public hospitals are refunded only when there are medical reasons to perform it. Some families have to collect money and travel long distances to a hospital which will conduct paid surgery. When a family suffers from poverty, like many Chechen families in Eastern Poland, following religious rules requires great sacrifices. Furthermore, a newborn child should be introduced to the community during celebrations with *halal* mutton served. Again, the product is difficult to get in some regions of Poland. Meat needs to be slaughtered by a Muslim directed to Mecca with a special formula said and in a precise way (e.g. animal's neck artery needs to be cut with one thrust). Some Chechen communities (e.g. in Warszawa) have easier access to *halal* food, and the others face more difficulties. Accessibility of *halal* products facilitates religious orthodoxy.

Another celebration which has its spiritual aspect defined by *shari'a* is marriage. Majority of Chechens accept only endogamy, unless the non-Chechen is a girl ready to accept Islam. It distinguished Chechens among other USSR nations. During the Soviet era every seventh family was ethnically mixed, while "in 1989 census, 93,7% of the families in Checheno-Ingushetia were monoethnic, and the figure was still 88,5% when all Chechen families in the Russian Federation were included" (Tishkov 2004: 152). Endogamy (particularly in case of Chechen women) was a strategy to survive as a nation. The strategy is strictly obeyed in exile. None of my Chechen informants' families was ethnically mixed. Amjad M. Jaimoukha the director of The International Centre for Circassian Studies (located in Jordan) describes a traditional wedding ceremony, which is reproduced also in Polish context, as follow:

> At the appointed time, the bridegroom-to-be and his merry men, who would have devised an 'abduction' plan, would 'snatch' the woman from her parents' house and posit her in safe keeping at the place of a close friend or relative of the suitor. There she would be kept in the company of a group of females until the wedding day, receive instructions on her future role from the lady of the house, and be visited by members of the bridegroom's family for mutual acquaintance. But before the wedding ceremonies could start, the important business of getting the consent of the woman's family had to be attended to [...] This was always high and often prohibitive, a virgin 'costing' more than a divorcee or widow. On the other hand, the bride-to-be was obliged to bring a special dowry (*qovlam*) to her husband's house, as a contribution towards readying it for marital life. A dowry

was payable by the man to his wife in case he decided to divorce her – a Muslim tradition. (2005: 147)

Abductions also take place in exile. Usually they have a symbolic character. Nevertheless it happens that police get involved in the situation. Such situations are debated in Polish media and sometimes they are used as an argument against the presence of Chechens in Poland.

On December 18, 2008 in Łomża five young Chechens abducted a 17-year-old Chechen girl. Before the marriage was discussed by the families, the girl's father called the police. The case ended up in the court and media. It was then used against the Chechen community in Łomża. Chechens were accused of "introducing their brutal customs to our region" (Subbotko 2008). Some Chechen customs reproduced in Polish environment are against the local law. The situation looks similarly in Chechnya. Russian federal law also forbids abductions, but in the Chechen environment the level of law observance in general is rather low.

In the traditional Chechen wedding the family of the bride is absent. The marriage contract (*mach*) is concluded at the groom's home or at his closest family's. During the wedding the bride stands in a special place behind the *kirha*, surrounded by the youth, and wedding guests come to meet her. The groom does not take part in the ceremony but his family is present. Later on, another small celebration takes place in the bride's home. Ultimately the bride is accompanied by her family to her husband's home, where young couple settle (Adger-Adayev 2005: 218–220). Chechen weddings, similarly to Polish ones, are celebrated not only by the extended families, but also by the whole community. They are grand and expensive. In exile, it takes years for Chechen families to be able to organize a traditional wedding. It may be an indicator of a settlement process.

Chechen families in Poland usually do not have enough money to organize such a wedding, they do not have an extended family and need an imam to conduct the wedding ceremony. Chechens deal with these problems in several ways. First of all, they use their transnational networks, i.e. the support from the members of their extended family in Western European Countries. The families not only can pay for the wedding, but also take part in the event. Then, Chechens ask for support of immigrant-based Muslim communities who already have their *imam*s. During my research, I was invited to a traditional Chechen wedding. It was organized five years after the prospective bride and groom migrated to Europe. The couple and the local Chechen community were unable to organize a grand wedding on their own due to lack of funds. Finally, the wedding was organized due to the support of their family members from Belgium and Austria. The groom-to-be met his future wife thanks to his brother, who told him that 2.5 hours drive from their town lives a nice girl, who originally came from a neighboring village in Chechnya. The groom-to-be visited the Polish city where she lived. He found the girl attractive and a good candidate for his wife. Next, families of the future groom and bride discussed the conditions of their marriage. The ceremony was conducted by an imam from Warsaw. The wedding took place in a rented restaurant. In accordance with *adat* laws, the groom was not present at the

celebrations, as well as bride's family, and the bride was standing in a special place in the corner of the room. All guests were seated according to their hierarchy in the Chechen society. Elder men sat in the front, younger men on right, and women on the left. The alcohol was not served during the wedding, since Chechens usually obey the Muslim ban on it. Bride was wearing a *hijab*, which is not typical for the Chechen culture. The girl started wearing a *hijab* and became more religious after she established relations with the orthodox Muslim community of immigrants from Middle East living in Warsaw. The presence of the *hijab* was interpreted by the wedding guests as an expression of her great religiousness. In accordance with *adat*s, the young couple moved to the groom's brother's apartment, because the brother was the closest family that the groom had in Poland. The wedding may be perceived as an indicator of some stability developing in the life of Chechen communities in Poland.

 Another ritual defined by Islam is the burial. Rapid life changes experienced by refugees and uncertain future contribute to the fact that Chechens prefer to send bodies of their deceased relatives back to Chechnya, where they are buried in accordance with the tradition. Since in the Muslim tradition the funeral needs to be organized soon after death, such a decision implies a number of complications and costs. Issa Adger-Adayev, a Chechen intellectualist living in Poland, gives a detailed description of a traditional funeral ceremony (*tazjat*), and expresses the wish common for many refugees to be buried in their fatherland:

> There is nothing more terrible than death and burial in a strange country, far from relatives and the Chechen community. In Chechnya a man who is seriously ill is taken very good care of by the whole community. When he draws his last breath, it is with the consciousness that in his last journey he will be accompanied by hundreds of people and buried in the land of his ancestors in accordance with the tradition. (2005: 221)

As soon as the Chechen community starts to bury their relatives in Poland as their conscious choice and not a necessity it may be defined as uprooting in the exile.

Virtual Islam

In exile, Chechens use the Internet to strengthen their ethnic and religious identity (Łukasiewicz 2008, 2010) and establish and sustain transnational networks. They follow news from Chechnya, recollect people and places from their homeland and keep the memory of wars with Russia. Similarly to the role played in Chechnya, Islam in exile is seen as a bulwark against Russian oppression. "Russian subjugation did not stop Islam from spreading. The religion became a form of passive resistance that continued from tsarist times through the Soviet period".[6] The virtual space, in parallel to

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[6] The Noxchiyn. Chechen Group (2007), http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid= 230527412.

reality, is a tool to reconstruct Islam either along more orthodox lines or in accordance with *adat*s. Some Chechen youth begin to practice orthodox Islam after they establish transnational relations with Muslims in different countries. Islam is highlighted as an important factor of Chechen identity. Religion is also a central theme in the establishment of Chechen transnational networks, since many Chechen national traditions, such as music and ceremonial dances, originate from their religious traditions. People discuss relation between religion and national identity, e.g. "Different nations can have the same religion, but people who practice one religion (even without variations) can fight with each other".[7] The transnational unity of Muslims is an expression of an orthodox vision of religion.

Conclusions

Chechens in exile apply different strategies of reconstructing Islam. Either they reproduce the *adat*-influenced Islam or a more orthodox version they practiced in Chechnya, or they reconstruct their religiosity under the influence of local and transnational Muslim communities. Application of any of the strategies depends on several factors.

The first one is the local Chechen community with the level of institutionalization and social solidarity being the influencing factor. The capability to organize grand ceremonies depends on the number of Chechens and relationships they share. The more numerous and integrated is the community, the more precisely are they able to reproduce the Chechen customs. Whether they reproduce Sunni *adat* influenced Islam or the orthodox version depends on members of the community and their biographies.

Secondly, the application of the two strategies depends on the settlement process within transnational communities. Those who have established strong economic or sociocultural relations with their relatives in the European diaspora or Chechnya are more likely to follow patterns of Islam accepted by the family. They nay also receive economical support in organizing grand celebrations. On the other hand, if the family is fragmented, the refugees – especially the "1.5" or second generation –may search for their own Muslim identity on the Internet. If they establish new relations with ethnically different Muslims, they are more likely to become more orthodox.

The third factor is the attitude towards strategies within native local community. If the attitude is negative, Chechens may reasonably be afraid of organizing any religious celebrations. Such situations take place in Eastern Poland. The "Polish" attitude stems from high unemployment rate and imagined or real competition on the labor market or over welfare benefits. The problem has been observed since the beginning of the 20th century by American migration researchers (e.g. Park and Brugges 1921).

Fourthly, the application of particular strategies depends on ethnic and religious structures of the local host society. The receiving society consists of various ethnic and

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[7] Chechnya Free (2007), http://forum.chechnyafree.ru/viewtopic.php?t=386.

religion minorities. The more differentiated is the local context, the easier is the reconstruction. Presence of other Muslim communities influences the patterns of reconstructing Islam and also enables Chechens to e.g. attend the mosque or receive assistance of an *imam*. As it was mentioned before, Chechens in Białystok or Lublin attend Tatars' mosques, and in Warsaw they establish relationships with Muslim immigrants from the Arab countries.

Fifthly, application of different strategies of reproducing religion depends on the economic situation in the local labor market. Refugees who experience poverty cannot afford religious celebrations as Chechen tradition requires, or they can do it only insofar as they strengthen relationships with their relatives in diaspora. Finally, the process is influenced by some personal experience of Chechen refugees, the type of Islam they practiced at home and also the time they have spent in exile.

Strategies of reconstructing Islam transform within biographies of individuals and with the passage of time. During first months or even years spent in exile the religious life is usually limited to individual sphere, e.g. praying. At that time hardly any celebrations take place because of uncertain future, rapid changes in one's life, and lack of community and extended family needed in practicing Islam influenced by *adat*s. Also poverty experienced by some Chechens in Poland limits possibilities of practicing Islam in its social dimension (e.g. Ramadan celebrations).

Another problem is the lack of imams, especially during celebrations. Finally, in a hostile local environment some Chechens in the beginning of their stay in Poland try not to stand out. It mirrors the behavior of many migrants elsewhere. This is particularly the case for Sikhs in the UK (McLoad 1992). In the beginning of their stay in the country they used to cut their hair and beards in order to blend in the UK society. They believed that not standing out will e.g. increase their chances on the labor market. As the time passed and they assimilated into local Sikh communities, they grew their hair again. Similarly to Sikhs, Chechens establish local ethnic communities and as the social solidarity increases, they reproduce patterns of practicing Islam brought from their homeland, and some of them become even more conservative than they were back home (Scheffer 2010).

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Magdalena Nowaczek-Walczak

The world of kebab
Arabs and gastronomy in Warsaw

This essay is a result of fieldwork carried out by me between April and August 2011 in various restaurants serving Arabic food in Warsaw. It is based on 30 in-depth interviews not only with the owners of venues, but also their employees, and in some cases their families.[1] According to M. Jackson, "storytelling mediates our relation with worlds that extend beyond us" (2002: 23), therefore I decided to let my interviewers concentrate on the issues that seemed most important to them. I represent these relations via quotations or description of their statements. My aim is to avoid showing Arabic owners and employees of kebab bars and restaurants in Warsaw as an "impersonal mass" (Malkki 1996: 378). I am aware of limits imposed by the intellectual traditions on Western social scientists who describe other cultures. On one hand, they claim to respect and represent the point of view of "Other" (Herzfeld 2001). Still, on the other hand, they are not able to succeed, because they will always remain external observers, outsiders (Geerz 1988). That is why I stressed the same points that were highlighted by my interlocutors. Due to that fact, many different areas of interest are included in this essay (such as problems faced by Arabic immigrants, education, lives, stereotypes, etc.), the order and links between subjects mentioned by my interlocutors reflects the same sequence chosen by my interviewees. Being aware of the shortcomings of this methodology, I decided to additionally apply participant observation and desk research as an additional approach.

Since 1970s a sudden increase of Arab nationals[2] has been noticed in Poland. The first group of migrants consisted of students who received scholarships in various Polish cities. These young males, mostly undergraduates of technical departments or medicine, decided to stay in Poland and continue their careers here. Since that moment the number of Arabic migrants steadily increased, however the character of the migration changed. There are still many students who receive grants to Poland,

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[1] Interviews were carried on in Polish, as none of my interlocutors had problems with expressing themselves (nevertheless sometimes the added Arabic words or English, especially in the context of really detailed description).

[2] I am aware that use of categories such as Arabs, Muslims countries, Arabic societies are simplifications, nevertheless they are necessary to describe some phenomena. In this essay by "Arab Nationals" I understand both: people who consider themselves Arabs and those who are members of Arab League.

although a new phenomenon, namely "work migration", appeared.[3] It is worth mentioning here that there is also a new group of immigrants – refugees from Arabic countries. As the community of Arab nationals is diversified, I decided to focus on one group – the gastronomy sector. Therefore in this article by "Arabic immigrants" or "Arabs" I understand those working in or in other way related to this particular business activity in Warsaw.

I focused on narratives of Arabs from gastronomy sector, choosing it from wider Arab diaspora in Poland. Since they have constant contact with different social classes, their observations provide interesting insights into Polish reality, seen from external perspective. In their narratives I selected several topics (their daily problems, their vision of Poles and the role of kebab bars and Arabic restaurants), divided into two main parts: "world of kebabs" and "recreations". In the first part I described issues related to functioning of such places and also matters related to everyday life of their owners and employees. Second one is based on perception of Arabic worlds by Poles and of Poland by Arabs.

The world of kebabs

Contemporary urban landscapes are full of restaurants, fast foods and bars offering at least one "foreign" specialty in their menus. Dishes such as kebab, *falafel* or *shawarma* became popular almost all over the world. Writing about the contemporary is strongly linked to globalization, a process partially identified with technological advance and growth of mobility. Particularly, the latter phenomenon seems to have an important impact on forming Hannerz's *transnational connections* (1996). These nexuses in the context of intercontinental migrations are related to constant reinterpretation of values and habits of new place of living and the old home place. The main point is that on the one side, mobility helps in applying a completely new set of experiences to the country of origin, and the recipient country as well. As Tim Edensor states, "Home-making includes the domestication of things and experiences from the external world, and of otherness" (2002: 58), therefore immigrant community must implement new behaviors and practices in new society and *vice versa*, recipient society also ought to carry out some changes influencing foreign groups. On the other hand, culture may transfer without personal contact, as it happens through mass media, causing the same effects as population mobility. According to Appadurai, this double influence of certain concepts enables people to create images about the reality; images which become the motive for action. "Deterritorialization creates new markets for film companies, impresarios, and travel agencies, which thrive on the need of the relocated population for contact with its homeland" (1996: 191). I would also add to this ethnic restaurants as the form that strengthens links between people.

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[3] It is a problematic issue to find out how many Arabic representatives are currently living in Poland. The most current files are those prepared by GUS (Central Statistical Office) and based on the National Public Survey carried out in 2002. According to this source, in 2002 there were 459 Arabs in Poland. More in Kubicki (2006).

Divisions

In Warsaw there are hundreds of places offering Arabic food[4] and the most popular one are commonly known as "kebab bars". Moreover, there are many non-Arabic places that include Arabic meals in their offer. Ten years ago hamburgers and hot-dogs were the most popular types of fast food meals among Polish people. Companies such as McDonald's, Burger King or KFC captured the leader position on the market. At this moment, several immigrants from different Arabic countries decided to open venues where their local food could be sold.

> I remember this moment very well. It was seven years ago. I decided to open a restaurant. I had a similar idea for several years. I even tried to open one local bar earlier but I did it with my colleague, not alone. It was a huge mistake. You know what I mean? He wasn't honest with me. So I left the place to him and waited. Finally in 2004 I found a proper location. In this zone there was only one more similar thing. There was no competition. Almost no one was selling Arabic food.[5]

In his property you may buy kebab, *falafel*, *hummus*, *tabbouleh*[6] and several Arabic sweets (the most popular one is *baklava*). He also serves Arabic mint tea with rose water and coffee with cardamom.

My interviewers (including this one) distinguish between different types of places where Arabic food can be bought. The division differs from the Polish perspective which includes: kebab bars (cheap and fast) and *shisha* clubs (stylish and trendy). One of owners explains:

> You see, my place is a restaurant. I do not have a fast food. It's a place where you may try the best of our culinary traditions. The division, here in Warsaw is simple,

[4] Use of the adjective "Arabic" requires further explanation. Meals such as kebab, *falafel* or *shawarma* are well known in all Middle Eastern and North African countries, and even beyond, therefore it's hard to identify its origins (more on this subject in Heine 2004). As per Barthes, food may be the symbol of the national identity. Many citizens from various countries adopt foreign dishes and treat them as a part of their culinary heritage. The consequence of such "nationalization" is the difficulty in identifying the roots of many dishes. Probably that is why in Polish language "Turkish coffee" means "Arabic coffee" and "kebab" for the Polish citizen does not mean the same what for an Arabic one. Interesting example of "nationalization" is the case related to the *falafel* in Israel, which adopted this meal from Palestinians. The final stage of this naturalization was adding a national symbol, such as flag of Israel to the dish as a decoration. Such photo of *falafel* with Israeli flag is common on postcards or tourist publications (Raviv 2003). To avoid misunderstandings with the use of "Arabic", I apply this adjective in relation to all dishes that were described by my interlocutors as Arabic, even if its origins were different.

[5] All quotations are statements of my interlocutors. The translation to English was done by me. I do not provide too many details about their age and often I changed their nationality due to the fact that they asked me to remain anonymous. All the information provided in this essay, unless stated otherwise in a footnote, is a result of fieldwork.

[6] Levantine salad made of tomato, cucumber, parsley, onion, bulgur, olive and lemon juice.

we, people from Syria, Palestine and Lebanon own restaurants. The rest have kebab bars.

Similar distinction is also done by a different interlocutor. He highlighted that only several people may afford owning restaurants. The reason of this are mainly costs:

> You find a small place, you don't have to a pay a lot for it, and you do a job that doesn't require any special abilities. You earn a lot of money really quickly. I chose the simplest dishes, I decided against serving all this complicated stuff like wine leaf filled with stuffing. I cook it only at home. For my wife and daughters (he is laughing). Here, it is kebab and *falafel*. If you want more, go to an Arabic restaurant.

That kind of distinction might be the consequence of well known among my interlocutors culinary traditions of Syria, Palestine and Lebanon. As Waines states, with the growth of the empire of 'Umayyad and Abbasid, a new phenomenon appeared: food for pleasure. Damascus, Cordoba, Baghdad, Kufa became centers related to the cuisine (Waines 2003: 573). It is interesting that my interlocutors did not include in this group Iraq, which is famous for its treatises on the art of cooking since 10th century.[7] It is possible that due to the unstable political situation Iraq is ultimately not perceived through its cultural heritage.

The menu of kebab bars usually consists of Kebab, Kebab XXL, Kebab dish (drink included), Falafel. With each meal set you may buy Coca Cola or Pepsi. Such a combination of Arabic meals with Coca-Cola is a great example of what Mathews calls *cultural supermarket* (2002). This is a combination of different culinary elements (kebab from the Middle East and Coca-Cola from United States) bought and consumed at the same time in the new context (in Poland). In this context, kebab bars and Arabic restaurants might be described as the places of *transnational connections*. Nowadays, when the identity is dispersed, global becomes local and local becomes global. This cultural exchange influences increase of sales in whole gastronomical sector. Many Polish companies added to their offer products related to kebab business. It's possible to buy all the ingredients needed to prepare kebab at home. Even "kebab flavor" pizzas are available. What is interesting, names of such goods frequently contain cultural references to different areas, as it happens with "kebab-gyros" spices. Kebab may be related to MENA countries, while gyros is a part of Greek cuisine.

Kebab bars are also objects of differentiations: Arabic kebab bars with owners from Arabic countries and others held by Turkish nationals. As I stated before, these kinds of divisions are not noticeable between Poles, who often identify Turkish

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[7] Old Arabic culinary treatises are not just cookbooks. Recipes are only a small part of the manuscripts. Different chapters contain information not only about meals, but also about properties of ingredients, fragments of poems, anecdotes about famous individuals of the epoch or tips on how to properly behave at the table (Ibn Sayyar al-Warraq 2007).

nationals as Arabs. My interlocutors also distinguished between Arabic and Polish kebab bars (where owners are Polish citizens) and explained that other places offer Arabic food, as nowadays kebab became a real "Polish traditional dish". Differences between Arabs and Poles in division of these places might be the consequence of applying distinct criteria. For my interlocutors the most important factors of the division are time needed to prepare and consume the food and the nationality of the owners. For Polish citizens actual trends and economical constituent are important.

Preparation of food requires patience and time, two factors that are disappearing in the era of globalization. Perception of time changed. As Eriksen emphasis, we live in the era of tyranny of the moment when 30 seconds seems to be too much (2001: 88). Different concept of time is reflected in the menus of Arabic restaurants and kebab bars.

> I do not have Arabic tea and Arabic coffee with spices in my offer, because drinking it requires time. And if you buy *falafel* and continue on your way home or wherever, you don't have the time. So you take Coca-Cola or a small bottle of juice. Arabic restaurants offer our traditional tea. But not all of them.

As my interlocutors said, drinking Arabic tea and coffee is more than just a simple part of the meal. It is a ritual that should not be a part of a commercialized world.[8] This stays in accordance with what Hjalager writes about body food and soul food:

> Body food comes from fast food restaurants, which fulfill the need to feed the stomach rapidly in standardized environments that do not challenge the intellectual capacities in any way. Soul food has another appeal. The food is prepared more slowly, possibly accordingly to special wishes, sometimes exotic and different – at the very least with some distinct qualities. The pleasures of the environment and the company of other people is an essential part of the eating experience. (2002: 31)

What's interesting, Arabic immigrants engaged in culinary business do not consider tea or coffee drank by Polish people as a liquid that may have any social function. That is why it is included in their menus, even in kebab bars, with a possibility to take it away.

Crisis

A few years ago, before the outbreak of the global financial crisis, newly established kebab bars reached the top of their popularity. According to my interlocutors,

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[8] It is worth mentioning here that in one of Arabic TV advertisements images of traditional teapots filled in with instant tea were used. The same commercialized use might be found in tourist places. Trips organized to "real" Bedouin's camps, where tea and coffee are served are a part of ritual representations for tourists.

the best time was between 2006 and 2010. That was the time when the revenues of such establishments were impressive. Restaurants were open from 9:00 a.m. till late hours of the night and filled with clientele all the time. At that moment many owners decided to open new spots, creating a net of the most famous kebab bars. Polish press was constantly informing about the growing popularity of these venues.[9] The Internet bustled with multiple rankings, comparing restaurants with Arabic food on offer. Why did it draw such a huge interest? "Our food is cheap and tasty", "you can eat a lot and not pay a lot", "it's healthier than a hamburger", "the box of hot wings in KFC costs almost 50 PLN [11 EUR] and it's full of artificial ingredients and our *falafel*, it's 8 PLN [2 EUR] and you may be sure that it's fresh", "we are open almost 24 hours and we are everywhere". There is also one more reason: it was trendy to eat ethnic food. Not only Arabic dishes became popular. Also other local cuisines were noticeable in the Warsaw's landscape. Kebab prosperity came to a halt in 2010. As one owner says:

> Since the middle of 2010 our situation started to deteriorate. I had to dismiss a couple of employees. Our restaurant is opened from 10:00 to 20:00, sometimes to 21:00, but only on a really good day. In 2009 I had a few tables outside the restaurant. This year I had to remove them. Do you know that for the last two years I haven't changed the prices? In 2009 there was a kind of marketing; all Arabic bars offered their dishes cheaper than non-Arabic places. Running such a business requires flexibility. So the prices remained the same. In 2010 something changed. The crisis started. I didn't earn anything this year. And my suppliers raised their fees twice. First, I thought that maybe a new bar was opened somewhere here, but I checked it and nothing new appeared in the neighborhood. I talked to owners of other bars. They have the same problem. It's easy to understand what's going on, people have less money, so they don't eat in restaurants. They prefer to stay at home.

It is probable that the economic crisis could have changed peoples' habits and many of them eat at home instead of restaurants. But can all the changes be explained by the crisis factor? The above opinion was stated by a co-owner of an Arabic restaurant located in one of most prestigious and wealthy districts of Warsaw. It seems almost impossible that the impact of crisis caused sudden loss of interest in eating out in that area. It would mean that if the richest people could not afford eating in restaurants, the representatives of middle class would neither. It is worth mentioning here that kebab bars and Arabic restaurants with their *shisha*s are still popular among

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[9] Kebab to nasza potrawa narodowa. *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 11.08.2010, http://kielce.gazeta.pl/kielce/1,35255,8241547,Kebab_to_nasza_potrawa_narodowa_.html; Kebab. Polskie Danie Narodowe. *Gazeta Prawna*, 19.08.2010, http://www.gazetaprawna.pl/wiadomosci/artykuly/443985,kebab_polskie_danie_narodowe.html; Czy Kebab się opłaca? *Gazeta Prawna*, 23.08.2008, http://biznes.gazetaprawna.pl/artykuly/102013,czy_kebab_sie_oplaca.html; Kebab to polskie danie narodowe. *Dziennik. Polska, Europa, Świat*, 23.12.2008, http://wiadomosci.dziennik.pl/wydarzenia/artykuly/299232,kebab-to-polskie-danie-narodowe.html; Kebaby za 2.5 miliarda. *Wprost*, 36(1439), http://www.wprost.pl/ar/207298/Kebaby-za-25-miliarda/.

students in Poland. Could the loss of clientele be influenced by a change of actual trends? Is eating in ethnic bars not stylish anymore?

According to Augé (1995) one of the signs of modernity is excess. The abundance of goods was also mentioned by my interlocutors, who do not believe in crisis as factor of deterioration of situation in this part of gastronomical business.

> I don't believe it's because of the crisis. People in Poland know what real crisis is. I think that Polish people have money. Look in the shopping malls, it's the best example. They are full of people each weekend. We are losing our clients because there are more and more new kebab bars and restaurants. Now, in Warsaw there are a few thousand of such places. So clients could eat every day in a different one. We earn less and taxes are higher each year. That's why the prosperity period ended for us.

One of ways of fighting the loss of clients was implementation of new solutions. As an example, some places added delivery services to their offer. Observing the popularity of such offers in pizzerias, Chinese and Vietnamese restaurants (which are also popular among Polish consumers), owners of some kebab bars and Arabic restaurants decided to follow the suit. There are also other ideas, such as selling not only hot meals and drinks, but also some additional ingredients of Arabic cuisine. Some of kebab bars offers also *pita* bread, *ful*[10], spices needed to prepare Arabic dishes, rose water, etc. Additionally, there are also „kebab chips" or even „kebab instant soups".

Clients, owners and employees

Clients of Arabic restaurants and kebab bars are mainly Polish representatives of all age groups (although some interlocutors highlighted here that usually "young people are the clients"), male and female, from different social classes. Depending on the location of the bar, different types of clients visit the place. These situated near university campuses, schools, hospitals, business parks are frequently visited by regular customers. Nevertheless such advantage of regular clients may also become a disadvantage:

> 80% of our clients are the same people. We know them. They know us. On one hand it's really good because I'm pretty sure that they recommend our kebab as good place. But on the other side, we may count on them only during the week, because on weekends or during holiday season less people visit us. And calculation is easy. Less people mean less money. And all fees are the same.

Other places situated in the city center or popular streets do not have a lot of regular clients during the week, but usually earn more on weekends. Therefore, these

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[10] Dish made of cooked beans, onion, tomato, olive oil, parsley.

kebab bars and Arabic restaurants have different opening hours and the work requires the employees to stay there all the night.

It is worth mentioning here that staff members of such places are usually male foreigners from Muslim countries (mostly Arabs and Turkish). What may be observed here is a phenomenon of *masculinization of migration*. Gender perspective in analyzing migrations shows that in the context of labor migration from Arabic countries to different European countries men are the dominant sex. Young men from Tunisia, Egypt, Algeria, Syria, Iraq, Palestine and Lebanon come to Poland looking for jobs. As they do not have all the permissions to stay, they usually leave their families and get married in Poland with Polish women. This is one of the ways to legalize their residence. Not all of my interlocutors plan to stay in Poland. Poland is just the first step on their journey to Europe.

> I've been here since 2005. Before I came here I had no idea where Poland was. There was a scholarship in Warsaw. I thought that this way I would come to Europe, but first they had to tell me that Poland is in Europe [he is laughing]. I graduated in Computer Science in Warsaw. I don't want to spend all my life here.

As my interlocutors stated, salaries of foreign employees[11] are usually low and do not depend on their education. Work contracts are predominantly short-term, without any additional benefits such as social security. They work about 10 hours a day, 7 days a week. Owners of Arabic restaurants and kebab bars hire foreigners due to two reasons: first, they speak their language (and most of them speak English as well), therefore they might be sure that everything is understood properly. Second reason is related to the fact that in a new place foreigners usually do not know how much they may earn. Young men leaving their countries feel obliged to succeed abroad. If they find employment and can send back even a small amount of money to their families, the prestige of their relatives increases.

> If I hire an Egyptian I will be able to explain the rules to him. That is the most important. And of course he has no idea how much he should earn, because he has no idea about Poland. So even if I offer him a salary that wouldn't be accepted by Polish people, he will take it, because it is more than in Egypt. So I'm happy and he is happy. He is even happier than me, because he still has money to send to Egypt.

During the interviews none of the employees complained about their situation. Even if they were aware of their half-legal conditions of work, this was not considered on the same terms. As one of them explained:

> I know that my working conditions are rather poor. I would like to change the job and I will do to that. But when I decide to change it, I won't sell kebabs anymore.

[11] Occasionally Polish students (more often male, rarely female) are hired.

I earn too little to afford many things, but at least I have a job. I know that young Polish people also have problems with finding employment, so I can't complain.

Many interlocutors highlighted the problem with finding a job that would be related to their education. Moreover, they frequently emphasized that this difficulty is common for all young graduates, both Poles and Arabs. Lack of opportunities for career development was also a problematic issue for the older generation of Arabic immigrants, actual owners of restaurants and kebab bars, who had arrived to Poland during 1970s. Nevertheless, older generation seems to be more optimistic about the possibilities of achieving success:

I've been in Poland for the past 25 years. I came here to study. I graduated from University of Technology and after that I started PhD. I really liked my "scientific career", but I had to interrupt it. The salary was too low, I couldn't maintain my family. I decided to open an Arabic restaurant. […] You know, in fact I believe that it is possible to find a work related to the studies. It's extremely hard, but it's possible. There is a different problem, also common for all the people: either you do what you want or you earn money.

As I mentioned previously, some of young immigrants decide to leave Poland and start their dream life in other European countries. The main reason is related to the possibilities of self-development. Foreign countries are rather idealized, especially if the interlocutors have never been there. Wives and children are not treated as a sufficient reason to stay in Poland. Many of these young men think about getting married once more, with a woman from their country.

I would like to go to Norway. It's not so easy because I got married here. I have a wife and a daughter. My wife doesn't want to leave Poland. So I will go alone. [Why Norway?] The life is easier there. How do I know that? I'm not sure. My colleague told me. I have never been there, but I know English. I want to continue there with postgraduate Ph.D. studies. Do you know that it's cheaper than in Poland? Studies and the room in student dorm are for free.

I emphasize here that not all the interlocutors showed the will to leave Poland. The older generation, which has been here for many years, is not interested in changing their lives. They see other EU members as attractive countries to visit, but not for living. They seem more conscious about real problems that they would face if they decided to move out of Poland. They established their businesses in Warsaw many years ago, they have friends here, their children are mostly either high school students or studying at universities, therefore they feel strongly linked with Poland. The older generation of Arabs involved in kebab bars or Arabic restaurants businesses also show more flexibility in work style changes. They do not perceive the lack of continuity of their studies as a failure. Possibility of learning new skills is noted more as a chance to develop, a challenge. More often they were able to abandon studies and start working.

I came to Poland in the 1990s. My brother was already here. I wanted to go to Ukraine, but he told me that it would be stupid, because he was in Warsaw at that time and he could help me. He helped me with getting a scholarship. I started the studies, but I quit them shortly. I wanted to work and earn money [...] Hobby and studies are one thing, but work is another. I only completed the Polish language course. I met my wife there. First I worked on the *Stadion*.[12] It was a great job. I had to get up at 4 o'clock, but I had a lot of money. I finished the work at 12:00, 13:00 and the rest of the day was mine. There were not too many Arabs on the *Stadion*. I sold clothes. A couple years ago I changed this job and I opened a kebab bar. Now I'm thinking about completing studies. It's a good time to do that.

The differences between opinions of older generation and the young one might be caused by different expectations of the immigrants. First of all, many Arabs who came to Poland in the early 1990s had more opportunities to set up their own businesses, as it was the period of free market transformation. It seems that they arrived to Poland with a clear vision what they wanted to do and they met a comfortable environment to implement their plans. I would also add one more factor. Mass media at that time were not as developed as nowadays, therefore images of Poland available in their countries of origin were completely different from the current ones. The mass media feed the youth from around the world with a false image of Europe. This breeds excessive expectations based on the false message. Moreover, currently young Arab immigrants cannot succeed so easily as previous generations due to the global economic crisis.

Re-creations

As I mentioned earlier images, concepts and visions about reality become impulses of action. It is especially noticeable in case of Arabic restaurants and kebab bars in Warsaw, which are objects of re-creations of certain images.

Artifacts

According to authors of the publication *Food and Cultural Studies* "restaurants are not there simply to feed people" (Ashley et al. 2004: 143). What is really important is the experience created during the consumption. In context of *transnational connections* and *deterritorization*, places such as Arabic restaurants or kebab bars should be ideal to offer the client not only a hot dish, but also a special ambience, a substitute of being a part of different culture. Moreover, such places, through the interior decoration, may also become an important sign of identity of the owners, who try to re-cre-

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[12] 10th Anniversary Stadium in Warsaw. In the 1950s it was one of largest stadiums in Poland. In 1980s it stopped being a venue for sport events and transformed into the biggest illegal open-air market, where anything could be bought (from clothes to illegal firearms). In 2009 the black market was closed and now it's being redeveloped into the National Stadium.

ate their landscapes in a completely new place. I used the word "may", because in many cases, this special "Oriental" and "exotic" atmosphere is just a marketing trick based on the stereotypical images. The use of stereotypical images is related to Said's "Orientalism" (1991). Using them in the context of building trends (what happens in case of kebab world) Górak-Sosnowska calls "inventing the Orient" (2011). As she says:

> Fascination with the cultures of Islamic peoples has, apart from the religious, also a secular face. Through the general interest in (or rather the fashion for) the Orient, and the particular interest in Islam, the cultures of Islamic people have entered show business. There are Oriental-stylized cafes and bars offering water pipes (*shisha*s), clubs playing contemporary Arab pop or Punjabi *bhangra*, belly dancers (the most famous one has even launched her own revue) and henna-tattoo painters. Among some circles of Polish youth it has become trendy to go to such clubs, listen to Tarkan or Amr Diab, smoke *shisha* or even attend belly-dancing workshops.

Analysis of the situation in Arabic restaurants and kebab bars in Warsaw seems to lead to the conclusion that the first category is more prone to such activities. Mosaic tables, Arabic music, *shisha*s, brass hanging lamps, colorful pillows and Arabic teapots with sets of glasses – these are the artifacts needed to give the customer a sensation of taking part in something extraordinary. Even if that image is completely stereotypical and does not represent a real Arabic restaurant, it is still considered as a characteristic Arabic place. Kebab bars interior decor follows a contrary philosophy. Apparently there are no things that could be treated as "typical". Tables and seats are made of plastic, all the dishes are served either to take them away or to eat them on plastic plates with plastic cutlery. So what makes them as "exotic" as restaurants? As owner of the kebab bar states:

> Kebabs must be sold by an Arabic or Turkish young man. It's a part of concept. Kebab sold by a Polish guy does not have the same taste. Clients coming to kebab bar and asking for *falafel* expect being served by Arabic or Turkish immigrant. I'm talking about Turkish, because for most Polish people a Turkish national and an Arabic national means the same. The customer wants not only the food, but the proper seller. Did you know that some Vietnamese bars included Arabic food in their offer, but no one buys it? Personally I think that it's due to the seller.

Expectations of Polish customers are based on visual criteria. If the sellers do not speak Polish fluently, it is even better, as it makes them more "exotic". It may be partially related to the significant increase in the number of Polish tourists who have been spending their holidays in Egypt and Tunisia in the last years. During such holidays they maintain contact only with young male employees of hotels (which are designed in accordance with *One Thousand and One Nights* stereotype) and later use the same image, but in different, Polish context. Therefore, Arabic place, according to the customer, is one where all the artifacts related to the common concept of being

Arabic are gathered, or the place where the image of this phenomenon is applicable. Personally, I would define an Arabic restaurant/bar as not only the place with Arabic food, but the one which Arabs choose as their place of meetings.

I would like to highlight that Arabic immigrants treat neither Arabic restaurants nor kebab bars as "their" places. If they decide to eat out, they would rather choose a different ethnic place. Sometimes they do meet each other in Arabic cafeterias, but bigger encounters are organized at home. Nexuses of traditions from their countries origin are re-created mostly at home. When I meet with the spouse of the owner of an Arabic restaurant at their home, the wall of her dining room is adorned with a big picture of the old town of of her homeland's capital city. She has access to Arabic TV and she loves watching Egyptian and Lebanese series. Ramadan will start soon. On the floor there is a hand-made carpet and when she serves me *ful* with rice and onions flavored with many spaces and *tabouleh*, I notice the set of small glasses for tea, which have a completely different meaning here than at her restaurant.

Stereotypes

Stereotypes and images of Other are tightly linked to re-creations in two dimensions: they are used to describe reality and they are created by people who give them different meanings, depending on the context. This subject appears at the beginning of almost every interview. Owners of Arabic restaurant told me their story:

> A: One day, when I was at my homeland I asked my mother to find me a good wife. I didn't want to get married in Poland. It's not because there is something wrong with Polish women, all of you are amazing, but the marriage should have some basic point of reference. And marriage with Polish woman would require a lot of problematic issues to be solved: completely different cultures, different languages, different religions. If we add day to day problems to this, it could fail. My mother talked with her mother.
> B: So the next time when he was in the country, we met and talked. And I wanted to become his wife. I didn't know where Poland was, but I was sure that he would take care of me. I knew that his family respects me. So here we are. I know that for some people it sounds strange. I hate these looks directed at me which seem to check if he beats me or not...

Cruelty of Arabic husbands and Muslims pictured as terrorists are the two most common stereotypes highlighted by the interlocutors as the most harmful in Polish society. Interestingly, no one blames the people, because "they don't understand the Arabic culture and Islam". All the fault is attributed to mass media, which were described as "completely unprofessional", "biased", "lousy".

> In Polish TV you won't find programs about us, about our life. You may find programs about Islamic extremists, terrorism, regimes, poverty, violations, manifestations.

> Things are getting worse. Especially after September 11. Creation of an Arab-Terrorist image is useful.

Analyzing newspapers and media transmissions[13] it is hard not to notice that Arab countries are mentioned in the contexts of violations of human rights, military conflicts, poverty and terrorism. Islam is treated as the only factor that explains everything. Arabs are represented as a homogeneous mass, zealous in its religious rituals. And if other religious minorities appear in the context of Arabic countries, they are usually represented as the victims of "Islamic despotism". Such representations must influence perceptions of Arab minority, although some of interlocutors believe that "a lot of Poles know that media are manipulating the information".

Are the opinions of Arabic immigrants in Warsaw about Polish people less stereotypical? Many times their answers contained elements met in the stereotypical image of Poles (intoxication, thefts). Nevertheless, there is a big difference in their judgment compared to opinions of Polish citizens. It is based on the personal experience and not on the media image. According to my interlocutors the most appreciated characteristic of Poles is being sociable and friendly:

> What I like mostly in Poland is sociability and kindness. People here are really helpful and direct. My neighbors are my best friends. I can always count of them. They never showed me any kind of suspicion or rudeness. They were more curious, they really wanted to know us, understand our culture. You guys here in Poland are really interested in other people. [...] What is really funny is that due to lack of knowledge of each other, misunderstandings appear. Once, I went to one of my neighbors to ask him if he could give me some grape leafs. I was preparing a special meal for my wife. He stared at me for some moment. And finally told: ok, do you need it for some animal?

> Hospitality. That's the best word to describe all of you. I have never met here anyone who would be unwelcoming towards the guests. And I always enjoy Polish parties. You have so many ideas how to spend free time. It's amazing!

> Girls! Polish girls are great! So beautiful! [he is laughing; And girls in your country are not beautiful?, I asked him] Yes, they are the most beautiful, but you can't see them as they are hidden all the time [he is laughing].

I also asked about things that are annoying in Poland. Employees of kebabs and Arabic restaurants are in constant contact with the Polish people. Owners of such places have been in Warsaw for so long that they experienced a lot of different behaviors.

> You drink a lot of alcohol. Young people, old people, everyone. I know that it's not my business but I hate when you oblige other people to drink. I remember

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[13] To find more on this subject, especially about images of Arabic women in Polish press, please refer to: Nalborczyk (2008), or Marek (2004).

a wedding party and this annoying question: what? You won't drink with me? If you want to drink, do it, but leave me alone. And don't feel insulted when I say "no".

I really hate the way you treat old people. Sometimes I can't believe it. It's a complete lack of respect. You leave them alone, without any help. In my country old people are happy. Poor, but happy. In Warsaw you barely notice old people on the street. And it's not because there are no elderly men or women in Poland. It's because they are excluded from the society. I really hate it.

According to the survey carried out in 2010 by *Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights* about racism in Poland, Arabs are one of the least liked nations among Polish people (this group of unpopular nations also include: Romanians, Turkish citizens and Romani People; Mikulska 2010). It should be mentioned that none of my interlocutors agreed with the statement that Poles are racists. This opinion seems rather interesting due to the fact that a couple of stories mentioned by them could be treated as a racist behavior, at least from the European perspective.

Poland is not yet a rich country, so there are no racists. You know, my sister lives in Sweden and says that she has a lot of problems due to her nationality. People exclude immigrants from society. In Poland the situation is completely different [...] Once I was attacked on the street. They beat me badly. I went to the hospital. I lost my job due to this, because my recuperation was long, so my boss fired me from his design office. These guys who assaulted me were just criminals. I don't blame all the Polish people for this.

I remember when I was wearing a *hijab* a lot of people were staring at me! I left it at home under the pressure of the looks and now I'm not wearing it anymore. But it was really strange, I covered my hair and I felt as if I were completely nude! [...] But you don't forbid wearing scarves formally, like they do in France.

In Germany or in France, yes, I heard about it. In Poland people are rather open to other cultures. Media are racist. They maintain negative stereotypes like this one that Arabs beat their wives [...]. At my first work it happened sometimes that people called me 'czarnuch'.[14] But it was on Stadion. And this was peculiar place. [...] It's really funny when people in buses think that I'm a thief. They always touching their pockets and grab their bags nervously, because I'm dark. Maybe they thought that I was Romanian.

Here the interesting element is not only the concept and understanding of „racism", but also adopting Polish stereotypes about other nations. A good example is the last sentence of above mentioned opinion: „Maybe they thought that I was Romanian". Using such comparison suggests that the interlocutor is aware of Polish false image of Romanians as thieves. Also the concept of "West" seems to exclude

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[14] Pol. 'nigger'.

Poland from "Europe". As I mentioned earlier, Poland is just a first step to get to European countries, therefore it is not treated like a European country. Another interesting fact is that Poland does not evoke any negative images, as it happens in case of France or Germany.

Rituals

Re-creations are also related to rituals, as they create the image of certain activities in certain situations. As Edensor states, "the rituals often achieve the illusion of fixity and common purpose" (2002: 101). There is no possibility to add new interpretation or any new element to rituals.

Food[15] and rituals related to food are important among Arabic society, and it seems that they are still valued among Arabic immigrants. Gathering together for eating is the preservation of what Kolmer calls the *ritual of association* (2001: 11). Being in the same place, sharing the food, being engaged in conversation, is the creation of unity, even "if the participants are not necessarily homogeneous but may represent various interest groups" (Edensor 2002: 101). Additionally, in Arabic society the faith (Islam, Christianity and Judaism) requires certain attitude on all stages of cooking: ingredients are as important as the way of preparing them. Eating is also regulated by fasting periods. In this context, the Islamic category of *halal*, things that are permissible, is applied as an opposition to *haram*, things that are forbidden. Arabic and Muslim immigrants living abroad should still implement the rule of eating only permissible food, which for many reasons becomes problematic. All my interlocutors confirmed that their food is *halal*, although no one holds certificate of *halal*, which is used in many non-Muslim countries.

> There is no need to have such a certificate. It happened once, maybe twice, that a client asked me about detailed description of the ingredients. Trademark *halal* wouldn't be popular in Poland. There are too few Muslims in Poland. I know that there are some shops offering *halal* food, but it's too expensive and no one buys it.

> It wouldn't work. People don't need it. If anyone wants to be sure if the food is *halal*, they are usually tourists. But I remember one Polish guy, who wanted to open a kebab bar. He came to me, asked for recipes and started selling kebab with pork chuck steak [laughing] ...as he said it was a mix of Polish and Arabic traditions.

> I don't want to sell alcohol and pork. It's against my beliefs. I know that many customers would drink with a pleasure a cold beer, but by selling alcohol I would support something which is *haram* for me. And as I don't want to touch pork, I don't offer it.

[15] The importance of food is illustrated by the use of *kunya*s (part of Arabic names, usually teknonym) for food. One of meanings for Umm Ali (Mother of Ali) is blancmange; (van Gelder: 2005).

There are three butcheries in Poland with *halal* trademark, but two of them export the meat to Turkey and they don't sell it in Poland. One is in Warsaw, another one near Poznań and the other near Szczecin. They are owned by Arabs and Turks. In Warsaw, there are also two bakeries delivering *pita* bread specially for kebab bars and Arabic restaurants. Certificate of *halal* might be granted by Muslim Religious Union of Poland (Muzułmański Związek Religijny). Fulfilling the *halal* rules is not only related to the food. It is the style of life which makes *halal*.[16] I would also amend *halal* lifestyle by adding "health" element to it. That is why in some kebab bars and Arabic restaurants there is no alcohol available. Additionally, some of interlocutors accented that they promote a healthy way of living, as the food they offer contains a lot of vegetables, and Polish nationals usually do not eat many.

Conclusion

Today the Arabic presence in the streets of Warsaw is not as noticeable as in other European capitals. In the symbolic sphere there are only a few shops with artifacts "typical" for Arabic countries, brochures from tourist offices, Arabic restaurants, kebab bars and a mosque which would be more related to Muslims than only to Arabs. There are also several associations of Arabic immigrants and other organizations interested in this community, but as they are known only to a small, closed group of people, they do not hold any place in popular awareness. Hardly ever it is possible to meet people in their traditional clothes, therefore from all these symbolic representations Arabic restaurants and kebab bars seem to have the biggest and the most obvious impact on introduction of Arabic elements into the urban space. Current EU policies aim to highlight the importance of the integration. As one of my interlocutors confirmed, "Working in Arabic restaurant is not only a great chance to integrate and to get to know other people. It also allows other to get to know you".

Arabic restaurants and kebab bars have an even more important function. As Ulf Hannerz states:

> In order to adopt a practice exhibited by someone else, people have to have some idea of how it would fit into their own life; and this may involve analyzing similarities and differences between their respective situations, and similarities and differences between themselves and the other. (Hannerz, 1996: 50).

They are not just an auxiliary integration tool helping Arabs to incorporate in Polish society. They are places which also help Poles to get to know other cultural groups.

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[16] Part of being *halal* is being eco-friendly. In Poland this understanding of Islam is not popular among Arabic Muslims related to food business. More about eco-Islam might be found in Górak-Sosnowska (2010).

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Marta Woźniak

Linguistic behavior of Arabophones in Poland

Language, which fulfils a number of functions, plays a significant role in the process of socialization. It is a medium of everyday communication and a resource, especially in the context of education and labor market. According to Esser (2006: 3) certain deficits in terms of the command of a relevant national language along with social distances, as well as discrimination, can hinder the process of integration of immigrants into host societies. Mother tongue and accents may act as symbols of belonging or foreignness. Access to education, income, societal recognition and social contact – they all depend on the acquisition of a respective national language. Learning it by the newcomers seems to be indispensable in the countries where the majority does not know a generally valid *lingua franca*, which English has now become.

This is the case of Arabic-speaking people, mostly Muslim, who live in Poland. Their linguistic behavior is almost unexplored, despite the monograph on intercultural communication by Zarzycka (2000). The aim of this paper is to fill this gap by identifying the linguistic behavior of Arabophones who function in the Polish language environment. It uses a methodology similar to that presented in the book on Arabic-speaking immigrants in Austria written by Skowron-Nalborczyk (2003), i.e. it involves interviews as a source of information, along with participant observation.

Skowron-Nalborczyk points out (2003: 13) that diglossia – using two standards of the same language in different social situations – has been characteristic of the Arabophone community from its beginnings. It should be distinguished from bilingualism which involves using two different languages (Danecki 2009: 25). The term 'diglossia' to describe the linguistic situation in Arabic-speaking countries was introduced by Marçais (1930: 401–409) and developed by Ferguson (1959: 325–337), who identified four languages (Arabic, Greek, Haitian Creole and Swiss German) as prime examples of languages which fit into his definition of diglossia.

As Freeman (1996) explains, these diglossic speech communities have a very prestigious high variety of the language and a low variety with no official status which are in complementary distribution with each other; for instance the high variety might be used for literary discourse and the low variety for ordinary conversation. Moreover, the speakers have a personal perception that the high variety (in case of Arabophones literary Arabic, *fusha*) is the "real" language, while the low variety (one of numerous Arabic dialects) is "incorrect". It must be stated though, that literary Arabic or even

Modern Standard Arabic (variety used in the media) is known and understood only by the educated part of the Arab society, leaving the rest locked in the frames of their dialects.

Arabophones willing to live in a new linguistic surrounding are forced to learn the national language and patterns of behavior of their hosts. It is interesting to explore whether, and if so, how their linguistic habits (using the high and low variety of Arabic) influence the communication in a country like Poland, where diglossia is unknown. It could be predicted that Arab nationals would learn spoken street Polish quicker than written Polish – at least in the beginning – perceiving the first as a kind of dialect necessary to "survive", and the latter as sophisticated *fusha*.

Another basic assumption is made after Agar (1994), namely that of a necessary tie between language and culture, described as 'languaculture'. Agar underlines that languages and cultures cannot be distinguished from each other, nor separated. Therefore, one cannot really know a language if he/she does not know the culture expressed by it. The notion of culture and its understanding involves a link between two different languacultures; Agar defines them as LC1 (source languaculture) and LC2 (target languaculture).

Arabophones in Poland

Today Arabs in Poland constitute a mosaic of ethnic groups and denominations: they are Muslims (Sunni and Shi'a), but also Christians (some Syrians and Egyptians). Their exact number is unknown, although it probably oscillates around 5,000; in 2002 it was 4,072 (Polish Central Statistical Office). The majority are intellectuals who came to Poland in the 1970s and 1980s as students from socialist-aligned Arabic-speaking states of the Middle East and Africa, and stayed for family reasons. There are also some small businessmen. In the late 1980s, Muslim community became more active and better organized. Nowadays, there are mosques and houses of prayer in Warsaw, Białystok, Gdańsk, Wrocław, Lublin and Poznań, in addition to rooms of prayer in Bydgoszcz, Kraków, Łódź, Olsztyn, Katowice and Opole. After collapse of the communistic regime in 1989, other Muslim immigrants have come to Poland – the Arab nationals have become fewer among them.

Survey

An attempt to observe the Arab linguistic behavior in Poland was the prime reason for an electronic survey to be designed in two language versions (Polish and English). Such decision was motivated by the eagerness to reach these respondents who are fluent in Polish but also those who have just begun studying it (the assumption was made that the majority of the newcomers know at least basic English).

The questionnaire consisted of 9 questions about personal data and 27 ones about the linguistic behavior: knowledge of literary Arabic (*fusha*) and Arabic dialects;

knowledge of the Polish language, ways and reasons of learning it; difficulties while studying Polish; knowledge of other languages used in speaking and writing; choice of Arabic and/or Polish media (newspapers, television, radio, websites); languages of parents, spouses and children; languages of communication in different situations; attitude towards the Polish language, and the respondents' eagerness to participate in an additional Polish course. Most questions were closed and in the few open ones, the respondents were only supposed to enumerate languages or names/titles.

I sent a link to the survey, along with a short note explaining the purpose of the research, to my Muslim acquaintances, as well as Polish scholars specializing in the Middle East studies who have contacts with Arabophones. Moreover, the link was put on the web-site of the 7th Conference 'Days of Muslim Culture' in Wrocław (www.dni-kultury.pl). The survey was completed by 14 Arabophones in June/July 2011; 13 other people tried to complete it, but failed (perhaps due to insufficient knowledge of Polish/English or because they were reluctant to reveal personal information).

Characteristics of the Respondents

All the 14 Arabophone respondents were men. It is not surprising, taking into consideration the social profile of Arab immigrants – young males, looking for education and work, often eager to marry Polish/European women. Travelling and studying abroad is still perceived as morally dubious for a single Arab female. Yet, at least two women tried to complete the survey, but they failed at an early stage (the first one, born in 1978, was a widow with primary education, the second one, born in 1982, was married and had higher education).

Thirteen people chose the Polish version and only one completed it in English, which means that those who decided to answer the questions, were generally representatives of well-educated Muslim intelligentsia; this seems to have been dictated by the electronic form of the survey and the way of learning about the survey – using "grapevine", predominantly university contacts.

The oldest respondent was 60 while the two youngest were 27. The average age of the respondents was 38. Three respondents mentioned "Palestine" as their country of birth as they were all born after creation of the state of Israel; their answers had political implications – they showed disagreement for calling "Israel" their homeland (however, one respondent did call his country with this name). There were two respondents from Egypt and Jordan respectively. The rest came from Tunisia, Algeria, Syria, Libya and Saudi Arabia. One respondent was born in Poland from Arab (Iraqi) parents.

The vast majority of the respondents lived in big cities – four in the capital, Warsaw, three in Poznań, two in Wrocław, the rest in Łódź, Kraków, Białystok, Bydgoszcz and Swarzędz (the only town being of less than 250 thousand inhabitants). The places of residence were correlated with the work opportunities which generally are higher for foreigners in urban areas.

All but one respondent had higher education. Again, it must be stated, that despite the fact that many Arabs living in Poland belong to intelligentsia, this

indicator is foremost influenced by the electronic form of the survey; among the respondents who did not succeed in completing the questionnaire there was at least one person with primary education and two with secondary.

Almost two-fifths of respondents were computer scientists and physicians; these two professions are among the most desired and relatively well-paid nowadays, similarly to engineers with technical education. There were two salesmen among the respondents, though probably the percentage of salesmen among the whole Arab population in Poland is higher. The rest of the respondents had graduated from different humanities faculties – i.e. they completed studies which generally require better command of language than technical knowledge.

Four-fifths of respondents were married, only one was divorced, and two were single. Almost three-fifths had children – the average number of children was 1.21. All wives, except one Algerian, were Polish. This means that despite the stereotype of Polish-Arab marriages being doomed for failure, the majority of respondents maintained stable relations with Polish spouses (see also Pawlik 2007: 198). It must be noted, though, that while the first wave of Arab migrants came to Poland generally to gain education and developed long-lasting romantic relationships during their studies, the latest wave has brought many men, especially from Egypt, who married Polish women for material reasons and/or to obtain visa status; these marriages do not tend to endure.

Results of the Survey

The majority of respondents had the consciousness of using Arabic dialects in everyday life, except for one Libyan who answered *polskie* ('Polish'), apparently misunderstanding the question. The rest responded accordingly to their countries of origin, rather then giving "proper" Arabist name of a certain dialect (Danecki 2009: 71–79; Fischer and Jastrow 1980: 174–201); the exception were two respondents who mentioned Jordanian-Palestinian dialect, which could be a proof of their higher linguistic consciousness, but more probably it means that they were Jordanian citizens of Palestinian descent. Nearly one-third mentioned the Palestinian dialect, one seventh Egyptian. Individual people spoke Jordanian, Tunisian, Algerian, Syrian and Iraqi dialect. To sum up, more than half respondents spoke the so called Syro-Palestinian dialects of Arabic (similar to each other and relatively close to *fusha*).

All respondents claimed to know literary Arabic (better in writing than in speaking), which indicates that they all gained quite good education in the Middle East and Africa. However, it does not enable them to communicate with Arabs who speak dialects of distant territories. Thus a linguistic phenomenon occurs – according to Zagórski, Arabs in Poland often speak a "third language", a mixture of literary Arabic and dialects (quoted in Wilczak and Zagner 2004: 21–22).

All respondents confirmed that they knew Polish. The number of those who considered themselves fluent both in spoken and written Polish oscillated around two-fifths, the rest generally perceived their knowledge of spoken Polish as better than

that of written one. According to my observations this judgment is justified – all Arab students of mine were quickly learning how to speak basic Polish, while they had difficulties with writing.

Chart 3: Level of spoken Arabic   **Chart 4**: Level of written literary Arabic
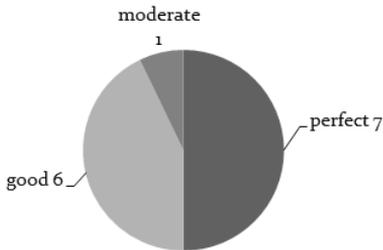
moderate
1

perfect 7

good 6

moderate
2

good
1

perfect
11
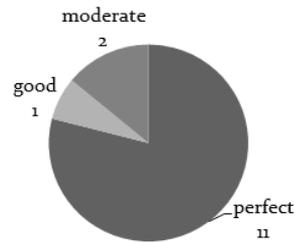
Chart 5: Level of spoken Polish   **Chart 6**: Level of written Polish
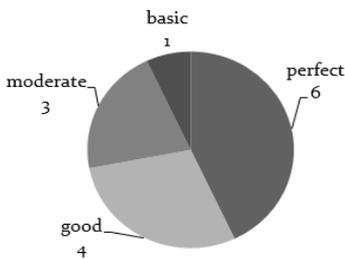
basic
1

moderate
3

perfect
6

good
4

basic
2

weak
1

perfect
6

moderate
3

good
2
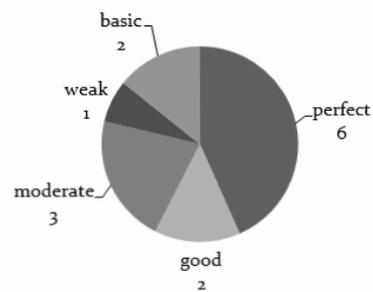
Four-fifths of respondents took courses in the Polish language, one-fifth at work and from family respectively, one declared that he was a self-taught. Almost two-thirds studied in the School of Polish for Foreigners at the University of Łódź; individual respondents also mentioned the School of Polish Language at the Technical University of Kielce, the University of Poznań and the University of Toruń. The reasons were the following: studies (about two-thirds), work and family, other – moving to a new place, living in Poland.

The shortest period of formal studying Polish was 3 weeks, the longest – two years. The average was one year.

The next question was about difficulties respondents faced studying Polish. More than two-fifths had problems with the Polish grammar (in terms of word endings), nearly one-third confessed to have troubles with the pronunciation. One person enumerated troublesome consonants: *cz, ch, w*, another one mentioned vowels: *e* and *y*, while one-fifth of respondents found writing in Polish difficult. On the other hand, almost one-third claimed to have no problems at all. One respondent admitted having problems, but he did not explain what kind of them.

Chart 7: Ways of learning Polish
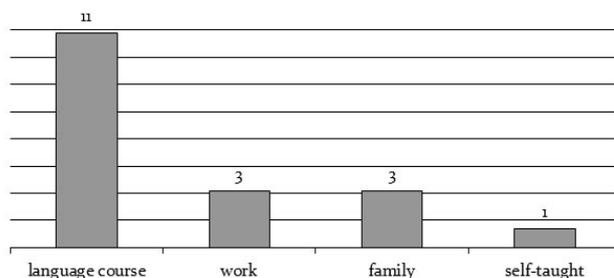
Chart 8: Periods of learning Polish
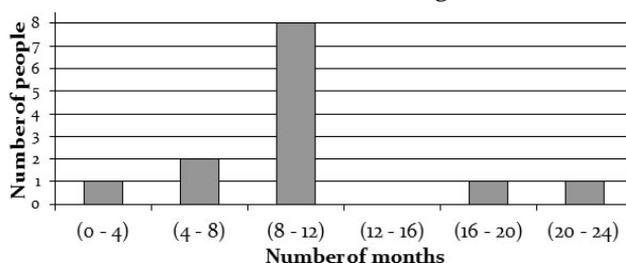
Chart 9: Language difficulties
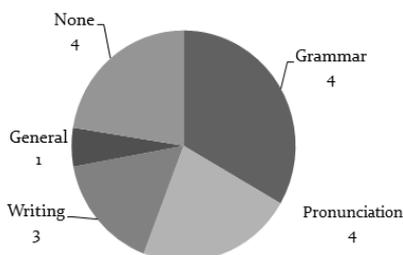
Subsequent questions were about using different languages in writing, speaking and thinking. What is interesting, although understandable, Arabic prevailed in writing and thinking, while Polish in speaking. Almost two-thirds of respondents claimed to think in Polish – among them two assured to think in Polish exclusively. The third language known and used by the respondents was definitely English – one person declared that it is the only language in which he thought. Other languages, like French, German, Czech or Hebrew, were used by individual respondents. Probably more people would have mentioned French, if there had been more respondents from the Maghreb.

Eight questions were designed to check what kind of media the respondents choose – in Arabic or in Polish language. Generally, they used both. As for Arabic

newspapers seven-tenths declared reading them; however, the respondents specified websites rather than printed newspapers; e.g. three quoted Al-Jazeera ('The Island'/ 'The [Arabian] Peninsula'). All titles were equally popular among the respondents, who generally seemed to read 'national' newspapers – focusing on the problems of their homelands. Two mentioned *Al-Quds* ('Jerusalem'), the largest circulation daily newspaper in the Palestinian territories, the same number read the Algerian newspaper *Al-Khabar* ('News'). Other titles were mentioned just once, like: *Al-Hayat* ('Life'), one of the leading daily pan-Arab newspaper, *Asharq Al-Awsat* ('The Middle East'), an international newspaper headquartered in London, *Al-Bayan* ('The Clarification'), a popular newspaper in the United Arab Emirates, *Al-Khaleej* ('The Gulf'), a daily broadsheet newspaper published in the UAE, *Al-Ra'i* ('Opinion'), a Kuwaiti newspaper, *Al-Qabas* ('The Firebrand'), another Kuwaiti newspaper, *Al-Sharq* ('East'), a Qatari newspaper, "Kul al-Arab" ('All Arabs'), an Israeli Arabic-language weekly newspaper, and *Panorama* – an Arabic weekly newspaper printed in Australia.

Chart 10: Usage of languages
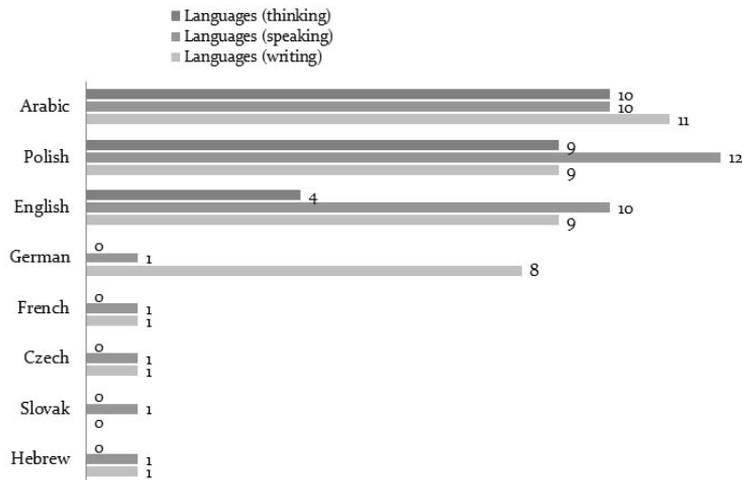
The situation was different regarding Arab television, watched by all respondents. Nearly two-thirds chose Al-Jazeera, an independent broadcaster owned by the state of Qatar; second popular was Al-Arabiya ('The Arabic One'), a Pan-Arabist Saudi-owned television news channel, third MBC (The Middle East Broadcasting Center Group, the first private free-to-air satellite broadcasting company in the Arab World), and fourth Iqra ('Recite'), a satellite and internet television channel promoting "Muslim and family values".

It means that Al-Jazeera is watched by the majority of Arabophones in Poland – probably for the reason that as a relatively free and professional channel it has been changing the face of a formerly parochial Arab media. It is popular precisely because it openly discusses sensitive topics and tackles controversial issues; it fills not only a media void, but also to some extent a political void in the Middle East (Zayani 2005:

1–2). Al-Jazeera's politics, agenda, programs, coverage of regional crises, and treatment of the West shape ideas and reconstruct identities of ordinary Arab viewers all over the world.

Chart 11: Arabic TV stations
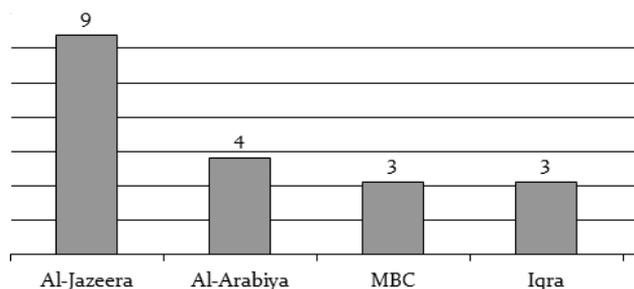
Arabic radio stations were far less popular – more than half of respondents did not listen to them at all. One-fifth declared that they listen to Arabic radio, but were unable to specify which stations. The names which appeared (each one time) were: Radio Sawa ('Together'), a 24-hour 7-day-a-week radio station broadcasting in the Arab world, Radio Panet, Radio Monte Carlo Doualiya ('International'), a mainly Arabic-speaking station, broadcasting in many locations throughout the Middle East and North Africa from Paris. Certainly, radio is not a primary source of information for the majority of respondents; it is the rarest-used media.

The Internet has the upper hand, as all respondents declared to use it. Four respondents indicated www.aljazeera.net, and two Egyptians Egyptian site www.youm7.com; other websites, predominantly with news, were mentioned just once. These were: radiomehatetmasr.com, www.onislam.com, www.alquds.co.uk, www.islamstory.com, www.tunisie.com, www.elkhabar.com, www.syria-news.com, www.alqaheraalyoum.net, www.filgoal.com, www.alarabiya.net, www.panet.co.il.

Slightly fewer respondents read Polish newspapers comparing to Arabic ones – six-tenths versus seven-tenths. One-fifth were unable to give the titles they read. Most popular was *Gazeta Wyborcza*, then *Rzeczpospolita* and *Polityka*; *Newsweek* and *Wprost* were each read by two respondents. Other titles appeared just once: *Metro*, *Echo miasta*, *Głos Wielkopolski*, *Krytyka Polityczna*, *Focus*. The situation was analogical to the case of Arabic newspapers, namely some respondents chose more demanding titles, and some read tabloids. They were polarized just as the Polish readers.

There is no Polish TV station watched by all Arabophones. Almost four-fifths affirmed watching Polish television. Most popular were information channels, which indicates that Arabophones in Poland look for news from their home countries, as well as international ones; entertainment is less important.

A little more respondents listened to the Polish radio than to Arabic one (three-fifths versus two-fifths). One-fifth listened to RMF and TOK FM respectively. Two respondents mentioned Radio Zet, one Program 1, and another Radio Maryja, which is interesting, taking into consideration Christian fundamentalist profile of the latter.

Four-fifths of the respondents used Polish websites, looking for information, possibilities to buy/sell on-line and sometimes entertainment. Almost one-third mentioned www.wp.pl and www.onet.pl respectively, two www.tvn24.pl; other websites were indicated only once: www.interia.pl, www.allegro.pl, www.wykop.pl, websites containing medical information.

This part of the survey demonstrated that Arabophones in Poland use a wide variety of Arabic and Polish media. All respondents used Arabic television and websites, and four-fifths Polish ones. It means that one-fifth of respondents preferred the above-mentioned media in their mother tongue to those in Polish. Newspapers were not such an obvious choice, still many Arabophones read them – more than two-thirds in Arabic and more than half in Polish. The radio was the last choice and the only media with advantage on the Polish language side. The results of the survey were certainly influenced by its electronic form (the respondents who completed it, had to have access to the Internet and be accustomed with modern technologies). On the other hand, the majority of Arabophones living in Poland are intellectuals or people with higher education (the latter is positively correlated with using modern technologies). That is why the chart below could show at least general tendencies valid for whole group (i.e. preferring Internet and TV to newspapers and radio).

Chart 12: Arabic and Polish media
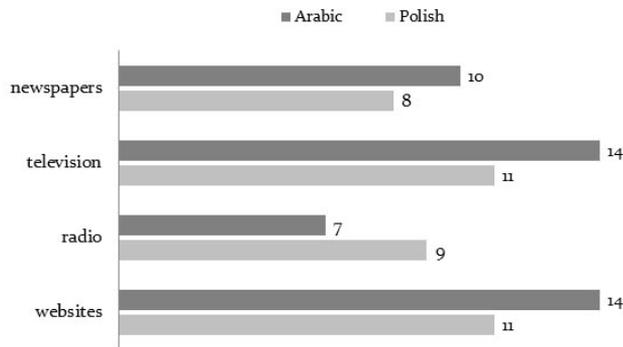
As Arabophones in Poland do not live in a social vacuum, four questions were meant to check the knowledge of languages of their closest relatives: parents, spouses and children, as well as colleagues and co-workers. The parents of all respondents knew Arabic, additionally the parents of the Algerian respondent knew French, the parents of one Palestinian knew English and Hebrew, and the parents of the Iraqi knew Polish since they had immigrated to Poland before he was born. Arabic was the language in which respondents communicated with the parents.

The situation was of course different in the case of their spouses, who all but one were Polish and spoke Polish as their first language. Almost three-fifths knew English, half spoke some Arabic, one-fourth German, and one-seventh French. While it is not surprising that quite a lot of Polish spouses knew English (according to the research

of Education First in 2011, Poland ranked 10th in the 44-countries English Proficiency Index), the number of those who knew some Arabic was very high. As the question did not require specifying the level of the language competence, there could be professional Arabists in this category, as well as women who have learnt basics of their husbands' language after marriage. Whatever the case may be, it shows their good will to understand their Arab spouses better.

Out of six respondents who had children, five had offspring mature enough to talk. All children knew Polish, four-fifths of them knew some Arabic too, and two-fifths were learning English and German. It means that the majority of respondents wanted their children to be able to communicate in Arabic; only one did not teach them his mother tongue. Some children were learning English and German, just like their Polish peers. The rule was, though, that they were using Polish and knew some Arabic (certain dialect rather than *fusha*).

The question about languages used in communication with the families confirmed that generally three languages were common: Arabic, Polish and English. Two-thirds of the respondents declared speaking Arabic with the families, while one-third answered that they spoke Polish (two respondents claimed to communicate in Polish only). Two spoke English (one Egyptian used English exclusively). This means that probably Arabophones, being at least bilingual themselves and often having bilingual wives and children, switch the languages depending on the language abilities of the relatives and/or the topic of conversation.

While Arabic is still extensively used at home, it is not the case at work – more than four-fifths of the respondents used Polish at work, one-fifth English, and one respondent French. It could be deducted that professional life forces Arabophones residing in Poland to speak Polish in order to get a job; only few were able to find jobs in which good command of English was sufficient. The Algerian man speaking French at work was an exception.

Another opposition was languages spoken in formal situation, e.g. in the office with co-workers, versus languages spoken in informal situations, e.g. with friends and colleagues. Formal situations involved only two languages – Polish and to a lesser extent English, while informal situations allowed respondents to use Arabic (more than half) and French. This could mean that the majority of respondents keep in touch with their Arab friends or meet new Arab-speaking colleagues in Poland. None of respondents worked in an Arab-speaking environment. Nevertheless, this is the case of well-educated Arabophones in Poland, as there are also Arabs, who do not know Polish, and thus look for jobs in restaurants or kebab shops run by Arab owners; most often such a choice means deterioration of their professional status in comparison to their position in home country. Those Arabophones aspire to learn Polish and change the job for a better one. Generally, only those who treat Poland as a transitional country do not want to learn Polish.

One question was about the attitude of respondents towards the Polish language. None of the respondents expressed open displeasure, yet less than half seemed to like it. Put together, there were more politely disapproving answers like 'I do not mind it' and 'I do not have an opinion'. It is important as a positive attitude towards a foreign

language generally stimulates to make a bigger effort while studying it. Except for previous answers of respondents who claimed to have no problems with Polish language, it might be guessed that complicated grammar, as well as the usage of many consonants and different vowels, is discouraging for many Arab people. Most certainly, Arabic is loved and valued far more – as the mother tongue obviously, but also as the holy language of the Qur'an (Danecki 2008: 98).

Chart 13: Attitude towards Polish language
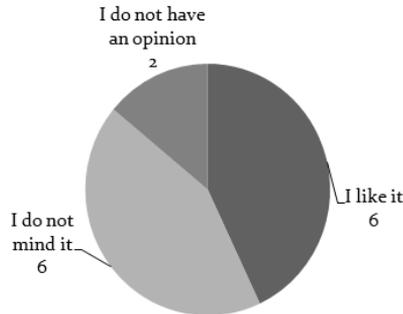
The last question was about the willingness to take part in an additional course of the Polish language. Half of respondents were not interested at all. Others would perhaps be interested depending on the charge they would have to pay. Only one-fifth would like to learn Polish in an extra course irrespectively of the price, while the rest would take such an opportunity if it was either an utterly free course, or they could afford it. It means that among the group interested in further studying the Polish language, economic restrictions play an important role.

Additional Remarks

Since the quantitative method of collecting data has its drawbacks (e.g. the researcher collects a narrow and sometimes superficial dataset), some additional remarks should be made. Teaching Polish to three Arabophones of different background and sex (Iraqi, Egyptian and Syrian; two men and one woman) in the years 2003–2011, I observed certain patterns of socio-linguistic behavior, which were confirmed by the definitely deeper case study by Zarzycka (2000). Although my experience was of private classes, once or twice a week, and hers of a regular course in the School of Polish for Foreigners at the University of Łódź, the similarities were striking. Zarzycka specified several social and linguistic behaviors of Arab students during the process of learning the Polish language:
1) preferring oral to written code of communication;
2) fascination with colloquial language;
3) tendency to use natural language resources;
4) tendency to define mutual contacts at the early stage;

5) over-expressiveness in communication;
6) word games.

The following examples are from my own teaching practice:

Ad 1) All my students insisted on speaking, asking for "more conversations". It could be ascribed to the high esteem of eloquent people in Arabic culture, as well as practical reasons – basic human interactions require common spoken code. If they made notes, they were phonetic ones (written in Arabic letters). Usually, they asked me to write new Polish words in capital letters and added translations and pronunciation in Arabic. Interestingly, the translations were sometimes in *fusha* and sometimes in their dialect (depending on the kind of vocabulary). Writing pronunciation in Arabic was helpful in the beginning, but later on it hindered the learning process, as the students kept pronouncing the words in a distorted manner, e.g. they had problems with distinguishing between *p* and *b* sounds (in Arabic only the latter exist).

I made a similar observation with regard to the English language – e.g. Iraqi woman, whom I taught in Poland, spoke fluent English, but made serious mistakes in writing (spelling, tenses, grammar). However, this did not disturb her in nor discourage from communicating. Thus, I suppose it is a kind of a rule that Arabophones learn quicker and better how to speak a foreign language than how to write in it, in contrast to e.g. the Japanese who in general are better in writing in English, probably because of the fear of pronouncing the words incorrectly (Brown 2004: 8).

Ad 2) In view of the fact that the students were interested in oral communication, and associated it with dialect (high versus low variety), they all wanted to know meanings of words used in the street; they often learnt erroneous but popular forms and phrases (e.g. *proszę panią* instead of *proszę pani* – addressing a lady). The men quickly picked up "dirty words", though they seldom used them (if any, they chose only mild ones, like *cholera* – 'damn'). They disapproved of some Polish heavy cursing.

Ad 3) Arab students in Poland were quickly (re)constructing friendly space around them by finding favorite shops, restaurants, tea shops, etc., in which they would eagerly involve in conversations with Polish people. They felt comfortably in informal situations like family gatherings or eating out; they avoided being left alone. As the result, they picked up Polish street language quicker than any other foreign group (Zarzycka 2000: 148).

Ad 4) Arabophones tended to define mutual relations with their interlocutors basing on the Arab model. Thus, Arab women wanted to treat Polish women as sisters or mothers, maintain warm relations and look for emotional support, while Arab men accentuated feminine side of Polish women, paying compliments, or even flirting with the younger girls (preserving their masculinity in this way), though many perceived females as sisters or mothers too (one attitude did not exclude the other). Certain behavior was determined by the age and sex of both interlocutors, as well as the needs of the Arabophone.

Ad 5) For people coming from Anglo-Saxon cultures, Arabs might be perceived as too emotional, noisy, pushy; their over-expressiveness involves movements, voices and emotions. The Arabic language abounds with grammatical features of assertion and exaggeration. In addition, Arabs use stylistic and rhetorical devices, such as

metaphors, similes, and long arrays of adjectives, to achieve an even stronger exaggeration (Gudykunst 2003: 64). Over-expressiveness reflects the tendency of the Arabic culture to emphasize effect over accuracy, image over meaning, and form over function (Zaharna 1995). According to Luster and Koester (1996: 205), the intonation pattern of the Arabic language is such that many single words in the sentence are accented. Thus, many phrases sound like exclamations although they have indicative character. A higher pitch of the voice carries more emotions comparing to English. Arabs generally look intensively at their interlocutors or tap them on the shoulder to show their positive feelings. The example of such close personal space preference (of course restricted to members of the same sex) is my Arab female student holding me by the hand whenever we were going out.

Polish people belong to the Slavic culture which, according to Wierzbicka (1991), value non-habitual emotional expression, thus they do not perceive such behavior as improper or impolite. On the other hand, I observed that after several months of staying in Poland my Arab students became more moderate, if not reserved in their behavior (they even spoke quieter), which certainly facilitated their integration.

Ad 6) Arab students I taught paid attention to the verbal side of the Polish language, they liked rhythms and word games, as well as learning lyrics of songs or short poems. They were fond of Polish diminutives and sometimes added to their own names endings like *-uś*, *-usia* in private conversations (e.g. 'Ahmaduś'). They were fascinated by names with interesting pronunciation, like 'Dziurdzioły' – name of a village in Poland, similar to Arabic word for 'holes' (Arab. 'juhr'), by accident having a similar meaning in Polish.

I would add one more point here, namely using Arabic words related to the Islam by pious Muslims, even those who speak very good Polish, for instance to welcome friends, also Polish, with *salam* ('peace'), or repeating *inshallah* ('if the God wills') and *alhamdullilah* ('praise to God'). This is marginal phenomenon though, as the majority of Arabs living in Poland are not very religious.

Conclusions

Though it is not a rule, in the light of this research well-educated Arabophones, who came to Poland as students and had the possibility to take part in a course of the Polish language, have acquired it to the extent that it enables them to communicate and function in Polish society. Despite some peculiarities, like preferring oral to written form of the language, or certain problems with pronunciation and grammar, they have learnt the new language relatively quickly. Moreover, many of them use various Polish-language media in addition to Arabic ones. In general, acquisition of the language is followed by the integration into Polish society, the process often strengthened and facilitated by marriage with Polish citizens.

On the other hand, there is also a group of Arabs, who have just recently come to Poland as husbands of Polish women and/or looking for economic opportunities, and have not learnt Polish yet. They depend mostly on Arabic media, as well as keep in touch with their Arab families through Skype; they use English to communicate with

their Polish partners, families and friends. Their integration in Poland is more difficult since they tend to work and spend their free time with other Arabophones. Most of them would eagerly learn Polish if time and economic constrains allowed them; not knowing it, they cannot occupy better job positions.

As for diglossia expected to occur in the Polish language, it appears only in first stages of studying Polish – after several months Arabophones notice that Polish is far more homogenetic than Arabic and the phrases learned at school actually work in the street. The rather small distance between Arab and Polish cultures facilitates creating a link between Arab languaculture (LC1) and Polish languaculture (LC2). The "cultural shocks" are relatively infrequent. Nevertheless, additional courses of the Polish language combined with courses of intercultural competence would deepen the integration of those Arabophones who decided to stay permanently in Poland.

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Gaweł Walczak

Muhammad in Warsaw, or a few words about Warsaw's Somalis

This article presents two different perspectives of representation of Somali community in Poland. The first part of this paper demonstrates images of Somalia and Somalis residing outside their country of origin as painted by the Polish media. It shows how they are depicted and categorized. The second part presents the life stories of Somalis residing in Warsaw. It also contains information about two Somali organizations and their members. Both institutions, Somali Association in the Republic of Poland (Stowarzyszenie Somalijskie w Rzeczpospolitej Polskiej) and Foundation for Somalia (Fundacja dla Somalii), are located in Warsaw. I collected the data on these organizations during my fieldwork in Warsaw in July and August 2011. The methodology used during my research included interviewing, a focus group and participant observations. For the analysis of media coverage of Somalis I used the desk research method.

This paper examines neither the content of the production of news about Somalis and Somalia presented in Polish media, nor the effects of these news on the identities or behavior of the "audience". I consider media images as a product of popular culture, which is „a contested space in which subjectivities are constituted" (Manenkar 1993: 471). As Michael Herzfeld put it, the media

> …provide us contact with experiences, realities, and aesthetic canons that differ from our own. They create both the awareness of actual and potential differences, and the "stuff" with which to imagine those differences. (2001: 305)

Media representations do impact on our perception of others, but they are not the only factor which constitutes it.

Michael Jackson claims that storytelling questions, blurs, transgresses and even abolishes existent boundaries of any society (2002: 25). By using the stories of the Somalis living in Warsaw, I do not want to explore the outlines of their community. I would rather expose the limits of our own, Polish society and its attitude towards the Others. This attitude is based on, as Michael Herzfeld calls it, "common sense", which is the everyday understanding of mechanisms of the world (2001: 19).

Media

My media research was based on the content of 21 websites, including 9 Internet editions of the biggest Polish daily newspapers (*Dziennik Gazeta Prawna*, *Fakt*, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, *Nasz Dziennik*, *Polska The Times*, *Rzeczpospolita*, *Super Express* and *Życie Warszawy*), 5 Internet editions of weekly magazines (*Gazeta Polska*, *NIE*, *Polityka*, *Uważam rze* and *Wprost*), 1 Internet edition of a quarterly journal (*Krytyka Polityczna*), one Internet portal of news television channel (TVN 24) and 5 Internet portals (interia.pl, niezależna.pl, onet.pl, salon24.pl and wp.pl). I surveyed all the contents of the Internet media archives, from 1998 to 2011.

These titles represent a diversified spectrum of political positions and ideologies. Some of them define themselves as belonging to the new Polish political left wing (*Krytyka Polityczna*), others as conservative (*Uważam rze*). Some media describe themselves as anticlerical and anti-right-wing (*NIE*), others as Christian (*Nasz Dziennik*). Many of them describe themselves as public opinion makers.

I found 690 articles concerning Somalis. Most of them (467) were related to Somalia. Only 20 of them referred to Somalis living in Poland. Ten media news covered the debate about Polish involvement in the European Union mission in Uganda, the main goal of which is to train Somali government soldiers. The rest (193) was about Somalis residing in other countries, outside Somalia (see table 1).

Most articles about Somalia (193) were related to the issue of piracy. It is worth to mention that only 17% of them (33) described kidnapping of ships with Polish crew onboard. Other news with reference to Somalia focused on such issues as death from famine and diseases (famine – 41, children dying of starvation – 10, cholera – 10) and international intentions of helping this country (international humanitarian aid – 21, United Nations Operation in Somalia II (UNOSOM II) occurred between 1993 and 1995 – 7). Some articles described fight against Islamists or terrorists (Islamists – 33, terrorists – 24, struggles between the Islamist rebels and government forces supported by the African Union troops from AMISOM (African Union Mission in Somalia) – 23, Ethiopian intervention – 15) and hostile Islam (bloody, antichristian and intolerant Islam – 3, stoning – 3, female genital mutilation[1] – 2). Also, news about Somalia referred to personal insecurity (kidnapping – 13, bomb attacks – 4, chaos – 4, journalist deaths – 4) and the "dark side" of power (mercenaries – 3, corruption – 2).

The image of Somalia painted by the Polish media is that of a country of pirates, Islamists and terrorists. It is a country in which people are dying from war (between government and Islamists rebels), famine (provoked by drought), disease (cholera), and even wild animals (crocodiles). Somalia is a place where, regardless of the failure of successive international military interventions (intervention of UN between 1993 and 1997 and Ethiopia between 2006 and 2009), the struggle of the international community to deliver humanitarian aid and peace (African Union Mission in Somalia) continues.

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[1] Although female genital mutilation is not related to religion but to the customs of a number of communities worldwide, many journalists or social activists treat it as an issue of Islam.

Somalia comes first in the rankings of most dangerous states presented by the Polish media. It is a dangerous place not only for its citizens, but for foreigners as well. News on journalist deaths and kidnapping show it. Somalia is especially dangerous for Christians, because of intolerant Islam.

Table 4: Main topics of Polish media news about Somalia

Topic	Number of articles
Piracy	193
Famine	41
Islamists	33
Terrorists	24
Government and African Union forces struggle against Islamists	23
International humanitarian aid	21
Ethiopian intervention in Somalia	15
Kidnapping	13
Children dying of starvation	10
Cholera	10
Works of art related to Somalia	10
United Nations Operation in Somalia II (UNOSOM II)	7
Bomb attacks	4
Chaos	4
Journalist deaths	4
Somalia as a negative point of reference	4
Bloody, antichristian and intolerant Islam	4
Mercenaries	3
The most dangerous country and city (Mogadishu) in the world	3
Polish Humanitarian Action appeal	3
Stoning	3
Other[2]	25

It is worth to mention that from about 460 articles concerning Somalia only two of them represent a holistic approach to the situation in this country. Ayşe Öncü asserts that

> [...] commercial media are significant, not because they educate audiences by providing factual information, but because they provide simplified ways of organizing meanings... (1995: 56)

There are two simplified ways of organizing Somalia-related meanings, provided by the Polish media. First one is related to the Western stereotype of African

[2] Other topics include: Comprehensive view of the situation in Somalia, a 117-year-old man getting married to a 17-year-old girl, corruption, country in which international aid is pointless,

primitivism. Africa is "the savage heart of darkness that lurks beyond the edges of the civilized world" (Ferguson 2005: 168). The image of Africa as „savage land" stems from the colonial era, when "...*savage life* is just another form of *animal life*, a horrifying experience, something alien beyond imagination or comprehension..." (Mbembe 2003: 24). Its primitivism is not only in opposition to the Western modernity based on "rational" and "logical" thinking (Ferguson 2002: 577). It is a place of disorder, of chaos, inhabited by violent people involved in barbaric and tribal clashes.

War and violence in Somalia persisted for more than 20 years and there is little prospect of the end of it in the near future. There is no doubt that the situation in Somalia is really hard for the people living there. But these people are not only pirates, terrorists, Islamists, government officials and soldiers or African Union mission members. Also, they are not only the victims of the clashes, kidnappings and bomb attacks. There are other people who not only struggle to survive, but try to lead a "normal" life as well. These people, however, are not shown in the Polish news.[3]

The second simplified way of organizing meanings provided by some Polish media concerning Somalia is related to the Western way of presenting the world. The world which we live in is a world of states, and state is an institution which is "above" the civil society (Ferguson and Gupta 2002: 982). Civil society is like a "buffer" between the state and the community: „...an imagined middle zone of contact or mediation between the citizen, the family, or the community, on the one hand, and the state on the other..." (2002: 983). One of the projections of civil society are social organizations which are independent of the state (Taylor 1990: 96).

In case of Somalia this type of reasoning becomes problematic, because it is hard to talk about a state, where the government recognized by the international community controls only one country town and a small part of the capital. It is also hard to talk about civil society or community where the whole territory is an arena of ethnic or interclan clashes. To describe Somalia's situation, the media use such terms as "failed state", "ghost state", "state of hatred" or land of "chaos". Notably, this is observable not only in the Western media, which Polish media belong to, but also with other Western public opinion makers, such as academic and research centers or non-governmental and international organizations.[4] "Failed state" is a state in which the government has failed. There is no central authority on its territory, no bureaucratic apparatus, but it exists on the maps and takes part in the international community.

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failed state, female genital mutilation, Adado as an oasis of peace, American imperialism, computer game about Somalia, country with the lowest number of Internet websites, crocodile attacks, country of war in Exsultet, failed international intervention, "Forgotten state", GDP decline, "Ghost state", mobile phone market growth, "State of hatred", "Unsuccessful state". There were 2 or 1 article on each topic.

[3] Media generally fail to mention the "everyman's" struggle in his everyday life. They focus on sensational news, not only in case of Somalia, but in referring to the Western countries as well. The difference lies with the contents of the news – the Western countries are not presented as "savage land".

[4] E.g. „Failed States Index", one of the sources of Polish articles on Somalia as a „failed state", is developed by the organization Fund for Peace and „Foreign Policy" magazine.

The situation of Somalia indicates that the perception of the world as a system of states is not applicable to every part of the planet. It is not applicable, because the state itself is „...a constructed entity conceptualized and made socially effective through particular imaginative and symbolic devices...” (Ferguson and Gupta 2002: 981). Lack of these devices reveals that it is not the state ascribed to a given territory that is "failed", but the system of description of political organization.

There are 193 Polish media news concerning the Somalis living abroad. Table 2 presents the main topics related to those articles.

Table 5: Main topics of Polish media news about Somalis living abroad

Article's topic	Number of articles
Terrorist	68
Artists	23
Refugees	17
Fugitives drowned in the sea	14
Human wave flooding other countriesWealthier immigrant community in comparision with Polish immigrants	12
Immigrants	9
Social damage perpetrators	8
Criminals	7
Works of art related to Somalis	7
Illegal immigrants	5
Less crimes committed in comparision with Polish immigrants	5
Abstract community	3
Expelled from host countries	3
Other[5]	13

Most of the articles about the Somalis in Polish media (68) focused on the terrorist issue. Many news (23) were related to Somalis artists creating abroad, but it is worth mentioning as well that these news refer just to three artists (a rapper – K'naan, a photographer – Omar Feisal, and a writer – Nuruddin Farah), one short movie from the 1980s ("The Tree of life") and a wife of famous British singer.

Somalis are depicted as refugees (17), fugitives drowned in the sea (14) and a human wave flooding other countries (12). They appear in articles describing Polish immigrants in Great Britain and Norway as those who are wealthier than Poles (9) and commit fewer crimes (5). Other images of this community in Polish media are related to regular (9) and illegal (5) immigration, social damage (8), crime (5), expulsion (3)

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[5] Other topics include (1–2 articles in each case): FIFA president's scandal, unwanted foreigners, blasphemy in Catholic Church, ethnic structure of national football team, female genital mutilation, objects of international mediator's activities, one of the most stigmatized community in Europe, Polish Humanitarian Action Appeal, Somali associations, scientific books about Somalis, victim of murder.

and unwanted foreigners. As I previously stated, Somalia was described as an abstract country. Some articles (2) were dedicated to a statement of a Polish politician who said that he preferred seeking asylum in Somalia, the country which was no longer a country, to staying in Poland. Other two presented Somalia as a country which is far away from Poland, so far that it almost belongs to another world. In Polish news the Somalis as a community or a nation are abstract as well. For example, some journalists quoted the words of a hockey club's coach who, after losing a match, stated that his players played like Somalis.

All these articles portray the Somalis as a homogeneous group, which is another method of simplification. Somalis are fugitives escaping to such European Union member states as Italy, Malta, Norway or Great Britain, and other countries in the world, as Yemen, Tunisia, Kenya or Canada. Some of them die during their trip through the sea. When they arrive to a destination country, they become refugees or immigrants, and as refugees or immigrants they remain there or are expelled by the authorities.

There is no place in Polish news for personal stories of Somalis living abroad. There is also no place for group images describing this community in a way different than refugees or immigrants. And there is no place for them to express their opinion or feelings. Somalis are, as Liisa Malkki calls them, "speechless emissaries". They are persons who do not speak, have no past and no future. They "stop being specific persons and become pure victims in general" (1996: 378), and they constitute a singular category of persons within the international order of things (Malkki 1996). This international order of things is a system of nation-states.

The one exception to this rule are the artists. However, it is worth highlighting that Polish media dedicated whole articles to only one of them, rapper K'naan. Omar Feisal appeared as one of the winners of World Press Photo Award in 2011. He received a reward in the category of "everyday life – single photograph". Nuruddin Farah was mentioned among possible Nobel Prize in literature in the year 2002.

There are only 20 articles about Somalis in Poland from among 690 concerning the Somalis and Somalia, as previously mentioned. Table 3 present the main topics related to those 20.

Most of the articles (6) regarding Somalis in Poland concern the suicide of a Somali prisoner in Sztum jail . Some of them describe it as an Islamic ritual, even though Islam forbids suicide. Other news show Somalis as residents of centre for foreigners[7] (2) or persons who attempt to cross the Polish border illegally (2). Two articles illustrate the assault on a Somali committed by three unidentified men in the city of Gdańsk.

Somalis as Muslims appear not only in news in relation to the suicide in a Sztum prison. There are comments concerning Somali students in secondary schools and their impact on the high schools final exams of religion. Since religion is included in

[6] Sztum is a small town of the Pomerania Province, in the north of Poland.
[7] Centers for foreigners are social centers for asylum seekers and belong to the Office for Foreigners.
[8] Interestingly, although Somalis are just one of the Muslim communities in Poland, the articles in Polish media related to the religion exams mentioned only them.

the final exams, they had to have an opportunity to pass the exam on Islam.[8] Other news regard school theme as well. During the debate about displaying a crucifix in classes some commentators indicated that if headmasters started to display crucifixes in classes, the believers of other confessions, for example Muslim Somalis, would insist to add their crescents in near future.

Table 6: Main topics of Polish media news about Somalis in Poland

Article's topic	Number of articles
Suicide in prison	6
Life stories of foreigners living in Warsaw	3
Residents of foreigners center	2
Illegal border crossing	2
Assault victim	2
Refugees in Malta invited by Polish government	1
Islamic threat	1
"Polish Foreign Legion"	1
Religion on high school leaving exams	1

These examples illustrate that the Polish media images of Somalis in Poland are centered on the same topics as images of Somalis living in other countries. These images are related to crime (a Somali committed suicide in prison, so he had to commit a crime to get there), refugees (Polish centers for foreigners are for people who seek asylum), illegal immigration (people who cross the national border illegally become illegal immigrants, because they lack a legal permission to stay in Polish territory), and victim. Nevertheless, there is significant difference between the depiction of Somalis living in Poland and their compatriots remaining in other countries, as presented by the Polish media. This difference is contained in life stories of two Somalis, described in articles on the Warsaw cultural diversity. The first story is about a young woman who struggles to integrate herself and her child with Warsaw society. The second one describes a man who started a non-governmental organization dedicated to social and humanitarian work in Poland and in Somalia.

Somalis in Warsaw

There are 25 Somalis in Poland today, according to my interlocutors.[9] Most of them live in Warsaw, only 4 in other cities, Poznań and Szczecin. All of them fled Somalia to get away from the war and went to Europe to seek a better and safer place. All the Somalis who reached Poland escaped from Somalia because of the war. Some of them were members of the United Somali Congress (USC), an opposition movement which in 1991 ousted Muhammad Siad Barre, the president of Somalia

[9] According to the National Public Survey 2002 conducted by the Central Statistical Office there were 41 Somalis residing in Poland.

since 1969. After his flight, the opposition broke into clan factions and started a civil war which has not ceased since. Other Somalis left the country after the civil war broke out.

One of my interlocutors arrived to Poland by himself. He wanted to go to Poland and went by airplane. Another one also wanted to go to Poland. He learned about Poland during his studies in Russia. He went from the United Arab Emirates to Turkey by plane, met other Somalis there and traveled with them to the North by car. His compatriots wanted to go to Germany, but they were detained by the Polish border guards on the German border. They traveled through Europe in the course of one week.

Some of the Somalis went with their friends by plane to Russia and crossed the border illegally with smugglers. They arrived together with Indians and Pakistanis. It should be mentioned that according Europol one of the illegal immigration routes to the European Union goes via Russia to Poland and from there to Scandinavia, Germany or Austria (Bruggeman 2002).

Of the 25 Somalis living in Poland nowadays, 21 are refugees. Four of them are asylum seekers. Some of them asked for asylum on the border, others asked the border guards for asylum after being detained upon attempting to cross the frontier with Germany or Czech Republic. Others did not know that they could seek asylum and went to a police station or the Office for Foreigners after other Somalis told them to do it.

They spent time in various centers for foreigners located in different cities and towns in Poland, waiting for the decision. Those Somalis who were seeking asylum in the early 1990s spent there only a few weeks. Those who came to Poland later spent there a year or more, in spite of the fact that, according to the Polish legislation, the procedure of awarding refugee status must be completed within 6 months. However, not every Somali entering Poland was granted international protection. According to the Office for Foreigners data, between the years 2001 and 2008 the refugee status was granted to 36 Somalis, and the tolerated status (other form of protection for foreigners seeking asylum in Poland) to 10 of them.[10] In case of 26 Somalis the decisions were negative. 21 procedures were discontinued. Between 2009 and 2010 not a single Somali was granted the refugee status and only 3 of them received the tolerated status. At the same time, the total number of successful refugee status applications (obtaining a positive decision) in Poland was 1694. The Somalis constituted 0.2% of them. As mentioned before, there are 25 Somalis in Poland nowadays. The rest of the 46 who were granted some form of international protection went to other European Union countries.

After receiving the decision of being granted the refugee status, every foreigner has to leave the center for foreigners and has two weeks to find a new place to live. In the mid-1990s foreigners received 450 PLN per person (ca 110 EUR).[11] Many of the

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[10] This information originates from statistical date available on the website of the Office for Foreigners: http://www.udsc.gov.pl.

[11] Afterwards this kind of financial aid stopped, and today, in 2011, they do not receive anything.

Somalis spent the money on buying ticket to other European countries, where their relatives or friends lived. They wanted to go to Germany or Great Britain because they considered that those countries offered more possibilities opportunities for a good and well-paid job. Besides, many of them never really wanted to come to Poland in the first place. Poland was a "transit" country for them. From the very start, their destination was the Western Europe. They did not manage to reach it, because they were detained by the Polish authorities on the Russian or German border.

In the 1990s those Somali refugees who decided to remain in Poland had to cope with their new situation alone. They were lucky if they met their compatriots during their journey or acquainted them in the center for foreigners. They could look for a flat or a room together. They said that the place to sleep was the most important element, because "if you had a roof over your head, you could calmly look for a job".

Today, the Somalis who live in Warsaw work as hairdressers, painters, waiters, barmen and butchers. Many of them got married, the majority with Somali women, but there are relationships with Poles as well. All of them are Sunni Muslims. Those who live in Warsaw go to the mosque every Friday for prayer,[12] but they celebrate their religious holidays in private houses. They came from various parts of Somalia. As one of my interlocutors noticed: "in our country we fight, but outside Somalia we live together". They said the situation in Somalia was so tragic that they did not have many problems in receiving the refugee status, although some of them had to spend over a year in the centers for foreigners.

My interlocutors maintain contact with their relatives in other countries. One of them has a brother living in United States, other's brother lives in Sweden. They help their families who remained in Somalia. They send them money, despite the fact that transmitting money from Poland to Somalia is very difficult and expensive. The best method of transfer is to do it by means of the *hawala* system. It does not require any bank account. People who want to use the *hawala* system have to find a *hawaladara*, the middleman. They give him money and he calls his counterpart in the country to which the money has to be transferred. His counterpart receives the information about the amount and gives it to the recipient. It is a system based on the confidence and the word of honor.

However, there is no *hawaladara* in Poland. There is no Western Union office in Somalia as well. The company used to have some offices in this country in the past, but had to withdraw after several attacks on its agencies. Thus, the only method for Somalis living in Warsaw to transfer money to Somalia is to send it by Western Union or bank transfer to other European country where some relative or friend lives. He or she receives the money and goes with it do the *hawaladara*, who sends it to Somalia. According to UNDP, some 500 million USD are remitted to Somalia every year The remittances surpassed over 4 times the international aid for Somalia, which amounts to almost 115 million USD annually (2001: 104).

The Somalis residing in Poland rarely face direct offence, but such offences are related more to the color of their skin than to their religion. The Somalis in Warsaw

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[12] There is no mosque in Poznań and Szczecin, and that is why Somalis who stay in those two cities pray in their homes.

form a very small, but well organized group. They established two NGOs, one to help each other here, in Poland, and the other one to work in their country of origin. The first organization is called The Somalis in the Republic of Poland Association, and the second one – Foundation for Somalia.

The Somalis in the Republic of Poland Association

The Association was formally created in 2005. Its main goals were to help Somalis living in Poland and to cultivate their culture and faith. The main reason for the establishment of the organization was their initial experience of "starting anew" in a European country. They were alone, they had nothing and they had to seek help in welfare organizations. When they settled, they decided that they could help the newcomers.

The Somalis living in Warsaw assist their compatriots while these wait for the end of the procedure of granting the refugee status. They provide them with help in looking for a flat to rent and with job search. They help each other in their everyday life as well. They get together to solve the problems of the association's members, if necessary. They inform each other about the most important events. They also gather to just simply talk. Once a year, they organize the Somali Day. It is a feast when all the Somalis living in Warsaw meet to cook and eat their traditional dishes. They sing and dance. They invite Poles as well to acquaint them with Somali culture. All the association's members are obliged to participate in this event. As the organization does not have a head office, people meet in private houses.

Whereas the association has 15 formal members, all the 25 Somalis living in Poland work for it. Those who are not formal members act as volunteers. The association is not only the formal representation of Somalis.[13] It acts as an official voice of the whole Somali community.

Foundation for Somalia

The Foundation for Somalia was created in 2007. The main reason and the main goal of the foundation was the construction of hospital in Adado, in Somali Himan and Heeb region. Furthermore, the foundation's activity focused on integration and intercultural issues.

The organization has two founders. For one of them, a Somali man, it was a return to his activities from the past. In the 1980s he acted in the United Somali Congress, but when he realized that the fight against the Muhammad Siad Barre regime was starting to deteriorate into an inter-clan civil war, he left USC and went to Poland. He was granted the refugee status and started his own business. After 15 years of trading he decided to return to social work once again.

The Foundation for Somalia's activities on integration and intercultural issues started with international youth meetings. The first encounter was organized in 2008.

[13] There is no Somali embassy in Poland.

It was called the "European Youth of Somali Origin" and was dedicated to young people from Denmark, Great Britain, Poland and Sweden. The second meeting took place in 2009 and was called „Others in Europe". It was not exclusively Somali-oriented. The participants came from Great Britain, Netherlands, Norway and Poland, and they were representatives of 14 nationalities in total. The third encounter was arranged in 2010 under the name "European Youth from Multicultural Family". The participants arrived from Denmark, Great Britain, Poland and Sweden. These meeting are followed by workshops focused on art and intercultural education, together with the migration and democracy issue. The seminars started in the 2010.

The Foundation for Somalia works both at international and local levels. It has a free of charge consultation center providing legal and career advice along with intercultural mediation. The consultations are in Polish and other languages as well, including Arabic, English, French, German, Italian, Russian and Spanish. The organization has also started founding an African immigrants' nongovernmental organizations' platform. The main goal for this activity is to create a formal body which will strengthen the African immigrants' voice in the public debate.

As I have just highlighted, the foundation's main goal is the construction of a hospital in Adado, in Somali Himan and Heeb region. Himan and Heeb is one of the central provinces of Somalia and is, as a foundation's president stated, a "no man's land". The notorious Al-Shabaab forces are located in the south of the country. Government recognized by the international community controls only Mogadishu and a small province town Baidoa. In the north, there are two quasi-independent regions, Putland and Somaliland. They are quasi-independent, because although they have their local authorities who managed to establish peace in their respective areas of influence, they are not internationally recognized.

The Foundation for Somalia cooperates with the local government of Himan and Heeb and Save Somali Women and Children organization. Its founder, Aisha Haji Elmi, won the Right Livelihood Award, also known as the alternative Nobel Prize, in 2008. They started to collect medical equipment in Poland with the cooperation of Polish Army and beds with the cooperation of Oleśnica city hall. They sent the collected items to Somalia in 2010. The foundation began fundraising as well. The main problem with gathering money is the reluctance and mistrust of people stemming from negative images of Somalis in the Polish media. People do not want to give their money to pirates or terrorists. On the other hand, the Foundation's president admits that in a way they are much indebted to pirates, because thanks to them the international community has started to think and speak of Somalia once again.

In 2011 the organization opened its new offices in Mogadishu, Somalia, and Nairobi, Kenya. They want to achieve a coordination of their work in Somalia and they want to start working with Somali refugees in this neighboring country as well. Work in Kenya will consist in four main fields of activity: women, education, water and health. The foundation's head office in Kenya is located in Nairobi, but they want to work in the city of Garissa. The refugee camp for Somali fugitives, Dadaab, is located in that city's vicinity. It is the world's biggest refugee camp as well.

Other form of the foundation's activity abroad started in 2011 by expediting Poles to work in Somalia. They went with a film director, two nurses and a doctor to

a hospital in Adado in their July journey to Mogadishu. They were planning another excursion in 2011 with some Polish journalists who wanted to make a documentary about the drought devastating the Horn of Africa. The main goal of these expeditions is to raise awareness among the Poles that not every part of Somalia is occupied by pirates or Islamists.

The Foundation for Somalia has recently started to gain European and Polish funding for its activities. Before that it worked due to the commitment of Somali community remaining in Poland. Formally, the organization employs three persons. On a day-to-day basis they cooperate very closely with the Somalis in the Republic of Poland Association. All the decisions regarding aid to Somalia or work with Somalis in Poland were made together. The president of the Foundation and the president of the Association participated in the last journey to Somalia with money gathered for the drought's victims.

Conclusions

As Michael Jackson wrote:

As long as we think of refugees solely as victims, we do a grave injustice to the facts of refugee experience, for loss is always countermanded by actions – albeit imaginative, magical, and illusory to regain some sense of balance between the world within and the world without... (2002: 79)

Moving away from thinking about refugees as victims and beneficiaries of aid efforts is a very important step. To treat them in this way is to consider them as a mute and passive mob which is dependent on the help of others. Refugees appear as inert, as persons who do not have influence on their life, on their future, and need someone who could decide for them. However, this is only the first step. The case of Somalis residing in Warsaw shows that the refugee story is not only about suffering and struggle against such fate. It is not only a tale about their efforts towards integration with a host society (Ajrouch and Kusow 2007, Gilbert 2009), their changing identities (Bigelow 2009, Engebrigtsen 2007), or their struggle for political recognition in the host country (Kleist 2008). The Warsaw's Somalis' stories go far beyond it. They are about social work done not for Somalis, but also by them. Their stories are related to civil society, but not as a community which they endeavor to integrate to, but as a community which they create and within which they operate.

It not only challenges the images of the Somalis as drafted by the media. It also shows that words used in common parlance and scientific discourse to describe them are not adequate. The significance of such terms as "immigrant" or "refugee" leads us to the world of otherness, marginalization and "being outside" in general. Maybe it is time to start thinking about them and describing them as citizens – not in its administrative meaning, but as full members of the society.

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Joanna Krotofil

'If I am to be a Muslim, I have to be a good one'. Polish migrant women embracing Islam and reconstructing identity in dialogue with self and others

In this paper I will discuss how the conversion to Islam influences the process of identity negotiation among Polish women who have migrated to the UK in recent years. The research on conversion of people coming from a Christian background to Islam has been slowly gathering momentum; however the literature on the subject still remains scarce. The potential controversies surrounding that phenomenon and the entanglement of some of the academic work on Islam in political struggles discourage many scholars from venturing into that area. In my attempt to overcome the problem of ideological biases I will try to capture the voices of the main protagonists in conversion stories – the converts themselves – and place their stories in the context of migration. Before I move further, a short clarification in regards to the use of the term "conversion" seems expedient. Conversion, defined as "a change (with various levels of drama) in religious beliefs and behavior" (Grzymała-Moszczyńska 2004: 116), until recently has been explored mainly by scholars looking for personality predispositions and motivation of people who convert and attempting to determine universal stages of that process (Beit-Hallahmi and Agrlye 2004).

I am more interested in how becoming a Muslim influences the process of identity negotiation in the internal and external domains of self. Although I will sustain the term "conversion", I will not be looking for the match between experiences described by my respondents and any of the numerous theoretical models of conversion developed by scholars representing different disciplines. It would not facilitate better understanding of how a woman sees herself as a Muslim, how she presents herself as a Muslim and how she is seen by others as a Muslim (see Bourque 2006). It also seems that the term "conversion" is contested and rejected by many women embracing Islam, who tend to see themselves as merely naming or recognizing as Islam the religion which has been part of their life for a long time before they said the *shahada*, rather than a change of religion (see also Bourque 2006; Leman, Stallaert, Choi and Lechkar 2010; Stefańska 2011). This is in line with traditional Islamic thought where the term for "conversion" is absent (Woodberry 1992). At the same time, in some way paradoxically, they make clear distinctions between their past self – before

they became Muslims, and their current self – as Muslims. From the dialogical perspective adopted in this paper it can be argued that the very act of naming or recognizing one's own beliefs as a particular religious tradition means engaging in dialogue with both adherents and those opposed to that religion and taking particular position in relation to them and it therefore marks a very significant moment in the identity negotiation process.

In the following parts of the text I will use the term conversion to describe interconnected processes, which lead to gradual reorganization of self structure. I argue that in order to avoid imposing unjustified uniformity and radical reductionism on converts' experiences it is necessary to recognize that there are many possible routes to Islam and that there are different versions of Islam to which people convert. This is very evident in data collected for this study. At first glance narratives of different women who have converted to Islam are very diverse; each of them has her own unique story to tell. It seems that one can understand each story only in its own original framework. This does not mean however that it is impossible to identify some elements that these stories have in common, something akin to reoccurring motifs. Converts telling their stories reconstruct and reinterpret their past. In that process they learn the conversion discourse by listening to stories told by other converts (see Bourque 2006; van Nieuwkerk 2006).

As C. Hermans notes "speakers constructing their unique stories always speak in the social languages with which they are familiar" (2003: 220). To understand how the conversion to Islam shapes the answer to the question "who am I?". I will employ the theoretical framework of the Dialogical Self (Hermans and Kempen 1998; Hermans 2001a). The theoretical angle from which the subject of conversion will be approached is based on Hermans' assertion that "mixing and moving cultures require a dialogical self" (Hermans 2001b). Developed within the narrative approach to identity, the Dialogical Self theory is grounded in the assumption that the self should not be conceptualized as an essence but rather as an existence, which is never completed but constantly negotiated, created and recreated, multivoiced and embodied. In the multivoicedness of self, the *I* emerges with the reference to *the other* (Salgado and Hermans 2005). This basic assumption of the Dialogical Self theory allows conceptualizing the conversion to Islam not only as a change in religious domain but also as renegotiation of social, gender and national identities. Another advantage of the Dialogical Self for studying conversion in context of migration lies in the fact that this theory recognizes societal-level processes such as globalization, dissolution of hierarchies and "production of locality" as very influential in the processes of self change (Hermans 2001a; Hermans and Hermans-Konopka 2010).

The following discussion is based on in-depth interviews with seven Polish women living in London who have converted to Islam in recent years and data gathered on internet forums dedicated to Islam where converts discuss a range of issues related to conversion. Because of the very limited number of respondents the conclusions from that research cannot be generalized but they may serve as starting point for further explorations of the topic.

Migration and conversion

Polish women who have migrated to the UK and converted to Islam share many experiences with converts living in Poland but they also constitute a group facing specific cultural and structural conditions shaping their experiences in unique ways. This stems from the fact that societal-level processes such as globalization, destabilization of traditional communities and pluralization in religious domain are increasingly influential on an individual level, particularly in the case of those individuals who through migration find themselves in cultural contact zones (O'Sullivan-Lago and de Abreu 2010). In relation to Polish migrants the UK can be conceptualized as such a contact zone for a number of reasons. First of all migrants in the UK live in the society where Muslims are a minority group, just as they are in Poland, but there is no doubt about the fact that the presence of Muslims is much more established in the UK than in Eastern European countries. This means that Muslims are less 'exotic' to the mainstream society in the UK than, for example in, Poland. Most likely it is easier for a woman in a *hijab* to "melt into the crowd" in London than it is in Warsaw.

On the other hand it could be argued that in the UK, as in many other countries of Western Europe, Islam has become symbol of *the Other*. The views of the general public are saturated with orientalistic ideas (Said 1997) and Islamophobia. Converts who have settled in the UK have to negotiate their Muslim identity with society affected directly by religious extremism and confront narratives about the July 2005 terrorist attacks in London. Secondly Polish migrants converting to Islam in their relations with the host society have to negotiate all stereotypes regarding Poles, including popular associations drawn between Polish nationality, conservatism and Catholicism. The third important factor influencing migrants' experiences is the abundant number of types of ethnic expressions of Islam existing in multicultural British society. Rather than embracing abstract, "pure" Islam, Polish women who convert to Islam in the UK relate to a particular "ethnic" interpretation of Islam and to the tradition represented by people through whom they become attracted to that religion. In terms of the Dialogical Self theory, they "localize" themselves in a community endorsing a particular cultural expression of a global religion.

Finally there is one more factor linked to migration which has to be taken into account in the reflection on identity and conversion which is the universal human tendency to avoid uncertainty and the biologically justified need for security (Hermans and Hermans-Konopka 2010). In this context we can talk about two distinctive types of security: economic and existential security. Migration as a major change in life can be conceptualized as a move from a familiar, safe environment into the unknown, a process marked for many by initial low level of economic resources and increased level of uncertainty. It can be argued that Muslim men with whom Polish women in the UK form relationships, in the majority of cases represent second or even third generation migrants, pose higher socio-economic status than their Polish partners and can provide a sense of economic security for them. From there, very often the search for existential security follows. Placing the experiences of Polish women

converting to Islam within a context of migration unveils the influence of growing complexity, ambiguity and plurality of social norms on individuals, who in response to these intensify their search for security. Although uncertainty is "an intrinsic feature of dialogical self that opens a process of interchange" (Hermans and Hermans-Konopka 2010: 28), intensifying experience of uncertainty may be accompanied in its' extreme forms with anxiety and confusion (Adams 2004).

To overcome this, individuals seek niches where they can restore their security by reducing internal disagreements, and conflict. Religion has been recognized as a one of the best suited frameworks to become this kind of niche. (Hermans and Dimaggio 2007; Hermans and Hermans-Konopka 2010; Kinvall 2004). As part of fulfilling the need for security migrants are seeking to establish existential trust and biographical continuity, and do it in numerous complex ways. For migrants embracing Islam, the new religion provides an important source of "fate discourse" (see Adams 2004). Repeating *"in sza Allah"* in many situations and contexts converts express the view that they are not entirely dependent on themselves or blind chance in their pursuit of identity. The achievement of goals and realization of their plans depends not only on their efforts but also on the God's will. Accepting this belief they gain a sense of being looked after by God and are able to shed at least some burden of shaping their own destiny.

In the following sections of that chapter I will try to place the narratives of Polish women who converted to Islam in the context of migration in order to understand how they engage in dialogue with voices represented by different groups and how collective voices shape their identity.

Between an old and a new religion

I will continue the discussion by looking at how different groups construct the conversion of Polish migrants to Islam. Voices representing conflicting perspectives engage in dialogue not only in the public space, but also within "the society of mind" (Hermans 2002), therefore it is important to establish with what views the converts are confronted and how they negotiate with them.

In the first instance Polish women embracing Islam engage in dialogue with "the old self" – their own cultural and religious past. In converts' narratives Islam is portrayed as a religion contrasting with the tradition in which they have been brought up. There are at least a few dimensions in which the contrast between Islam and the religion the converts were born into is constructed. The first one pertains to the role of religious institutions. The critical view of the Catholic Church, the rejection of Church's dominant position in Poland and the disappointment with Church hierarchy have been expressed on many occasions by women who in majority of cases have been brought up in religious, Catholic families (see also Łojek-Magdziarz 2007). The absence of the Church or anything that could be seen as the Church's equivalent in Islam has very important implications for converts' experiences. It means that there is no universally accepted authority regulating forms of religious expressions and

overseeing religious education. In these circumstances individuals new to the religion have a sense of autonomy and freedom in their quest for answers.

The access to *sacrum* in Islam seems for them more democratized in comparison to Catholicism. On the other hand fragmentation and internal diversity of Islam pose a challenge for new converts who may experience a high level of uncertainty and feel lost in the new and diverse territory. In later parts of this paper I will discuss how they try to cope with this problem by looking for support among other converts. Secondly Islam is contrasted with Catholicism in the doctrinal dimension. Converts construct Islam as rational, simple religion (see also van Nieukwerk 2006a, Stefańska 2011). In the interviews the dogma of Holy Trinity, the divinity of Jesus Christ and the status of Virgin Mary were most often quoted examples of vague and unnecessary complications confusing Christians. After years of asking questions in an attempt to understand it and getting unsatisfactory answers converts found peace after turning to Islam. These problems have been annulated when they accepted that Allah is the only God and Jesus was a human, one of the prophets. Finally the third dimension of contrast is that of religious practice. For new converts to Islam praying five times a day is a great shift in terms of commitment to religious practice. They invest lot of effort in the learning process and work towards a new organization of daily life which would allow them to pray five times a day.

> At the beginning I couldn't get used to praying five times a day. It was a shock for me. I was passing on prayers. I would say to myself ok, I will start tomorrow, from tomorrow, I will be super. And it was like that every day, every day. But at the end that time came. I said to myself no, I can't keep passing my prayers only because I am new to Islam. Month after month is passing and I am not new anymore. I am Muslim now and I can't keep postponing, thinking I will some day…, some day I will be good Muslim. (M., 28 years old)

Practices prescribed by Islam are seen as influencing everyday life to a much greater extent than those rooted in Catholicism and as more meaningful. Religiously defined ways of dressing, eating and praying occupy a central place in daily activities and are ascribed higher importance and status than Catholic practices.

A new view of the past may be threatening to the sense of biographical continuity, therefore the process of distancing form the old religious tradition very often is complemented by the opposite tendency to maintain connection to it. This is expressed in converts' narratives by a search for commonalities between Islam and Catholicism. Telling their stories, women who converted to Islam not only highlighted the contrast between Islam and the religion they were born to but also the connection between these two traditions, particularly on the doctrinal dimension.

> This religion is similar to Christianity. (M., 28 years old)
>
> I still don't know what the difference is between the God from my past and the God I try to believe in now. I wish very much… I think it is the same, but this

cannot be verified. I would not want to change God, because it is difficult, I can't imagine it. This is great about Islam, that it absorbs earlier religions. (A., 25 years old)

Highlighting the fact that Islam absorbs earlier religions A., similarly to M. quoted above constructs her conversion as a developmental process that is marked by continuity, rather than a break or a complete change.

Negotiating boundaries between Us and Others – Muslim converts among other Muslims

Migrant women converting to Islam are socialized into a new cultural and religious group. Contrary to the unidirectional patterns described by Roald (2006) in relation to Scandinavian converts who gradually shift from very enthusiastic perception of the Muslim communities they enter towards more balanced views, Polish women interviewed for this study represented more diverse attitudes in first contacts with other Muslims. Many described the initial interactions with their husbands' family and friends as marked by mistrust and disregard:

Polish Muslims [...] the problem is that very often they are disregarded by other Muslims, the ones who were born into that religion. It is like oh, you are a convert, so for sure you don't know... And again we have that valuation. This is so dreadful and so negative. (Z., 26 years old)

On the one hand Muslims treat me with some sort of disbelief. They don't believe that I am truly Muslim, that... but not all of them, some, I have to say, are happy. They say that they are shocked that I am at all religious and so on. But there are so many of them who keep their distance, as if I was impersonating someone else. That's the way I would describe it. (B., 22 years old)

As the above fragments illustrate, Polish converts represent others-within-us for Muslims who were born into Islam (Hermans and Hermans-Konopka 2010) and have to negotiate their positions in a new group. In this process the individual has to deal with many conflicts and dilemmas, as the story of M. illustrates. Describing her first visit to her husband's parents, M. talked about fear and discomfort experienced by both sides:

My mother-in-law was scared, probably even more than I was. And so was my father-in-law, but he was more down to business type, like we deal with the issue and say as it is. They also invited the cousin. He looks scary, and they wanted to set things between us, make sure that there was nothing suspicious coming from me. So that I would not stir things and would not try to pull their son away from Islam.

After the wedding, the couple moved into the family house. While living together with her in-laws, M. was very strongly defending her position as a Catholic and communicating her lack of interest in Islam:

> Back then I was..., I insisted I was a Catholic. Me and my husband, we have assumed from the very beginning that I would not change my religion. I did not feel any need for that. I was never a strong believer as a Catholic, but told my husband, that I did not want to change, I believed in God and I was happy with it. I did not feel I needed to know the prophets, or to the history, never mind that what happened in the past, people have different opinion on that [...]. I wanted to show them that I was there, in their family and that it was time for change, but it was not me who was to adjust, I wanted them to adjust.

Unwilling to change her position, M. could not engage in the dialogue with the family. In that situation the couple decided to move out and to find separate accommodation. The sudden death of the father brought the husband back to the family home. During the mourning period M. felt like an outsider. She could attend only some of the family gatherings and during those she did attend she felt as an outcast and a stranger. She wanted to support her husband, but was struggling with the fact that she could not join in the rituals and was not feeling part of the family. This crisis triggered conversion and started the long process of establishing her new religious identity in relations with family members.

A few years after her conversion M. still finds herself in situations where she is positioned by her husband's family in a way which emphasizes conflict between traditional rules associated with being a good Muslim and much more liberal, "Western", values. Her involvement in conflict between Tamina – her sister-in-law and mother-in-law provides good illustration of such position. In this particular situation the mother-in-law asked M. to talk and reason with Tamina, 18 years old, who recently started seeing a Scottish boyfriend and was planning to go away for a weekend in his company. This behavior was deemed unacceptable for a young Muslim woman by her family and the mother asked M. to intervene. She was expecting that M. will convince her sister-in-law to stay at home and will make her reflect on the choice of boyfriend who was not a Muslim. The sister-in-law on the other hand was keen to ask for understanding and support from M. whom she still perceived as a young Western woman who was brought up outside of Islam and did not fully embrace traditional Islamic views. M. describing this situation stated:

> It was difficult – being in the middle. My mother in law has some expectations from me, she wants me to persuade the sister, to stop her somehow. And Tamina [the sister, JK] expects that I will understand her and that I will persuade my mother in law. This is difficult, very difficult situation.

M. admitted that she could understand a young girl who wanted to see her boyfriend and opted for a western style of dress but on the other hand felt that she

needed to prove to her mother-in-law that she was a Muslim and stood by the values that her mother-in-law associated with Islam. This example is also a very clear remainder of the fact that experiences of Polish women marrying into Muslim families can be very diverse. M. described the family of her husband as very traditional, but even within that family she found someone who was subscribing to a more liberal, western life style.

The families which converts enter by marriage, in many cases initially provide the only social context in which Polish women interact with other Muslim women. For female converts in particular who have restricted access to mosques,[1] there is no ready-made community supported by an institutional framework which they could join upon conversion. Unlike parish churches, offering point of contact with other Catholics for Polish migrants, mosques with facilities for women are sparse. This together with unfamiliarity of mosque settings and lack of ownership commonly experienced by new converts is reflected in low levels of mosque attendance among Polish Muslim women in the UK. Having limited interactions with Muslims, other than the closest members of their husbands families and friends, Polish converts tend to contest the concept of *umma* – Muslim community, as is illustrated by the following statement:

> I have Muslims all around me, but they do not pay any interest to whether I need any help, or whether I don't. It is so sad, because we are this umma, this Muslim community, but there is no support. This is the way it is, so it was hard for me (T., 27 years old)

All women interviewed for this study, in line with research on Western converts from other countries agreed that they get most support from other Muslim converts from their country of origin (see Bourque 2006). In that respect Polish Muslims are very similar to Polish migrants in the UK who maintain identification with the Catholic Church. In both groups the sense of community is shaped by ethnic boundaries (Krotofil 2010). The data from interviews suggest that Polish women are more likely to seek advice and support from Polish converts than from women in their husbands' families. They prefer to learn how to be a Muslim woman from other Polish women who share their cultural background and the experience of conversion.

> Girls like me, who convert to Islam and are lost at the beginning, they need advice. They need someone who is in a similar situation. And this is the main reason why I have got in touch here with other girls. They are so warm and many things in their life indeed happened in a similar way. They had similar reasons and now they have similar problems, so it helps a lot. (B., 22 years old)

[1] Only a limited number of mosques in UK have facilities for women. A great number of small local mosques are situated in converted buildings which do not have the required separate entrances for women and do not attract female Muslims.

Becoming a part of this network women gain a very strong sense of belonging. This is reflected in the way they address each other as "sisters" and value the contact with other Polish Muslims. The description by M. seems very representative of views expressed by other women interviewed for this study:

> [...] these are friendships. We have our own internet forum for sisters, for Polish sisters. It is located on 'nasza-klasa' portal. There is more and more of us, and simply each one of us... from time to time one person posts a message: 'I am so happy to have you'. And then it goes, fifteen posts saying 'me too', 'and me'. Because really, you can feel that whenever one of us has a problem she can enter the forum, click the mouse few times and it turns out that fifteen other people have the same problem and they support each other and they learn from each other. (M., 29 years old)

Unable to relate to born-Muslims, Polish converts rely on the Internet in their efforts to make contact with other Polish Muslims. Numerous grass-root initiatives using communication technologies, mainly social networking websites facilitate creation of virtual community and form a base for other, real-life activities, such as the meeting organised by Polish Muslims in Regent Park mosque in London attended by twenty women from different parts of England. The internet websites for Polish Muslims provide the forum for exchange not only within the Polish Muslim community but also facilitate discussion between Muslims and other Poles.

Polish Muslims among other Poles

"Platonic islamophobia" in Polish society signifying the near absence of born-Muslims in Poland together with a high prevalence of hostile attitudes towards that group (Górak-Sosnowska 2006, 2008) suggest that Polish Muslim converts have to actively defend their positions in their interactions with other Poles (see also Łojek-Magdziarz 2007). Although the conversion to Islam is still a rather small scale phenomenon in Poland, the increasing media attention stimulates debate in Polish society. Many people joining the discussion on Internet websites share the view that Islam is something alien to European culture and poses a threat to European societies. Voices accusing converts of lack of loyalty towards the nation and their cultural heritage are not uncommon. Some of them portray conversion as a betrayal, as the following example illustrates:

> Thinking about the decisions these people make... These are a result of spitting on Poland. Lack of respect to your country, lack of respect to other Poles, lack of respect to your history, lack of respect to tradition, family and lack of respects to themselves.

Reproofs like that have particularly strong undertone in relation to women who migrated to other countries. They support and reinforce the construction of migration

as a moral issue, where voluntary migration is perceived as a betrayal (Erdmans 1992; Garapich 2007). The fragment quoted above is one of many anonymous statements which can be found on the Internet. It is not addressed to anyone in particular but the responses posted by Muslims suggest that many of them are personally affected. In reaction to such voices Polish converts interpret these views as related to strong pre-dominance of Catholicism in Polish culture and identify this position as part of their own outlook from the past. This explanation allows them to concentrate on what they perceive as a personal duty to spread a good image of Islam (related to the concept of *da'wa*) and to engage in the dialogue:

> In Poland it is as if no other religions existed in the world. I have been thinking about it in the past and only when I was confronted with Islam I realized that there are Muslims in Poland. (A., 25 years old)

In everyday personal interactions Polish Muslims are also very often confronted with voices represented by their friends and family expressing concerns about the converts' new life circumstances defined by their gender and religion.

> Oh, these sort of stories are being spread. My grandmother was told incredible things by her friends... She is dead now, but she was still alive when we got together and she met him. I told her that my husband was from Bangladesh, but she has heard so many tales, she kept saying that he will take my children to Pakistan [...]. People don't know. (R., 28 years old)

> My uncle is still afraid. Whenever I talk with him on the phone he asks me. He refers to the fact that in Islam men are very strict with women and so on, and asks me if I am happy. (A., 25 years old)

Converts interpret this fear as rooted in the fact that the world of which they are becoming part is completely unknown and seems threatening for many Poles who have very limited contact with Islam. The negative expectations are influenced by his-tories featuring the tragic fates of European women who formed relationships with Muslim men. From that perspective their conversion is seen by friends and family as an effect of some sort of seduction, calculated and devious behavior of Arab men who force Polish women to embrace their religion. The act of conversion is therefore often constructed in the mainstream discourse as a weakness, mistake, immaturity and inability to think in a rational way (see also Leman et al. 2010). The converts them-selves deny any form of sanction or duress and see their decisions as based on careful consideration and good knowledge about Islam acquired prior to the conversion. For many Polish women who migrated to the UK, the marriage may be a trigger of con-version, but this does not equal with coercion by domineering husbands. Converts themselves explain the link between marrying a Muslim man and conversion to his religion in terms of having access to first hand knowledge about Islam, becoming curi-ous, learning about this religion and subsequently discovering its merits. Polish women converting to Islam represent different planes and aspirations prior to

conversion and they encounter families which differ in how they define gender roles and women's positions. The incorporation of positions of a Muslim woman and a Muslim wife into their self repertoire is a unique process for each of them. New Muslims very rarely deny that conversion placed them in a new position in social and family structure but they ascribe positive meaning to that position. Describing what it means to be Muslim wife they actively engage in dialogue with the "oppression" discourse and strongly oppose it. For M. fulfilling the expectations of her new family was empowering, rather than stifling experience:

> I don't know, even before I converted to Islam, me and my husband, we have decided that I will stay at home, that I will not go to work. I was very happy with that, because I never liked having bosses above me. (M., 29 years old)

M. constructs her position as a house wife as more independent than a position of women in employment associated in Western societies with independence and gender equality. While looking after her children and home she can make her own decisions and does not have to look for approval of any superiors.

A. on the other hand stressed the fact, that general rules stated in the Qur'an are interpreted in different ways depending on particular ethnic group. She admitted that Muslin men are "more restrictive" towards women than Western men, but comparing her own position with Muslim women in traditionally Muslim countries. A. was able to define her situation as one of relative freedom and a position providing a structure and clear rules in her life:

> This is complicated. In some way, I don't know, to some extent this is good. To some degree, when it is rational, and only partly applied. I think this is good, they care about decency, about the ways they dress and so on. In each country it is different. In Algeria, because my husband is from Algeria, the situation is much better than in Iraq for example, or Afghanistan. And let's say in Algeria, it is not too bad; woman can go to the doctor and so on. (A., 29 years old)

Polish women converting to Islam compare their position as a woman not only with other Muslim women living in more "traditional" cultures but also with other women who married their fellow countrymen and live in "modern", Western, relationships. One of the women pointed to the fact that some women marring Catholics are very unhappy with their relationships and also face many kinds of restrictions. The strategies employed by converts engaging in debate on the position of women in Islam suggest that opening up to others – in these cases to women concentrating on professional careers, other Muslim women and Catholic women – and relating to their experiences enables them to negotiate what it means to be a Muslim woman and to look at their situation from multiple perspectives. Engaging in this process converts are able to localize themselves in the complex social and cultural landscape and to find their own relatively stable place in the constant flux of modern life.

Embodied religion and hybrid identities

Western women converting to Islam have not only to confront the stereotypical notions of Islam shared by their close family and friends; they also have to defend their newly adopted behaviour and new dress code. By changing bodily practices converts embody their new identity in a process shaped by interaction with others. Religious practices endorsed by women becoming Muslims are very unfamiliar in their old social milieu and sometimes are met with resistance. Converts invest lots of effort in the adoption of religious practices. Some embrace all prohibitions and prescripts immediately upon conversion and display zeal and piety rarely seen among born-Muslims. For the majority however this is a gradual process which requires some preparation of those who adopt new practices and others in their social circles. Converts learn how to perform new symbolic actions, learn the meaning of these actions and also actively negotiate that meaning. Stepping into completely unfamiliar symbolic world they have to learn all gestures and words used in daily prayers. Their husbands and new families, as well as other Polish women who have converted to Islam provide very important sources in the learning process. In the latter case the exchange of information is facilitated mainly through the use of Internet. New converts share useful reading materials and advice, answer each other's questions and direct others to informative websites providing help with pronunciation of prayer texts.

In relations with the social world of their country of origin new converts also learn to defend these practices. Most of them experience ambivalent reactions form family, friends and strangers when they travel back to Poland. Very often the journey back to home town or village is the moment when practices rehearsed in their new social context of the UK are put to the test. Nearly all women interviewed for this study talked about the concerns they had about the reaction of their fellow nationals, many of them saw themselves in the eyes of other Poles as "funny", "unauthentic".

> Well, being very sceptic... at the beginning and very slowly I was mentioning, in very small portions. And the photo from my wedding on nasza-klasa, where I wear the headscarf... it took me long time before I, I don't know, before I started showing off. (A., 25 years old)

Even though in later stages the vast majority of women start wearing headscarves; many experience some difficulties with adopting this very visible and unequivocal marker of religious identity. For some it is a gradual process, they start wearing a headscarf initially only in the company of their husbands' friends and families and slowly build up the courage to wear it on the street. One of the women in the research sample tried to experiment with the way she was tying the scarf. By doing this she felt she could blur the association between religious identity and the practice of covering hair and could avoid being necessarily recognized as a Muslim convert.

For those who move from one religious and cultural tradition to another, the break from old is never complete (Wohlarb-Sahr 1999). Converts can try to reject

completely old practices or negotiate their meaning and transform them. In the case of Polish migrants living in the UK who strongly participate in transnational networks and maintain close contacts with their families and friends in Poland, the latter strategy is used more often. Socially and culturally shaped practices rooted deeply in Christian tradition continue to structure interactions between converts and their families and friends. As the position "I as a Muslim" gains dominance, old, non-Muslim practice have to be reinterpreted.

M.'s description of dilemmas about the celebration of Christmas provides a very good example of such a renegotiation process. Even though M. has not participated in any traditional Christmas practices which she perceived as purely religious, such as midnight mass, she decided to participate in a gift exchange between close family members. M. bought presents for her children but when probed by her husband what kind of present she wanted, M. asked for a new mobile phone. She wanted to choose something practical, and something that she would have to buy anyway and settled on a phone because her old phone was broken. Emphasizing the practical, everyday character of the gift M. challenged the traditional interpretation of that practice associated with Christian culture. M. was happy for her children to receive presents from their grandparents and uncles and aunts but put forward a suggestion about exchange of gifts between adult members of the family. She wanted to collect all the money they would have normally spent on gifts for each other and to donate that money to a charity.

Explaining this idea M. stressed the fact that charitable giving is one of the five pillars of Islam and therefore giving money allocated for presents to charity would be in her view a Muslim practice. This practice redefined as "a fusion of something from our tradition [Islam – JK] and something form Christianity" can be seen as an expression of coalition between two positions: *I as a Muslim* and *I coming from a family with a Christian background*.

Concluding remarks

The small research sample does not allow drawing general conclusions about Polish women converting to Islam but the data collected for this study provide some insights into the complex process of conversion in the context of migration. Despite the fact that, with the exception of one person, all women in the sample converted to Islam through entering marriage with a Muslim, their conversions were not instrumental and are far from superficial. The narratives of women interviewed for this study suggest that the introduction of new positions related to religion into the self repertoire leads to major reorganization of the whole self structure. The complexity of that process means that reciting *shahada* is neither the beginning, nor the final point of conversion. Over time converts engage with different internal and external voices giving more prominence to some and silencing others. Polish women who migrated to the UK and came to first hand contact with Muslims actively engaged in dialogue with "the Other".

As I have shown above migration facilitates direct contacts with Muslims born to Islam, it also gives Polish women the opportunity to live their faith in the society where the Muslim presence is better established than it is in Poland. From the Dialogical Self perspective the journey of Polish migrants converting to Islam can be seen as a journey towards existential security and sense of belonging. Yet, as I was trying to demonstrate, conversion does not equal giving up personal autonomy in return for a sense of security. Converts exercise their autonomy actively engaging in negotiation of meaning of the new symbolic world they become part of. By doing so they are able to overcome tensions between competing cultural positions. Constructing their personal narratives they draw on collective voices of both adherents and opponents of Islam, in that process "assimilation and innovation go hand in hand" (Hermans 2003: 232). Becoming Muslims, Polish migrants access vibrant cultural contact zones where Western and Islamic values penetrate and infuse each other providing a social and cultural landscape for the creation of hybrid identities.

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Konrad Pędziwiatr

"The Established and Newcomers" in Islam in Poland or the inter-group relations within the Polish Muslim Community

One of the leaders of the Tatar community in Poland, professor Selim Chazbijewicz, interviewed for the web portal Entologia.pl in 2006, described relations between the Tatar led Muslim Religious Union (Muzułmański Związek Religijny w Rzeczpospolitej Polskiej, hereafter MZR) and the Muslims of Arab descent living in Poland in the following way:

> Bernard Shaw used to say that: I had had a friend who taught me so long to drink tea without sugar that he ceased to be my friend. In the same way the Arabs had taught us [Polish Tatars – KP] to be proper Muslims, that we went separate ways. (Orzechowski 2006)

The separation mentioned in the interview implies not only some tensions within the diverse Polish Muslim community, but also their organizational outcome in the form of setting up the Muslim League (Liga Muzułmańska w Rzeczpospolitej Polskiej, hereafter LM) in 2001, led by Polish Arabs.

The goal of this article will be to shed light on inter-group relations within the Muslim population in today's Poland. The article will do so by analyzing the key areas of competition and cooperation between the two community organisations in the country: the Muslim Religious Union and the Muslim League. I will argue that one may observe significant transformations in the relations between the two strongest and best organized groups within the Muslim population in the country, namely the Tatars and naturalized Arab immigrants. One of the results of these transformations is that earlier criticism from the Arab circles of the Tatar Muslimness and aversion of the Tatars to any kind of remarks concerning their religiosity from outside of their own community (Warmińska 1999) has been now largely replaced by healthy competition between the Tatar-led MZR and the Arab-led LM for the support of Muslims living in Poland and for their actions and initiatives.

The article will look into the dynamics of the relations between the MZR and LM through the perspective of exclusionary/inclusionary forces of nationalism or struggles over who belongs to the nation and thus should enjoy equal rights before the law, be called upon to participate in politics and be granted the privilege of having one's

own culture and language valued and legitimated by the state. As numerous scholars show (e.g. Wimmer 2002, Kaufman 2004, Mann 2005 – to name only those who immediately come to my mind) the privileged access to the modern state that some ethnic groups enjoy is mirrored in the exclusion of those who are being declared aliens or immigrants with no such privileged relationship to the state.

Another theoretical perspective useful while analyzing the inter-group relations within the Polish Muslim community is that of "the established and outsiders" by Elias and Scotson (1965). As they demonstrate in their study of 'Winston Parva' in East Midlands, England, the domination of "the established" group (clearly played by the Tatars in the Muslim population in Poland) is not easily shakeable since the communal feelings of belonging and ownership, membership of important community roles, integration into informal (and formal) local networks and local knowledge give established groups the upper hand in the "relations of definition" between themselves and newer groups. All of these power resources also enable the established to make their evaluations stick and, as the practice shows, these evaluations are rarely favorable to those who are "less established". This is because established groups tend to generate "group charisma", or a sense of their own superiority as a group, based on a "minority of the best" as part of their social and self-identification. Their self-image tends to be based on evaluations rooted in the best aspects of the group whilst ignoring other elements that might contaminate such an image. As such, it is an important aspect of the group's internal solidarity and sense of community. This "rosy" self-image of the established is sustained through the vital mechanisms of communal "gossip" and everyday conversation. Established groups produce "praise-gossip"[1] when discussing their own group, but use "blame-gossip"[2] to describe other groups, which they do not consider as "one of theirs" or "established enough".

While there is a significant body of literature on the history of Islam and Tatar Muslims in Poland (e.g. Borawski and Dubiński 1986, Chazbijewicz et al. 1997, Warmińska 1999, Dziekan 2005) the information about non-Tatar Muslim communities and especially the inter-group relations within the Muslim population in the country are very scarce. The existing publications are usually concerning selected aspects of Muslim life in Poland (e.g. the issue of conversion was studied by Baranowicz 2009 and Sieniawska 2009) or they analyze only the situation of one of the numerous ethnic groups making up the diverse Muslim population in the country (e.g. the Chechens – vide Chrzanowska and Gracz 2007, Ząbek 2002). Moreover, in the latter group of studies the issue of religiosity is not their main concern. There are also some publications that deal with Muslim presence in some localities and analyze religious dimension of the studied community (for example Muslims in Cracow studied by Ewa Turyk in 1999), however they are very rare. To date there is no study that is based on extensive fieldwork and comprehensively deals with various aspects of

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[1] "Praise-gossip" means that the best elements perceived by the established group form the basis for discussion and evaluation whilst negative elements are not openly discussed (Elias and Scotson 1965: 92).

[2] "Blame-gossip" is exactly the reverse, as outsider groups are discussed and assessed in terms of what are considered to be their worst elements (Elias and Scotson 1965: 92).

Muslim life in contemporary Poland, depicting the relations between various groups within the Muslim population.

The following reflections on the inter-group relations within the Polish Muslim community should be viewed as an exploratory work and a starting point in the critical analysis of Muslim presence in contemporary Poland. They are based on 12 in-depth interviews with leaders and active members of the main Muslim organizations in Poland,[3] a group interview with Muslims from diverse Islamic and ethnic backgrounds that was held at the Tischner European University on July 13, 2011, participant observation during the annual Congress of Polish Muslims held in Borki (nearby Tomaszów Mazowiecki) between July 9–10, 2011, and last but not least, the analysis of the existing materials and content of the Muslim journals (in particular *As-Salam*, *al-Umma*, *Muzułmanie Rzeczpospolitej* and *Przegląd Tatarski*) and websites.[4] The majority of the fieldwork material was gathered between May and August 2011 within the research project "Muslims in Visegrad Countries" sponsored by the Anna Lindh Foundation and the Visegrad Fund.

Muslim Diversity

Before I shed light on some aspects of the inter-group relations within the Muslim community in today's Poland it is worth briefly recalling the roots of the current diversity of the Muslim population on Polish soil. There is no precise information about the size of this population in the country of 38 million inhabitants but it is estimated that between 25–35 thousand people are Muslims or feel affinity with Muslimness in one form or another.[5]

The first contact between Poland and the Muslim world goes back to the initial stages of the history of the country. Actually, one of the very first historic accounts of a proto-state form on current Polish territory comes from the trader from Moorish-ruled Tortoza in al-Andalus – Ibrahim Ibn Jakub, who was passing through these lands in the 10th century. The settlement of permanent Muslim communities (initially Tatar prisoners of war and refugees in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania – at that time a shared monarchy with Poland) did not start until 13th/14th century (Borawski and Dubiński 1986). By the end of 16th century the Tatars of united Poland and Lithuania lost their language but maintained religion and customs. At the end of 17th century a new wave of Tatar settlers arrived to the territory of present north east Poland and have been living there to this day (Czarniejewska et al. 2009). In the multi-ethnic Poland of the inter-war period (1918–1939) their homes found 19 Muslim communities with their mosques and cemeteries. After World War II only about 10% of the traditional Tatar

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[3] Please see the list of persons interviewed at the end of the article.

[4] Including websites of the Muslim organizations in Poland (quoted below) and Muslim fora (including http://www.islam.fora.pl and http://www.muslima.fora.pl).

[5] Here it is important to stress that for each Muslim adherence to Islam or being a 'Muslim' means different things and the notion of Muslimness should be approached with great care in order not to essentialize it. For elaboration of different aspects of Muslimness see Pędziwiatr (2007: 42–45) or (2010: 111–113).

settlements remained within the new Polish borders. The post-war migrations further dispersed the Tatar community and in addition to the traditional Tatar settlements in Białystok and Warsaw new ones also emerged in Gdańsk, Gorzów Wielkopolski, Szczecin and Oleśnica (Gródź 2004, Nalborczyk and Gródź 2010). In contrast to the Polish ethno-religious composition from before the World War II[6] post-war Poland became ethnically and religiously very homogenous country. With 96% of citizens declaring adherence to the Roman Catholic Church, Poland became one of the most religiously homogenous countries in Europe.[7]

In the 1970s and 1980s a significant number of Muslim students arrived to Poland from the "befriended" countries of the Middle East with some deciding to settle down, thus becoming the pioneers of the Muslim immigrant community in Poland. From the beginning of the 1990s one may also observe the emergence of groups of Muslim professionals, businessmen and refugees.

As mentioned earlier the exact number of people who would call themselves "Muslims" in today's Poland is unknown since the question about the religious belonging, in contrast to Great Britain, for example, is not asked in the census. All the available figures are thus based on statistical models and estimations, and, as is usually the case, the estimations by the members of the Muslim community are significantly higher than those by experts from outside of the community. Probably the most commonly advanced estimation on which the scholars and Muslim activists would agree puts the figure of Muslims in today's Poland at ca 25 thousand.[8]

It is believed that one-fifth of Muslims in Poland are the descendants of the Tatars who were already settled in the country by the 13th/14th century.[9] The remaining majority is a very diverse group that is comprised of former and current students, businessmen and professionals, diplomatic corps, economic migrants, refugees, and, last but not least, Poles who have embraced Islam. Within this group, probably the most important role for the life of the Muslim community in Poland played by former students from the Muslim-majority countries (in particular from Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Occupied Palestinian Territories, Algeria, Iraq, Yemen and Tunisia) who settled in Poland over the last 30 years. By today most of them have acquired Polish citizenship and substantial cultural capital. They would identify with Poland, while not forgetting about their countries of origin and the wider Muslim *umma*. They have been instrumental in establishing some of the most dynamic Muslim institutions in

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[6] According to the last pre-World War II census carried out in 1931 68.9% of inhabitants of Poland were Poles, 13.9% Ukrainians, 8.7% Jews, 3.1% Byelorussians and 2.3% Germans.

[7] The largest religious minority are Christian Orthodox who make up around 0.5 million people or 3% the total population. The number of regularly practising Poles has been slowly yet steadily decreasing and at present around 43% of Poles are regular churchgoers (Diagnoza Społeczna 2009).

[8] For detailed discussion of the difficulties involved in counting Muslims in Poland see Kubicki (2006).

[9] The last Census carried out in Poland in 2001 showed actually a figure of Tatars in Poland 10 times smaller than estimated (ca 500) but it was mainly a result of faulty methodology – see Babiński (2004), and the fact that many Tatars do not see themselves as a separate nationality (see Warmińska 2011).

the country such as the Muslim Center in Wrocław, for example. In doing so, they have been greatly assisted by numerous Polish intellectuals (including political scientists, philosophers, orientalists and artists) who have embraced Islam. Similarly, in other European countries Polish converts play a role of skillful cultural navigators who help to translate various aspects of Islamic heritage into the Polish context. This group consists of a few hundred men and a few thousand women. In that sense for every male convert there are most probably at least 5–8 female converts. The "relational" conversions,[10] to use Stefano Allievi's terminology, are more common amongst women than amongst men where the "rational" conversion type prevails (1999). Many Polish converts live abroad and have limited opportunity to actively contribute to Muslim life in Poland excepting that which takes place in the virtual world of the Internet.

Another group of Muslims that has recently started to play and increasingly important role in animating Muslim life in the country are Muslim businessmen and professionals, especially from Turkey. They established a number of institutions (including Mevlana Foundation and Dunaj Institute of Dialogue – both linked to the Gulen movement) that have started to actively engage both Polish Muslims as well as non-Muslims.

Much less organized are the Muslims from Iran, Central and South Asia (including those from Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan and India) and Africa (mainly Somalia) who have recently taken up residence in the country. This applies also to a significant number of Muslims who have arrived from the North Caucasus as a result of the Second Chechen War which started in 1999. The Chechens, in fact, make up over 80% of all refugees in contemporary Poland. This group is in constant flux, but its size (around 3–5,000) is quite significant and is constantly growing[11] (Chrzanowska and Gracz 2007, Czarniejewska et al. 2009).

The group which is much smaller but has an important influence on the life of Muslims in Poland are the diplomats from the Muslim world and their families. For example, the ambassadors of Saudi Arabia and Pakistan regularly visit the Congress of Polish Muslims and take part in other initiatives of Muslim organizations in Poland. The Muslim diplomatic corp also assists financially some initiatives of the Polish Muslims.

Muslims living in Poland are not only a very heterogeneous group in terms of ethnic origins but also with regard to religious world views. In other words, they follow various paths of Islam. Whereas the majority are Sunnis of Hanafi *madhhab*, there are also followers of other *madhhab*s and people inspired by the spiritual path of Islam or

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[10] In this type of conversion embracing Islam is rather a means to reach another aim (marriage) and not an end in itself.

[11] According to the data Office for Foreigners in 2010 there were almost 5,000 applications for refugee states from the citizens of Russia (here the vast majority are Chechens) slightly above 1,000 applications from citizens of Georgia and fewer applications from citizens of Armenia (107) Vietnam (47) and Belarus (47). At the same year refugee status was granted to 82 individuals including 42 from Russia, 19 from Belarus, 5 from Iraq and 4 from Afghanistan. For more information please go to the Office website http://www.udsc.gov.pl.

Sufism, Shiʻa Muslims[12] and even a few dozen members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, which has its office in Warsaw.

As far as the spatial distribution of Muslims in Poland is concerned the largest group lives in the capital city. It is estimated that around 1/3 of Muslims in Poland live in and around Warsaw. The other cities with substantial Muslim communities include Cracow, Łódź, Wrocław, Poznań, Gdańsk and Białystok however one may also find vibrant Muslim centres in Lublin and Katowice, Opole, Olsztyn and Bydgoszcz.[13] The leadership of the Polish Shiʻa community, which is made up almost entirely of Polish converts, is located for example in the city of Bydgoszcz.

Religious Leadership and Authority

Although there more than 10 organizations catering to the needs of various Muslim groups in the country, there are, in fact, two major groups that strive to speak in the name of all the Muslims in the country and represent them in the corridors of power. These two organization are the analyzed Muslim Religious Union and the Muslim League.[14]

The role of organizational *primus inter pares* within the Muslim population in Poland (at least in the eyes of the State) is played undoubtedly by the Tatar-dominated, oldest Muslim organization in the country that is the Muslim Religious Union in the Republic of Poland. The Muslim Religious Union (MZR) was established in 1925 and since 1936, when Islam gained official recognition by the Polish state, it has been acting as the representative of the Polish Muslims. In light of this law, the Mufti of Poland chosen from the ranks of the MZR, as well as, *imam*s and *muezzin*s had their salaries paid by the Polish state.[15] After 1989 when the new legislation allowing establishing of new Muslim organizations was introduced, MZR lost the monopoly as the sole and only representative body of the Muslims in Poland. The first Mufti of Poland after the World War II was elected in 2004. Since then this role has been played by

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[12] The number of Shiʻa Muslims according to one of the leaders of the community in Poland accounts for up to 10% of all the Muslims in Poland.

[13] For example the population of Muslim in Cracow is estimated at around 300 families (interview with HO) and in Lublin at around 400–800 people (interview with NAT).

[14] The smaller Muslim organization in the country include the predecessor of the LM that is the Association of the Muslim Students in Poland (Stowarzyszenie Studentów Muzułmańskich w Polsce), closely linked with the LM the Muslim Association For Cultural Formation (Muzułmańskie Stowarzyszenie Kształcenia Kulturalnego), two Shiʻa Muslim organizations that do not cooperate with each other: the Association of Muslim Unity (Stowarzyszenie Jedności Muzułmańskiej) and Ahl-ul-Bayt Islamic Assembly of Poland (Islamskie Zgromadzenie Ahl-ul-Bayt) the Tatar Union of the Republic of Poland (Związek Tatarów Rzeczpospolitej Polskiej), the School of Sufi Teachings (Szkoła Nauk Sufich), Muslim Association Ahmadiyya (Muzułmańskie Stowarzyszenia Ahmadiyya), Mevlana Foundation (Fundacja Mevlana) and Danube Dialogue Institute (Instytu Dialogu Dunaj). For more information about this organization see Pędziwiatr (2011).

[15] This was at least the case before World War II. The Communists regime ceased to support any religious group.

Tomasz Miśkiewicz – Tatar *imam* from Białystok (born in 1977) who completed a degree in *shari'a* law at the university in Saudi Arabia. Until the end of the 1990s the membership of the MZR was open only to Muslims with Polish citizenship (interview with GB) which has in fact partially contributed to the creation of the second major Muslim organization in the country that had a much more inclusive character. The MZR learned this lesson and at present is open not only to Muslim Polish citizens but also to all Muslims who have permanent residence[16] in Poland. Although the key positions are still occupied by the Tatars, at least 15% of its members are now immigrants and converts (Nalborczyk and Gródź 2010: 404).

The Muslim Religious Union has been looking after two historic mosques from the 16th and 17th centuries in Kruszyniany and Bochoniki and the prayer house in Białystok. It has been also in charge of the only (so far) modern purpose-built mosque in Gdańsk and an Islamic Center in Warsaw. It maintains also a vibrant publishing activity. Two of the journals published by the MZR, *Przegląd Tatarski* and *Muzułmanie Rzeczpospolitej*, can be downloaded from MZR's well-maintained website.[17]

To carry out various activities the Tatar-led organization receives substantial financial support from the State. Tatars are in fact doubly recognized – not only as members of a religious minority and spokespersons of the Muslim community in Poland[18] but also – which is even more important – as a recognized ethnic minority.[19] The Act of January 6, 2005 on National and Ethnic Minorities and on the Regional Languages[20] strongly legitimates their privileged position within the Muslim community.[21] Paragraph 18 of this Act states, for example, that

> Public authorities shall be obligated to take appropriate measures in order to support the activity aimed at protection, maintenance and development of cultural identity of the minority.

Such a law not only opens numerous channels of funding from the state for the recognized minorities but also represents a powerful mechanism for enforcing ethnic

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[16] However the membership in the governing body of the organization (Najwyższe Kolegium MZR) is still limited only to Muslims with Polish citizenship – see paragraph 20 of the status of MZR available on http://www.mzr.pl/pl/pliki/statut.pdf.

[17] More information about the organization can be found on the following website http://www.mzr.pl.

[18] This recognition is of more informal nature although the pre-war legislation from 1936 is sill binding since it was not repelled neither by the Communist regime nor by the post-1989 governments.

[19] There are in Poland 4 recognized as ethnic minorities: the Karaim; the Lemko; the Roma and the Tartar and 9 recognized national minorities: Byelorussians, Czechs, Lithuanians, Germans, Armenians, Russians, Slovaks, Ukrainians, Jews.

[20] Available in English on http://www.mswia.gov.pl/download.php?s=1&id=2342.

[21] The Tatars are for example the only group from within the Muslim population in Poland that possesses some access to the state media. The Polish Television in Białystok broadcasts regularly a program called Orient Podlaski – more information about the program can be found on http://www.tvp.pl/bialystok/mniejszosci/podlaski-orient.

boundaries and the different statuses ascribed to the various ethno-national categories.[22]

As mentioned earlier the emergence of the second major Muslim organization in the country, the Muslim League in the Republic of Poland (LM), is linked, at least partially, to the initial exclusiveness of the MZR. As one may read on its website the LM was set up in 2001 to, inter alia, „promote awareness about Islam" and „to exercise Muslim religious rights". The organization was recognized in 2004 as a "religious community" by the Department of Denominations and National Minorities at the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration. In contrast to the MZR, from the very beginning the membership in the organization has been open to Polish Muslims, Muslims with Polish citizenship, and those with permanent or temporary residence permits. Similarly to the MZR the Muslim League has also created the position of a Mufti (with the title of Mufti of Muslim League in Poland), which, since its creation, has been occupied by imam Nidal Abu Tabaq (a medical doctor by profession) from the Muslim Center in Lublin. In this move one may clearly see the attempt of LM to challenge at least some religious authority of the MZR's Mufti of Poland. In the international relations mediated by State authorities, the Polish Muslim community is usually represented by the Mufti of Poland, and here the LM has very little chances of breaking the monopoly of the MZR's representation.[23] In the internal relations, however, even with the State's backing, the position and authority of Mufti of Poland is much more exposed and hence prone to attacks undermining his authority.

The fieldwork material shows that the two *mufti*s (Tomasz Miśkiewicz from the MZR and Nidal Abu Tabaq from the LM) who theoretically should be regarded by the members of the wider Muslim community in Poland as the key points of religious reference are not necessarily viewed in such a way. At the age of relatively easy access to religious knowledge from abroad many believers are searching for religious guidance beyond the formal structures set up for them. Partially this search for alternative sources of religious knowledge is also a result of dissatisfaction with the quality of guidance provided by the Polish *mufti*s. Some of the persons interviewed in the course of the research argued that if they want to inquire about some religious issues they would rather address *imam* Jarosław Banasiak (of the Sunni tradition) or *imam* Arkadiusz Miernik (of the Shia tradition) (Group interview). At the same time several persons interviewed pointed out that while assessing the religious and organizational leadership provided by the major Muslim organizations in the country one must take into account very limited resources (both financial and human) that they have at their disposal and that a great deal of work within these structures is being done pro bono or on a voluntary basis. (Interview with AS, MC, NAT).

The Muslim League led by medical doctor Samir Ismail has set up branches in all major Polish cities (including Warsaw, Łódź, Wrocław, Katowice, Kraków, Poznań,

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[22] On the reception of the 2005 Act within the Tatar community please see Warmińska 2011.

[23] It can do so only through non-State mediated channels (for example Pan-Islamists) but so far it has been doing it only in the limited degree (e.g. by obtaining funding for the Muslim Cultural Centre in Warsaw).

Lublin, and Białystok). The most vibrant Muslim centres are probably those in Wrocław, Poznań, Lublin, Katowice, and Kraków. In this way, the League has been striving to cater to the needs of the Muslims in Poland whereas the MZR structures are not available. The organization has been also building the biggest Muslim Cultural Centre in Poland[24] with prayer facilities for 300 people in the Polish capital. Its actions are not only aimed at building Muslim institutions in Poland but also educating Muslims and non-Muslims about different aspects of Islam and Islamic culture and heritage. The later goal it strives to achieve, inter alia, through publishing activities. It has published numerous books and it has also been publishing a Muslim socio-cultural quarterly *As-Salam*,[25] which should be available in all major bookshops around the country. The Council of Imams, one of the organs of the LM, also publishes a "journal for new Muslims" *Al-Umma*.[26] The latest publication can be viewed both as an educational tool for new Muslims and as an element of the subtle organizational policy of inviting people to Islam or carrying out *da'wa*.

There have been some discussions and efforts in the past to set up an organization that would allow all Muslims in the country to speak with one voice to the government and the media (interview with RB, MC, GI). To date these plans and efforts have been futile, inter alia, due to lack of willingness on the part of major players to truly engage in the creation of such a body. Frequently issuing even a joint press release addressing some critical issue to the community has not been possible either due to the difficulties of reaching a common position or due to organizational ambitions to speak only with its own voice.

The state authorities are also not interested in helping to establish such a body, clearly favouring the relations with MZR over any other organizational representation of Muslim population in the political corridors of power. Such a policy, however, may be short-sighted, taking into account the fact that Muslim life in the country is animated by the MZR only to a limited degree while other organizations and institutions have been gaining the support of the majority of Muslims in Poland. It may happen that one day those perceived by the state as the leaders of the "Muslim community" will no longer be seen as such leaders in the eyes of Polish Muslims themselves.

Who should build the first mosque in Warsaw?

The competition and cooperation between the MZR and LM extends to many other spheres beyond those of religious representation and authority. Probably it is most clearly visible in the recent efforts to build a mosque in the Polish capital. As aforementioned, there are currently three purpose-built mosques in Poland: two historic ones in Bohoniki and Kruszyniany and a modern one in Gdańsk. All of them have been under the supervision of the MZR. The Tatar-led organization has been also

[24] I shall elaborate more on this project in the next subchapter.
[25] For more information please see the website of the quarterly: http://www.as-salam.pl/.
[26] More information about the organization and its status can be found on the following website: http://www.islam.info.pl.

trying to build a mosque in Warsaw. It obtained the building plot in the Polish capital even before World War II, however, it did not manage to construct the mosque as the war broke out and the resources for the construction were spent for the defense of the country. Since 1989 the MZR has been trying to obtain a new plot from the City Authorities but so far its requests have been rejected. (Interview with GB) One could read in the newspapers at the end of 2008 (e.g. Na Ochocie stanie meczet?, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 06.10.2008) that the construction of the MZR's mosque in Warsaw was imminent. These announcements, however, turned out to be overoptimistic and premature. As of now, there is no viable plan of construction of such a mosque. Having known this, one may understand the words of frustration expressed to the media by the Mufti of Poland when he learned about the construction of a mosque by the LM. (Wojtczuk and Urzykowski 2010) Before I elaborate on these words and the meaning behind them lets introduce the case.

The Muslim League, which does not control at the moment any purpose-built mosques in Poland but only prayer halls in converted buildings, started to search for the construction site for the Warsaw mosque already in 2001, immediately after its emergence. Initially the LM, much like the MZR, asked the City Authorities to give it a building plot on which it could erect the Centre for Muslim Culture. The answer from the City Authorities was negative, while the State offered 40 thousand PLN of "financial assistance" (Piskała 2011). Clearly with such financial offer the LM could implement its ambitious project. The organization decided then to take a different path in which it relied mainly on its network of contacts in the Muslim world. This strategy proved to be successful. The plot was bought on commercial conditions at the end of 2004. Two year later the permission to build the Centre was obtained (for a period of two years) and in June 2009 the construction work began. By the end of 2011 the construction of the 2,600 m² Centre with a prayer hall for 300 people and a small minaret in the Ochota district of Warsaw is supposed to be complete. The major cost of the construction (4 million EUR) is covered by the Saudi donor *shaykh* Abd al-Latif Al-Fuzan, however the list of donors is yet open. The full list of contributors will be revealed during the opening ceremony (interview with SI).

The construction of the Centre has attracted substantial media attention mainly as a result of protests held by the association Europe of the Future against the project. The members of the association argued that the mosque in Warsaw is part of the wider "invasion of Europe by Islam", or "invasion of aliens", and that it is "a manifestation of the terrorist civilisation" and that the permission for the construction should be given only when the Saudi authorities would allow to build churches in their own country (Pędziwiatr 2010a, 2010b, Piskała 2011). The reply of one of my Muslim interviewees to these arguments was the following: "I am a Polish Muslim and not an alien! I want to have a mosque in which I could pray. I do not care about the situation in Saudi Arabia" (group interview). The construction fence in the Ochota district of Warsaw was covered, inter alia, with the slogan "islamy na Islandię" ('Islams go to Island').[27]

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[27] Please see also the electronic petition against the construction of the Center with more than 3,000 signatures: http://www.petycje.pl/petycjePodpisyLista.php?petycjeid=5088&podpis_rodzaj=1.

To the surprise of the leadership of the LM, the anti-mosque campaign also received a boost from within the Muslim population. It was particularly painful since it came from the highest position within the Muslim leadership in Poland, that is the Mufti of Poland, in the words of lack of support for the LM prospect, distancing itself from it and questioning the right of LM to build a mosque in Warsaw. Mufti Miśkiewicz quoted in one of the major Polish newspapers complained that: "We have 5 thousand members, but it is the Muslim League that has only 180 members, which has received fast-track permission to build a mosque" (quoted by Wojtczuk and Urzykowski 2010). By doing so, he used his position, as the leader of the "established" Polish Muslims to question the right of the "less-established" to build a mosque in the Polish capital. Although LM supposedly enjoys a smaller member base of followers of Islam in Poland, they nevertheless turned out to be more resourceful than the "established" community. By recalling earlier the history of the Tatar project to build the mosque in Warsaw, the Mufti also pointed out historical elements legitimizing the Tatar claim to the priority right in the construction of such an edifice in the Polish capital. In only a few sentences he has managed to generate a "group charisma", or a sense of their own superiority as a group over other groups of Muslims relegating them to the status of tiny margins of the Muslim population.

The location of the fourth purposed mosque in Poland is also not without importance. The leader of the MZR complained to the journalists of *Gazeta Wyborcza* about the architectural style of the constructed Muslim Cultural Centre and its location close to the shopping mall. In his view "the mosque needs some dignity" (Miśkiewicz quoted by Wojtczuk and Urzykowski 2010) and it surely does. The crux of the matter, however, seems to be not so much its setting within the city but rather its location within the country. Warsaw as the capital city is a political center of Poland and the place where decisions are made with regards to the whole country. Most probably Mufti Miśkiewicz would be less critical if a similar project for mosque construction was implemented in another Polish city. He is well aware of the symbolic significance of the first purposed mosque in the Polish capital. The fact that the MZR does not have such a mosque in Warsaw weakens its authority within the larger Muslim population in Poland.

The "rebalancing of power" in Warsaw between the two major players of the Polish Muslim population might come surprisingly also with assistance from the "less established" community. In the interview with the author, the leader of the LM suggested, in a reconciliatory manner, that the LM would happily support the MZR in its project of building a mosque in Warsaw, when they complete the Muslim Cultural Center (interview with SI). Moreover, if the state authorities are serious in their support for the Tatar community and want to assist them in their efforts to hold on to power within the Polish Muslim community they should also act more constructively in this matter than they have been doing so far.

Conclusions

As shown above with these few examples, the inter-group relations within the Muslim community in Poland are very complex and full of dynamism. This article has managed only to touch upon some of the dimensions of these multifaceted relations. Clearly, further research is needed in this area. Behind the official statements claiming peaceful and harmonious cooperation between the major organizational players within the Muslim community in Poland one may notice numerous cases of strife, competition, and tensions. At the same time the leadership and members of the two major Muslim organizations in the country have been quick to learn about each others' advantages and how to refrain from open criticism. Within the circles of LM there is, e.g., an increasing appreciation of the heritage of the Tatars or the "older brothers",[28] as they are often referred to, whereas within the MZR there has been a growing number of members who happily cooperate with the "Arab brothers" from the LM. The increasing number of Tatars who take part in the annual Congresses of Polish Muslims organized by the LM is just one example of this trend. Here it is worth mentioning also that the criticism of the Tatar religiosity by the Arabs quoted at the beginning of the article fades away partially also due to the changes within the Tatar community. The religious guidance provided by the Muslims of immigrant origin and Muslim emissaries (e.g. *imam*s and missionaries) has clearly sped up the processes of secondary religious socialization amongst the Tatar community and enabled their members to reconnect with the Muslim world on different terms than during the Communism regime. These changes were aptly captured by one of my interviewees who pointed out that

> There is now much less lecturing of Tatars by the Arab Muslims [...] At the same time the Tatar population has changed significantly. A lot of people have ceased to eat pork and drink alcohol. The world has opened up for the Tatars with a new range of contacts and opportunities. (Interview with MC)

Fieldwork Material

In-depth interviews with:
  — Andrzej Saramowicz – AS (June 28, 2011, Prague)
  — Hayssam Obeidat – HO (June 29, 2011, Prague)
  — Samir Ismail – SI (June 30, 2011, Warsaw)
  — Musa Czachorowski – MC (July 6, 2011, Kraków)
  — Ali Abi Issa – AAI (July 9, 2011, Borki)

[28] One may notice if for example in the recent article by the Chairman of the LM Samir Ismail about the role of Muslims in the elections in which he makes several references to the noble history of Tatars in Poland. Available on http://islam.info.pl/images/stories/Polscy_muzulmanie_a_wybory.pdf.

— Nidal Abu Tabaq – NAT (July 10, 2011, Borki)
— Dagmara Sulkiewicz – DS (July 9, 2011, Borki)
— Maciej Kochanowicz – MK (July 9, 2011, Borki)
— Grzegorz Bohdanowicz – GB (July 10, 2011, Borki)
— Zouhir Tobbal – ZT (July 10, 2011, Borki)
— Rafał Berger – RB (July 15, 2011; Internet communication)
— Beata Abdallah-Krzepkowska – BAK (July 25, 2011 Internet communication)

Group interview (July 13, 2011, Kraków) – 8 anonymous Muslim participants from various groups within the Muslim population in Poland.

Participant observation – 25th Annual Gathering of Polish Muslims (July 9–10, 2011, Borki)

Panel discussion (July 13, 2011, Kraków) – *Muslims in Poland – Muslims at Home?* Panelists: Urszula Chłopicka-Khan, Beata Abdallah-Krzepkowska, Hayssam Obeidat, Andrzej Saramowicz, Musa Czachorowski. Recording of the panel discussion is available on http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=URRe7nUfNQI.

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Agata S. Nalborczyk

Mosques in Poland. Past and present

There are three purpose-built mosques in Poland, with another mosque currently under construction. However, many more buildings of this kind existed in Poland in the past, owing to the traditionally tolerant laws for religious minorities, including the Muslim faith. During the first half of the 20th century, however, there were cases when it was impossible for mosques to be built because of complexities outside the legal framework. The current legal situation permits construction of sacred buildings by officially-recognized denominations, including Islam. Today there are few Muslims in Poland, approximately 25–35 thousand people, which constitutes about 0.07–0.09%[1] of the population.

This article presents the history and legal status of mosques in Poland, with emphasis on the 20th century and the present.

History of mosques in Poland

The first mosques were built in the Polish-Lithuanian state by Muslim Tatars residing in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The Tatars came from the Golden Horde, whose sovereigns practiced Islam since the 13th century (Borawski and Dubiński 1986: 15). In the 14th century Vytautas the Great began settling Tatars in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.[2] They were mostly vassals, who were granted a fiefdom in return for military service (Kryczyński 2000 [1938]: 17). They enjoyed various privileges such as religious freedom and the right to build mosques (Borawski 1980: 43f). Muslim Tatars came to the territory of modern Poland in the 17th century, when Jan III Sobieski endowed them with lands in Podlachia (Pol. Podlasie).

The first record of mosques in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania came from the 16th century. The mosques of Lithuanian Tatars were built with funds from usually poor local communities (Konopacki 2010: 110f). It is interesting to note that Tatars who served lords were granted by their masters the financial means to build their prayer houses (Borawski 1991: 33f; Konopacki 2010: 114f). The mosques were built by local

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[1] According to the article 53 of the act 7 of the Polish Constitution: "No one may be compelled by organs of public authority to disclose his philosophy of life, religious convictions or belief".

[2] For the history of Tatar settlement in Lithuania and Lithuanian-Tatar relations see Tyszkiewicz (1989: 158f).

carpenters who constructed Catholic and Orthodox churches, which is why the concept and appearance of the buildings were so similar. These were rather modest and simple buildings (Kryczyński 2000 [1938]: 165f; Drozd 1999: 16f).

Until the 17th century there were no formal obligatory stipulations or restraints to the construction of Muslim sacred places (Konopacki 2010: 105f). It was only in 1668 that the constraint on building mosques was introduced on the land where previously no such buildings had existed (Drozd 1999: 14). However, there were exceptions, as demonstrated by new mosques built in Kruszyniany and Bohoniki on the territory of newly-bestowed lands in Podlachia in 1679. Freedom to erect new mosques and renovate existing mosques was unequivocally granted by the Constitution of 1768 and ratified by the Constitution of 1775 (Konopacki 2010: 109).

Historical sources do not record any protests in the Polish-Lithuanian state against the building of the mosques or any hostility towards the already-existing buildings (Kryczyński 2000 [1938]: 159), apart from one exception, when in 1609 a fanatical crowd ravaged the mosque in Trakai (Pol. Troki). However, this took place during a period of escalated religious activity in the course of counter-reformation (Sobczak 1984: 104).

According to Stanisław Kryczyński (2000 [1938]: 160f), before 1795, when Poland lost its independence for more than 100 years, there were 23 mosques and five prayer houses in Lithuania.[3]

Endeavors to build new mosques in Poland in 1918–1939

After Poland regained its independence in the period between the two World Wars, 17 mosques and 2 prayer houses existed within Polish borders.[4] Initially after the World War I, numerous mosques needed renovation or restoration. Thanks to financial help from the Ministry of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment, Tatar emigrants from the United States and Egypt's contribution (King Fuad I's donation; Drozd 1999: 16) it was possible to renovate the majority of mosques.[5] All the mosques were wooden with the exception of one in Minsk, made of brick and founded in 1902 with parishioners' contributions (Miśkiewicz and Kamocki 2004: 100).

During this period, Polish authorities supported financially the officially recognized religions, including Islam. In December 1925 the Muslim Religious Union in the

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[3] There were few mosques more in Volyn annexed to the Polish Crown in 1569 (Kryczyński 2000 [1938]: 161). Turkish historian, Paşa Peçevi (1572–1650) noted in his *Tarih-i Peçevi* that in the 17th century Tatars owned 60 mosques (Kryczyński 1937: 17). However, Andrzej Drozd (1999: 14) thinks there were only 20.

[4] Altogether, 19 Muslim communities (called parishes) with sacred buildings (Kryczyński 2000 [1938]: 162–163).

[5] Only the mosque in Studzianka, destroyed in 1916, was not reconstructed, since after the World War I the Tatar community did not exist in this village any longer (Miśkiewicz 1990: 88). The first mosque was erected in Studzianka in the 18th century and it was renovated in 1817 (Węda 2009: 4–5).

Republic of Poland (Muzułmański Związek Religijny, MZR) was established with the approval of the Ministry of Interior and Administration and thanks to the financial help of the Ministry of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment.[6] The statute of the Union was approved by the Ministry and its relations with the Polish authorities were eventually regulated in 1936 by the Act defining the relationship between the state and the Muslim Religious Union in the Republic of Poland. Jakub Szynkiewicz PhD, a specialist in Oriental studies (1884–1966), was appointed Mufti. According to this Act, the government was legally obliged to support financially the Muslim Religious Union (article 38) and mosques were exempt from taxation and other payments (article 41). However, in spite of this financial support Muslims had to finance construction of their places of prayer by themselves.

No new mosques were built in that period despite the plans for construction in Vilnius and Warsaw. The Tatars owned one small modest wooden mosque in Łukiszki district (Kryczyński 1937: 13f) and just before World War I they founded a committee charged with the construction of a new mosque. It was to be made of brick and was designed by Professor Stefan Kryczyński, an architect of Tatar origin.[7] Twenty thousand rubles were collected and then lost, together with other Community funds, during the War (Kryczyński 1937: 20), and it was impossible to start the project before 1939 (Miśkiewicz 1990: 89). However, the mosque in Vilnius was considered to be one of the most significant in Poland and was visited by President Ignacy Mościcki in 1930 (Miśkiewicz and Kamocki 2004: 99–100).[8]

In Warsaw, the country capital, the Muslim community differed from the communities in the east, where Lithuanian-Polish Tatars prevailed. In Warsaw, Muslims were in majority refugees, former prisoners of war (of the Russian army) and ex-Russian civil servants who did not want to go back to their homeland in the Soviet Union. They were Azerbaijanis, Circassians, Tatars from Crimea and the Volga region in Russia and Caucasian peoples (Tyszkiewicz 2002: 118). The community did not have any places of worship, and before World War I there were plans to build a small mosque in Warsaw. However, due to the War, the project was not started (Miśkiewicz and Kamocki 2004: 103). After the War, the Muslims still did not have anywhere to worship so they met in private houses or rented a room in the Eastern Institute to celebrate religious holidays (Miśkiewicz 1990: 92).

Since not only Warsaw Muslims but also representatives of diplomatic missions of Muslim countries took part in prayers, an idea was conceived to build in Warsaw a representational mosque which would serve local communities and foreign Muslims (Miśkiewicz 1990: 92f). In 1928 a Mosque-Building Committee was established, which was independent from the Muslim Religious Union (Kołodziejczyk 1987). What is interesting is that it was not only Muslims who joined the Committee but also

[6] For more details see: Nalborczyk and Borecki (2011: 346f).

[7] Professor at Saint-Petersburg State University of Architecture and Civil Engineering (Miśkiewicz 1990: 88f). He was the author of the mosque project in Saint Petersburg (Kryczyński 1937: 20).

[8] President Mościcki's first visit took place in Nowogródek on September 22, 1929. President prayed together with the worshippers for the prosperity of Poland (Miśkiewicz and Kamocki 2004: 110).

Catholics who were sympathetic to the initiative. Professor Olgierd Górka, Secretary-General of the Eastern Institute, was among the supporters (Miśkiewicz and Kamocki 2004: 103). The Committee appealed to the Polish society as a whole, calling for financial contributions for the building of a mosque and highlighting the Tatar Muslims' merits for Poland and the esteem Poland enjoyed in the Muslim world of that period (Miśkiewicz 1990: 93).

The Committee also asked the Warsaw municipal authorities and Ministry of Public Works for land for the construction. After few years of discussions, the Committee was granted in 1934 a plot of 300 m² and started work on the architectural plan. One year later a call for tender was announced and a panel of adjudicators was elected, composed of the Mufti, members of the Committee and representatives of the Polish Architects' Association. The call for tender envisaged a building with a worship room for 300–350 persons, a library, a conference room, the chancellery of the Muftiate and the Mufti's private apartment (Miśkiewicz 1990: 94f). After being built, the mosque was to be handed over to the Warsaw Muslim community (Miśkiewicz 1990: 93). The winning project was selected from among 67 projects submitted, but the construction works were not started before the outbreak of World War II due to the lack of financial resources.[9]

Mosques in Poland – current state of affairs

There are three mosques in Poland at the moment.[10] Two wooden mosques, the 18th century mosque in Kruszyniany and 19th century mosque in Bohoniki,[11] are located in Podlachia and a new brick-build mosque was opened in 1990 in Gdańsk. Other Muslim communities in Poland have only prayer rooms. Even the largest Muslim community, MZR in Białystok, has only one prayer room in a communal wooden building that it has owned since the 1970s and which used to be a public library.[12]

Construction of a mosque in Gdańsk – People's Republic of Poland

In Gdańsk, after 1945 the Tatars established a completely new local religious community. Being new, they had no place of prayer in the city and met at private houses. When in 1980 the community started considering the construction of a place of

[9] Polish diplomatic missions in Muslim countries participated in the collection of money. However, they were not successful. Even Mufti Jakub Szynkiewicz's trip to India in 1937 was a failure (Kołodziejczyk 1987).

[10] After World War II two out of six mosques were destroyed in Soviet Lithuania – in Vilnius and Wiksznup (Pol. Wiksznupie), and six out of eight in Belarus – in Dowbuciszki, Lachowicze, Łowczyce, Minsk, Niekraszuńce and Osmołów (Drozd 1999: 15).

[11] At the end of the 20th century there were projects to expand the mosque in Bohoniki. However, it was not well received by the majority of the community and heritage conservator (Miśkiewicz and Kamocki 2004: 106).

[12] In the 1960s of the 20th century a construction of a new mosque in Białystok was considered (Miśkiewicz and Kamocki 2004: 104f).

prayer, the first idea was to create it in Dżemila Smajkiewicz-Murman's family house. Mrs Smajkiewicz-Murman was since 1979 an elected president of the community and her father was a local *imam*. After some time, a mosque building committee was established with Stefan Mustafa Bajraszewski as president. It was Dżemila Smajkiewicz-Murman who raised the initial funds for construction, collecting money during religious holidays from the ambassadors of Muslim countries. She also selected the site for construction from among three sites proposed by the city. The money came mostly from fellow worshippers and benefactors both from Poland and abroad (from the Grand Mufti of Lebanon among others), diplomats and Muslim business-men (Miśkiewicz and Kamocki 2004: 104). The brick mosque in Turkish style was designed by a Polish architect, Marian Wszelaki. The cornerstone was laid in 1984.

The construction of the mosque was not an easy task. At that time it was difficult to acquire many building materials allotted by the state authorities.[13] Dżemila Smajkiewicz-Murman exchanged missing building materials and equipment with a local parson, who was building a church in the neighborhood, in order to prevent delays in both constructions. The opening of the mosque took place in 1990 in the presence not only of fellow believers from abroad, but also the bishop of Gdańsk, arch-bishop Tadeusz Gocłowski and the future President Lech Wałęsa,[14] the legendary leader of 'Solidarność'. The next President, Aleksander Kwaśniewski, visited the mosque in October 2001.[15]

Legal situation of religious organizations in contemporary Poland and construction of the sacred buildings

A right to construct sacred buildings constitutes a factor of religious freedom and it is supervised by national legislation regulating the relationship between the State and religious authorities. Religious law, as provided for in the Constitution of April 2, 1997, implies a relaxed division between State and religion (article 25, paragraph 3).[16] Article 53 of the Constitution of April 2, 1997 guarantees freedom of conscience and religion to every citizen, including possession of sanctuaries and other places of worship for the satisfaction of the needs of believers.

Religions interact with the State by building churches and denominational organ-izations in accordance with article 2 paragraph 1 of Act of May 17, 1989 on the

[13] For more on the construction of the mosque see: Historia meczetu. Meczet w Gdańsku, http://www.meczetgdansk.pl/historia_meczetu.php (accessed: 18.08.2011).

[14] Lech Wałęsa, before the rise of 'Solidarność' in 1980, worked in the Gdańsk Shipyard; he lives in Gdańsk.

[15] Prezydent Kwaśniewski odwiedził gdański meczet. Wirtualna Polska, http://wiado-mosci.wp.pl/kat,1342,title,Prezydent-Kwasniewski-odwiedzil-gdanski-meczet,wid,207731,wia-domosc.html (retrieved: 18.08.2011).

[16] Art. 25 par. 3: „The relationship between the State and churches and other religious organizations shall be based on the principle of respect for their autonomy and the mutual independence of each in its own sphere, as well as on the principle of cooperation for the indi-vidual and the common good".

Guarantees of Freedom of Conscience and Religion. The Basic Law guarantees that all churches and other denominational organizations shall have equal rights (article 25, paragraph 1). This means that all denominational organizations which are in the same situation have to enjoy equal rights. Pursuant to article 25 paragraph 3 denominational organizations use their internal autonomy, i.e. they have the right to make their internal law and be self-governing, and the authorities cannot interfere in these processes. The State has no right to define the direction of religions or the functioning rules of their internal bodies, the State and religions are also financially independent from each other.[17]

Today Polish people can freely establish denominational organizations. If they wish to receive a legal entity status in accordance with their internal law, as well as rights and privileges envisioned by the state law for denominational organizations, they must register the organization in the Register of the Ministry of Interior and Administration based on the Act of May 17, 1989 on the Guarantees of Freedom of Conscience and Religion. To register there have to be at least 100 petitioners who are Polish citizens (Rynkowski 2005)[18] and the registered association receives privileges of an officially recognized denomination.[19] The relations between the Republic of Poland and churches and denominational organizations shall be determined by statutes adopted pursuant to agreements concluded between their appropriate representatives and the Council of Ministers (article 25, paragraph 5).[20]

The denominational organizations have to act within the legal framework and their activity „cannot violate prevailing regulations on the acts protecting public safety" (article 27, paragraph 1 and article 5 of the Act).

In Poland according to the law, officially recognized denominational organizations are guaranteed rights and privileges. One such privilege is the right to construct sacred buildings as guaranteed by article 53 paragraph 2 of the Constitution of Poland:

> […] Freedom of religion shall also include possession of sanctuaries and other places of worship for the satisfaction of the needs of believers as well as the right of individuals, wherever they may be, to benefit from religious services.

and art. 19 par. 2 of the Act of May 17, 1989 on the Guarantees of Freedom of Conscience and Religion:[21]

[17] Religious organizations, as a rule, do not have the right to demand government grants – indirect or direct ones – for their religious and internal activities.

[18] Before 1998, 15 Polish citizens could register a denominational organization (Rynkowski 2007: 292–293). In some European countries this number is much higher – e.g. in Slovakia, a much smaller country than Poland, there must be 20 thousand citizens to register a denominational organization (Moravčíková 2005). In the Czech Republic this number is 10 thousand (Tretera 2005).

[19] There are 154 religious and 5 inter-church organizations registered in the registry of churches and other denominational organization.

[20] At present there are 15 churches and other denominational organizations operating on the basis of particular legal acts defining the relations between the state and each of these denominational organizations.

[21] Dz. U. 1989 Nr 29 poz. 155, z 2005 r. Nr 231, poz. 1965, z 2009 r. Nr 98, poz. 817.

Churches and other denominational associations, when performing their religious functions may in particular: [...]
6) make sacred investments and other church investments;
7) obtain, own and dispose chattels and real properties and to administer it [...].

In order to accomplish their objectives, churches and denominational organizations have a right to receive donations (article 19, paragraph 2, point 8) including foreign donations (article 24 paragraph 2), and "to stay in touch with fellow-believers and participate in the works of religious organizations of international scope" (article 2, paragraph 6).

There are five Islamic denominational organizations registered in Poland. Only two of them are Sunni Muslims organizations: Sunni Muslim Religious Union of the Republic of Poland (the oldest Muslim organization, established in 1925, MZR) and Sunni Muslim League (Liga Muzułmańska) which was registered in 2004. Among these organizations, the Muslim Religious Union is the most significant, accounting for approximately 5,000 members (the Muslim League has about 180 members), and is the only religious organization which operates on the basis of a special legal act, as the Polish Sejm has not repealed the Act of 21 April 1936 defining the relationship between the state and the MZR[22].

Warsaw – a new mosque under construction

Although the majority of Muslims of Poland live in Warsaw (approximately 10–11 thousand persons, with an estimated number of 20–35 thousand Muslims in Poland), there is no purpose-built mosque in the capital.

The Muslim Religious Union has an adapted room of prayers in a 1992 villa in Wiertnicza Street. There is also an Islamic Centre and seat for the Warsaw community. After 1989 the Union began efforts to regain the land granted before the World War II, which proved unsuccessful due to legal difficulties and so the Union requested a replacement lot. This request was refused by Warsaw Municipality and the Ministry of Interior and Administration. Furthermore, the Polish State today does not fund denominational organizations and churches and so the Union must attract funds from abroad.[23]

The majority of Muslims of immigrant origin, together with their families and converts, belong to a new Muslim denominational body, the Muslim League, which was set up in 2001 and registered with the Ministry of Interior and Administration in 2004. The Mazovian section of the League, whose seat is in Warsaw, meets in the

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[22] However, the act is anachronistic, as it has not been adapted to the new Polish Constitution of 1997.
[23] Tomasz Miśkiewicz, Mufti of MZR, addressed such an appeal to the authorities of Organization of Islamic Conference, OIC, at the opening of an international symposium OIC on the situation and problems of Muslims in Eastern and Central Europe. The symposium took place on December 8, 2010 in Warsaw.

Islamic Center, MZR, in Wiertnicza Street as mentioned above.[24] The Muslim League authorities decided to build a Center for Muslim Culture. A donation came from a Saudi Arabian sponsor who wished to remain anonymous until the opening of the building. A further donation was made by the fellow worshippers.

By 2006 the project, the purchase of the lot and the plans for the building were completed. The project of the Center for Muslim Culture envisages a room of prayers covered by a dome, a minaret eighteen meters high (azan will not be audible), a conference room, a cafeteria and a commercial section (Wojtczuk and Urzykowski 2010).

In 2008 building permission was granted and the construction works began. The walls started to be visible above the ground in 2010 and the works continued until summer 2010 when they stopped due to problems with the construction company. The works have now recommenced and the building will be ready in time for the Euro 2012 European football championship taking place in Warsaw.[25]

On February 25, 2010 *Gazeta Stołeczna*, a Warsaw supplement of *Gazeta Wyborcza*, published an article „A mosque for eleven thousand Warsaw Muslims is being constructed" (Wojtczuk and Urzykowski 2010). It attracted attention to the mosque built since 2008 by the Muslim League and four weeks later it was announced that on March 27, 2010 a demonstration against the mosque would take place, organized by "Europe of the Future", who made accusations of fundamentalist danger and connections with foreign Muslim movements and organizations, including the Muslim Brotherhood.[26] The source of the danger was supposed to be the League's affiliation with the Federation of Islamic Organizations in Europe (FIOE) with members connected with the Muslim Brotherhood who were alleged to influence the League's activity in Poland.[27] Other allegations were a potential danger of massive Muslim immigration[28] or the supposedly Wahhabi facet of Islam professed by the members of the League.[29] However, on March 23, 2010 in the morning program on Radio Eska the leader of "Europe of the Future" admitted to not having any evidence proving the connections of the Muslim Brotherhood with the Muslim League and its potential danger for the Polish State. The protest announcement and the Association's

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[24] See: http://www.islam.info.pl/liga-muzulmanska/oddzialy/warszawa-oddzial-mazo-wiecki. Other sections of the League have local Islamic Centers and rooms of prayers.

[25] For Muslim football supporters from abroad.

[26] Kto buduje meczet w Warszawie?, http://www.euroislam.pl/index.php/2010/03/kto-buduje-meczet-w-warszawie (accessed 22.03.2011).

[27] Jan Wójcik, the head of the "Europe of future" said in *Gazeta Stołeczna*: "We are protesting because the Muslim League of Poland is connected with Muslim Brotherhood of radical Muslim fundamentalists" (Machajski and Urzykowski 2010). However, Muslim Brotherhood is not a homogenous organization. In Jordan it is known for its moderation and its members work in the government.

[28] They wrote in the protest appeal: "We don't agree with the islamization of Poland"; Minarety jak głowice rakiet. Agresywni islamiści w Polsce?, Wirtualna Polska, http://konflik-ty.wp.pl/kat,1371,title,Minarety-jak-glowice-rakiet-Agresywni-islamisci-w-Polsce,wid,12114536,wiadomosc.html (accessed 22.03.2011).

[29] Kto buduje meczet w Warszawie?, http://www.euroislam.pl/index.php/2010/03/kto-buduje-meczet-w-warszawie (accessed 22.03.2011). For more see: http://www.euroislam.pl.

appeal were signed by March 24, 2010 by 2,000 fans on Facebook, some of whom were proponents of nationalist and fascism-oriented All-Polish Youth (Machajski and Urzykowski 2010).

On March 27, 2010 a demonstration against the building of the Center for Muslim Culture took place. One hundred persons protested against the Center[30] and few dozen supported it (some sources indicate 20 persons).[31]

Shortly after the demonstration, the Common Council of Catholics and Muslms and the Association of Polish Jews, B'nai B'rith Polin, published announcements on the issue. The Council referred to Polish denominational law and the right to construct sacred buildings and also to the Polish Pope, John Paul II, the first pope in a history to visit a mosque, the Great Mosque of Damascus in 2001. The Jewish organization compared stirring the anti-Arab atmosphere to anti-Semitism, thus making reference to events and ideology which resulted in pogroms and the Holocaust. Both organizations pointed out the traditional tolerance of the Polish State towards followers of different religions.

The Warsaw authorities were surprised by the protests. The press officer of the town hall, Tomasz Andryszczyk, said that all the building formalities had been finished in 2008 and there were no legal reasons to revoke the permission. Thus, from the legal point of view the protest was unfounded.[32]

As the authorities of the Muslim League say, the Center of Muslim Culture should be ready in time for the European football championship which will take place in Warsaw in 2012 and the Muslim football supporters will have a place to pray.

Conclusion

Since the beginning of their presence in Poland, Polish Muslims enjoyed freedom of religion and the right to construct mosques. The first Islam followers, the Tatars, freely constructed wooden buildings in their towns and villages which served as places of prayers and meetings for local authorities. Sources record only one incidence of violence, towards sacred Muslim buildings.

In the 20th century, in the Second Polish Republic and Polish People's Republic, the Muslims benefited then as they do also now from the fact that Islam is an officially-recognized religion. Denominational organizations are recognized by the State and have a right to construct sacred buildings. However, only one mosque (in Gdańsk) was constructed in the 20th century. Before the World War II, although the Muslims did not have sufficient money to construct the mosques planned in Vilnius and Warsaw,

[30] G. Szymanik (2010) in *Gazeta Wyborcza* wrote there were 200 protesters; this number was also mentioned on the demonstration notification submitted to the authorities. T. Pruchnik (2010), councilor in the Law and Justice party, cited 150 persons.

[31] Szymanik (2010) mentioned several dozen; Pruchnik (2010) said there were 20 supporters.

[32] He said: "The decisions and negotiations in this matter were accomplished long time ago. This investment is being done according to the procedures. As a matter of fact, what are we expected to do?" (Machajski and Urzykowski 2010).

they had a legal right to do so. The situation is similar now. The Muslim League, as an officially-recognized Muslim denominational organization, is building the Center of Muslim Culture with a mosque according to the law. One protest could not stop the building, the law prevailed contrary to some European countries (France, Slovenia, Switzerland) where the legal status of Islam is not regulated.

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Eugeniusz Sakowicz

Dialogue between the Catholic Church and Islam in Poland

The Roman-Catholic Church is the main Christian partner in the Christian/Muslim dialogue in Poland for the simple reason that a vast majority (more than 90%) of the nearly 40 million Polish citizens belong to this Church. John Paul II greatly contributed to the promotion of this dialogue. What is more, the Church established permanent structures for dialogue and conducts it in areas indicated in the teachings of the Pope and of institutions for which the pontifical office is an unquestionable authority. For Catholics, the inspiration for the dialogue comes from the "Nostra Aetate" Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian religions (1986: 334–338), proclaimed in 1965 by the Second Vatican Council.[1]

Cultivating relations with Islam

In 2001 in Strasbourg, France, the President of the Conference of European Churches and the President of the Council of the European Bishops' Conferences (which includes the Polish Bishops' Conference) signed the *Charta Œcumenica. Guidelines for the Growing Cooperation among the Churches in Europe.*[2] In this document, Europe's Churches and ecclesiastical communities committed themselves, *inter alia*, "to conduct ourselves towards Muslims with respect". A chapter entitled "Our Common Responsibility in Europe" contains a section on "Cultivating relations with Islam", which states:

> Muslims have lived in Europe for centuries. In some European countries they constitute strong minorities. While there have been plenty of good contacts and neighborly relations between Muslims and Christians, and this remains the case, there are still strong reservations and prejudices on both sides. These are rooted

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[1] For a discussion of the Declaration, see E. Sakowicz (2000: 61–66). Catholic Church documents on Islam and dialogue with Islam were collected and edited by E. Sakowicz (1997a). The book was published by the Academy of Catholic Theology in Warsaw (currently Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw). Church documents on Islam were published throughout the pontificate of John Paul II (1978–2005) by the Vatican journal *L'Osservatore Romano*.

[2] For the Polish language version, see *Karta Ekumeniczna* (2001: 18–27).

in painful experiences throughout history and in the recent past. We would like to intensify encounters between Christians and Muslims and enhance Christian-Islamic dialogue at all levels. We recommend, in particular, speaking with one another about our faith in one God, and clarifying ideas on human rights.
We commit ourselves:
— to conduct ourselves towards Muslims with respect;
— to work together with Muslims on matters of common concern (2001: 26).

Assuming the responsibility for Europe, the Churches face an important task of overcoming prejudices that divide Christians and Muslims. A valuable lesson on how to challenge unfair stereotypes about Islam can be drawn from Poland, where positive relations between Catholic and Muslim Tatars have existed for many centuries.

The *Charta Œcumenica* reminds the Europeans that the believers in Allah have lived on the European continent for hundreds of years. Therefore, one should not give in to Islamophobia and fear of the Christians' "younger brothers and sisters in faith". What is needed is a greater number of encounters between Christians and Muslims, as well as Christian/Muslim dialogue conducted in various forms (dialogue of life, dialogue of experts, dialogue of works, dialogue of religious experience). These goals are pursued by the Catholic Church in Poland (Sakowicz 2001: 49–59).

Partners in the dialogue

The adherents of Islam are no strangers in Poland (Skowron-Nalborczyk 2005: 191–215; see also Poniatowski, Dziekan 1991: 143–218), and over the centuries Poles have been interacting with them in a number of ways and in various circumstances. These contacts have included wars against invaders from Islamic empires on the one hand, and peaceful co-existence on the other. Let us focus on the latter, i.e. on the dialogue-based co-existence of Christians and Muslims. Islam certainly constitutes a "valuable thread in the Polish spiritual and religious fabric". An examination of the history of Muslim Tatars in Poland shows that their relations with Catholics have been essentially "healthy". The interreligious dialogue was not a new phenomenon in Poland in the second half of the 20th century. Although not known under such name, it had already begun at the dawn of Polish statehood.

The mid-14th century saw the onset of incursions by Muslim Tatars of the Golden Horde (a Mongol-Tatar state). At the end of the 14th century, the Grand Duke of Lithuania Vytautas supported Tokhtamysh, who attempted to become the khan of the Horde. After the defeat of Tokhtamysh, some of his followers settled in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, primarily in Lithuania, and thus came to be called "Lithuanian Tatars" or "Polish Tatars". Later on, they were joined by Muslims from the Grand Horde (the central part of the former Golden Horde) and, in smaller numbers, from the Caucasus, Azerbaijan and Turkey. There were Tatar units within the Polish army. In 1410, they fought alongside Polish troops against the Teutonic Knights at the Battle of Grunwald (1st Battle of Tannenberg).

The largest influx of Muslims (ca. 100 thousand) in the history of Poland occurred in the 16th and 17th century. As a result of assimilation in the 1600s and 1700s, most of them began using Polish or Belarusian, although Arabic remained the language of prayer. The Muslim Tatars fought for the Polish cause in the Bar Confederation against the Russian Empire (1768–1772), in the national uprising against Russia and Prussia known as the Kościuszko Uprising (1794), and in the November Uprising (1830–1831) and the January Uprising (1863–1865), both against Russia. Those events constituted a peculiar form of interreligious co-operation of a patriotic nature.

Both the Christian majority and the Muslim minority cared for the same country, Poland. In 1918, Poland regained independence. The Regiment of the Tatar Uhlans, called the Tatar Cavalry, was organized in 1919. In 1920, this Muslim regiment fought in the Kiev Campaign (an offensive of the Polish Army against Kiev during the Polish-Bolshevik War), and defended Warsaw and Płock against the Bolsheviks who sought to impose communism throughout Europe.

The Religious Union of Muslims in Poland, established in 1925, has been a partner in the dialogue between the Catholic Church and Islam. Between the two World Wars, 20 Muslim communities existed in Poland, incl. Vilnius, Nesvizh, Novogrudok, and Slonim (these four found themselves outside Poland's borders after World War II), Bohoniki, Kruszyniany, and Warsaw. Muslims co-existed with Christians in villages, towns and cities of Poland, including the capital. Poles were always involved in a dialogue of life with them, i.e. a dialogue of everyday life. They accepted their otherness and knew that Muslims were not enemies of Christianity. At that time, the Polish Muslim community numbered 6,000 and had 17 mosques.

Pursuant to an act of 1936, the Polish state subsidized the Religious Union of Muslims, which may be regarded as a manifestation of "dialogue" between Polish society and Islam. Before World War II, the Tatars published *Życie Tatarskie* ['Tatar Life'], *Przegląd Islamski* ['Islamic Review'] and *Rocznik Tatarski* ['Tatar Yearly']. In September 1939, Polish Muslims participated in the defense against Nazi Germany's invasion of Poland, after which many of them remained in territories occupied by the Soviet Union.

In 1947, the Religious Union of Muslims was registered in the then People's Republic of Poland. In the years 1986–1990, the *Życie muzułmańskie* ['Muslim Life'] magazine was published in Gdańsk. Since 1993, *Rocznik Tatarów Polskich* ['The Polish Tatars Yearly'], since 1992 *Świat Islamu* ['The World of Islam'], and since 1998 *Życie Tatarskie* ['Tatar Life'] have been published. These magazines facilitate a better understanding of Islam, not only by its adherents, but also by Christians interested in the subject.

The Tri-City (Gdańsk, Gdynia, Sopot) and Białystok are now the largest centers of the Muslim/Tatar community in Poland. Muslims also live in villages and towns of the Białystok region. Towards the end of the 1990s, there were six religious communities belonging to the Religious Union of Muslims, namely Warsaw, Gorzów Wielkopolski, Białystok, Bohoniki, Kruszyniany, and Gdańsk. The Tatars have wooden mosques in Kruszyniany (dating back to the 18th century) and Bohoniki (19th century), while a modern mosque was built in Gdańsk in 1989. The dialogue of life has been conducted in

all these places for many years. Between 4–5,000 Tatars live in Poland now, while around 12 thousand people have Tatar origins.

Polish Tatars have served their Christian motherland for more than 600 years, even entrusting the Polish Christian rulers and nation to Allah. Tatar women in Lithuania went on pilgrimages to the Gate of Dawn in Vilnius so as to pray to the Holy Virgin for the gift of motherhood. The above attests to the existence of interreligious dialogue. For several centuries, Polish Muslims have been active patriots. They had their own units (under the care of Muslim chaplains – *imam*s) in the Polish Army.

After the World War II, the communist government renewed diplomatic relations with Muslim countries. In the early 1950s, the University of Łódź initiated a Polish language study program for students from the Third World, among whom were also Muslims. Thus, many academic contacts were established, as well as artistic-literary co-operation with Muslim countries. In conformity with the guidelines set by the 9th General Council of UNESCO in New Delhi, India, concerning the East-West Project, a week of cultural exchange with the Islamic world was organized in Poland in 1958. From the mid-1960s until the end of the 1980s, many Polish professionals (engineers, doctors, scientists) and workers were invited by the governments of Tunis, Libya, Egypt, Syria, and Iraq to work in their respective countries. Some remained there for a period of a few years. These foreign contacts increased general Polish awareness of Arabic and Islamic culture. However, they did not have the character of interreligious dialogue.

Since the 1970s, Arabs and Muslims from non-Arab countries have been coming to Poland in growing numbers. After graduation (mostly from technical and medical universities), many of them have adopted Poland as their second homeland and remained here. Some stayed in Poland only for a while before moving to Western Europe or returning to their country of origin. Many Muslims married Polish Catholic women who have then converted to Islam. A number of Polish women have moved to their husbands' countries of origin. Muslims from Asia or Northern Africa have businesses in Poland, e.g. food outlets. There are also cases of ethnic Poles, who have no Tatar roots, converting to Islam.

Muslims from Arab and non-Arab countries living in large cities in Poland have "home mosques", i.e. special rooms at homes where they gather for the Friday prayers. Diplomats from Muslim countries can pray at the mosque in Wiertnicza Street in the Wilanów district of Warsaw. Furthermore, an Islam Center is run by the Muslim League in Żwirowa Street in the Ochota district of Warsaw. Registered in 2004, the Muslim League has about 30 thousand members and is actively engaged in the dialogue of experts (also known as the theological dialogue) and the dialogue of prayer (dialogue of religious experience). In Wrocław, the Muslim League publishes *As-Salam*, a socio-cultural magazine. The Institute of Islamic Studies also operates in Wrocław. Both the magazine and the Institute are dialogue-oriented.

Shi'a groups are present in Poland; one of them, the Warsaw-based Association of Muslim Unity, has existed since the late 1970s (although it was not formally registered until 1989). Attached to it is the Muslim Institute which publishes the *Rocznik Muzułmański* ['Muslim Yearly'] periodical. This group is very much committed to the dialogue with the Catholic Church.

Dialogue: a challenge for the new century

On November 23, 2003, the General Meeting of the Polish Bishops' Conference (PBC) at Jasna Góra in Częstochowa approved a document prepared by the PBC Council for Religious Dialogue entitled *Dialog – zadanie na nowy wiek* (2004) ['Dialogue: A Challenge for the New Century']. The first part of the document, "Church on dialogue and in relation to dialogue", presents the modern notion of dialogue, its theological perspective, interreligious dialogue, its peculiar features and forms. The second part, "Situation in Poland: diagnosis and recommendations", discusses relations with Muslims, among other issues. When describing these relations, the document emphasises the presence of the Muslim Tatar minority in Poland for more than six centuries.[3] It also states:

> Nowadays, the number of Muslims arriving in Poland from various countries is on the increase. The majority of Muslims around the world are neither fundamentalists nor terrorist, and within Islam itself there is an ongoing debate on its adequate interpretation in the modern world. (2004: 107)

The document continues with the following declaration:

> By introducing the annual Day of Prayers Dedicated to Islam [currently called the Day of Islam in the Catholic Church in Poland], observed on 26 January at the end of the Octave of Prayers for the Unity of Christians, we wish to provide our spiritual support for the growth of these trends that conform to God's will, and we wish to develop our own understanding and respect for our "younger brothers" who seek to discover and obey God's will, in accordance with the most important precept of their religion. Through this initiative and by looking for platforms for mutual understanding and amicable co-existence, we wish to follow the guidelines contained in the teaching of the Second Vatican Council and John Paul II, even though we realise that in countries with a Muslim majority Christians are often exposed to persecution, or simply do not enjoy the same rights as Muslims. (2004: 107)

The passage discussing relations with Muslims ends with a very interesting suggestion:

> It would be advisable to establish and operate joint scholarly institutes and civic institutions that would work for the promotion and development of the Christian/Muslim dialogue in various areas of life. The fruits of such work in Poland may have an effect reaching far beyond Poland. (2004: 107).

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[3] As regards the dialogue between Christians and Muslims in Poland, see Chazbijewicz (1990: 33–41), Konopacki (1995: 66–79; 1997: 61–67), Sakowicz (1997b: 142–145).

Forms of the Catholic/Muslim dialogue in Poland

The aforementioned dialogue of life is the basic form of interreligious dialogue pursued in Poland today and mentioned in numerous documents of the Church during the pontificate of John Paul II. Christians and Muslims have been living as neighbors in Poland for many centuries. The so-called Eastern Borderlands of Poland (*Kresy Wschodnie*) provided a unique environment for dialogue – particularly Vilnius, referred to as the Jerusalem of the North, where people of various religious and ethnic backgrounds lived side by side, and where various non-Christian religions, including Islam, had their institutions.

Historically, the Białystok region in the north-east of Poland has been another unique area of the dialogue of life. Even today, the largest number of Tatars in Poland live in the region. Maciej Musa Konopacki, a Polish Muslim who writes about Tatar issues, initiated a national symposium "Orient Sokólski" ('The Sokółka Orient') in 1976, focusing on the culture and religion of Polish Tatars. The town of Sokółka hosts a small museum of the "Polish Orient", containing exhibitions devoted to the rituals of Polish Tatars, the history of Muslims in Poland, and the Tatar regiments in the Polish army which fought in defense of the country. The Polish Tatar mosques in Bohoniki and Kruszyniany in the Białystok region are visited by Catholics. Comments left by members of Polish clergy and monastic orders in visitor books at these mosques reveal their favorable attitude towards Islam. Cardinal Henryk Gulbinowicz, Apostolic Administrator of the Białystok Diocese later appointed Archbishop of Wrocław, visited the mosque in Bohoniki. During their "Tour of the Polish Orient", students of Missiology department of the Academy of Catholic Theology in Warsaw visited and prayed at the mosque in Bohoniki and donated some money for its restoration and expansion in 1996.

All Muslim religious associations registered at the Ministry of the Interior and Administration's Department for Denominations and National and Ethnic Minorities are represented in Warsaw. Christians and Muslims in Poland have good neighborly relations. The dialogue of life manifests itself in neighborly harmony, openness, readiness to help and to share joy and compassion in the context of difficult or even dramatic circumstances. Polish Christians and Muslims, as neighbors or even members of the same family, jointly celebrate family events: weddings, funerals, annual religious holidays and observances.

The dialogue of life includes the dialogue with refugees. Several thousand people stay at 13 refugee centers in Poland, e.g. in Dębak k. Nadarzyna near Warsaw, or in Lublin (data for the year 2011). These centers provide shelter for political and economic refugees as well as individuals without a clear political status. For most of them, Poland is a transit country on their way to Western Europe. A vast majority are Muslims who have entered Poland either legally or illegally. The refugees' countries of origin include Afghanistan, the former Soviet republics, as well as Chechnya, Pakistan, India and other regions in Asia. Catholic clergy have often visited the center in Dębak, while young Catholic volunteers provide assistance to refugees in Lublin on a regular

basis: they respond to their various needs and look after the children by helping them with schoolwork, organizing games and leisure activities. The Polish branch of Caritas Internationalis is also involved in relief efforts for refugees.

Mixed marriages constitute a separate "chapter" in the dialogue of life. Since the opening of Poland's borders in 1989, millions of Polish citizens have travelled abroad, and many of them have emigrated permanently. In the last few years alone, nearly 2 million Poles have left for the United Kingdom, Ireland and other countries in Western Europe. When abroad, they often start families with non-Christian partners. Typically, Polish women marry Muslim men. Christian/Muslim marriages are becoming more and more common in Poland as well.[4]

The doctrinal dialogue, also known as the dialogue of experts or theological dialogue, is another form of communication between religions pursued at scholarly conferences and symposia. The calendar of conferences devoted to the Christian/Muslim dialogue is quite full indeed. Particularly worth noting is a pioneering initiative organized in the 1980s and 1990s at the Seminary of the Divine Word Missionaries in Pieniężno, in the Warmia region of Poland. In 1985, the Divine Word Missionaries organized a "Muslim Day" as part of their "Pieniężno Encounter with Religions". Muslims from various centers in Poland participated in this meeting. Before and during the event, the seminary's museum held an exhibition of the Qur'an thanks to loans from various Polish Muslims. Many Catholics, pilgrims and tourists from all over the country visited the exhibition. Its aim was to present Islam and the Qur'an to the Catholic society in Poland, and to show the long history of Muslims in the Polish territory. One section was dedicated to the dialogue between Islam and Christianity.[5]

Doctrinal dialogue is conducted on a permanent basis by scholarly institutions operating within Faculties of Theology or at inter-faculty level at state universities and private universities run by the Church (the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin and the Pontifical University of John Paul II in Cracow). Interreligious dialogue is a research priority for the Chair of the Theology of Religion that forms part of the Religious Studies Section at the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw. The Faculty of Pedagogical Sciences has the Chair of Pedagogy of Culture and Intercultural Education, whose scope of interest includes preparation for dialogue with Islam through education and upbringing.

Furthermore, Catholic publishing creates a significant space for doctrinal dialogue. *Biuletyn Misjologiczno-Religioznawczy* ['Bulletin of Missiology and Religious Studies'], an integral part of the Polish Theologians' *Quarterly Collectanea Theologica*, has featured numerous texts on Islam and dialogue with Islam for many years.

[4] A document proclaimed by the Spanish Episcopal Committee for Interdenominational Relations was translated into Polish and published under the title "Wskazówki dotyczące związków małżeńskich pomiędzy katolikami i muzułmanami w Hiszpanii" ['Guidelines on Catholic/Muslim Marriages in Spain']. See: Spanish Episcopal Committee for Interdenominational Relations (2005: 179–204). It can serve as a model for an analogous Polish document whose preparation is urgently needed. Similar documents have been proclaimed by the episcopates of Germany, France and Italy.

[5] Materials from the Pienieżno Encounter with Religious were published, see e.g. Śliwka 1985, 1991.

Among important writings promoting interreligious dialogue, one should mention a collection of documents *Islam w dokumentach Kościoła i nauczaniu Jana Pawła II (1965–1996)* ['Islam in Church Documents and the Teaching of John Paul II (1965–1996)'], collected and edited by E. Sakowicz (1997). Another noteworthy work is *Jan Paweł II. Encyklopedia dialogu i ekumenizmu* ['John Paul II. Encyclopaedia of Dialogue and Ecumenism'], also edited by E. Sakowicz (2006). It features such entries as "Interreligious dialogue" and "Islam", and has an extensive bibliography and anthology of selected pontifical texts, including those on the dialogue between the Church and Islam.

Another form of interreligious dialogue in Poland is the dialogue of religious experience, also known as the dialogue of prayer. Its essence is manifested in the words spoken by John Paul II in relation to the World Day of Prayer for Peace convened in Assisi, Italy, in 1986: "Be together to pray". These words were also the keynote of the second World Day of Prayer for Peace that took place in Assisi in 2002. In 1980, Muslims attended the Week of Prayers for the Unity of Christians at St Anne's church in Warsaw for the first time, and they have participated in this annual event since then. In the 1980s, preparations were made to erect an interreligious Temple of Peace at Majdanek, the former Nazi German concentration camp in Lublin. According to plans, the Temple would comprise seven "chapels", each commemorating religions and denominations represented among Majdanek's victims: Catholics, Protestants, Orthodox Christians, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists as well as atheists and people of various world views and beliefs.[6]

The dialogue of prayer, involving Christians and Muslims among representatives of other religions, has been pursued during major state and religious ceremonies commemorating the 50th anniversary of the liberation of the German Nazi concentration camp KL Lublin at Majdanek (1994), and the 50th anniversary of the liberation of KL Auschwitz-Birkenau (1995), as well as the unveiling of the Monument to Those Deported and Murdered in the East (1995, the 56th anniversary of USSR's invasion against Poland).

The Day of Prayers for Peace in Warsaw, held on September 1, 1989, the 50th anniversary of the outbreak of the World War II, was an event of worldwide significance. Representatives of various religions (including Islam and Christianity) came to Warsaw to express their shared concern for world peace. All those attending the event listened to a speech by John Paul II, a dedicated champion of peace and Christian /Muslim dialogue (the speech was broadcast from the Vatican).

Documents of the Catholic Church mention a very important form of dialogue, namely the dialogue of works. Unfortunately, this kind of dialogue seems to be entirely absent in Poland. There are no joint Christian/Muslim initiatives for combating drug addiction, prostitution or pornography in this country. Representatives of these two religions do not work together to promote the principles of their respective religious social teaching, or to solve and prevent the problem of homelessness, poverty, alcoholism and other pathologies of social and political life.

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[6] For information on the Temple of Peace at Majdanek, see Sakowicz (1992a: 10, 1992b: 15).

Organizations and institutions promoting Christian/Muslim dialogue

The Polish Bishops' Conference Council for Religious Dialogue plays a very important role in the forum of interreligious dialogue, including the Catholic/Muslim dialogue. In 1964, the Secretariat for Non-Christians was established as a dicastery of the Roman Curia. In 1988, John Paul II renamed it as the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue. The Apostolic See ordered the establishment of similar Councils at the level of national Bishops' Conferences throughout the world. Thus, the Polish Bishops' Conference Council for Religious Dialogue was created in 1997. Its objective is to promote the teachings of the Apostolic See on non-Christian religions and on dialogue with them, to inspire actions promoting the study of religions, and to foster dialogue and mutual understanding between Catholics and followers of other religions.

The Committee for Dialogue with Non-Christian Religions, one of the Council's Committees, prepares the celebrations of the annual Day of Islam in the Catholic Church in Poland. In 2006, the Committee issued a statement disapproving the lack of respect towards religious symbols and values as manifested by the publication of cartoons depicting Muhammad in international and Polish press. Each year, the President of the Committee issues the *Address on the Day of Islam in the Catholic Church in Poland*. Eugeniusz Sakowicz, consultor of the Council for Religious Dialogue, represented the Polish Episcopate at the Conference "Christians and Muslims in Europe: Responsibility and Religious Commitment in a Pluralist Society", held in Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, in 2001. The event was organized by the Conference of European Churches and the Council of European Bishops' Conferences, and was attended by numerous representatives of European Islam. The conference began one day after the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in New York.

The Joint Council of Catholics and Muslims, established in 1997, has a small membership, and its basic function is to express views and opinions. The Tatars from the Religious Union of Muslims are the only traditional Muslim group represented in the Council since, as a rule, members from non-Tatar communities (e.g. Arabs, Shi'as and other) are not accepted. Years ago, the Council addressed the authorities of the Catholic University of Lublin and the then Academy of Catholic Theology (currently Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University) in Warsaw with a proposal of establishing within the Faculties of Theology of these universities an institution educating *imam*s for Muslim communities of Central and Eastern Europe and the Asian republics of the former Soviet Union (independent states today). However, the university authorities failed to discuss the matter with the Council.

The Muslim League in Poland runs cultural centers popularizing Islam. One of the most dynamic centers is the Muslim Center of Culture and Education in Wrocław, the Islam Center in Lublin, and the Muslim Association of Cultural Education. These institutions organize conferences and symposia, conduct Arabic classes and a range of workshops, and help those interested to learn more about Islam. The Days of Muslim Culture held every year in Wrocław are an important item in the calendar of events related to interreligious dialogue (Kubicki 2006: 132).

Another active organization, the Dunaj Institute of Dialogue, draws its membership from the Turkish community. Incidentally, Turks living in Poland generally do not belong to religious associations. The Dunaj Institute of Dialogue organizes meetings at universities, or even at Catholic parishes, during which Islamic and Turkish culture is presented. Since 2008, such meetings have been held as part of the Day of Turkish Culture at the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw.

Dialogue with Islam is promoted by the Center for the Dialogue of Cultures and Religions, established at the Seminary of the Divine Word Missionaries in Pieniężno in 2003. The Center publishes a series entitled *Dialog Kultur i Religii* ['Dialogue of Cultures and Religions'] (Stefanów and Wąs 2006; Wąs 2005; Szyszka and Wąs 2007; Jenkins 2009). In 2008, the Centre for Interreligious Dialogue established at the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw co-organized a symposium entitled "Dialogue of Cultures and Religions: Lebanon – Experience of the Past and Challenge for Today" (Piwko 2009: 374–379).

Postscript: the presence of Muslims in public discourse

Owing to their small number, Muslims currently living in Poland are unable to participate in public debate, but they will certainly get involved in it in the future, as indicated by an important meeting held in Warsaw in 2006. The Polish capital was the venue for the Roundtable Meeting on the Representation of Muslims in Public Discourse, organized by OSCE (Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights).

During the meeting, attention was focused on the issue of Muslim immigrants, who have been coming to Europe for many years. It was observed that politicians used xenophobic language, and matters related to Islam were often discussed by individuals not familiar with Islam at all, particularly by ignorant journalists, who nonetheless had a huge influence on politicians. The media perceive Islam as "present-day communism", posing a new threat to Europe. Prejudice against Islam is intensified not only through press publication, but also books. During the debate it was concluded that fear and prejudice could be overcome through responsible and competent education. Muslims participating in the meeting expressed the view that everyone living in Europe needed thorough education aimed at fostering respect and trust, and gaining an understanding of the history of both the Christian and Muslim communities in Europe. Muslim children should learn that the history of Christianity is a part of their heritage, and conversely, Christian children should learn to share the same approach towards Islam.

Multicultural society is a challenge both for Muslims and non-Muslims inhabiting Europe. Muslims living in the world of Western culture have the right to regard themselves as Europeans, and no-one can deny them this right. In a society of cultural pluralism, Muslims and non-Muslims are bound by numerous ties. An important issue raised by the Muslims is the status of immigrants from Muslim countries who have lived in Europe for many years and regard themselves as European citizens.

Islamophobia is another formidable challenge facing Europe, according to Muslims. Fuelled by the media, university institutions and politicians, European Islamophobia clashes with Islamic fundamentalism that also emerges in Europe. It is vital to stop these dangerous tendencies. Furthermore, there exists among Muslims a strong fear of the West ('Western phobia') and the Church ('Church phobia').

The conference papers, discussions and the so-called interventions by observers were dominated by secular subjects, and no references were made to strictly religious issues. Only a few general remarks about religion were made, and the subject of relations between the Catholic Church (and Christianity in general) and Muslim communities was not touched upon. What is more, the conference did not discuss how the religious mission of Muslim communities in Europe was carried out, which was a serious shortcoming, because a general dialogue with Islam is difficult without the religious dialogue.

In the light of the above, one should appreciate Poland's enormous and creative contribution to religious dialogue, achieved through meetings between Catholics and Muslims.

Conclusions

The Christian/Muslim dialogue in Poland is a fact. Muslim Tatars have lived in this land for many centuries, and their relations with Poles have been good. There have been no serious tensions between the two communities. On the Christian side, the Roman-Catholic Church is committed to this dialogue. The Muslim partners of this dialogue, on the other hand, represent a variety of Islamic movements and factions. The most distinctive forms of dialogue include the dialogue of life and dialogue of religious experience.

This article has presented only a portion of the impressive contribution of the Catholic Church to dialogue. Alongside Church institutions, the dialogue is supported by secular scholarly institutions educating experts in Arabic, Turkic and Iranian studies. The University of Warsaw's Faculty of Oriental Studies, particularly the Chair of Arabic and Islamic Studies, has significant achievements in this area. There is also a Department of European Islam at the Faculty, established in 1994, which conducts research on Muslim communities in Europe, including relations between Christians and Muslims. In 2005 an extensive monograph on Muslims in Europe was published, edited by Professor Anna Parzymies (2005). A particularly valuable initiative comes from Katarzyna Górak-Sosnowska, who has been organizing workshops devoted to the culture of Islam ("W kręgu kultury islamu", 'In the world of Islam') for several years.[7]

There is no alternative to dialogue. Meetings of believers, Catholics (and Christians in general) and Muslims, serve not only the interest of the Catholic Church

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[7] More information in Polish at: http://www.arabia.pl/warsztaty. For English see: Górak-Sosnowska (2008: 192–207).

and other Churches and ecclesiastical communities in Poland, but also the interest of people holding different beliefs as well as non-believers.

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Egdūnas Račius

Islam in Lithuania:
revival at the expense of survival?

The history of Islam in Lithuania dates back to the 14th century, when the first migrants – political refugees – from the Golden Horde (and later, the Crimean Khanate) came to the then Grand Duchy of Lithuania (GDL). Soon they were joined by new arrivals, consisting chiefly of mercenaries hired by Lithuanian grand dukes, more refugees and prisoners of war who, once freed, chose to stay. The immigrants, the majority of whom were recently Islamized Turkic speakers (Tatars), eventually settled in the western parts of the Duchy, south and east of the capital Vilnius.

Despite or because of the fact that Muslims have been only a tiny minority of the citizenry of the GDL, they enjoyed almost all rights and freedoms that their Christian fellow citizens did. Upon settlement, Lithuanian Tatar (as they came to be collectively referred to) elite were granted the nobility rank and given tracts of land to be used as fief that later went into their personal possession. Even more, Muslims in the GDL (and later, post-1569, in the Republic of Two Nations – *Rzeczpospolita*) were never forced to abandon their faith either through coerced conversion or because of artificially created obstacles in practicing their religion (such as bans, prohibitions, segregationist decrees, etc.). In the GDL/*Rzeczpospolita*, Muslims throughout the centuries were allowed to publicly observe all Islamic duties and rituals.

After the final partition of the *Rzeczpospolita* in 1795, most Lithuanian Tatars found themselves subjects of the Russian Empire. It appears, however, that the Lithuanian Muslims vehemently insisted on retaining their religious independence. For instance, as it is reported, way back in 1803, Lithuanian Muslims approached the Russian authorities with a request not to be subjected to the authority of Russia's *mufti* (Bairašauskaitė 1996: 130f). On another occasion, in a letter of 1812, they insisted on their right to choose a *mulla* from among themselves (Kričinskis 1993: 168). Finally, in 1851 the Russian government ascended to Lithuanian Tatars' requests and officially allowed them to elect *mulla*s from among themselves, though they still needed to be certified by the Taurida Spiritual Governing Board, under whose jurisdiction Lithuanian Muslims fell.[1] In the end, however, the fact that the headquarters of the formal religious authority, the muftiate, were several thousand kilometers away, made

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[1] Высочайше Утвержденное Мнение Государственного Совета 8 Января 1851 г. Об Избрании Мулл в Магометанских Обществах Западных Губерний ('On the election of mul-

effective communication (and control) practically impossible and the real authority of the, in general, very reluctant Taurida muftiate over the Lithuanian Tatars remained tenuous and minimal until the end of the Russian rule in Lithuania during the World War I.

In the aftermath of the World War I, Vilnius region came under the jurisdiction of the Polish state and most of the 'Muslims of the GDL' (some 6–7,000; Miśkiewicz 1990: 58–60) became Polish citizens. Meanwhile, in the inter-war Lithuania, the 1923 Census revealed that 1,107 inhabitants of the Republic of Lithuania (excluding those residing in the newly incorporated Klaipėda Region (Memelland), and, naturally, Polish-controlled south-eastern part with Vilnius) identified with Islam. Of those 1,098 were Lithuanian citizens (2 – Polish, 7 – Soviet citizens; Central Bureau of Statistics 1925: 34). Nine hundred sixty one Muslims identified themselves as ethnic Tatars, of 146 non-Tatars – 117 as Lithuanians (sic!), 12 as Polish, remaining as Russians, 1 even as a Turk, while 5 failed to identify their ethnic belonging altogether (Central Bureau of Statistics 1925: 38–48).

Though there had never been any significant Muslim presence in Kaunas, after its becoming the interim capital of Lithuania, local Muslims registered a religious community there in the fall of 1923 and by the summer of 1925 came up with a plan to establish a Central Mohammedan Council which was to supervise and coordinate religious activities of all Muslim communities in Lithuania. However, the idea of a central spiritual governing body in Lithuania did not materialize, mainly due to lack of commitment and widespread mistrust of the Kaunas community's intentions among Muslims of the provinces who then made up the majority of Lithuania's Muslims. The Soviet occupation ground communal, especially religious, life of Lithuanian Tatars to a standstill.

The new era – a multifaceted revival

Though, as indicated above, Muslims have been an integral part of the Lithuanian society since at least the 15th century, the newly independent post-Communist Lithuania has been witnessing (re)appearance of Islam on its soil, where the revived indigenous Tatar Muslim community is gradually being supplemented by immigrant Muslims and even more so by a steadily growing group of Lithuanian converts and their progeny. So far, however, Muslims in Lithuania form a very small minority and do not exceed several thousand in a total population of the country of a little more than three million. A decade-old nationwide population census of 2001[2] put the figure of Muslims in Lithuania at 2,860, of whom 1,679 identified themselves as Tatars, while 185 as Lithuanians (Department of Statistics 2002: 203f).

las in the Mohammedan communities of the Western provinces'), decision of the State Senate of 8.01.1851. The full text of the Decision can be viewed at http://constitutions.ru/archives/3239.
    [2] The data from the most recent Census of March 2011 will be available only in the first part of 2012.

Currently, Lithuania's Muslim community can be seen to be composed of four "cultural" groups, the biggest (according to the 2001 Census, 3,235) of which is the Lithuanian Tatars described above. The second oldest group is the "colonists". These are the descendants of immigrants from the Muslim Central Asian and Caucasian republics who settled in Lithuania during the Soviet period and made the rest of Muslims in Lithuania throughout the Soviet era and well into the independence (around 1,400 in 2001; Department of Statistics 2002: 188f). By all means, they seem to be mostly greatly secularized and hardly participate in the religious life of Lithuanian Muslims. For instance, of the 788 Azeris (the biggest ethnic group among the "colonists") less than half (only 362) even identified themselves as Muslim.

The third group is immigrants (around 1,000, mainly Chechens) and temporary residents (around 500 students, mainly Arab, and several hundred, mainly Turkish, businessmen).[3] First foreign Muslims arrived in Lithuania shortly after the independence. Most of them were students from the Middle East (initially predominantly from Lebanon), who sought inexpensive yet high-quality education in such fields as medicine and engineering. In the beginning of the 1990s Lithuania became a transit country for high numbers of illegal migrants from Asia, many of whom were from Muslim lands (Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan). However, most of them were rejected asylum and, moreover, as Lithuania was not their intended destination, left or were forced to leave it. Towards the end of the 1990s Chechen citizens of the Russian Federation started choosing Lithuania as their target country for asylum. Most of the Chechens have been granted temporary asylum status on humanitarian grounds. With Lithuania's integration into the European structures and in the face of coming accession to the EU, Muslim businessmen (many of whom were of Turkish origin) both from elsewhere in Europe and the Middle East started investing in the Lithuanian economy. Some of them moved to Lithuania to supervise their ventures (restaurants, shops). However, despite fears in certain quarters, with Lithuania's accession to the EU and joining of the Schengen area, immigration from Asia and Africa has so far remained low. Given that almost all of immigrant Muslims are still not citizens of the country and are indeed pretty much a group on the move (many, even if granted refugee status, have a propensity to stay in Lithuania only until they see a chance to relocate further West, while others are in the country on a temporary basis for the duration of studies or business purposes), one can so far hardly talk of this segment of the Muslim community in Lithuania as a coherent one.

Finally, the fourth group is the converts – some 500 or more citizens of Lithuania who have converted to Islam in the past two decades.[4] Conversion of ethnic Lithuanians to Islam has been picking up pace and it is them as much as immigrants who make up the "new" Islam in Lithuania. And like immigration, conversion of Lithuanians (both ethnic and of other ethnic origins, like Polish, Russian) to Islam is

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[3] Data of the Department of Migration, *Migracijos metraštis. Metinė ataskaita 2010*, http://www.migracija.lt.

[4] Data from observations of on-line Muslim Internet forums and personal experience of the author. A note has to be added here – many of Lithuanian converts to Islam reside, temporarily or permanently, outside the Lithuanian borders.

a recent phenomenon – two decades ago there virtually were no Lithuanian convert Muslims.

The organization

Formally, the main religious organization of Lithuania's Muslims (according to its Statute, "the supreme governing body of Lithuanian Sunni Muslims")[5] is the Vilnius-based Spiritual Center of the Lithuanian Sunni Muslims – Muftiate, in 1998 (re)established and since then dominated by Lithuanian Tatars. Since its establishment, the Muftiate has been headquartered on state-owned premises in a downtown apartment block, rented by the Vilnius city section of the Vilnius Region Tatar Community and next to *mufti*'s office it has several classrooms and a *musalla*, which serves as the space for *jum'a* prayers with *khutba* delivered in Turkish by the imam supplied by the Turkish state.

So far, there have been two Muftis, both Lithuanian Tatars – Romualdas Krinickis (born in 1973), who served as the Mufti between 1998 and 2008, and the current (since 2008) Mufti Romualdas Jakubauskas (born also in 1973). The former Mufti, Romualdas Krinickis, a native of Vilnius, at the time of election to the post was 25 years of age. Next to his, as Mufti's duties, he also served as the *imam* of the Vilnius and Keturiasdešimt totorių village (where one of the four purpose built historical Tatar mosques is situated) congregations. Upon relinquishing his duties as the Mufti to Jakubauskas, Krinickis kept his position as the *imam* of the Keturiasdešimt totorių mosque. The current Mufti, Romualdas Jakubauskas, a native of Kaunas, acquired his religious education in Lebanon, where he studied at a religious college between 1992 and 1999. After returning to Lithuania he assumed the position of the *imam* of the Kaunas mosque and has kept it to the present. The elections of 2008 catapulted Jakubauskas to the position of the Mufti. For the first two years he chose to reside in his native Kaunas, but after realizing that this led to paralysis of the Muftiate activities, finally, in 2011, decided to move with his family to Vilnius.

Jakubauskas has hired a secretary who answers phone calls and e-mails and registers inquiries; the Muftiate already has its e-mail address and is in the process of setting up a webpage; furthermore, the Mufti is very enthusiastic about reviving publishing program (formerly pursued through the Kaunas-based Lithuanian Muslim Youth Society, currently being dissolved); finally, the Mufti holds weekly religion classes (currently attended almost exclusively by young Lithuanian female converts to Islam) and allows the converts to use the premises for their self-study sessions on weekends. The Mufti was instrumental in organizing in Vilnius in early 2011 a week-long pan-Baltic religious camp for female Muslims (once again, attended mainly by young converts from the three Baltic States).

[5] Article 1.1. of the Statute of the Spiritual Centre of the Lithuanian Sunni Muslims – Muftiate.

Though the founding fathers of the Muftiate must have seen their move as re-establishing the Muftiate that had functioned in Vilnius in the inter-war period, the current Mufti Jakubauskas, who has neither special attachment to Vilnius nor sentiments to its "Polish past", sees it as a purely new organization – he consciously makes a distinction between the "Polish" muftiate and the organization he is now heading.[6]

Next to the Mufti, who is the supreme Muslim religious authority in Lithuania, there are several *imam*s (mostly self-styled) in once Tatar-dominated villages and towns with big enough Muslim congregations like Klaipėda and Panevėžys who submit to Mufti's authority. There are so far no alternative Muslim religious hierarchies as Shi'as and other non-Sunni and heterodox groups have not yet established themselves in the country.

The state

Soon after regaining of the independence the Lithuanian state recognized Islam as one of the nine "traditional confessions" to be protected by the state itself: Article 5 of the Law on Traditional Religious Communities and Associations of Lithuania of 1995 states that

> The state recognizes nine traditional religious communities and associations existing in Lithuania, which comprise a part of the historical, spiritual and social heritage of Lithuania: Roman Catholic, Greek Catholic, Evangelical Lutheran, Evangelical Reformed, Russian Orthodox, Old Believer, Judaistic, Sunni Muslim and Karaite.[7]

Such an attitude on the side of the state would be only laudable. However, the Lithuanian state out of inertia recognizes only the Lithuanian version of Islam (which is the version of it practiced by the Lithuanian Tatar Muslims) officially put as Sunni Islam. Thus, the Lithuanian Muslims (read, Lithuanian Tatars), while registering their Muftiate with the Ministry of Justice in 1998, in their words, "were forced" to put word 'Sunni' in the title. As the then head of the Vilnius congregation, Asanavičius explained "the Muslims could expect to receive financial support from the state only if they put "Sunni" in the title of their organization" (Sitdykovas 1999: 1), otherwise, their organization would have not been regarded as an organization of one of the nine officially protected "traditional confessions".

Moreover, it is *a priori* presumed by the Lithuanian state that Muslim religious organization in Lithuania is an organization of Lithuanian Tatars, who historically have been Sunni of Hanafi *madhhab*.[8] And since the state annually allocates funds for

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[6] Author's interview with Mufti Jakubauskas, 22.03.2011, Vilnius.

[7] *Law on Traditional Religious Communities and Associations of the Republic of Lithuania*, http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=289917 (22.03.2007).

[8] This has been confirmed by a civil servant at the Ministry of Justice who has been in charge of religious affairs there for over a decade. Author's interview, 25.03.2011, Vilnius.

the traditional religious communities recognized by the state as such, Tatars (who until now make the majority in the registered Muslim congregations), receive yearly support from the state, which, however, has been steadily decreasing: for instance, if in 1998 they received 20 thousand Litas[9], and in 1999 – 18,000, by the year 2005 the amount had shrunk to mere 12.7 thousand Lt,[10] and further declined to 11.7 thousand Lt (i.e., less than 3,500 EUR, which even by Lithuanian standards is a meager amount) in 2010.[11] The state, however, seems not to require the Muftiate (or its constituent religious congregations) to submit any detailed reports on how the money has been spent.[12]

The state in the person of the Ministry of Justice (or rather its Division of Legal Persons and Religious Issues of the Department of Registers) assumes that all Muslim religious communities (and there are no registered Shi'a congregations) in Lithuania pursue their activities under the umbrella of the Muftiate and therefore are considered by the state by default "traditional" to Lithuania. The state does not concern itself with the legal traditions followed by these congregations (e.g. it is of no relevance if any of them is not of Hanafi *madhhab*, as long as the Muftiate is endorsing them as 'traditional').

In 2002, the Muftiate addressed the Ministry of Justice with a request "not to register [with the Ministry – ER] newly forming Muslim congregations without permission from our Spiritual Centre of the Lithuanian Sunni Muslims – Muftiate, as it is stipulated in the Article 3.5 of our Statute".[13] Since then, two new congregations in the seaport city of Klaipėda (where there has never been any Tatar or Muslim, for that matter, presence as the city since its founding in the 13th century had been part of Prussia, not the GDL) – the Klaipėda City Muslim Religious Community *Al-Tauhyd* (established in 2007) and the Klaipėda Region Muslim Community *Iman* (established in 2009) – have been established and both have received the Muftiate's blessing (the first one still by Krinickis, the second – by Jakubauskas) to receive official recognition as "traditional religious community". As is evident from these precedents, the prerogative to decide who is to be and who is not to be recognized as a Muslim 'traditional religious community' is 100% conferred to the Muftiate, practically elevating the Article 3.5. of its Statute to the status of law.

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[9] 3.5 Litas = 1 EUR.

[10] *Tradicinėms religinėms bendruomenėms skirti beveik 3 milijonai litų*, 25.03.2005, http://www.bernardinai.lt/archyvas/straipsnis/5891.

[11] Government of the Republic of Lithuania, *Nutarimas dėl lėšų paskirstymo tradicinių Lietuvos bažnyčių ir religinių organizacijų vadovybėms*, 19.05.2010, http://www.lrvk.lt/bylos/Teises_aktai/2010/05/15313.doc.

[12] Related to the author by a civil servant of the Ministry of Justice who has been in charge of religious affairs there for over a decade. Author's interview, 25.03.2011, Vilnius.

[13] Dėl naujų musulmonų religinių bendruomenių registravimo ('Concerning Registration of New Muslim Religious Communities'), Muftiate's letter dated 28.06.2002. Article 3.5. of the Statute of the Spiritual Centre of the Lithuanian Sunni Muslims – Muftiate reads: "The newly establishing religious communities are obliged to coordinate their statutes and actions with the Muftiate".

The community

By the beginning of the 20th century on the territory of today's Republic of Lithuania only half a dozen of mosques remained. During the Soviet era they all, except for the one in Raižiai, were closed, but have been restored and once again reopened in the 1990s. However, due to lack of attending worshipers, the three historical Tatar mosques located in once Tatar dominated villages, though they formally have imams in charge of them, open their doors only during festivities like 'Id al-Fitr and 'Id al-Adha. The Kaunas mosque, with its vibrant multicultural congregation, mainly composed of foreign students, has fared better, especially after 2000, when a young and energetic native Tatar with proper Islamic education Romas Jakubauskas (the current Mufti) assumed the position of *imam*. It would not only hold regular *jum'a* prayers with *khutba* in several languages but also host a weekend religious school, and a religious organization, Lithuanian Muslim Youth Society, which for a time was very prolific in translating to Lithuanian and publishing Muslim religious literature. It has been noticed that a dozen or so female converts have been constantly attending Kaunas mosque for *jum'a* prayers (Markevičiūtė 2009), while in Vilnius, they shied away from the *jum'a* prayers in the *musalla*, arguing that the performance of the Turkish imam there did not meet their expectations and the praying space was poorly arranged, especially for female worshipers. Instead, female converts living in Vilnius preferred gathering separately for communal prayers and self-study circles in the private space of one of them.[14]

Though through Jakubauskas' organized summer camps and other activities aimed at Tatar youth, some from among young Tatars have (re)discovered their Muslim roots and in result became more observant, the Tatar community in general is, due to emigration, assimilation and intermarriage, and above all, secularization (of 3,235 Tatars in the Census of 2001 only 1,679 identified with Islam; Department of Statistics 2002: 188f) apparently dwindling and there is little hope that it will ever produce a deeply religious component of any significance in the future composition of the Muslim community in Lithuania, let alone spiritual leaders. Today the Lithuanian Tatars, most of whom are very secular or even altogether non-religious to the point that half of them did not even identify themselves with Islam, seem to be firmly committed to the secular nature of the state – the separation between state and religion, yet guared freedom of belief are seen as the best arrangement satisfying the overwhelming majority of Tatars. Their virtual absence from the communal Friday prayers in Vilnius and Kaunas further attests to the Lithuanian Tatars' effective loss of interest in religion, something that is routinely lamented by those still paying attention to religious duties (Klemkaitė 2008: 38).

Meanwhile, next to observant immigrant and a handful of indigenous (Tatar and "colonist") Muslims, the religiously conscious (though not necessarily publicly visible) core of the Muslim community in Lithuania is mainly composed of converts to Islam,

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[14] Author's conversation with Aušra, a female Lithuanian convert to Islam, 30.01.2009, Vilnius.

who are almost exclusively young females currently in their early 20s to 30s.[15] And although it is too early to talk about any noteworthy tendency, it is nonetheless already possible to offer a crude typology of Lithuanian converts to Islam.

The core of the community?

One may speak of three types (or groups) of Lithuanian converts to Islam based on "motivational experiences" forwarded by Lofland and Skonovd: *intellectual, mystical, experimental, affectional, revivalist,* and *coercive,* (Lofland and Skonovd 1981: 373–385) to which later authors added several more "motivational experiences", among them *negativist* (Lakhdar et al. 2007: 1–15). In the case of Lithuanian converts to Islam, affectional and experimental 'motivational experiences' evidently dominate.[16]

Probably the biggest group (up to 300 individuals) of converts are female Lithuanian citizens who have either married or maintain close personal relations with Muslims hailing from Muslim-majority countries. Most of these female converts may be assigned affectional "motivational experience". Or, to use Stefano Allievi's terminology, this type of conversion can be called "relational" and "conversion under these circumstances is a means to reach another aim (marriage), not an end in itself" (Allievi 2002: 1). Yet, many of such women married to Muslims become themselves devout Muslims, though few gain any proper (and virtually none formal) religious education.

The second group (between 100 and 150 individuals) of converts might tentatively be called "adventurers" or "lovers", which in part corresponds to the experimental "motivational experience", though negativist "motivational experience" is also often present. Usually these are young unmarried males and females. Many of them simply "stumbled" upon Islam by accidentally coming upon information on Islam on the World Wide Web or meeting Muslims while abroad and became fascinated with it. According to Allievi (2002: 1), such conversions belong to a "discovery of Islam" type. In the initial phase after their conversion converts of this type painstakingly aspire to become as Islamic as possible: constantly repeat Islamic formulas in Arabic, use religious symbols, don "Islamic" attire.

The third, and by far the smallest (up to 50 individuals), group of converts might be called "spiritual seekers" (with intellectual "motivational experience") whose conversion, in Allievi's words, belongs to the "rational" conversion type (2002: 1). These are people who discovered Islam after having gone through several other religious traditions, movements and cults (in other words, with a "conversion career"[17]). As a rule, they are married middle-aged males with families and careers in Lithuania. Sometimes they manage to persuade their family members to also convert to Islam. Such converts plunge into religious self-study: they analyze the Qur'an and hadith and devour religious texts in search for what they believe is the essence of Islam. Some of

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[15] On typology and profiles of Lithuanian converts to Islam, see Račius (2012).

[16] A similar distribution was found in a research on 70 British converts to Islam by Kose and Loewenthal (2000: 101–110).

[17] Expression "conversion career" has been borrowed from Richardson (1978).

them are fascinated by what Tina Gudrun Jensen calls 'ethical' Islam, in which the mystical dimension of Islam – Sufism – is paramount (Jensen 2006: 646).

The fact of conversion to Islam in itself is not so much significant as the 'type' of Islam converts choose. Most of the Lithuanian converts to Islam appear to have opted for complete overhaul of their identity and have joined the ranks of Muslims who in the academic literature have been generally referred to as revivalists[18] as opposed to traditionalists (e.g. Muslims adhering to one of the so-called 'classical dimensions' of Islam[19]). In their search for knowledge about their adopted religion, Lithuanian converts to Islam have been pulled into the whirlpool of the revivalist debates on the nature and composition of the "true" Islam in abundance and easily accessible on the WWW and through other advanced means of communication.

Most of the converts (a bulk of whom, incidentally, have emigrated from Lithuania), who have been socializing on online forums such as *islamas.lt*,[20] tend to lean toward a sort of revivalist-type, "deterritorialised" (Roy 2004: 18–20; not seen as bound by locality and its culture), *'ulama*-less quasi-legalist[21] (even neo-fundamentalist[22]) Islam (as opposed to the traditionalist Islam of the Lithuanian Tatars) with an expressed "desire to follow the 'straight path', or even relocate it amidst the maze of

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[18] Revivalist Islam was brought about by Muslim reactionary socio-religious movements that sprang up in the second part of the 19th century in many parts of the Muslim world then colonized by Europeans (i.e. infidels from the perspective of Muslims). Since then, revivalists, with the set aim to re-islamize their Muslim societies, which they find to have deviated from the straight path of salvation, have been calling for the bringing back of the Islamic injunctions into the life of Muslim societies. While the (neo)fundamentalist flank of the Muslim revivalists has opted for the bottom-up strategy by plunging into religious education and upbringing (*tarbiya*) and proselytism (*da'wa*), the Islamist flank has chosen the top-down approach through taking active part in politics. For revivalists, who consider themselves the avant-garde of the Muslim *umma*, there is no question as to what socio-political attire Muslim (and ultimately all other) societies are to do – the "Islam is the solution" maxim is paramount. Consequently, all other faiths are found to be flawed, corrupt and wrong, while atheism, agnosticism and similar are anathemas.

[19] Historically (classical) Islam comprised at least three distinct dimensions: one normative – "legalistic" (Redfield's "great tradition" (1956), Gellner's "high" Islam of the *'ulama* (1993: 23–39) and two cultural – "mystical" and "folk" (Redfield's "little tradition", Gellner's "low" folk). The normative and the cultural are mutually opposed, while the two cultural dimensions have much in common and are accommodating of each other. For more on the classical dimensions of Islam see Schimmel (1992).

[20] Since its inception in the spring of 2004, the Forum had by the Spring of 2010 accumulated more than 45 thousand entries on several dozen Islam-related topics ranging from theological-dogmatic to rituals-related to practical issues submitted by almost 700 registered members (of whom probably more than a half are non-Muslim) and scores of occasional visitors (Statistics taken from the main page of the online Islamas.lt forum at http://www.islamas.lt/ forumas/index.php?act=idx (accessed 21.04.2010)). However, on May 25, 2010, after 6 full years in operation, the Forum was removed by its administrators "due to server error (some hacking issue)", http://www.islamas.lt/forumas/.

[21] Quasi-legalist Islam in this chapter is a term used to designate a hybrid sub-dimension of revivalist Islam common to contemporary converts to Islam in the West, the main features of which are longing for a non-denominational *fiqh* and unreserved hostility to folk Islam.

[22] For the "basic tenets of neofundamentalism", see Roy (2004: 243–247).

alternatives generated through history" (Bunt 2003: 128). All this leads Lithuanian converts to Islam identify first and foremost with the transnational *umma* rather than the Lithuanian nation (which they see as very anti-Islamic[23]) and the state or even the indigenous Muslims of the land, the Lithuanian Tatars, of whom the neophytes are of very low opinion.[24]

In her research on Danish converts to Islam, Jensen discovered that "the newly converted often exhibit a so-called fanaticism with their new religion, which is generally expressed with very ritualized behavior, such as taking on the entire Islamic dress code and forming a preoccupation with Islamic rules of what is *haram* ('forbidden') and *halal* ('allowed'), of doing things right"(Jensen 2006: 646). The *islamas.lt* forum was replete with "*haram*/*halal* fetishism" where concentration on distinguishing *halal* from *haram* is a focal point of discussions among the Lithuanian converts. In one of her posts Rimantė, one of the most prolific members and apparently a devout Muslim, insisted that "it ought to be every Muslim's aspiration. Not only to reflect if we do not engage in haram but in general always to have in mind if what we say, how we act, how we judge things – is this all appreciated by Allah".[25]

This appears to be a preoccupation for at least some of the converts. Take for instance the discussion on the question of whether men and women are allowed to chat together online. One of the female members attempted to chart a general rule:

> It depends on whether your question relates to unmarried or married women? I'd say, married Muslim women should not chat with unknown and moreover non-mahram men, moreover, will her husband approve of her doing this? (I do not think so)...,[26]

while the other female user was even firmer: "According to Islamic teaching wasting of time is *haram*, so do not waste your time on chats, and when you are chatting with a non *mahram* man – it is even worse".[27]

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[23] That Lithuanians are indeed rather anti-Islamic has been revealed by the results of a recent opinion poll: over a third of surveyed Lithuanians had negative opinion about Islam while less than 10% saw it in a favorable light. No other "world" religion was found to be perceived more negatively than Islam. See opinion poll results commissioned by the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Lithuania. Visuomenės požiūris į naujas religines grupes, 10.12.2007, http://tm.infolex.lt/?item=relig; M. Jackevičius. Lietuviai nepakantūs islamui, tačiau garbina krikščionybę, Delfi.lt, 10.12.2007, http://www.delfi.lt/archive/ article.php?id=15277252.

[24] On Lithuanian converts' opinion about the Lithuanian Tatars see Račius (2012).

[25] Rimantė. Do we follow religion in our daily lives? Do we rely on Islam? Online posting, 2009. http://www.islamas.lt/forumas/index.php?showtopic=2369&hl= (accessed 29.01.2010).

[26] Dunya. Are men and women permitted to chat on the Internet? Is this allowed in Islam [Online posting, 2005]. http://www.islamas.lt/forumas/index.php?showtopic=296&hl=chatinti (accessed 29.01.2010).

[27] Admin. Are men and women permitted to chat on the Internet? Is this allowed in Islam [Online posting, 2005], http://www.islamas.lt/forumas/index.php?showtopic=296&st=0 (accessed 14.02.2009).

The drive to draw a line between "permitted" and "prohibited" is also evident in another discussion, focusing on the translation of the Qur'an into the Lithuanian by a well known Lithuanian poet. One of the female users was eager to figure out if she needed to perform *wudu'* (ritual ablution) prior to taking the book into her hands. After some considerations, the users came to a consensus that if in the translation the original Arabic makes less than a half of the entire text, *wudu'* is not required. One of the members of the discussion was joyous that the Lithuanian translation contained no Arabic text at all, for Muslims could then be confident that non-believers' dirty hands would not touch the holy script.[28]

As is common to converts in general, Lithuanian Muslim neophytes are thirsty for religious knowledge and guidance. However, non-affiliation with any traditional *madhhab* (as majority of converts do not adopt any classical rite) has its advantages – there is neither dogmatism nor pressure to adopt any single approach as the solely 'truly Islamic' and converts are free to explore and promote "best practices" drawn from any sources. Yet the resolve of newly converted to be the best among their brothers and sisters-in-faith in their compliance with religious injunctions sometimes pushes them to the extremes. For example, in their chats and discussions on the *islamas.lt* forum Lithuanian converts to Islam would constantly emphasize a perceived distinction between cultural Muslims (usually seen as not enough Islamic) and "true" Muslims: "we do not mix Islam with cultural stuff...";[29] "as a rule converts seek to practice 'pure' Islam without cultural impurities"[30]; "they [converts – ER] indeed seek to get to know Islam from the roots and are least influenced by culture"[31], the likes of whom they look for to become themselves.

Such stance often makes communication with Muslims by birth difficult for, as Jansen correctly observed, "converts often experience conflicts that relate to what they call "culture differences", often articulated as born Muslims' inability to distinguish "'Islam' from 'culture' and 'tradition'" (Jensen 2006: 647). For instance, one of the converts rhetorically asked: "is it OK if while believing in God some brothers and sisters [...] prefer cultural and not religious traditions?"[32] In reacting to the impression of one of non-Muslim visitors to the *islamas.lt* forum that new converts seek to be "more Muslim than Muslims themselves", the founder of the Forum Siddiqa replied that

> it is natural that such an opinion is prevailing because most likely it is so... Those who convert to another faith see in this sense and thus practice what they have

[28] What do you think of Sigitas Geda's 'Quran – translation of literary meanings'? [Online survey, 2008]. http://www.islamas.lt/forumas/index.php?showtopic=1751&st=0 (accessed 29.01.2010).

[29] Jurga. Ummah – the Muslim community. [Online posting, 2004], http://www.islamas.lt/forumas/index.php?showtopic=177&st=10 (accessed 29.01.2010).

[30] Rimantė. An article in *Lietuvos Rytas* [Online posting 2007], http://www.islamas.lt/forumas/index.php?showtopic=1485&hl= (accessed 29.01.2010).

[31] Salma Benyahya. Ummah – the Muslim community [Online posting 2004], http://www.islamas.lt/forumas/index.php?showtopic=177&st=10 (accessed 29.01.2010).

[32] Rimantė. Islamic groups, main divisions [Online posting 2006], http://www.islamas.lt/forumas/index.php?showtopic=518&st=0&start=0 (accessed 29.01.2010).

chosen. While the Muslims by birth [...] are 'carriers of traditions', not much knowledgeable about and not so much interested in this religion.[33]

Ultimately, this "often leads to ironic situations in which converts repudiate people who are born Muslim for not doing things 'the right way', or for not living up to the 'definition' of being 'a Muslim'" (Jensen 2006: 646). Indeed, some of the female converts who have visited or even lived in Muslim-majority countries in their communication with other *islamas.lt* forum users expressed their indignation at the perceived un-Islamic behavior of fellow believers.

On the local (Lithuanian) level, it is apparent that Lithuanian converts to Islam are of poor opinion about both ordinary Tatars (who might be practicing some sort of folk Islam or not practicing at all) and even their spiritual leaders (*imam*s and *mufti*s). This is pointedly revealed in a discussion the incentive for which was an article about the former Mufti Romualdas Krinickis published in Lithuanian printed media (Balikienė 2006: 11–12). One of the most senior members of the *islamas.lt* forum expressed her amazement:

> they all are so relaxed there as if their religion is of no interest to them... That expression [by Krinickis – ER] that 'the most important thing is not to be fanatical', but excuse me, is it fanaticism when the person strives to abide by the religion?.. If the head of the Muslims in Lithuania himself thinks so, what to say of the others?.. In my opinion, Lithuanian Tatars have simply been totally lithuanianized and do not know much about their own religion or maybe do not want to know...[34]

And later summarized:

> well, as far as I understand, Tatars simply want to live 'at peace' with all the others. [...], those Lithuanian Muslims, whose ancestors have been living here already for several centuries, have not kept any traditions and indeed have not kept anything...[35]

These and similar ponderings reveal that what the Lithuanian Tatars indeed cherish most – their ethno-cultural heritage (that is, a subculture that distinguishes but does not exclude them from the main culture) – is summarily rejected by the converts on religious grounds and substituted with an ideal anti-culture separating them (and all "true" Muslims) from the entire main culture with all its historical subcultures. In

[33] Siddiqa. Jihad in Lithuania [Online posting 2007], http://www.islamas.lt/forumas/index.php?showtopic=3&hl=totorius&st=10 (accessed 29.01.2010).

[34] Saddiqah. Articles and reports on Lithuanians' adventures abroad [Online posting 2006]. http://www.islamas.lt/forumas/index.php?showtopic=315&hl=totore&st=50 (accessed 29.01.2010).

[35] Saddiqah. Articles and reports on Lithuanians' adventures abroad [Online posting 2006]. http://www.islamas.lt/forumas/index.php?showtopic=315&hl=totore&st=50 (accessed 29.01.2010).

other words, the position of Lithuanian converts to Islam is to be seen as a constructed hostility toward the Lithuanian (in a geographical sense) culture[36] and its part (in an ethnic sense) – Tatar subculture as non-Islamic.

Conclusion

Lithuanian Tatars, having nominally kept their Muslim identity, in practice were far less religiously conscious than would be generally expected of Muslims. Consequently, they appear to have had no particular need for religious authority or religious guidance and as long as they could they resisted such authority's appearance, especially if forced upon them from the outside. The Soviet period facilitated rapid secularization among Tatars, majority of whom, even after Lithuania regained its independence and faith communities were once again allowed to freely and publicly practice their religion, have remained non-observant, if not altogether agnostic. The absolute majority of Lithuanian Tatars today see the religion of Islam as a mere cultural feature related to their ethnicity.

Unlike Tatars, the bulk of Lithuanian converts to Islam, who might tentatively be viewed as a core of the observant part of the Muslim community in Lithuania, are exceptionally religious and observant. To most of them, becoming/staying Muslim is a state of mind and converts to Islam as a rule receive their new religion in its totality, holistically, with all ensuing consequences to their daily life. And though so far the convert segment is in minority in the overall community of nominal Muslims in Lithuania, it is rapidly gaining in numbers (while the Tatar community, and especially the religious part of it, is as rapidly shrinking), and coupled with the immigrant component it will inevitably become a, if the not the, power both within the Muslim community and in its relations with state and the wider (non-Muslim) society.

So far, from a close observation, one could tentatively conclude that an unavoidable rift, if not a gap, caused by differences in degree of intensity of personal relation with religion (and indeed culture), has been opening between the autochthonous Lithuania's Muslims (Tatars) and Lithuanian converts to Islam. Because of their fundamentally different perception of the place and role of religion in one's life, Tatars (and Muslim settlers from the Soviet time) and converts make parallel autonomous communities (which in the case of converts is in part virtual) with practically no interaction among them.

In conclusion, one might rest assured that there certainly is a revival of Islam in Lithuania; yet its standard bearers are not the progeny of the once immigrants from

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[36] Hostility of Lithuanian converts to Islam toward the Lithuanian culture, though of a complex nature, is in part caused by the generally negative reactions to the fact of conversion on the part of family members, colleagues and friends, from whom the converts eventually distance themselves or even break ties for good. Ultimately, left alone, the converts tend to create alternative identities, like the earlier mentioned "symbolic ethnicity", which by default sets them apart from the mainstream culture (as a rule directly related to dominant ethno-confessional group(s)).

the Golden Horde. Today the face of Islam in Lithuania has distinctly Lithuanian (anthropologically speaking) features, though its content is foreign to the land. As for the locally brewed Islam, though it has survived for more than 600 years, its further survival is in grave doubt.

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Irina Molodikova

Formation of new Muslim communities in new member states: the case of Hungary

There are several places in Europe where Muslim communities settled historically. These communities originated as an aftermath of the Golden Horde invasion in the 13th century and during the later period of the Ottoman Empire. Such places are located in Russia (Volga region and Caucasus) and in the Balkans. Hungary was partly under the rule of the Ottoman Empire for one and a half centuries (in mid-16th–17th centuries), but according to the opinion of Imams of Hungarian Muslim communities (El-Awady 2005), there is no evidence for the existence of descendants of these Muslims towards the end of the 20th century, when the Hungarian Muslim community emerged again in 1988. Only 14 Hungarian Muslim converts could be found in Hungary at that time.

There is no particular public discourse on Muslims in Hungary and even migrants' discourse in Hungary concerns mainly Hungarians living in surrounding countries (who are not Muslims). For the last 20 years, since the liberation from Communism and inclusion of Hungary into the global migration system, it was defined as a transit country for the majority of migrants other than co-ethnics (Juhasz 2003, IOM 2004, Molodikova 2009). Nevertheless, the Muslim community in the country was evaluated to be as big as 24 thousand (Pew Research Center 2009: 31). It would mean that in 20 years it rose six-fold. The task of this chapter is to evaluate the process of formation of a Muslim community in Hungary, as in the last 20 years there has been very little research on its development (Lederer 1992; Bolek 2008, 2009).

Methodological approach and information

The official census data (KSH 2010a) provides a very modest number of Muslim population: 3,201 people, or 0.03% of the total population of Hungary. However, there are no reliable statistics on this. According Jakab György (Imam of the Church of Muslims of Hungary[1]), in the 2001 census 3 million Hungarians refused to disclose

[1] Magyarországi Muszlimok Egyháza (Church of Muslims of Hungary) – this is the name of a religious organization. The word church ('Egyháza', and not a mosque) is used due to the registration regulations in Hungary. Until 2010, if an organization was registered as a "church", it had the right to collect 1% of tax of the members of its community for its own needs.

their religious affiliation and therefore official figures refer only to those who gave an answer. Thus it is suggested that the figure is based on the people that hold a Hungarian passport. Basically, this figure might represent the number of the Hungarian converts to Islam. He evaluates the actual number of Muslims in Hungary in 2010 to be as big as 20 thousand with most of them living in Budapest. The recent calculations (Pew Research Center 2009) suggest a figure of 24 thousand.

The increase since 2001 may partly be related to the inflow of asylum seekers from non-European countries, the acceptance of whom is an obligation of Hungary as an EU member state. The rise in educational migration from countries with Muslim populations has also affected the numbers of Muslims in Hungary. The total number of foreign students rose from 9 to 16 thousand between 2001 and 2009, with an increase in the numbers of Asian and African students (MoE 2009).

For the last 20 years Hungary has mainly received migrants from Europe, and most importantly from the neighboring countries, predominantly ethnic Hungarians living in those countries. There is a sizeable immigrant population from Germany, China and Vietnam. The total immigrant population constitutes about 200 thousand migrants, or 0.5% of the total population (OIN 2011). Of the total number of foreign citizens residing in Hungary, Asians and Africans make up no more than 15% (KSH 2010). Hungary has no integration policy for non-Hungarians. It has typically been a transit country since its inclusion in the world migration after the downfall of the Communist regime.

As the official statistics give little information about Muslim communities, the method of in-depth interviews was selected as the methodological approach. The interviews were conducted with Muslim migrants (including refugees) who arrived in Hungary after the year 2000. The main questions were: How did you come to Hungary? How is your life in Hungary now (including the integration questions)? What are your future plans? Do you have a community of compatriots here? The issue of belief was touched upon in the interviews only if mentioned by the respondent. This important discourse has to be presented in the results if it is really important for the person. In total, 34 interviews with Muslims were conducted, 27 of which were refugees and others had the protected status or were asylum seekers. The other seven were Muslim students and labor migrants. There were two interviews with social workers who work with migrants and refugees, with two *imam*s of Muslim communities in Budapest and in Debrecen, and 3 persons who converted from Islam to Christianity (Uzbek, Tatar and Kosovan). All names of the respondents were changed for security reasons.

The article consists of five parts, covering the historical overviews, contemporary situation and the interviews with Muslim students, labor migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, and converted people and defines the main characteristics of Muslims in Hungary, as well as their problems. In this context, several categories of Muslims living in Hungary may be identified, according to their origin:

1. Ethnic Hungarian converts to Islam;
2. Non-ethnic Hungarians (migrants):
— labor migrants (low-skilled and highly-skilled),

— international students,

— refugees and asylum seekers.

These groups of non-Hungarians may overlap and some migrants may arrive both legally and illegally. Some students or labor migrants can turn into refugees and vice-versa, as will be seen below. In this chapter, the main focus will be on non-Hungarian ethnic groups, especially the asylum seekers and refugees from Muslim countries, who are a new phenomenon of the last decade in Hungary, and on their life, strategies of adaptation and religious feelings.

Muslims and their organizations in Hungary: Contemporary processes

According to the interview with imam Jakab György in Islam Online (El-Awady 2005):

Although there are indications that Hungarians have known Islam as a religion among their countrymen since the country itself began forming in the 8th century, not one of their ancestors remains in the country to this day. [...] Islam practically disappeared or was prohibited as a religion thrice in Hungarian history: at the end of the 13th century, when King Laszlo IV prohibited the practice of the religion, despite the fact that his mother was reportedly Muslim. After the Ottoman rule disappeared from the country in the 17th century, some Turks left Hungary but others were assimilated.

The Islam issue only emerged almost two centuries later in discussions over the destiny of Bosnia-Herzegovina during the Congress of Berlin (1878). The enlargement of this territory in 1908 led to the beginning of the immigration of Muslims into Hungary. After the annexation of this region by the Austro-Hungarian dual monarchy, according to the 1910 census, about 600 thousand Muslims lived in Bosnia-Hercegovina (Bolek 2009: 42).[2]

Still, the Turks who settled in Hungary in the beginning of the 20th century were mostly students or Bosnian soldiers and workers (about 2,000 people). In spite of the fact that this inflow of migrants was relatively small, discussions about the place of Islam in Hungary emerged, because the Hungarian law was not developed in the context of multi-religious community. In order to find a solution, the Hungarian Parliament adopted Act XVII of 1916 which acknowledged Islam as a "recognized religion". The above-mentioned Act has been never withdrawn and this law was not cancelled. Unfortunately, uncertainties of the Treaty of Trianon and the World War II finally led to a slow disappearance of the Islamic community. Finally, in 1947, during parliamentary hearings, Islam was called a "curiosity" by the Minister of Education. (Lederer 1992: 16).

[2] In 1908 Bosnia-Hercegovina joined the Monarchy. There were 553 (179 Turkish, 319 Bosnian and the rest were mainly soldiers) Muslims (excl. Croatian-Slavonic) in the then Hungary; according to the 1910 census there were 612,137 Muslims in Bosnia-Hercegovina.

During the Soviet times, religious development was halted and persons with knowledge about Islamic traditions and religion could only be found in departments of Arabic studies; the Muslim religion went "underground".

As a result in 1988, when the first modern Islamic group was being founded in Hungary, only 14 Muslim converts to Islam could be found. Another group of six non-Muslims had to be added to the list of founders. (El-Awady 2005)

The post-socialist period of the 1990s was characterized by the opening of borders and inclusion of Hungary into the world migration system. In the beginning of this decade the migrants were mainly Arabs who were involved in foreign currency exchange (as certain limitations apply to Hungarians in this matter, but not to foreigners). Since that time, the Muslim community, or more appropriately: communities, have developed and grown, especially from the end of the 1990s. This development was related to the decision on the EU enlargement. Hungary undertook obligations on asylum policy that were not limited to the European countries, as it was until 1998. In addition, the inclusion of the country into the EU system has led to the internationalization of the education and labor markets (especially for highly skilled labor). Today, various Muslim organizations exist in Hungary. It is difficult to evaluate the real number of Muslim communities, because according to Imam Jakab György sometimes Muslim organizations register one entity under various names.

There are two main Muslim organizations in Hungary. One is the Church of Muslims of Hungary (Magyarországi Muszlimok Egyháza); it is the fastest growing community. They have two centers in Budapest, one of them (at Fehérvári 41 St.), was newly built with the financial support from the Gulf countries. It is the largest Islamic center in Hungary that aims to promote a lifestyle in accordance with the main pillars of faith, encouraging interfaith dialogue and raising the awareness of Islam and Muslims among non-Muslim Hungarians in order to promote social and economic relations. The organization took over the former Taubah mosque which got into some financial difficulties when it was run by Arabs and renamed it (Al-Huda Mosque). It also has mosques in Szeged and in Pécs.

The other major organization is the Islamic Church which also has two mosques (Dar-al-salam mosque and Tawheed mosque at the Chinese market) as well as an information center. There are three more mosques around the Chinese market in Budapest that were established by different Muslim diasporas, for example the Turkish mosque of the Living Anatolia Foundation and an Afghan one in the Ganz Industrial area. In addition, over the last 20 years new Muslim communities were established in big cities, as in Miskolc, Debrecen, Szeged, Pécs, and in towns such as Siklós, Kecskemét Salgótarján, Tatabanya, Solnok, Szigetmiklos, Pecel. They opened mosques, cultural funds and businesses. Some of them are in contact with the Budapest Muslim "churches" but the others are not. They also provide various kinds of services for Muslims.

The Hungarian Islamic Community (Magyar Iszlám Közösség) is a Hungarian national organization created to support cultural events, Qur'an education, charity and Arab language courses. The Turkish community organized the Islamic Cultural

Trust of Hungary that provides accomodation for students, some religious education and daily prayers. In addition, there are some prayer rooms established by Muslim businessmen in Budapest and other places. Some of them work as help centers for newcomers searching for housing, cultural assistance and job opportunities. Some Turkish and Arab stores with Islamic food, various restaurants (*halal*), small gyros and kebab venues, even a carpet showroom organized Friday and Ramadan praying. The mosque near Kecskemét is actually a small place of worship at a Turkish truck park near the M5 highway. The *imam* for the Friday sermons is provided by Islamic Cultural Trust of Hungary (the Magyarországi Iszlám Kulturális Egyesület). In addition, there are several clinics run by Muslims. In total, in Islamic finder[3] there are more than 30 different Muslim organizations in Hungary. The new Platform of Dialogue in Budapest was created to promote intercultural and interfaith dialogue. One more unofficial group of Hungarian converts to Shi'a Islam, Anszar Ahl-ul-Bayt, was organized under the leadership of a Hungarian Imam Erdeyi Péter's (Mosab). In the beginning of August 2011 they signed an agreement with the Hungarian Islamic Community (Magyar Iszlám Közösség) and they are now allowed to pray in the latter's mosque.

There is no unity between Muslims who live in Hungary and they usually operate in their own ethnic environment. This is especially typical for some diasporas from Somalia or Senegal. They meet once or several times a month in different places to share information, for celebrations of some events, etc. The main concern of Muslim communities today is the new Law on Religious Freedom, which was passed on the 21 July 2011, abolishing all Muslim "churches", and recognizing only 11 Christian and 3 Jewish denominations. Meanwhile, the 1916 Law has not been abolished and recognizes Islam as a religion. Thus the "church"-dubbed organizations retain the name, but not the legal privileges.

Immigrant Muslims in the labor market

In order to understand the sources of inflow of Muslims we should bear in mind that in contrast to Western European countries which held colonies in Asia and Africa until the middle of 20th century, or have organized the recruitment of labor in various Muslim countries after the World War II, Hungary has always relied on its own labor resources, sourced from among ethnic Hungarians. A difficult language, certain xenophobic attitudes of local populace, the absence of any integration policy and the presence of a clearly articulated nationalist preferential selection for ethnic Hungarians from neighboring countries limits even more the few opportunities for Muslim migrants for integration.

In case of low-skilled migrants, according to the information of one interviewer who has worked in the money exchange business for 20 years in Budapest, they came mainly from Syria, Libya, Palestine and Lebanon. They arrived in the beginning of the

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[3] Islamic Finder, http://www.islamicfinder.org/worldIslamicCountry.php?more=more&startPoint=0&endPoint=50&country=hungary&lang=.

1990s, when the Hungarian border was very weak and porous. Many of them arrived illegally and lived for a long time without proper documents, which today would be almost impossible. About 30% of them are married to Hungarians, sometimes in sham marriages. They regularly attend mosques on Friday and try to uphold the traditions of the Arab countries. They are still in the exchange business, but now it is not as profitable as it was back in the 1990s. At that time large sums of cash were circulated, mainly because of small oil and gas businesses which were used for black market operations. Some of these immigrants open a small business in Chinese markets (e.g. selling mobile phones or carpets, small catering and so on).

Another type of Muslim migrants are the highly skilled experts who work in transnational companies. Many of them graduated from international programs mainly in the English language, such as business schools or medical universities etc., and have worked in Hungary for many years incorporated into the society of global highly skilled workers. Their Muslim faith does not affect their career development, but only their private life. They behave as other highly skilled workers, regardless of ethnicity. They change their traditional perceptions and attitude to the society working in an international environment. But they are not well integrated in Hungary and are ready to go anywhere else where they will find a better job. One of the informants told his story:

> In 1995, after the postgraduate course, a question lingered – where to go? [...] Ironically, it turned out that there were more opportunities abroad. [...] All this started to change my perception of the world. [...] There is the language barrier and the openness of the society... I don't know, but you cannot imagine a society more closed that this one [Hungarian], just maybe in Japan. [...] This is a chain of random events. So I stayed here for the next 10 years. I speak Hungarian on some level just to understand. There are less places of employment for people like me here than in other countries [...]. I evaluate my integration into Hungarian society as 2–3 on 10 point scale; i.e. integration is difficult... My wife was chosen in Azerbaijan by my relatives and I was not against. She does not know Hungarian. But children go to Hungarian school and kindergarten. If I have choice, I will go somewhere else. (author's interview, April 2008)

The other person arrived from the Ferghana Valley, Uzbekistan. Nurlan studied IT in English language at the university at home and was accepted into the Central European University:

> There was nothing for me at home after graduation. [...] I began to apply [for different positions], continued to study. I went there for an interview. It was Nokia. After the interview they decided they wanted to take me. Since then I am [working] at Nokia. [In Uzbekistan] I used to think that money was important to me. Now, it is not only how much I earn, but how I will be treated at my job. Will I be respected or there will be a culture of a boss being a half-god. I do not think I'll be back. My conscience started to change [...]. My place of work is international. This is corporate culture there. (author's interview, May 2008)

He married a Ukrainian Hungarian woman. The marriage took place against his mother's will: "She wanted a girl from my country". After 7 years of living in Budapest he found a new job and resettled to the UK.

Both interviews show that after the migration people change their perception of style of work in an international environment and because there are many traditions that they are not ready to accept anymore they will not return. Both are not well integrated in Hungary and do not care about that very much, because they work in the international environment. They evaluate Hungary as a country where integration is difficult and does not take place even over a long period of time.

Refugees and asylum seekers from Muslim countries

There are several camps for asylum seekers. The majority of people are from non-European countries (with the exception of the Kosovars) and 80% of them are Muslims. The first one in Nyírbátor is responsible for the first screening and is reminiscent of a prison. The stay there should last about one month. Unfortunately, the majority of newcomers spend more time there. Sometimes they are kept there even over half a year. Many of those who went through this experience would not leave their rooms, debilitated with trauma and stress.

Table 7: Changes in the number of asylum applications by main nationality 2009/2010

Country	2009		2010	
	number	% of all applications	number	% of all applications
Kosovo	1 786	38.23	379	18.01
Afghanistan	1 194	25.56	702	33.37
Serbia	536	11.47	67	3.18
Georgia	116	2.48	68	3.23
Turkey	114	2.44	59	2.80
Somalia	75	1.61	51	2.42
West Bank and Gaza Strip	23	0.49	225	10.69
Other	828	17.72	553	26.28

Source: Homepage of Office for Immigration and Nationalities, http://www.bevandorlas.hu/statisztikak.php.

If the first stage is successful for the applicants, they are sent to the Debrecen camp. It holds 350 refugees who are waiting for final decision. They should be there for six months according to the law, but there is a Kosovar family with several children who has lived there for about six years now. The life of people in the camp is far from

normal. They are waiting for the decision on their cases, which results in nervousness and depression, especially among women. According to the interviews with *imam*s, the community of regular prayers is small and constitute about 80–120 people (from Syria, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine, Somalia, Congo, Nigeria, Kosovo and Bosnia). There are no contacts with the Budapest Islamic centers and mosques.

Muslims have no special place for praying in the camps. Still, with the efforts of the Palestinian asylum seekers, who act as *imam*s for this community, and with the help of an Iraqi asylum seeker, they try to organize praying every Friday, and even every day. It is based on volunteering, since there is no learned "official" *imam* there. The current Debrecen outdoor "mosque" for Friday and Ramadan service is at the Ali Baba restaurant in the campus of Debrecen University. It is used by Debrecen students (mainly from the medical faculty) for regular praying and meetings. According to the opinion of a social worker from Debrecen refugee camp:

> They [refugees – IM] do not really come to Hungary. I do not think that they will stay in Hungary for long. Hungary is in crisis, economic and other. The majority of them were going to the West when they were stopped. Hungarian language is difficult for them. They try to find jobs, housing. There are different people. Some are very intelligent. Now the new camp was opened for the persons whose application was rejected and they were prepared for the deportation. In Debrecen there are 320 people now, but two months ago there were twice as many. (author's interview in Debrecen camp, June 2011)

The authorities of refugee camps have become more sensitive to the Muslim community's needs. For example, there were many complaints about feeding asylum seekers with food that included pork. The Ministry of Interior changed the regulation and instead of feeding people provides them with daily subsistence allowance (4–5 USD). Now people are able to buy food themselves. In 2010 the Debrecen camp director even permitted Muslim people to organize a sacrificial killing of two lambs for a celebration.

The integration camp is in Bicske. According to the information from camp authorities, there are 67 recognized people with different status, but at this moment they have no Imam or any person who could lead prayers, so people go to Budapest to attend the service if they are able. The director of this camp is rather pessimistic about the integration of these people: "I do not remember any successful case after they leave the camp".

Refugees and subsidiary protected persons work as low skilled. There are few places where refugees can find work. They are usually recruited for a very low-wage night shift or agricultural job. According to interviews, the owners are often cheating them with payment, jobs and living conditions. Nevertheless, by using the network of refugees, relatives and diasporas they regularly travel abroad for short-term illegal work for one or several months all over the EU. As soon as they are exposed, they are often deported back to Hungary:

I was not able to find a job for almost one year in Hungary, finally I went abroad. I lived in Sweden sharing rooms with my friends and was sent back. Afterwards, I went to Germany, where my aunt has been living for a long time. She helped me to get a job in a hotel of our compatriot's. Unfortunately after 4 months I was discovered by the German police and sent back. They even kept me several days in detention. (author's interview with a refugee, January 2011).

Usually, recognized refugees and people with subsidiary protection status do not become homeless. Once they receive an approval they can begin the integration program and language course and can undertake some training. They then try to get a job, but it is not easy. Because of their illegal travels to other European countries, should they be identified and sent back, they loose their access to social benefits and sometimes even lose a living place. This is typical especially for the Somali people (UNHCR 2010). The refugees experience difficulties in the Hungarian society. This feeling is acute, because they are on the bottom level of the society. At the same time, the really marginalized persons are those who have the humanitarian status. They are mainly Muslims.

The persons authorized to stay under the humanitarian status get the residence permit for only one year, and they need a special permit for work. Usually the time of application is counted into the time of work permit. It is a vicious circle of prolongation of the humanitarian status and work permit that they are not able to break. Every year they have to renew their humanitarian status and they can spend years in this situation, working illegally. The following is a typical story of a person with the humanitarian status:

I am from Somalia and have been here for many years, I have a Hungarian girlfriend and a son born in Hungary. I have the humanitarian status and every year I have problems with documents. For months, they [immigration office – IM] have not issued the papers for me. I go to the OIN branch at Budafoki street every month, carrying a pile of papers. I go to them and they start yelling there. They even once asked the guards to keep me away. Every month they promise to give me the papers, and they do not. I told them – 'If you don't give me the documents, I'll go to Sweden'. Well, they again only promised, and I went to Sweden and applied for the status there. The Swedes quickly checked me through the system and contacted Hungary. Both Swedes and Hungarians started asking me to return to Hungary. [...] Well, I came back, but still haven't received the documents. I do not know what money I will live on. Previously, I worked at some factory, but I do not work now. (from an interview with a person with the humanitarian status, 2010)

Among 27 individuals with various protected statuses, only 13 of the originally interviewed are still in Hungary. The majority has found illegal work in a Western EU country. They returned to Hungary because they were sent back, their papers expired, or they had health or family reasons to return. The others either disappeared or, as

I was informed, they work in other countries. According to experts' opinion and reports from Helsinki Committee (HHC 2009, 2010), the Hungarian government policy pushes them out to other European countries, but because of common EU regulations they can be send back if they are captured.

To be Muslim or not Muslim: how people choose to be converted

The following section presents the decision-making processes around whether or not to be Muslim. One can divide the cases into two types and two sub-groups:

Table 8: Conversion matrix

To Islam	From Islam
— Converted Hungarians, — Hungarian partners of Arabs migrant.	— Muslim migrant who decide to convert to Christianity in Hungary, — Asylum seeker who fled because of conversion from Islam to Christianity.

Converted Hungarians: The story of Jakab György, a leader of the Hungarian Muslim community, is to some extent typical for converted Hungarians (El-Awady 2005). Jakab is a 32-year-old high school teacher of geography and French. At the age of 15 he was just getting to know Islam through his travels around the world with his father. Step by step, he accumulated a substantial amount of information on Islam and started to consider conversion. In 2002, he visited West Africa. In the city of Ouahigouya, Burkina Faso, he was invited into a mosque to pray. At that time he was not ready to take this step, but later he read a Hungarian translation of the Qur'an. It was "the last prod".

During Ramadan 2002 he decided to fast and visited an Islamic cultural center in the city. He spoke with the lecturer. The lecturer also invited him to the mosque. He went home and spoke with his father and wife about his plans to finally convert to Islam. "They were a bit surprised". His wife was concerned about whether she would have to convert if he did. When Jakab inquired and discovered she did not have to, his wife's concerns were appeased, "though she still converted later on". On the very last day of Ramadan, Jakab revisited the mosque, where he said *shahada*. It took him 10 years from the first visit to an Arab country to the moment of conversion.

As we can see from the interview with the convert, the decision making process took 10 years. The conversion occurred through a step-by-step involvement and development of deep feelings for Islam. Preparation for conversion was through long studies of the Qur'an, Islam traditions, and also through emotional preparation. The choice was not temporary and the person is now an Imam in one of the local Hungarian communities.

Hungarian partner of a Muslim migrant: The story is told by the mother of a Hungarian girl whose partner is Muslim:

It was my fault that I introduced my daughter to this Syrian guy. Afterwards, the daughter dated him and they started to live together as partners. In the end of the 1990s, he worked as a money-changer, and then he opened a little mobile phone shop. My husband certainly doesn't want her to marry him. He was very angry that our daughter lives with an Arab. But so far we don't know how our daughter could peacefully leave him [...]. This Syrian guy wanted to marry my daughter, but on the condition that there would be no communication with us [her parents]. Then he told her that if a baby will be born – especially if it will be a girl – they should move to Syria at once or else he will send the baby to his parents. He does not want his children to be brought up in such a "brothel" as Europe is, in his opinion. (author's interview, June 2008)

Basing on this story, the most striking element is the negative attitude of parents towards the Muslim partner, whose behavior, in spite of his long-time stay in Hungary, does not fit into the European style of life. He is ready to leave Europe for Syria because he does not like the European values. However, if after many years the girl is still not ready to take steps towards becoming a Muslim, her opportunities for choice exist.

Muslim migrants who decide to convert to Christianity in Hungary: here are the stories of two men. Both arrived in search of a better life and have relatives in Hungary who already settled there. However, one is a student and the other has the humanitarian status. Their situations are different, but the integration strategies bear certain similarities.

The first interviewee is a 19 year-old migrant who arrived from Russia, where he lived for 8 years. Originally, he comes from Uzbekistan. He applied for a scholarship in the college and studied Hungarian for one year while working. After that he studied two years in the college and after the graduation he was accepted to study economics at Corvinus University. He provided an interesting evaluation of Muslims in Hungary and the explanation to questions on how he became a Christian.

I liked it spiritually [Islam]. The power of Islam is attracting. Qur'an is much stronger [than the Bible]. For example – Kill the infidel. Qur'an supports both peaceful and not peaceful Muslims [...]. Arabs treat it [religion] very seriously. If [a woman is] not a virgin – they will send her home. This is shame on the family. And "ours" [Ingush] can even kill [for that]. In the Caucasus, they would definitely kill. I will say this – Islam is more a religion of prohibitions and restrictions, and Christianity – is a religion of choice. Therefore, they have only one way of doing things. They can thus be easily zombied by this. They are told what to do and what not to do. It turned out that I am more attracted by Christianity. The youth is attracted by the power [in Islam] and by the possibility to quickly become an authority [to be a boss, important person].

The interview discloses certain evaluations of Muslims in Hungary, but in general the person seemed ignorant of Islam, using a set of popular slogans and clichés about

Islam and the *shari'a* law. More important is his attitude and behavior in the changing environment. The respondent developed two different strategies of adaptation in two Christian countries (Russia and Hungary). In Russia, in spite of his Russian citizenship, his observations led him to understand that he may be assaulted, not because of his passport, but because of his non-Slavic look. To protect himself from migrant-oriented xenophobia, he chose Muslims [Ingush-Chechen diaspora] who appeared to control the small town where the boy lived. When he moved to Hungary, he met a different and much friendlier environment. He evaluated the opportunities of Christianity in a more open society in comparison to the closed Arab or Afghan community and opted for Christianity and for integration.

The following is the story of another person who arrived to Hungary about 10 years ago, but currently faces deportation. Naijl and his family are from Uzbekistan, but he is a Tatar. His wife Aisa is of Uzbek ethnicity but speaks Russian only, because she graduated from a Russian school and had a Russian stepfather. Both of them were born in Kokand [a provincial city in Uzbekistan] and their parents were good friends. The marriage was arranged by their parents. Naijl's sister married a Hungarian and organized an invitation for Naijl to travel to Hungary. He received the invitation from her and sold the apartment and everything in Tashkent [Uzbekistan capital, where they lived at that time]. They arrived in Hungary and stayed for 10 years. His sister took them into the Ukrainian Baptist Church of the Living Jesus with a Russian-speaking priest. The Christian community became their home and provides substantial help to Naijl's family. Naijl's wife has always gravitated to Christianity in Uzbekistan, although her father was a Muslim (Uzbek), her mother is an atheist and stepfather Russian. After several years of being in the community of this church, enjoying the attitude of the people around them, they decided to convert. In Soviet times they did not pray or go to mosques and Naijl was more of an atheist. Now they pray several times every day and go to Church every Sunday.

> Honestly, all the Muslims that I know from CIS in Hungary are three Uzbek women. They do not live religious lives, but they say that they are 'Muslim' women. They also do not go to the mosque. But when they heard that I had been baptized – they perceived me as a traitor because of my Christianity, but then they told me they saw me living honestly in my religious life. They told me that they respect me. The rest I know are the Arabs, they are money-changers. They do go to their mosque every Friday. But I pray all the time and Jesus helps me and my family a lot...

The family's economic situation is very bad, because they applied for a refugee status but were awarded only the humanitarian status, which should be renewed every year. The renewal procedure is time-consuming and it is impossible to find a legal place of work. Because their humanitarian status was withdrawn two years ago, they are currently in the second year of the deportation process. Naijl knows people willing to employ him legally, but he has no documents. They cannot return to Uzbekistan because they have long been baptized, and the girl [his daughter] does not speak the

Uzbek language at all. She goes to Hungarian school. They are fighting for legalization with the support of Helsinki Committee.

Asylum seekers who fled because of conversion from Islam to Christianity: Amir is a 19-year-old boy from a Kosovar village. He recently graduated from high school. He speaks good English and German, because his family spent 1.5 years in Germany as asylum seekers; he was 7 years old and went to school there. Then they were sent back to Kosovo. He learned English from the US troops in Kosovo. Then he became a Protestant:

> I don't like that Islam is just submission and restrictions. Your parents decide everything for you – whom to marry, what to do. This is disgusting. [...] Well, one girl invited me to a service 40 km out of our village where the Americans stay. That happened 3 years ago. I was baptised 2 years ago. Well, my parents do not want to believe it. They would not let me [leave] and they burned the Bible several times.

He certainly wants to integrate somehow in the society. He is very much focused on success and the future, and does not want to live in Kosovo. He also plays football. He said that if he gets a refugee status, he will be accepted to the Debrecen football team. It would be a good future. He already plays in his home country team, but they paid very little – just 50 EUR per month. His mother was also in the camp. She says that they left because it was dangerous for the son (being Protestant). She is very scared of being sent back. The house was already broken in and looted.

It seems that the choice of religion was mainly based on the prospects for success, and he seems to link the US and Germany with the image of a boss who can make decisions, in contrast to his parents who have little influence in their country. Therefore, when deciding about his future, Amir chose Protestantism.

The five interviews presented show the variety of situations that people find themselves in when deciding on religious conversion. All of them have different lives and family situations. In the first case we see 10 years of preparation for conversion and a real development of Islam awareness. The second case is still a pre-case, and its future development is hard to predict. Nevertheless, it clearly shows how difficult it can be for people other than Muslims to accept traditions, behaviors and perceptions which are not indigenous to Europe. The migrants from CIS countries are atheists rather than Muslims in both cases, and the choice of Christianity seems to have been related with a desire for a better life and integration, as in the Kosovo case.

The challenge of Islamophobia

The Hungarian Islamic community prepared a report about Islamophobia in Hungary (2010). They made an analysis of Islamophobia in the Hungarian media. According to the article, some negative presentations of Muslims exist in the media, and these are related to a common trend for the whole Europe. The evaluators used

the Hungarian Index news portal to identify that there are more negative presentations than positive, especially on Kuruc.info and various Nazi websites, blogs and news sites.

In terms of negative attitude towards Muslims, the ATV's (news website) and TV channel are in the lead, with the Hetek (or 'Weeks' in English) weekly newspaper in close second. They both fall into the category of anti-Muslim yellow press, writing along the lines of: "The only positive exceptions are Muslims converted to Christianity or a those who abandoned the faith and abuse Islam". ATV presents unverified information, and with almost tangible pleasure repeats that "Muslims are terrorists". At the same time, according to the opinion of evaluators, the two biggest daily newspapers: the *Magyar Nemzet* and the *Népszabadság* provide accurate accounts of Islam and the Muslims. Hít Television, the RTL Club and ECHO Television are also all positive. The community was also satisfied with depictions in the civil service channels, because no Islamophobia was discovered there.

In addition, some politicians also express their negative attitude to Muslims. The evaluators pointed to Béla Csécsei, the mayor of Józsefváros (a district in Budapest where one of the Chinese markets is located) as an example of this negative attitude. The Muslim population expresses regret that "there are no Muslims in the Parliament or in the Capital General Meeting, the political representation of our interest is still nonexistent" (Hungarian Islamic Community 2010). The case of Muslim women in the labor market was also mentioned as an example of problems faced by Muslims in Hungary. The bone of contention is the issue of wearing *burqa*s and shawls in Hungary, and it is as exacerbated as in the rest of Europe. It makes for a large media topic in Hungary, and if a woman wants to find a job, she must refrain from wearing a shawl or any other religious symbol.

According to the Shadow report on Hungary (Novák 2010) the following new regulations "target all asylum seekers from Arabic countries in the name of security and counterterrorism" (2010: 33). Starting in April 2010, a strict detention regime was introduced for asylum seekers at the first stage of application. More than 80% of such detainees are from the Middle East and North African states. Following these amendments, the number of asylum seekers fell drastically and the number of individuals in detention simultaneously and correspondingly increased (Novák 2010). The report also noted that access to citizenship for people with an Arabic background seems to be more restricted in comparison to previous years. This observation is linked to a wider European trend, which is based on the idea that terrorists tend to be in the possession of European passports, and the resulting belief that applicants could be terrorists. The fear that Europe is full of Muslim extremists is supported by some Hungarian media and by Islamophobia.

Internet, television and radio media services are obliged to provide balanced reporting. The Hungarian press gladly reports on the activities of "Muslim terrorists", but have not mentioned a significant aid mission of the Hungarian Islamic Community. For example, in the first half of 2011 the Hungarian Islamic Organization organized two shipments of pharmaceutical assistance to the Libyan rebels (antibiotics); distributed 2,200 packages of baby food to impoverished families in Zala, Vas

and Pest County; and prepared several different Islamic Cultural Exhibitions in various places (Novák 2010).

In Hungary, Muslims also complain about visa difficulties when inviting relatives and friends from abroad. According to some research, the existing practices of Hungarian Consulates are characterized by a discriminatory attitude towards people from Africa and Asia. For example, if the average rejection rate was about 3.6% in 2008 in Hungarian Consulates for visa applications, the applicants from North Africa and other parts of Africa, experienced very high rejection rates, sometimes going above 60% (Algeria – 63.2%, Nigeria – 51.4%, Kenya – 34.8%, Tunisia – 32.5%, Libya – 30.3%, Morocco – 26%, Egypt – 23.1%). Similar figures may be observed with regard to some Asian countries: Syria – 28.1%, Pakistan – 46.2%, Saudi Arabia – 24.5% (Illes and Melegh 2010: 10).

Conclusion

Historically, Hungarians knew Islam as a religion since the country itself began forming in the 8th century. However, not one of original Muslims survived to this day, and Islam practically disappeared or was prohibited as a religion thrice in the Hungarian history. Muslims were successfully assimilated by Hungarians during various periods of Hungarian history and by the end of the socialist era (1988), when the first modern Islamic group was founded in Hungary.

In contrast to the Western European countries which received waves of Muslim migrants from their own colonies in Asia and Africa or through organized recruitment of labor from a number of Muslim countries after World War II, Hungary had no such experience in modern times (if we leave out the inclusion of Bosnia-Herzegovina from 1908 to 1918). It always relied on its own ethnic Hungarians from neighboring countries. Hungary is not a country of destination for Muslims because of a difficult language, certain xenophobic attitudes of the local population and the absence of any integration policy. The presence of clearly articulated nationalist preference in the integration policy (ethnic Hungarians) provides few opportunities for integration for Muslim migrants, especially the asylum seekers.

Nevertheless, as an EU member, Hungary slowly receives Muslim migrants through different channels, and for the last 20 years following the liberation from Communism, the Muslim community increased eight-fold to about 24 thousand, spreading to many cities and towns. Hungary is a transit country; the majority of migrants (Muslim and non-Muslim) does not feel comfortable there and try to resettle where their diasporas live. There is no unified Muslim community in Hungary. They are represented by small communities of different diasporas (Hungarians converts, Arab, Iranian, Afghan, Turkish and others). They have their own *imam*s and mosques, or places of prayer that belong to Muslim businessmen. The main task of the majority of small communities is the organization of Friday and Ramadan praying, the popularization of Islam through cultural events and study of the Qur'an and the Arab language.

There is little communication between individual ethnic groups. Some groups have more contacts based on religion (Syrians and other Eastern Arabs) and the others communicate basing on the country of origin (Iranian and Afghani). Some are bound by the former Communist past (Soviet Union migrants) or origins in former Yugoslavia (Kosovo Albanians).

Every ethnic group has its own method of integration. The least open for communication is the Arab Muslims' community. They try to protect themselves from the Europeanization of their culture. The children are brought up according to Islamic traditions and it is difficult for them to accept the values and culture of Hungary. Another integration strategy is chosen by people from the former Soviet countries, where the Islamic traditions during the Soviet regime were strongly affected by atheism and socialist values. They prefer to assimilate, and even convert from Islam to Christianity. Christianity attracts them more through opportunities for modern life and values of choice. They are better prepared for assimilation by the host European society.

The highly skilled Muslims who graduated from European universities also changed their cultural perception and are not ready to return home anymore. Still, Hungary is also not their country of destination and they are ready to move on to the West.

Since the EU enlargement, Hungary receives refugees and asylum seekers from non-European, Asian and African countries. The majority are Muslims from Somalia, Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine and Kosovo. All of them want to migrate to the Western countries where their relatives or diasporas live. People with the humanitarian status experience the most problems. They are marginalized by the Hungarian regulations in their access to employment, housing and the health system. This is not related to their Muslim identity, but to the EU and Hungarian refugee policies. The evaluation of attitudes of 34 interviewed Muslim migrants who study, work and find refuge in Hungary showed that the majority of them wants to resettle to other countries. They were not planning to stay in Hungary. Only Hungarian spouses, children schooling and health problems are able to keep them in Hungary. Those (with status of protection) who are not able to resettle find illegal employment in other countries.

The new amendments to the Law on Religious Freedom, adopted in July 2011 by the new right-wing nationalist government in Hungary (which is favorable towards Hungarians living outside of the country, but not other migrants), abolished all Muslim "churches" and their legal privileges. This can create a framework for persistent discrimination practices of Islamophobia, which takes place from time to time in Hungary but receives no lasting coverage in the media and not much attention in the real life.

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Michal Cenker

From reified collectivities to multiple Islams: putting Muslim migrants in Slovakia into context

Few areas of sociological research can be effectively covered in their fullness without taking regional or international migration into account. Migration of people has indeed become a prolific topic and may well become one of the dominant – if not the most dominant – inquiries of scholarly and political a work in the 21st century. Contemporary development of migration discourse clearly shows an enormous increase in academic production in recent years. Even more has this trend been visible, however, in public discourse including state and international politics. This paper is being written in times when every major political party in countries of Western Europe must include immigration policy measures into its political program, if it wants to survive the election fight; and restrictive immigration policy measures, if it wants to come out victorious. What is even more striking is that the rising anti-immigration discourse is very visible in countries, which have for years been praised for their positive and exemplary models of cohabitation of people from various countries all over the world. The most poignant of these is perhaps the case of the Netherlands, which has been regarded as *the* most liberal and multicultural – read most tolerant and effective – country in terms of integration of people with different ethnocultural backgrounds. It is the year 2011, however, and the man who is prosecuted by the Amsterdam Court of Appeal for inciting to hatred and discrimination, leads the third largest political party in the country. Geert Wilders has become the voice of thousands of radical opponents of international migration and is being listened to far beyond the borders of the Netherlands. This same man is fighting for a complete ban of immigrants from Muslim countries and proposes the *kopvoddentaks*, the Head Rag Tax.[1] In a speech in the Dutch parliament he said on this account:

> Madam Chairman, this country has an excise tax on petrol and diesel, it has parking permits and a dog-tax, it has an airline ticket tax and has a packaging tax, so why not tax the headscarf? A Head Rag Tax. Just pick up a license once a year and immediately pay for it in cash. €1000 a year seems like a tidy sum to me. Then we will finally get some money back out of what has cost us so much. I would say:

[1] Head Rag Tax wants to tax every woman who wears a *hijab* – the part of Muslim women clothing, which covers the head, but leaves face visible. Head Rag pejoratively designates the *hijab*.

the polluter has to pay. My question: is the government prepared to introduce a headscarf-tax? (Wilders 2009)

Dutch government currently operates with silent support of Wilders' Partij voor de Vrijheid, or the Freedom Party, as it has become known in the rest of Europe. The Dutch political arena hangs on decisions of the politician, who likens Qur'an to Hitler's "Mein Kampf". There is something rotten in the state of the Netherlands. But, make no mistake; there are other countries across Europe, which undergo similar changes towards radical right-wing ideologies of racism and xenophobia.

The liberal paradox

Europe thanks for much of its social and economic wellbeing to immigration of cheap labor after the World War II. Hundreds of thousands of immigrants entered Europe and many never left. On the contrary, members of their families joined them thanks to family reunion programs. Labor was, of course, not the only thing that arrived to Europe along with immigrants. They all carried a "cultural baggage", which came into partial exposure in the destination countries. As the Swiss novelist Max Frisch put it, the European governments "had asked for workers, but human beings came" (Hollifield 2010: 73). Whether of religious or non-religious character, distinct cultural manifestations have been the centre of various polemical debates on international migration and integration since then. Governmental and nongovernmental programs have tried to spread the spirit of appreciation and toleration, but much has been done in the naïve tone of unanimous "respect for every culture", which was very difficult to believe in even for the most ardent proponents of leftist multiculturalism.

Since integration has been such a problem for most European societies, immigration policies try to regulate the inflow of people in order to preserve social balance and to please the moods of the electorate. It is maybe too obvious to say that much of these efforts were futile, if not detrimental to European integration. As Castles argues:

> Two types of beliefs have been particularly influential in migration policy formation. One is the economic belief in market behavior based on neoclassical theory, according to which people move to maximize their individual utility (usually through higher income), and cease to move, or return home, if the cost-benefit equation changes. The second is the bureaucratic belief that regulations designed to categorize migrants and to regulate their admission and residence effectively shape aggregate behavior. Together these two beliefs add up to the idea that migration can be turned on and off like a tap by appropriate policy settings. (Castles 2007: 35)

But it cannot. Castles implies that the restrictionist measures of governments, which they impose to limit or stop immigration do not bring the effect, which had been expected from them. "Migration rules become just another barrier to be

overcome in order to survive. Potential migrants do not cancel migration just because the receiving state says they are note welcome – especially if the labor market tells a different story" (Castles 2007: 37). Other studies (Gibney 2005, De Genova and Nicholas 2004) prove this.

As migration intensifies and single markets become more dependent on international exchange of people and goods, a new state emerges. Hollifield calls it "the migration state" (in Portes and DeWind 2007). However, liberal countries, which are the highest recipients of migrants, are limited in what they can do. They wish to regulate migration in order to protect their internal markets, high social standards and some try to prevent cosmopolitanism to alter what they believe is the natural, "authentic" culture, which is especially the case in post-communist countries of the Central and Eastern Europe. These efforts are, however, constrained by the *raison d'e-tre* of the individual rights ideology liberal states are built upon.

The "liberal paradox" comes into full exposure in the process of integrating societies with members of various migration backgrounds. Symbolic to the whole discussion has become – rather unfortunately – the so called "head-scarf issue".[2] Several European governments as well as respective public have been trying to decide to what extent this single piece of women clothing is in violation of the European liberal values and whether it is right to regulate wearing it. *Hijab* was said to be discriminating women, which is by some believed to be one of the most visible signs of a barbarous – uncivilized – society.[3] It was also a security issue, as it covers part of women's head, which until now must have been visible in passport photos and other security requirements. Most importantly, however, it was in conflict with the unformulated "Europeanness", the ambiguous set of norms and values and histories often called "culture".

Indeed, the situation of international politics, especially in regards to wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the proliferation of the so called "War against terror" have become almost banal. The symbolic representative of immigration to Europe has become an unknown Muhammad, follower of the Muslim faith; squarely outrunning the "Polish plumber". Public discourse has been flooded with articles, blogs, videos and flogs documenting various "Islamic conspiracies", dramatic demography shifts, irreversible cultural conflicts and the like. Muslim migrant, the anonymous Muhammad, was given identity of an angry young man seen on the CNN and BBC news reports. Since the Bush doctrine and the two wars in the Middle East were articulated as civilization conflict from the very beginning, Muslims were given a stand on the other side of the barricades. In a civilization conflict there is no place for reconciliation and Muslims became members of different, distant and competing civilization.

Liberalism of the 21st century democratic countries in the developed world, therefore, finds itself in a paradoxical situation, in which it stipulates individual liberty as

[2] Much has been said and written about it, perhaps too much. For some sound analyses see Joppke (2009), Mahmood (2005), or Scott (2007).

[3] Mill as early as 1817 argued on this account: "The condition of the women is one of the most remarkable circumstances in the manners of nations. Among the rude people the women are generally degraded; among the civilized people they are exalted" (in Marranci 2009: 131).

the cornerstone of its political principles, but in the same time finds itself unable to regulate immigration and integration in such a way as to manage socially sustainable. Thus, there is a continuing urge to stipulate the right for self-advancement and self-realization, but in the same time a rising anxiety in how to manage diversifying societies without infringing the rights of minority groups and individuals.

Muslim migrants in Slovakia

After Slovakia entered the Schengen system, it has become difficult to measure accurately how many foreigners enter and depart from Slovakia. This measurement is still in place only at the Slovak-Ukrainian border and at airports. Other borders are open to be crossed freely. Statistics of the border police, however, show that until 2008, when the movement was still measured, there was a continuing increase of foreign nationals crossing the Slovak borders.[4] This may be a sign that very slowly Slovakia is transforming from a transit to a destination country.

Precise measurements of the number of foreigners entering and leaving Slovakia is difficult. Much more difficult, however, is to give a precise account on the number of Muslims in the country. The only measurement, which took place so far, was the 2001 census. Muslims were not statistically significant enough to be represented separately in the output statistics; they fell under the "Other" category.[5] Internal documents of the Statistical Office, however, declare 1,212 Muslims. More than 300 were of Slovak nationality. Another population census took place in 2011, so more precise numbers will be available soon.

On the other hand, official counts misrepresent the numbers due to the fact that many decide not to declare their religious affiliations or are not covered in the census at all, due to temporariness of their stay. The Islamic Foundation in Slovakia, the largest organization representing Muslims in Slovakia, estimates the number to be approximately 5,000. Other NGOs estimate the number to be somewhere between 2 and 11 thousand (Cenker 2010b, Letavajová in Bitušíková and Luther 2009).

Migration to and from Slovakia can be delineated along the political turning point of 1989. Since political life was limited before the so called Velvet Revolution, cross-border movement fell under very restrictive rules. Immigrants to Czechoslovakia were almost wholly citizens of countries of the Eastern Block or of countries, which maintained positive relations with the Soviet Union and its satellite states. Immigration from countries of the Western Europe or the United States was restricted. Most Muslim migrants had therefore come to Czechoslovakia from Syria, Afghanistan, Palestine or the Soviet republics. Muslims from these countries are the most numerous in Slovakia until today.

Muslim migrants who immigrated to Czechoslovakia before 1989 and stayed – most of them were labor migrants and exchange students – have built significant

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[4] Statistical Yearbook 2000–2008. Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic. Štatistická ročenka, http://www.minv.sk.
[5] Štatistický úrad SR, http://www.statistics.sk.

social networks and acquired appropriate cultural capital to enter the labor market and become Slovak citizens. According to the recent study (Brnula et al. 2010) these third-country migrants show highest levels of integration among all migrants in Slovakia. Moreover, lack of structurally defined habitus among the migrants and strong anti-integration forces within the majority population manifested in xenophobia and racism has hampered migrants to acquire sufficient capital for a successful integration to take place. Therefore, it is more probable that a second generation of migrants has been formed especially among migrants, who have stayed in Slovakia long enough to overcome the structural barriers to integration.

Muslims migrate to Slovakia mainly for education and business purposes. For this reason most stay in the capital Bratislava, but a significant number lives in Martin and Košice, too. After finishing their studies, most Muslim students leave Slovakia and either return back to the country of origin, or migrate to another country. Most of them study engineering and medicine. Some are capable of studying in Slovak, since they took a Slovak language course before they started the actual university studies, but some decide rather to study in English. This is the case mainly in medicine students coming from solvent families. The reason is that English programs are too expensive even for middle-class families. Only the rich can afford them. The process of integration, which students studying with Slovaks develop, takes significantly different trajectories. English-only speaking students have limited access to Slovak nationals, as they stay mostly in groups with other foreigners and are not motivated to spend time with Slovaks. Those, who decided to take up the Slovak language course, go through a year-long training, during which they are given time to create social ties, which they can utilize later on. In this respect, language schools are an important factor in the initial stages of migrant integration. Muslims, who still study at universities usually live on campuses, but the richer can afford private flats and apartments. Since most university students are not accompanied by other members of their families, they live alone or with other students and friends.

Some students, who came to Czechoslovakia before the 1989 revolution and decided not to leave, have their own families in Slovakia. Their children are already adult and constitute to the core of a small second-generation of Muslim migrants. Another significant group of Muslims in Slovakia are businessmen and employees of international companies and organizations, who come to Slovakia with a job mission. Since the purpose of their migration is to accomplish a certain goal, their stay is strictly delineated for a given time period. That does not necessary mean that all leave after finishing their task, but most often it is the case. The same pattern of temporary migration occurs in employees of embassies and consulates. Since their diplomatic mission is planned for a given time period, they usually return or follow another mission in a different country.

Migrants in Slovakia find it difficult to get jobs on the Slovak labor market. (Popper et al. 2006, Vašečka and Koštál 2010) Most often they fail to prove sufficient language proficiency, or face discrimination, occasionally even open racism, from the side of their potential employers. Temporary migrants, who do not acquire temporary stay permit or the Slovak citizenship, furthermore, face bureaucratic difficulties,

which prevent them from finding a job. As a recent study shows (Brnula et al. 2010), some find these bureaucratic requirements so burdensome that they decide to leave Slovakia, even though they are highly-skilled and motivated to stay.

Another way to deal with the difficulties to enter the job market is to start an own business. If migrants possess sufficient initial capital, they create a company and some even end up employing "native" Slovaks. These are the most successful stories of integration as far as employment is concerned.

Migrants maintain transnational links, with the exception of those, who have escaped from a war-stricken country and have limited opportunities to travel or even keep in touch with their relatives. This is the case of some Palestinian and Afghan migrants, as well as most refugees, whether they are from Iraq, Chechnya, Ingushetia, Pakistan, Sudan or other countries. On the other hand, lack of contact with family environment, solitude, cultural deprivation, lack of social capital and material means; all these may be provided by other Muslim migrants living in Slovakia.

Framing Islam in Slovakia

Since Slovakia became one of the 27 Member States of the EU, its potential as a destination country for immigrants increased. This was mainly due to significant political and economic transformation of the country, which offered better opportunities for immigrants' self-realization. Apart from the positive economic growth, Slovakia increased diplomatic ties with countries around the world, being now represented also by the European Commission diplomats.

Slovak mainstream public began articulating its awareness of immigration of Muslims with the rise of this discourse in the rest of Europe in the 1990s and especially after the terrorist attacks in the USA and in Europe. The debate, which has arisen, in many respects copied anxieties of the rest of the conservative Europe. Islam has usually been articulated in the most banal terms of a cultural block, which Muslims embody and conform to. Moreover, this block is believed to be inherently different from the essential "Slovakness", posing danger to it. Perceived as threat, immigration is approached with significant restrictions. In this, Slovak public discourse does not represent any significant deviation from the mostly right-wing conservative and nationalistic and anti-immigration discourse of the rest of Europe.[6]

What is different, however, is the tendency to articulate these anxieties in terms of culture and ethnicity. The debate is oriented on cultural values and norms stemming from particular historicity of the region. Since these values and norms are taken for granted as natural, immigration is threatening the "natural order" of historical development of Central Europe and Slovakia. In other words, "it is not 'normal' for Muslims to live in Slovakia, since they have never lived here", would be a formulation of such rationale. What is "normal" and "historic" is of course a deeply normative assessment and Slovak mainstream public tends to articulate these categories in terms of nationalism and ethnic belonging. There is a popular belief in a "prototype", a "genuine Slovak". These popular imaginations are rooted in Slovak nation-building of the

19th century, when the newly formed intelligentsia formulated the political representation of the Slovak people. Since leaders of this discovering of the Slovak nation received political upbringing from the German tradition, the new Slovak nation was formed around the Herderian ethno-cultural principle. This principle is present until this day in the Slovak constitution, which in its Preamble refers to:

> We, the Slovak nation, bearing in mind the political and cultural heritage of our predecessors and the experience gained through centuries of struggle for our national existence and statehood, mindful of the spiritual bequest of Cyril and Methodius and the historical legacy of Great Moravia, recognizing the natural rights of nations to self-determination, together with members of national minorities and ethnic groups living on the territory of the Slovak republic...[6]

Since the vernacular narratives about "the Slovak" are in stark contrast with the globalizing transformation of the romantic rural "heart of Europe", immigration is seen with an obvious distrust. Moreover, the figure of 'the Muslim' is connoted with another set of negative traits, which date back to wars between the Habsburg and the Ottoman Empires. Popular imagination illustrates Muslims as wild warriors, coming from distant lands of the Orient, striking hard on the peaceful lands of the Slovak village. This image of a cold-blooded exotic, even mysterious, man-warrior has anchored in many vernacular songs, poems and tales. However, it is not a thing of the past. The "warrior" has given room to the "terrorist", other traits remain much the same. Good examples of this are various banal references to "Arabs selling women for camels", "Muslims being naturally aggressive and violent", or having a "natural desire to rule over the Christian Europe".

Despite the long-term historical presence of Muslims in the region of Central Europe (for more see: Mendel et al. 2008), which is also reflected in the popular Slovak culture, current discourse denotes Muslims in Slovakia as a novelty. Since the post-9/11 climate adds the "terrorism narrative", Muslims are no longer perceived as threat only to the Slovak culture, they also pose a security threat.

Interestingly, Slovakia is probably the only European country without a single formal mosque. Given the estimated 5,000 Muslims living in the country, this may be surprising. Of course this does not mean there are no places, where Muslims meet to pray and socialize. Most of these places are rented buildings or flats without any religious or ethnic symbols displayed at their exteriors, so local communities usually pay no attention to them and are not aware that Muslims meet there regularly.

There has been an effort by the Islamic Foundation in Slovakia to build a mosque in Bratislava, which has not, however, until now come to pass. The Foundation owns the allotment and has sufficient financial means to start the project right away, but has not received authorization from the city magistrate. These efforts started in 1999, and for 12 years they are waiting for the permission. Since mayors of Bratislava during this period have always been members of the Christian Democratic Party, the head of

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[6] Translation available at Fórum pre medzinárodnú politiku. www.mepoforum.sk.

the Foundation, Mr. Mohammad Hasna, supposes that their efforts were stalled purposely. Year 2010 brought a change in the mayor seat, however, and for the first time Bratislava is having a left-wing mayor. The Islamic Foundation is, therefore, prepared to resume their efforts.

One of the Muslim prayer-houses, in which I spent most of my field research time, is located in Bratislava, the capital of Slovakia. To my knowledge, there are altogether three places in the city, where Muslims pray and socialize. A rented building, it was formerly a strip-club, which is rather astonishing. It is built in the centre of the city, standing on a busy crossroad. Hundreds of cars pass this one-storey building each day, but few people know what happens behind its white façade. There are no visible Muslim or Arabic signs in the exterior of the house. Coming from the main street, one enters a front yard through a metal gate. The building is L-shaped with the yard in the middle. There is enough space to organize a small social event there, in fact, there are garden chairs and tables stored – rather untidily – there and occasionally are used.

After entering the yard, to the left is a door to a shop and a restaurant. This place offers different sorts of basic foodstuff imported mostly from Syria via Vienna. There are Syrian dates, olives, spices. Cuscus, rice from Indonesia and Bangladesh and various sweets are also offered. Some of the products are common foodstuff available in Slovak supermarkets too, but the rest is imported.

This place also serves as a private restaurant for visitors. When someone comes to pray or just socialize in the prayer-house, he (this is a place reserved only for men) can come and have his dinner there. Men meet there to eat, or just chat and drink tea. Since there is no professional chef cooking in the kitchen, meals are usually simple, cooked from ingredients available in the shop.

Facing the shop, to the right is the women's section. It is separated from the rest of the yard by a wooden wall, which does not make it less visible, but symbolically separates the area from the rest of the prayer-house. No man enters the place and only few women come to the prayer-house regularly, which means it is rare to see anybody inside. Most often little children, boys and girls, come outside to play.

The only contact, and very indirect a man has with the women's part of the prayer-house is, paradoxically perhaps, in the men's section. Since there is a toilet and a cleaning room with a shower, where men ritually clean themselves before prayers and it is accessible from both men's and women's section, one can hear at least a little bit of what is going on there. Most often I have heard children's laughs coupled with women's voices speaking to them in Slovak, Arabic or English. From time to time, some of the children come running out right into the men's section and search for their father, uncle or just continue playing there.

The men's part of the prayer-house is the largest section of the building. It consists of two rooms, a smaller one, which is the office of the Muslim Foundation and a large one, where men meet to pray. It is the most important part of the prayer-house. Before entering it, one must put of his shoes and leave them on one of several shelves prepared for that purpose. The floor of the room is covered with a thick bright-red carpet with Arabic patterns. Along the walls are shelves with religious books in Arabic, English, Slovak, Russian and several other languages. On the eastern wall,

directing Mecca, is a digital timer, which shows exact times of each prayer of the day. Back of the room is filled with all sorts of new and used things; chairs, carpets, air conditioners seemingly without an owner. Even though the place has been recently renovated, a more careful look finds stains on the walls, or a badly cut carpet here and there. During rainy days, there are two or three buckets scattered around the room to collect leaking water.

The place is open mostly in the second half of the day. Some men stay there between prayers, if they have nowhere else to go. Sometimes there are men sleeping on the carpet. Since the only compulsory prayer is the Friday *jum'a*, there is only a few people there most of the week. Apart from Friday and the weekend, the prayer-house is closed until afternoon, when first visitors come. Weekday evening prayers are attended in small numbers, so the atmosphere is rather cozy and intimate. Friday *jum'a* is more ceremonial and attended by 60, 80, sometimes 100 people.

Most Muslims visiting this prayer-house are Arabs. There is also a significant group of migrants from former Soviet republics speaking Russian. There are several men from Ethiopia, some come from Bosnia. Due to the number of Arabs, the dominant language is Arabic, but occasionally one hears Russian, English and Slovak as well.

The cultural Islam

Generally speaking, Islam is not understood merely in terms of religion. It has rather become a kind of a cultural prism, a way of life, life philosophy. Muslims have been judged on this holistic cultural category. Their lives, all their actions and thoughts, their motivations to migrate and integrate are evaluated on the premise that they are embodiments of a particular set of morals and norms, which are uniformly distributed among all and are either unchangeable or at least very difficult to change. Each Muslim is approached as being a prototype; a complete and perfect representative of all Muslim believers (see Cenker 2010a).

Mandani (in Marranci 2010) calls this kind of stereotypization of Muslims the "Culture Talk". Its main characteristic is the idea that "Muslims 'made' culture at the beginning of history, but in the contemporary world they are only able to conform to culture" (Marranci 2010: 2). Indeed, much of false generalizations of Muslims have roots in approaching Muslims as victims of their own culture. Once created, the "culture" is an unmovable, unchangeable cage, which encircles everyone, who declares to be Muslim, or who happens to live in a Muslim country. Muslims are thus seen as passive conformers to a given set of social norms and rules. Culture is in this light understood as created by men "in the beginning of history", but afterwards it has become natural and given, so the individual agency only alternates between acceptance and rejection.

In this way Muslims are *racialized* by the mainstream public of the countries of the geographical West. Individual people are lumped together into a homogenous ideological block, which is strictly demarcated. Thirty years after the famous thesis of

Edward Said (1978), who explained how Europe and the USA orientalize the Arab and Muslim countries, a very similar ideological process is unwinding with regards to Islam and its adherents.

Said explained that the orientalization process was grounded on, in fact only possible through, a specific culturally and politically biased interpretation of a certain time-space. Orientalization itself was a culturally specific product. Thus, European politicians and literates recreated Orient in their minds – according to their own understanding of social realities of the Middle and Far East world. Orient was a European invention. And so is the current "cultural Islam".

By "cultural Islam" I understand the specific political projection of cultural stereotypes on an artificially projected people. This culturally biased interpretation came into full existence in the process of transformation of the global security environment after the demise of the Soviet Union, as a direct result of specific political development. Islam has been given a single explanation and the worldwide *umma* a single destiny.

Late 1990s and the early years of the 21st century have seen a remarkable reappearance of the concept of "culture". The term became prolific in both academic and public discourses, reaching even to lay discourses of vernacular communities. "Culture as a theme or topic of study has replaced society as the general object of inquiry among progressives" (Kuper 1999: 4). Marshall Sahlins adds: "Tibetans and Hawaiians, Ojibway, Kwakiutl, and Eskimo, Kazakhs and Mongols, native Australians, Balinese, Kashmiris, and New Zealand Maori: all discover they have a 'culture'" (Kuper 1999: 4).

The post-9/11 inhabitants of Europe and the USA also discovered a "culture" among followers of the tradition of the prophet Muhammad. In fact they invented it. "Culture" is on lips of politicians and lay public when they assess, why integration in Europe has been failing. "Culture" is the reason of social and spatial segregation of Muslim immigrants. "Culture" stood behind the so called "Muslim riots" in French *banlieues* in the early 21st century. "Culture" is the reason to ban *burqa* and *hijab* in Belgium, France or the Netherlands. Today, "culture" is everywhere. Even though scholarly discourse has stopped using it whatsoever due to its ambivalence and multitude of meanings, popular discourse has taken up the term and fully exploited it.

> There is a talk of cultural differences between the sexes and the generations, between football teams, or between advertising companies. When a merger between two companies fails, it is explained that their cultures were not compatible. The beauty of it is that everyone understands. "We tried to sell 'semiotics', but we found it a bit difficult", reported a London company called Semiotic Solutions, "so now we sell 'culture'. They know that one. You don't have to explain it". (Kuper 1999: 1)

As a generalizing concept, "culture" transformed into a normative rule for dividing any social group into different subgroups, which are characteristic for "having" – and in the same time "being" – a specific "culture". It is, therefore, a highly exclusionary term. Anyone, who does not "have" a specific "culture", cannot be member of

a social group, which is of this "culture". Thus, Muslims with a racialized and invented culture cannot be part of the majority non-Muslim European population, since its post-Enlightenment and postmodern liberal values are irreconcilable with the values and norms of the "cultural Islam".

In this way, not only has two amalgamated "cultural blocks" been created, these entities were given opposing positions in the fictive Huntingtonian battle for the European civilization. The conflict potential of these blocks is inherent; thus, no reconciliation is possible. The only way to overcome the mutual otherness is to "bridge" it.

Islam or multiple Islams? Change of perspective

After Islam entered the stage of worldwide media attention, it was quickly deprived of any intricate, perplexing and individual qualities. In order to get the highest attention of their viewers, news producers continuously presented a simple – even banal – picture of a faith and of a people, which would best sell their product. This narrative was generalizing, simplifying and one-sided, giving up to the ideology of consumption. Islam was given a certain meaning and Muslims were given certain faces and the viewers quickly associated the images and the narratives with the symbolic categories they were supposed to represent. Islam and Muslims of the post-9/11 have been created.

What is important about this reified Islam are not only the banal stereotypes and politically motivated misinterpretations, but the fact that Islam has been given a *single* interpretation. This artificial image was portrayed as the truth. Islam was one and only; the one seen on CNN.

But what if there is no single Islam? What if it was much fruitful to look for *Islams*, rather than one Islam? Approaching Muslims as adherents of a single set of beliefs and a specific historic tradition overlooks the vast spectrum of cultural and ethnic backgrounds Muslims from all over the world have. Moreover, as Islam has no single superior spiritual authority, there is no way how to define, which religious school is the "true" one. There is no single codified structure of Islam, as there is only limited theology of Islam. Marranci in his important contribution *Anthropology of Islam* (2008) argues that Islam exists only in human mind, so its theology is deeply individual.

> The most important aspect is neither what the Islamic texts read, nor what Muslims believe, nor how they act, but rather whether or not they believe themselves to be Muslims. (2008: 3)

Belief in one's being Muslim defines the way, how one approaches Islam. I view this process as an interaction between human mind and the social relations, in which it is embedded. Therefore, there can be no single Islam, as there is not a single Muslim. Interpretations of Islam are as diverse as are those who interpret it. On the

other hand, no human mind exists free from the surrounding environment of politics, social hierarchy, tradition and ethnically specific cultural traits. For this reason individual interpretations may show particular patterns according to the environment they have been exposed to. These social forces are of diverse character. Since migration is not merely the process of moving from one place to another, but is an interconnected set of continuous processes beginning from deciding to leave the country of origin until integration in the country of destination, Muslim migrants' view of themselves as Muslims and Islam as a category for their religious persuasion needs to be analyzed in the whole of this process.

This shift in the way Islam and Muslims are approached – both in lay as well as in scholarly discourse – might suggest how to deal with the false prophets of cultural generalizations mentioned earlier. It effectively confronts the "block vision" of bounded civilizations and the racialized ethno-religious group identities, which have dominated the debate. Moreover, taking into consideration the tendency of the human mind to think in simplified language of limited categories and furthermore its desire to rationalize and defend such thinking, it becomes clear that problematization of the general concepts is necessary for fruitful analysis of the social processes related to migration of Muslims and integration of time-spaces where mixed populations of Muslims and non-Muslims live. Integration is not a process of "a group" entering another "group". Effective integration engages the whole field of social relations. It is this social network composed of elements with respective positions and dispositions – to use Bourdieu's terminology – which are in its whole engaged in the process. This, however, prerequisites a view, which does not monopolize a single interpretation of social reality. Quite the contrary, it needs the "human aspect" get involved; the very fact of individual interpretations, which is crucial when studying Muslim migrants – in Slovakia as well as anywhere else.

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Oleg Yarosh, Denys Brylov

Muslim communities and Islamic network institutions in Ukraine: contesting authorities in shaping of Islamic localities

Over past two decades Ukraine experiences a steady growth of Islamic religious activity. The present day "Islamic revival" in Ukraine shares many similarities with its neighbors in Central and South Europe. In the first place, Islam in Ukraine is developing in a "minority situation", when Muslim ethnic groups constitute only a very small part of the overall population of the country. Secondly, Ukraine has (as Bulgaria and Poland) a significant indigenous Muslim population.

At the same time, the uniqueness of the Islamic revival in Ukraine stems from the fact of dramatic experiences of the Crimean Tatar's deportation and repatriation. Therefore, despite the presence of a huge indigenous Muslim ethnic group in Ukraine, we should perceive Islamic revival in terms of "construction" rather than reconstruction. Islam in Ukraine does not develop in a monolithic form; more likely we should speak about recently emerged heterogeneous Islamic localities based on ethnic groups and institutional structures. Meanwhile, international network-structured Islamic institutions have a huge impact on emergence of transnational Muslim communities in Ukraine. These network institutions represent different traditions, missions and organizational structures found among Muslim organizations in Ukraine. All of the network institutions referred to in this paper have global connections and influence across Europe.

We should mention that this study does not attempt to cover the full spectrum of Islamic institutions in Ukraine. For example, we do not refer to such an influential network Islamist movement as Hizb ut-Tahrir due to the secrecy and conspiracy surrounding this organization and its activities in Ukraine; instead, the primary focus of this paper is on major transnational network movements and local Islamic authorities on which we have reliable and verifiable data. Other Muslim communities and institutions are discussed in terms of their relations with the major ones.

Following the notion by Talal Asad, we understand Islam as a concept for organizing historical narratives, not the name for a self-contained collective agent (1986: 10). Therefore, Islamic discursive tradition is a tradition that relates itself to the founding texts of the Qur'an and the hadith, to conceptions of the Islamic past and future, with reference to a particular Islamic practice in the present (Asad 1986: 14). At the same time, we understand "Islamic authority'" as the power to define what belongs to

Islamic tradition and what does not. Islamic authority is always socially organized and distributed among Muslim communities starting from its most simple and basic forms of parental authority to the most learned authority of *'ulama*. According to Asad, practice is Islamic if "it is authorized by the discursive tradition of Islam, and is so taught to Muslims – whether by an *'alim*, a *khatib*, a Sufi *shaykh*, or an untutored parent" (1986: 15).

Martin van Bruinessen, while describing the processes of dissemination of Islamic tradition and production of Islamic knowledge in Western Europe, refers to dual trends of universalization and localization (2001: 3). Thus, universalization, as the first step of dissemination of Islamic tradition beyond the Arab cultural context, means "the separation of what was considered as universal in the Islamic message from what was contingent" and the second one, namely localization, consists of "adapting the universalized message to local customs and needs" (van Bruinessen 2001: 3).

The present-day situation within Muslim communities in Ukraine to a large extend is shaped by the local Islamic authorities' dispute about the "Islamic tradition". The disputed matters belongs to the universalization and localization levels both, in other words, first line of the conflict lies between two main transnational network organizations and the second one stuck between one of the major network organization and ethnic Islamic institution.

Islamic communities and institutions in Ukraine

According to the data provided by Larysa Vladychenko (2011), the overall number of Muslim communities in Ukraine at the beginning of 2010 amounted to 1,208 (including 598 registered as legal entities and 610 unregistered), which constituted 3.4% of the total number of religious organizations in Ukraine. Vladychenko also indicates a 2.2% absolute increase of Muslim communities in comparison with the previous year.

When we approach the problem of the number of the Muslim population in Ukraine we should notice, that there is no direct data on quantitative composition of particular Islamic communities, because their membership is impermanent and fluctuating. The only reliable method of counting is based on the data of the Ukrainian general population census. Thus, according to the last such census held in 2001, the number of Muslims by birth (ethnic Muslims) is 436 thousand, or about 0.9% of the overall population. The ethnic composition of Ukrainian umma looks as in table 1.

Among other Muslim ethnic groups we should mention Turks 8,844; Arabs – 6,575, Kazakhs – 5,526; Tajiks – 4,255; Bashkirs – 4,253; Turkmens – 3,709. Also a large number among the 48 thousand foreign students in Ukraine came from Muslim countries, including Turkmenistan – 3,823 and Jordan – 2,566.

Obviously, these data does not give the full picture of quantitative and ethnic composition of Ukrainian *umma*. For example, it does not include data on the number of Ukrainian and Russian converts. Nevertheless, it allows us to conclude that Ukrainian Muslim population is composed predominantly of Turkic ethnic groups.

Thus, Islam in Ukraine is represented by mono-ethnic communities in Crimea, South and South-East, and multi-ethnic communities at other parts of Ukraine.

Table 9. Main Muslim ethnic groups in Ukraine

Ethnic group	Number of people
Crimean Tatars	248 200
Volga Tatars	73 300
Azeris	45 200
North Caucasian ethnic groups	13 903
Uzbeks	12 353

Source: Государственный комитет статистики Украины (2001), http://2001.ukrcensus.gov.ua /rus/results/nationality_population/nationality_popul1/.

The most important Islamic institutions consolidating a huge part of Muslim communities, are: the Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of Ukraine (DUMU) in Kiev, the Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of Crimea (DUMC) in Simferopol, the Spiritual Center of Muslims of Ukraine (DCMU) in Donetsk, the Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of Ukraine "Umma" (DUMU "Umma") in Kiev, the Spiritual Center of Muslims of Crimea (DCMK) in Eupatoria, Religious Administration of Independent Islamic Communities "Kiev Muftiat" (RANIO) in Kiev.

Table 10. Islamic institutions in Ukraine

Institution	Communities (% of total)	Ethnicity
DUMU	9,1	multi-ethnic
DUMC	80,1	Crimean Tatars
DCMU	1,9	Volga Tatars
DUMU "Umma"		multi-ethnic
DCMK	8,3	Crimean Tatars
RANIO		Volga Tatars

We should also mention independent Salafi communities in Kiev and Crimea and Shi'a communities in Kiev, Kharkov and Lugansk.[1]

The total number of Muslim clergy in Ukraine is 528 (Vladychenko 2011). Of these, DUMC has 349, DUMU – 64, DCMU – 24, and other – 91. The significant part of Muslim clergy in Ukraine get their training abroad: in Turkish Islamic educational institutions, Al-Azhar University in Cairo, Islamic University of Medina, and Islamic University of Moscow, Lebanon. Some of Ukrainian religious schools student (*tullab*)

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[1] Восточноукраинский центр мусульман-шиитов, http://www.baitalzahra.org/in-dex.php?razdel=1.

get initial religious training in in Ukrainian schools (*madaris*) and complete their education abroad.

The present day system of religious education in Ukraine basically consists of two levels:

— elementary weekend schools which correspond to some extend to *maktab* in Islamic countries;

— secondary religious schools based on Turkish *imam-hatip lisesi* system (DUMK) and secondary Islamic school *thanawiyat shar'ia* (DUMU; Bogomolov et al. 2005: 45):

Table 11. Islamic Education in Ukraine

Institution	Elementary schools	Secondary schools	Number of students
DUMU	39	1	82
DUMC	66	5	204
DCMU	13	1	–
DUMU "Umma"		–	–
DCMK	5	–	–
RANIO		1	27

Source: Vladychenko (2011).

Islamic institutions in Ukraine established in 2009 a representative body in order to coordinate their activities and mediate their relations with the State. The Council of representatives of Spiritual Administrations and centers of Muslims of Ukraine to the State Committee on Nationalities and Religions was formed by DUMC, Kiev Muftiat and DUMU "Umma". According to its Statute, the Council is a voluntary representative and consultative body of Muslims of Ukraine, which aims to:

— Develop of the Muslim *umma*, as an all-Ukrainian and regional union of Muslim communities in Ukraine;

— Strengthen mutual understanding and mutual respect among all Muslim organizations in Ukraine;

— Coordination of interaction and dialogue between Spiritual Administrations of Muslims of Ukraine and Centers with state authorities and administration.

The main objectives of the Council include:

— Representation of interests of Ukrainian citizens who practice Islam;

— Promotion of rights and influence of Muslim organizations in drafting and adoption by public authorities of public legal acts on matters relating to the religious life of its citizens.

At the same time, the main reason for the creation of Council was a conflict related to the quota for *hajj* for Ukraine in 2008, when it was distributed in a way favorable to DUMU. Notably, DUMU, despite an official invitation, has not joined the Council yet.

Regardless of the dissolution of the State Committee on Nationalities and Religions, the Council continued its work in 2011 as the Council of Muftis. The main agenda of the Council is preparation for *hajj* in 2011.[2] Therefore, the organizational structure of Islamic institutions in Ukraine (Spiritual Administrations or Muftiats) in general outline follows the system adopted in Russia where such structures traditionally served as instruments of state control over Islamic communities.[3]

These "Spiritual Administrations" represent hierarchical institutions, like Christian dioceses, linked to a particular territory within which they have full administrative and spiritual authority. These structures do not always correspond to the realities of Islamic life in "minority situation" and often contribute to the emergence of conflicts between Spiritual Administrations and Islamic network institutions over religious authority in a given territory. As we will see later on, some of such network institutions, as "Al-Ahbash" and "Al-Ra'id" create their own 'Spiritual Administrations' in order to empower and legitimize their presence in Ukraine.

However, among all of the functioning spiritual centers the most influential and the most numerous are the two rival organizations – the Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of Ukraine and the Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of Crimea, which represent the traditionalist trend in contemporary Islam. Both these organizations came into being within the very first years of independence of Ukraine as a result of transformation of large regional subdivisions (*muhtasibat*s) of Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of the European part of USSR and Siberia (SAMEUS), active since 1948 in Ufa.

The third influential force active in the territory of Ukraine are the representatives of the Islamic modernism, represented by the followers of the Society of the Muslim Brothers which legalized their existence as the Spiritual Center (the Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of Ukraine "Umma", registered in 2008), acting previously as a NGO. In fact, most of the processes observable in the Ukrainian *umma* is taking place with the participation of these actors.

The Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of Crimea

The majority of scholars assume that the mass islamization of Crimea started in the 14th century, when Islam became the state religion of the Golden Horde during the reign of Khan Uzbek. Sufi institutions played a significant role in this process and in following centuries. Crimean Tatars belong to Hanafi *madhhab*. Religious education was based on a three-tier system: *mekteb*, *mektebe rushdiye* and *madrasa*. Some

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[2] Notably, that Ministry of Hajj of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia reduced this year's quota for Muslims in Ukraine from 500 to 200 pilgrims. See: Совет Духовных управлений мусульман Украины продолжит свою работу. 27.07.2011, http://ansar.ru/rfsng/2011/07/27/18573.

[3] The first muftiat was established by decree of the Empress Catherine II in Simferopol in 1794, shortly after the Russian conquest of the Crimean Khanate, its legal status was formalized in 1831 and the next year the Tavrichesky Muftiat officially launched its activities.

religious schools established by Sufi *tariqa*s included Mevleviyya, Naqshbandiyya, Helvetiyya, Saadiyya (a sub-branch of Mevleviyya).

Toward the beginning of the 20th century, the religious authority of Sufi *shaykh*s and conservative mullahs was challenged by the modernist Jadidi movement which was originally inspired by Ismail Bey Gaspirali (1851–1914). In 1884, Ismail Bey embarked on an ambitious educational reform that was to completely reshape Muslim education in the Russian Empire. Ismail Bey opened a series of "new method" (*usul-i jadid*) schools in the Crimea that were to spread throughout the Russian Empire (Williams 2001).

After the Bolsheviks revolution and the Civil War (1917–1921), the Crimean Autonomous Socialist Republic was formed in 1921. Subsequently, there was a rise in active secularization that reached its peak in violence in 1930 – a time when almost all Muslim clergy was repressed, mosques and *madrasa*s were closed, and many Muslim sacred places (*azizler*) were destroyed. The Muslim life in the Crimean Peninsula completely vanished with the deportation of Crimean Tatars in 1944.

During the period of exile, religious activity of Crimean Tatars was in fact limited to the private sphere. This affected the level of Islamic knowledge and worship among the people. The religious rites were observed mainly by the older generations. Only a few graduates of *mekteb*s acted as repositories of Islamic knowledge. Thus, Islam as religion was not able to influence the attitudes of the rising generation. Nevertheless, Islam was still expressed in ritualized narratives, festivals and life cycle events such as burials, birth, and circumcision, and marriage rites retained its role as an important element of national identity (Khayali 2000; Bogomolov 2004: 21–22).

In 1991, similarly to Muhtasibat, the Kadiyat of the Muslims of Crimea (KMC) was organized, centered in Simferopol. In 1992, by the decision of representatives of Muslim communities of Crimea, it was reorganized into an independent Muftiat of the Muslims of Crimea. These actions provoked outspoken displeasure of the Head of SAMEUS, Mufti Talgat Tadjuddin. In his telegram addressed to the Head of the Council for the Affairs of Religion he recommended that the registration of new Centers should be first consulted with the Main Muhtasibat Administration of Ukraine (later reorganized into the Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of Ukraine). In disregard of that the Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of Crimea was founded on the rights of self-administration and complete autonomy, and has been registered as an independent Center. This very fact, according to the Crimean researcher Elmira Muratova, led to long-lasting tensions in the relations between the Centers in Crimea and Simferopol.

According to the Statute, the Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of Crimea operates in concordance with the Revelations of the Highest and Qur'an, Muhammad's the Prophet Sunna, *shari'a* norms formulated by *faqih*'s *ijtihad*, decrees and decisions by Kurultay of the Muslims of Crimea, respecting and following the national laws of Ukraine. The supreme authority of spiritual power is the Kurultay of the delegates of ministry and Muslim communities of Crimea, Plenum of the Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of Crimea, the Council of 'Ulama and Mufti.

The Kurultay convenes once every five years and is considered to be valid only if representatives of no less than two thirds of all the communities of the Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of Crimea are present. It determines the program of the internal and external activities of the Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of Crimea, elects the Mufti and amends the Statute. For all period of Islamic revival on the Crimean Peninsula, four Kurultays of the Muslims of Crimea took place – in 1995, 1999, 2004 and 2008.

The Head of the Muslims of Crimea is Mufti, who is elected for 5 years. He is also the *imam-hatip* of Simferopol, Bakhchisaray and Evpatoriya Mosques. Over a period of functioning of the Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of Crimea, three *mufti*s were changed. The first one elected for this post was Seitdzhelil Ibragimov (1992–1995). After him, the Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of Crimea was headed by Nuri Mustafayev (1996–1999). Since December 4, 1999 this post is held by Emirali Ablaev (Boitsova et al. 2009: 395).

The overwhelming majority of religious organizations of the Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of Crimea is located in the territory of Crimea and brings together Crimean Tatars, which indicates its regional character and mono-ethnic structure. An officially declared goal of the Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of Crimea – "to unite the Crimean-Tatar people in the study of religion of Islam"[4] points to this mono-ethnicity. The Crimean Muftiat recently issued a *fatwa* against inter-ethnic marriage: "Inter-ethnic marriages weaken our spirit, national sentiments, and lead to the emergence of generations unaware of their origins".[5]

The everyday religious life of Crimean Tatars today is still organized predominantly around holidays (*Uraza bairam*, *Qurban bairam*, *Khidirles bairam*, *Derviza bairam*) and life cycle events, such as burials, birth, circumcision, and marriage. The popular Islam in Crimea preserves some elements of the Sufi tradition. One of these elements is the cult of sacred places, *azizler*. While some of these *azizler* are the supposed tombs of Avila, most others are simply natural objects: springs, rocks or caves. One of the most popular *azizler* is a dervish graveyard at the former Mevlevi *tekke* at Eupatoria (Kezlev). Many respondents know stories about saints (*aulia*) and believe in saints' intervention.

In spite of the formal independence, the Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of Crimea coordinates its activity with the Majlis of Crimean-Tatar people that is headed by Mustafa Dzhemilev. The key role here belongs to the institution of the special representative of Majlis under the Muftiat which to a great degree determines the religious politics via consultations with the administration of Majlis (Bogomolov et al. 2006).

In ideological sense, the Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of Crimea is oriented predominantly to Turkey. Strong connections are established with the

[4] Принципы Духовного Управления Мусульман Крыма, http://qirimmuftiyat.org.ua /index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=28&Itemid=70&lang=r.

[5] Принципы Духовного Управления Мусульман Крыма, http://qirimmuftiyat.org.ua /index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=28&Itemid=70&lang=ru.

Administration of the Affairs of Religion (Diyanet Işleri Başkanliği – Diyanet).
Furthermore, Turkey has the largest diaspora of the Crimean Tatars. Henryk
Jankowski (2002) notes that it counts about 4 to 6 million people. However, these
evaluations may not be fully reliable.

The Turkish Government (the Religious Foundation of Turkey, Ministry of
National Education of Turkey in particular) actively aids the Spiritual Administration
of the Muslims of Crimea by supporting projects on religious education and financing
real estate development and reconstruction of cult-related buildings. Apart from the
official structures, a religious organization Nurdzhular and its Head Fetullah Gülen
maintain a presence in Crimea: in March 1995 he met with the Head of Majlis,
M. Dzemilev, to discuss the construction of mosques, schools and high schools for
Crimean Tatars in Crimea (Grigoryants 2002). The Turkish Foundation Aziz Aziz
Mahmud Hüdai Vakifi of famous Turkish Naqshbandi Shaykh Osman Nuri Topbaş is
actively present in Crimea since mid-1990s. It started with the construction of the
Mosques, but today its activity is focused on religious training in Azov *madrasa*
(Dzankoy region).

Recently the politics of Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of Crimea shows
signs of an influence of Arabic Islamic centers, predominantly of fundamentalist and
modernist trends. Thus, for example, the official website of the Muftiat informs that
the Orthodox Schools of Teaching (*'aqa'id*) of Sunni are Ash'ari, Maturidi and Salafi
'aqa'id, though the traditionalist trend in Sunni acknowledges only the Ash'ari and
Maturidi schools.[6]

A significant part of Islamic life in Crimea thrives in the so-called 'independent
communities'. The Ukrainian legislation on religious and civil associations is liberal
enough to allow them to operate without formal registration. Registration is needed
only to obtain the status of legal entity. These communities provide an environment
for operation of various international Islamic network organizations, such as Hizb ut-
Tahrir. Some of Crimean Islamic school graduates, as well as those who received their
education abroad, joined these independent communities. As a result, the level of
Islamic knowledge in these communities is much higher than in communities which
are under jurisdiction of the Crimean Muftiat.

The Spiritual administration of the Muslims of Ukraine

The second spiritual center in Kyiv has been formed collaterally and almost at the
same time with the spiritual center in Simferopol. In August 1992 SAMEUS approved
the establishment of the Main Mukhtasibat Administration of Ukraine and appointed
Lebanon-born Ahmad Tamim to the post of *imam-muhtasip* of the Muslims of
Ukraine (Chervonnaya 1997; Boitsova et al. 2009). By September 9, 1992 the Spiritual
Administration of the Muslims of Ukraine has already been founded and registered as

[6] Fatwa no. 878989 of the Egyptian House of Fatwa, http://dar-alifta.org/f.aspx?ID=
878989.

the religious organization by the Council for the Religious Affairs of Ukraine under the Ministry of Ukraine. This process was completed with the establishment of the Kyiv Muftiat in April 1993 – Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of Ukraine, headed by sheikh Ahmad Tamim – that became independent of Ufa.

Similarly to the Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of Crimea, the Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of Ukraine represents the traditionalist trend in Ukrainian ummah and is based on the concept of "traditional" authority in Muslim community that presupposes the priority of the judgment of the religious teacher, *shaykh*. As a result the printed publications by DUMU emphasize the necessity of acquiring religious knowledge from an authoritative teacher:

> ...Obtaining information from books cannot replace the teacher, especially at the level of getting primary, basic knowledge [...] Most of mistakes in human beliefs stem from an independent study of books [...] The greatest scholars of the golden age said: 'Those who learn about the Words of the Prophet from books (and not from a teacher) are called scribes, not scholars'. (*Знание о Боге* 2006: 9)

The Head of DUMU, Mufti Ahmad Tamim, is a typical representative of a traditional religious authority, who received his Islamic education in the framework of traditionalist model – at the Dar Al-Arqam Ibn Abi Al-Arqam University in Manbij (Syria) and at the Al-Imam Al-'Uza'i University (Lebanon), where he defended his Th.M. thesis. He has the permission (*ijaza*) to translate Sufi *tariqa*s of Rifa'iyya, Qadiriyya and Naqshbandiyya (at least of the two branches, in particular – Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya of Shaykh Ahmad Zulfiqar (Zulfiqar 2007: 185), hadiths of Zafar 'Ali al-Nu'mani Ridawi and some other permissions on translating the Islamic sacred texts – from his teacher, the renowned *muhaddith* Abd Allah al-Harari al-Habashi primarily (*Биография муфтия Украины шейха Ахмеда Тамима*: 3).

However, unlike the Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of Crimea that unites Muslims basing on their ethnic affiliation (Crimean Tatars) and traditionally adheres to the Hanafi *madhhab*, DUMU follows the principle of trans-ethnicity by bringing together Muslims of different nationalities: not only the traditionally Muslim Crimean and Volga region Tatars, Chechens, Arabs, but also converts from among ethnic Ukrainians and Russians. Moreover, DUMU is a poly-*madhhab* association, including the followers not only of Hanafi and Shafi'i *madhhab*s, but of Maliki *madhhab* also.

Moreover, DUMU is closely connected ideologically and organizationally with the Sufi network structure Al-Ahbash[7] which upholds the rigid traditionalist position

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[7] In 1930 Shaykh Abd al-Rahman al-Ajuz founded Jam'iyat al-Mashari' al-Khayriyya al-Islamiyya (the Association of Islamic Charitable Projects, AICP). Its goal was the dissemination of religious knowledge. After his death, one of the students of Shaykh Abd Allah al-Harari, Shaykh Nizar Halabi, took over the lead. This greatly spurred the development of the Organization and soon it became one of the most powerful international Sufi organizations, better known as Al-Ahbash. See more detailed information at the website of the association: http://www.aicp.org.

in issues related to teaching the faith, and stands in conflict with the modernist move-ments of Islam (like the Muslim Brotherhood or Jama'at-e Islami). According to some studies, Al-Ahbash is a conglomerate of *tariqa*s Rifa'iyya, Qadiriyya and Naqshban-diyya, having strong connections with *tariqa* Shadhiliyya. As the main reason for the rise of this organization the researchers point to the reaction of Sufi community to the spread of Islamist structures, the Muslim Brotherhood and Jama'at-e Islami mostly, and different trends of Salafism in their effort to politicize Islam (Nizar Hamzeh and Hrair Dekmejian 1996: 220). It should be noted that according to an opinion popular in the Arabic community Al-Ahbash is a separate *tariqa* – Habashi (Amman Message 2006). The "father" of the movement is Abd Allah al-Harari al-Habashi, who was born in 1920 in Harar, Ethiopia (Kabha and Erlich 2006: 527).

The headquarters of the Association are in Lebanon. The main direction of activ-ity is the establishment of mosques and oratories. Al-Ahbash is famous for its close connections with the University Al-Azhar in Cairo, which allowed for recognition of Kiev Islamic University of DUMU's diplomas by the Al-Azhar's educational structure. This movement is supported by secular and religious authorities of a number of Arabic countries, for example – Jordan and Syria. Therefore, in 1995 in Jordan, by initiative of the Ministry of Wakuf, a rotation of Imams in mosques was initiated, and the follow-ers of the Muslim Brotherhood were replaced by the followers of Al-Ahbash (Nachman 2005: 215). The Association publishes a monthly magazine *Manar al-Huda* since 1992; it runs a radio station "Nida' al-Ma'rifa" since 1998. Its followers are active users of Internet and own websites that spread the teaching of their *'ulama*, and polemics with the representatives of Islamist ideology.

Moreover, Al-Ahbash is quite active in Muslim Diaspora in Western countries. Its European headquarters are located in Germany, but in the majority of Western-European countries there are regional centers. It also maintains branches in Indonesia, Malaysia, India, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Syria, Jordan, Egypt, Canada, USA, Ukraine, and Australia. At the end of 1990 Al-Ahbash became one of the best organ-ized international Islamic associations in non-Islamic countries, with more than quar-ter of a million of followers (Kabha and Erlich 2006: 528).

According to some researchers (Nizar Hamzeh and Hrair Dekmejian 1996: 221), the main features of this movement are as following:

— in the issues of *fiqh* the followers of Al-Ahbash adhere to Shafi'i *madhhab*, but in Ukraine among the representatives of this movement there is a large amount of adherents of Hanafi (and Maliki) *madhhab*s.

— in the issues of faith (*aqida*) *habashites* are the followers of the teachings of Imams Abu al-Hasan al-Ash'ari and Abu Mansur Muhammad Ibn Muhammad al-Maturidi (for instance, they stand by the opinion that Allah created good and evil, and all of the human actions are created by Allah, and human being "obtains" this or that action).

— Al-Ahbash maintains a position of legitimacy of Sufism with its main rituals and practices, such as *dhikr*, *ziyarat*, etc. It needs to be noted that the question of a fully *shari'a*-based legitimacy of the Sufism has been positively solved in the form of *fatwa*s by many Islamic scholars, most notably by Ahmad al-Ghazali (d. 1126).

American Islamic Studies researcher George Makdisi maintains that the question of legitimacy of Sufism has never appeared, because from its very conception Sufism has been closely connected with Islamic orthodoxy (1973: 155–168).

— The movement does not accept the violent methods of Islamists. At present, their view is that there are no legal conditions for forming a Caliphate. Habashites are clearly opposing the practice of accusing the Muslims disgruntled by their system of infidelity (*takfir*), which is common among Islamist. Their background assumption is that a Muslim, who does not adhere to his/her duties, but accepts his misdoings, remains a Muslim, though a sinner.

— Al-Ahbash does not recognize the Islamic nature of the main ideologies of "Islamism", such as expressed by Ibn Taymiyya, Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, Sayyid Qutb, Abu al-A'la Maududi and others, blaming them of corruption of the foundations of Islam and perversion of Muhammad's teaching.

Al-Ra'id and the Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of Ukraine "Umma"

The third main center in Ukrainian *umma*, apart from the described Spiritual Administrations, is a non-governmental organization, or to be more precise – the All-Ukrainian Association of non-Governmental Organizations "Al-Ra'id".[8] This organization is an umbrella structure of the Association the Muslim Brotherhood, its Palestinian branch in particular. Because of its status – an NGO – for a long time "Al-Ra'id" could not engage in religious activity. As a result of this situation, in 2008 the Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of Ukraine "Umma" was established on the base of this organization. It united Muslim communities that were favorable towards "Al-Ra'id".

As of 2011, the Association "Al-Ra'id" includes 20 NGOs, declares cultural, educational and charitable activity as its main goal, and provides help to the citizens of Ukraine regardless of their religious beliefs and ethnicity. In ideological sense, "Al-Ra'id" is oriented towards Shaykh Yusuf al-Qaradawi and his European Council for Fatwa and Research (ECFR). Moreover, as the Head of "Al-Ra'id" Isma'il Qadi confessed in his interview for a Kuwait newspaper *Al-Siyasa*, all strategic questions pertaining to the development of the Association are aligned to the decisions of the Ministry of Wakuf of Kuwait which is also one of the key donors of the organization.[9] Other major donors include transnational Islamic organizations and charitable organizations of the Persian Gulf countries, among them the Social Reform Society (Kuwait), the Islamic Relief (Great Britain), the World Assembly of Muslim Youth (Saudi Arabia), the Federation of Islamic Organizations of Europe and others.

[8] Association "Alraid" (until 2007 – Interregional Association "ArRaid") was founded in 1997 on the base of unity of Arab students of Ukrainian universities. The Heads of the organization were the representatives of the countries of Middle East and East Africa. The first Head, a Sudanese Mu'az Abu 'Ubayd was deported from Ukraine in 2001.

[9] See: Ra'is "Al-Munazimat al-ijtima'iya" fi Ukrania: al-Kuwait sharikana al-'asasi fi taqdim surah al-Islam al-wasati ila Urubba, http://www.al-seyassah.com/AtricleView/tabid/59/smid/438/ArticleId/95238/ren/r/Default.aspx.

As to the links of "Al-Ra'id" to the Muslim Brotherhood, it must be noted that the prevalent majority of contemporary modernist-type organizations adopt the ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood. This very organization predetermined the key tendencies observable today in contemporary Islamic modernism. The Muslim Brotherhood became one of the first in their organizational structure which performed the transition from a formed organizational and ideological core (Egyptian organization of the Muslim Brotherhood) to a more amorphous, decentralized, stalking network, actively increasing the number of units on a franchise-like principle. These units share the ideology and common directives of the maternal organization and use its name as a brand, but in some cases they may not be connected to it directly. Muhammad Akif, ex-Head of Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood and ex-Head of Islamic Center in Munich, explains the transcendental character of the movement:

> We have no international organization, our movement is founded on the base of perception of things. We are present in every country. People everywhere believe in the Muslim Brotherhood's program. (Nechitaiilo 2007)

These organizations vigorously participate in the political and economic systems of states; structurally follow the forms of parties and NGOs; have their own parliament fractions and control over mass media; have representations in International organizations; and take part in global economic processes, forming parallel transnational communities. In this spirit, the Head of "Al-Ra'id" Isma'il Qadi in aforementioned interview to Kuwait newspaper "Al-Siyasa" was bemoaning their so far unsatisfactory performance in political scene of Ukraine.

Conclusion

The heterogeneous nature and inner diversity of Islam as a religious tradition is reflected in Ukraine in full scale. Despite a relatively small number of Muslims in the country, different and even contesting Islamic institutions are present, which makes Islamic tradition in Ukraine extremely polarized. Local conditions of Islamic revival (including religious, ethno-cultural and political), of constructing and reconstructing Islamic institutions, have shaped the understanding and practice of Islam among Ukrainian Muslims. On the other hand, these conditions are under the influence of international Islamic network institutions, bringing their disputes and feuds into the Ukrainian context.

Currently there is no observable individualization of Islamic authority in Ukrainian *umma*, as is the case in the Western Europe (Frank 2006). In contrast, the majority of Ukrainian Muslims clearly identifies itself with Islamic religious centers and adheres to statements made by their leaders. Only a small number of regularly practicing Muslims shows ideological flexibility and attends mosques of different communities.

In this light, two lines of internal conflict are noticeable in the Ukrainian Islam: "universalized" and "localized". The first line of conflict runs between the Islamist network institution of the Muslim Brotherhood represented in Ukraine by "Al-Ra'id" and DUMU "Umma", and their Sufi-oriented rivals – "Al-Ahbash" network and the affiliated Ukrainian institution DUMU. The second is delineated inside Crimea, between mono-ethnic and politically motivated DUMK and DCMK which is strongly linked with DUMU. The religious authority in Crimea is fragmented, as may be seen, while in other regions the Islamic religious authority established itself already in a dispersed form.

At the same time, in spite of a huge diversification of Islamic authority structures, the current situation in Ukraine is relatively stable in terms of doctrinal and ideological aspects and positive development of missionary activities. Moreover, current conflict empower, above all, the network Islamic institutions operating in Ukraine, making them an important structural element of the religious network in the global dimension.

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Daniela Stoica

New Romanian Muslimas.
Converted women sharing knowledge in online and offline communities

Converted women, or new Romanian Muslimas, constitute an active sub-group of the emerging Muslim community in Romania which deserves a more careful consideration, since the topic of feminine conversion to Islam has been intensely discussed in the Western European context (see Allievi (1998); Allievi and Dassetto (1999); Köse (1996); Sultan (1999); Köse and Loewenthal (2000); Badran (2006); van Nieuwkerk (2006); McGinty (2007)), while for the Eastern Europe it has been hardly approached. Analyzing a series of conversion narratives generated in online and offline environments, this chapter questions the way in which Romanian women who convert to Islam gain knowledge and further evolve as knowers during their spiritual growth as Muslim believers.

Within the chapter, a brief historical introduction is drawing the heterogeneous profile of the local Muslim community, followed by a description of the representative institutions of the Muslim cult in Romania and by an outline of the Islamic non-profit organizations established here in the last two decades, highlighting their active role in supporting Muslim believers and in attracting new ones. Furthermore, the Romanian "Cyber-Islamic Environment" (Bunt 2003: 31) is brought into discussion, as well as its intense use as an individual and collective expressive framework for Muslims in Romania, revealing the dynamism of this emergent community. New Muslims are being shaped by this vibrant environment and – in their turn – they creatively contribute to its enactment.

Discussing women converts' narratives, the chapter draws a profile of their evolution on the scale of knowledge, of their transformations as Muslim believers, and their growth as subjects who gain and enact agency through their actions. During this spiritual journey, they are facing challenges as a "minority within a minority",[1] as members of the local Muslim community and of the broader society as well.

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[1] Kevin Brice (2010) employs the expression "a minority within a minority" to describe what he sees as "the paradox" illustrated by British Muslim converts who adhered to a minority religious group, within which they are a minority as well.

Historical presence of Islam in Romania

Muslim populations – consisting mainly of Turks and Tatars – grew and consolidated into a stable community in the south-eastern part of the Romanian territory during five centuries of Ottoman domination of the Dobrudja area, which is delimited by the Black Sea, the Danube River and the Bulgarian frontier. The region was occupied by the Turks in 1420 and remained under Ottoman domination until 1878 (Bechir 2008).

The first Muslims – a group consisting of 10 to 12 thousand Anatolian Turks – came to Dobrudja between 1263 and 1264. In their turn, the first Tatars settled down in the region under the leadership of Noghai (1280–1310), leader of the Golden Horde, who was ruling over the north of the Balkan Peninsula up to Dobrudja. Later on, sultans Bayezid I (1360–1403), Mehmet I (1413–1421), and Bayezid II (1447–1512) were responsible for colonizing Dobrudja with Tatars and Turks from Asia Minor, and with Volga Tatars (Grigore 1999). Muslim Gypsies are believed to have arrived as well in the region in the early 16th century, as a specific division serving in the Ottoman army; they also came from other regions, moved into the areas dominated by Ottomans and converted to Islam (Oprişan and Grigore 1999).

Following the annexation of Crimea by the Russians in 1783 after the Russian-Turkish War, 100 thousand Tatars were brought to Ottoman Dobrudja after being driven away by force from Crimea. The region had one of the most ethnically diverse populations in Europe, consisting of Turks, Tatars, Romanians, Bulgarians, Russians, Greeks, Armenians, Jews, Germans, Italians, Albanians, and Arabs (Bechir 2008).

In addition, in order to increase the Islamic presence in the region, other populations from the Empire, like Persians, Kurds and Arabs, had been concentrated in the region; these groups mingled with the dominant autochthonous residents and were thus immediately assimilated (Grigore 1999).

Several migration waves followed at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, when Tatars began to leave Dobrudja, as a consequence of the state policy which included – among other aspects – changes in the land property legislation unfavorable to the Tatar populations.

> The lack of water, the fact that the given lands were away from the villages they lived in, the priority given to Romanians and Bulgarians to get land or buy it for less money and the independence of Turkey in 1923 determined the Tatar population to migrate. (Bechir 2008: 34)

According to Grigore (1999), the fluctuation of the Muslim populations in Dobrudja was reflected in the decreasing number of mosques in the area. Thus, while there were 260 Muslim sites of prayer in 1900, at the end of World War II there were only 151 left and this descending trend continued throughout the decades. Currently, the number of mosques in Romania is estimated at around 80 (Grigore 1999).

Romania has also a history of Arab migration, intensified especially during the communist regime years. The first Arab citizens – coming mainly from the Middle

East and Africa – arrived in Romania in the 1970–1980s, when authorities decided to invite a few thousand students in their efforts to expand the state's economic relations with the Arab countries. This was the beginning of an approximately 20-year-old collaboration between Romania and these countries in the line of university education, in accordance with the economic and trade interests of the communist state (Chiriac and Robotin 2006).

Muslim groups retained a constant presence in Romania, after the fall of the communism as well, concentrated especially in the main university centers – Bucharest, Cluj-Napoca, Iași and Timișoara. These communities include Arabs – from Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Palestine – Iranians and Kurds from northern Iraq and southeastern Turkey. "These new communities have not joined the old Muslim community in Romania, the two groups living almost parallel lives" (Grigore 1999: 34).

In the last 20 years, religion – and particularly the Christian Orthodox church – had an increasing importance on the Romanian socio-political scene, holding a majority of over 86% of the country's population.[2] The Christian Orthodox dominant group is followed by small percentages of Roman Catholics, Reformed Christians and Greek Catholics (between 4.7% and 0.9% of the population). In this context, the Muslim community represents approximately 0.2% of the Romanian population. As was shown by the latest national census in 2001, there were 67,257 Muslims in Romania, of whom 31,118 were Turks, while 23,641 were Tatars. According to the Pew Research Center (2011) estimations, by 2010 the total number of Muslims in Romania has grown to 73 thousand. Unfortunately, no statistics concerning the Muslim converts in Romania are available whatsoever and no estimations have been made.

Muslim institutions and organizations in Romania

According to the legal status of the Muslim denomination, the Romanian Muslim community is officially represented by a *mufti*, while the Muftiat is the denominational and cultural representative institution of the Muslim community, with a status similar with that of the other denominations officially recognized by the Romanian state. Based in Constanța, this institution coordinates the religious activities in Muslim communities; it offers religious assistance to Muslims in Romania and works together with the state authorities in the matter of religious education in public schools. In addition, the Muftiat organizes Qur'an lessons, coordinates special programs preparing believers for the pilgrimage, organizes pilgrimages to Mecca, and performs religious rituals for conversions.

In addition, Muslim non-governmental organizations became a constituent part of the current religious landscape in Romania after the 1989 revolution. The Cultural Islamic League emerged in 1999 from the previous Muslim Students' Association, established in the early 1990 with the initial purpose of defending the rights of Muslim students and making Islamic faith visible through media channels. Currently, the

[2] Approximately 22 million inhabitants.

League's objective is to accurately present the "phenomenon of Islam and the aspects that lead to its natural spread" (Islam.ro 2011), as well as the principles of Islam, and to coordinate charity activities. The League has local branches in important Romanian university cities, which also host mosques. Moreover, they offer support and advice to the members of local Muslim communities, and also to the non-Muslims who are interested in Islam, especially to those who consider converting.

Later, in 2001, The Cultural Islamic Center "Semiluna" developed from a charity association, as a project meant to respond to needs of the Romanian Muslim community in accordance with its structural ethnic diversity, as acknowledged by the association. As the Center's website (www.musulman.ro) indicates, its main objective is to integrate the diverse Muslim religious community – comprising Tatar, Turkish, Gipsy, Arab, Pakistani, Albanian, and Romanian Muslims – in the Romanian society.

Since 2009, The Romanian Muslims' Association has been coordinating Islamic lessons within the framework of an online Islamic School, targeting mainly Romanian converts. Among its other objectives, the organization aims at hosting learning programs on topics pertaining at Islamic culture, customs and religion. It also provides study materials to the members of the Muslim community, and supports the establishment of Islamic pre-school and school education units funded from private sources. The association seeks to actively promote its cause and to fundraise for it.

Romanian converts are also represented by their own organization – The Romanian Muslim Converts' Association – which has the overt intention of performing *da'wa* and thus inviting each Romanian to Islam, a process in which its online discussion forum plays an active role. According to its website (www.arci.ro), the Association's members are Muslims of various ethnicities: Romanians, Hungarians, Turks, Tatars, Pakistani, and Arabs. The largest group is represented by Romanians, ex-Christian Orthodox, Catholic, Pentecostal or Adventist believers, who embraced Islam.

In 2006, The Muslim Sisters Association was created as an initiative of Muslim women living in Romania. It presents itself as an independent structure, protecting Muslim women's rights in Romania and worldwide. Through its activities, the association endeavors to facilitate an interreligious and intercultural dialogue, and to prevent any type of discrimination, especially on religious grounds. Other active Muslim organizations are The Islamic Cultural Center "Islamul Azi" ('Islam Today'), and The Taiba Foundation.

Islamic media channels and digital Islam in Romania

Muslim organizations are active in the online environment, utilizing websites, social media affiliation, multimedia content, chat rooms, e-mail listing, blogs and discussion forums. Developed and charged with the purpose of providing support and advice to the members of the Muslim community, these online instruments and channels assist and host debates on religious and cultural topics, support active *da'wa*, and allow their users' access to a series of resources. Thus, Islamic books can be

downloaded for free, the Qur'an can be listened to in its audio format, while *shaykh*s' online lectures and Friday lectures can be watched online. Moreover, Muslim organizations use their websites and blogs for fundraising activities.

Online media products are visible in the local Muslim landscape as well. Advertised as the news portal of the Muslim community, Radio Islam (www.radioislam.ro; transformed in Radio Orient in July 2011) is one of those channels and one of its partners is The Romanian-Arab Press Club, an institution set up by journalists and intellectuals of both Romanian and Arab origin, who promote social and cultural relations based on tolerance. Within the Muslim community in Romania, these channels have been developed along narrow niches, in order to reach different segments of public. Thus, Muslim children have also been included into the target-groups of Islamic new media in Romania; e.g., on the Micul Musulman ('Little Muslim') website (www.miculmusulman.com), Muslim children have access to prayers and stories, interactive games and customized applications.

Discussion forums are important communication instruments for the local Muslim online environment; some of the most intensely visited by Muslims in Romania are those of The Romanian Converts' Association (forum.arci.ro) and of "Islamul Azi" Cultural Center (islamulazi.ro), as well as those of the sunnah.ro (www.sunnah.ro/forum.php) and rasarit.com (www.rasarit.com/vb/) websites. In this context, the use of virtual space as a broad platform stimulating the emergence of the Muslim community in Romania, and for debating and negotiating over what proper Islamic observance is, needs to be discussed from a theoretical perspective as well.

In *iMuslims. Rewiring the House of Islam* (2009), Gary Bunt uses the concept of "Cyber-Islamic Environment" – CIE, defining it as "virtual ummah", which is "the perfect place for individuals to express themselves while claiming to belong to a community to whose enactment they contribute to the enacting of, rather than being passive members of" (Bunt 2009: 31). Individuals thus contribute to the flow of data on Islam through the Internet and have a personal, direct input to the "global Islamic knowledge economy" (2009: 12). This reflects the intense focus on information and knowledge within CIEs, and simultaneously the stress on interactions and networks, between which connections and boundaries might sometimes be blurred. Here, "elements of production, consumption, and circulation take on a religious edge" (Bunt 2009: 12).

In the Romanian context, access to online sources of information on Islam needs to be regarded as an opportunity to reach data for a religious group that is rather marginalized in the broader religious context dominated by the Christian-Orthodox majority. In addition, one's active role in generating, updating and spreading these resources can replace a sense of community and mutual support, continuing or completing the believer's offline religious activities. Nevertheless, according to Dawson, "virtual communities, to the extent that they ever become common, are unlikely to operate as substitutes for more traditional forms of social relations". As the author suggests, since offline lives are balanced by online lives, "there is no reason to expect that religious uses of the Internet will differ" (Dawson 2004: 76). Converts are thus employing Internet resources for balancing the knowledge they gather from other

sources, regarding it as a more reachable knowledge base, within which they nevertheless need to think and act in a critical and selective manner.

As the narrative interviews conducted among the women converts from the Cluj-Napoca[3] Muslim community have revealed, the Internet is a primary information source and a networking instrument for new Muslims. Meanwhile, those who have a longer history as Muslims adopt it later as a prolific Islamic knowledge resource.

Ten respondents, aged between 19 and 45, were interviewed in the May-October 2010 interval and invited to share their conversion experience; questioned about their Islamic knowledge sources, seven of them – who had been Muslims between one and a half months to five years – mentioned the Internet as primary information source in their initial conversion phases. Thus, this is a crucial resource for Muslims from emerging communities, since it provides information that is sometimes scarce in offline environments. In this context, new converts are using the Internet also in their search for immediately reachable Muslim communities, or for individuals with similar trajectories.

Only two of the participants did not refer to the Internet as the main information source; one of them had been a Muslim for six years and stated that the online environment was not an option for her in the beginning, while the other woman, who had been a Muslim for 12 years and converted in an Islamic country, answered she relied on the information she received from other Muslims. Although not available from the onset for the respondent who had been a Muslim for 20 years when the interview took place, the Internet became a reliable source in the following years.

Moreover, the spread of English information on Islam has facilitated new Muslims' access to important knowledge sources, allowing them to become a part of a transnational cyber-*umma*, to which individuals are affiliated according to their affinities and knowledge pools. In this milieu, Muslims can find advice and support for both spiritual and practical issues, regarding the requirements for leading an adequate Islamic lifestyle, opening the way for alternative authorities and information sources.

Thus, Islamic knowledge becomes reachable in contexts in which it would otherwise be difficult to access. For Romanian Muslims this is one of the main incentives offered by Islamic online resources, especially in the case of those living in communities where they are isolated, and cannot attend meetings at mosques or join support organizations, and therefore are not able to interact with other Muslims.

Romanian Muslimas' ways of knowing. Data and theoretical framework

Analyzing narratives generated in both online and offline environments, the chapter aims at highlighting the variation of Romanian converted women's perspectives on knowledge according to the different communication environments and communities in which they are present, and to the stages of their evolutions as Muslim believers. In this context, the leading assumption is that knowledge is an important

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[3] A city in northwest Romania situated in the historical province of Transylvania.

da'wa vehicle, especially in the case of a developing Muslim community like the Romanian one, since conversions actively contribute to its growth. In order to reveal these epistemological transformations and developments, two types of narratives will be further discussed.

The first set of data was selected from the "Islamul Azi" (www.islamulazi.ro) discussion forum; it represents a commonly encountered topic among new Muslimas: the hijab and the pressures exerted on women for removing it when they try to gain access to the labor market. The analyzed post was written on May 22, 2011 by a Romanian Muslima, who was inquiring whether the other women members of the forum would consider taking their headscarves off with the purpose of being hired.

The second set of data is composed of the conversion narratives of three Muslimas from Cluj-Napoca, where a growing Muslim community has been forming in the last years.[4] The selected respondents were among the ten previously mentioned converts, interviewed alongside other eleven converted women from Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Eindhoven and Tilburg (Netherlands) in the framework of my PhD research project,[5] concerning the Islam conversion experience of Romanian and Dutch women.

In what follows, the theoretical framework within which these narratives are analyzed will be briefly outlined. Thus, the main knowledge perspectives from which these will be discussed are those identified and defined by Mary Field Belenky, Blythe McVicker Clinchy, Nancy Rule Goldberger, and Jill Mattuck Tarule, in their study *Women's Way of Knowing. The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind* (1986), investigating the cognitive lives of 135 women of different ages.

According to Field Belenky et al., individuals' central assumptions about the nature of truth and reality and about the origins of knowledge form the way in which they see the world and themselves as participants of it. These influence their self-definition, as well as the way they relate with others, their public and private roles, their sense of power over the events occurring in their lives, their conceptions and their learning, as well as their notions of morality. Questioning the way women see reality and draw conclusions about truth, knowledge, and authority, the authors divided women's perspectives into five epistemological categories: silence, received knowledge, subjective knowledge, procedural knowledge and constructed knowledge.

According to the silence position, women experience themselves as mindless and voiceless, subject to impulses of external authorities, while from the received knowledge perspective, they conceive themselves as capable of receiving, and even of reproducing information from omniscient outside sources. Yet, they are not capable to

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[4] According to the local media, the total number of Muslims in Cluj-Napoca amounts to around 1,000 individuals.

[5] Investing in people! Ph.D. scholarship, Project co-financed by the Sectoral Operational Program for Human Resources Development 2007–2013, Priority Axis 1. *Education and training in support for growth and development of a knowledge based society*. Key area of intervention 1.5: Doctoral and post-doctoral programs in support of research, Contract no: POSDRU/88/1.5/S/60185 – *Innovative doctoral studies in a Knowledge Based Society*, Babeș-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca.

create knowledge of their own. Further, from the subjective viewpoint, truth and knowledge are conceived as personal, private, subjectively learnt or intuited; in turn, the procedural perspective involves a position from which women invest in learning and applying objective procedures for obtaining and communicating knowledge. Finally, when they actively construct knowledge – from the constructivist stance – women regard it as contextual and experience themselves as creators of it, valuing both subjective and objective strategies for acquiring information.

In congruence with the communication environments and the communities they find themselves in, and their development as Muslim believers, the interviewed Romanian Muslimas project themselves as received, subjective or procedural knowers. They are permanently disciplining themselves through knowledge, and scrutinizing themselves, while being aware that they are inspected by others as well – either converts or born Muslims.

As Saba Mahmood (2005) shows, Muslim women employ great caution in this process of self-evaluation, with the purpose of measuring how deeply their actions are rooted in their dispositions, and endeavor to surmount the discrepancy between a religious norm or a religious ideal and how they actually enact it.

Converts are engaged in this active knowledge pursuit, illustrated by Foucault's "power-knowledge" paradigm, according to which "the development and acquisition of knowledge doesn't necessarily make people more powerful" (Danaher et al. 2000: 50). On the contrary, knowledge transforms individuals into its subjects, since they make sense of themselves "by referring back to various bodies of knowledge". Knowledge and truth are the result of power struggles between different fields, disciplines, and institutions, being used to "to authorize and legitimate and legitimate the workings of power" (Danaher et al. 2000: 64).

The scrutinizing process occurring within Muslim communities, when one's knowledge and religious observance are being critically assessed, is reflected in Foucault's panopticon image, which represents the authoritative gaze. In the case of Romanian converts, this is constituted by the members of both their previous and present groups – (non-practicing) Christian families and friends, and their Muslim peers.

In these circumstances, Muslim converts cultivate themselves through "arts of existence that not only allow us to become self-determining agents, but also provide the grounds for us to challenge and resist power structures". Nevertheless, power-knowledge, contexts, and discourses restrict "the possibilities of subjectivity" (Danaher et al. 2000: 150f), in the matter of individual identity and of relations with others. In this context, agency is conceptualized in accordance with Mahmood's perspective, "not simply as a synonym for resistance to relations of domination, but as a capacity for action that specific relations of subordination create and enable" (2005: 18).

By acquiring knowledge, new Muslim believers evolve from the status of received knowers to that of subjective and procedural knowers, still within the boundaries of religious knowledge.

Religious beliefs order and regulate the embodied subject. Religion as a power-knowledge matrix forms a technology of self, not necessarily in a negative way, but as a force among others shaping life. There is no neutral free-floating life, only certain technologies and operations that mark out a life. (Carrette 2000: 150).

Thus, once they have embraced Islam, converts enter this power-knowledge paradigm and evolve as knowers only within its confines. Butler's concept of bodily performatives, enacted as a consequence of one's evolution as a subject through knowledge, becomes relevant here; for Butler, performativity "consists in a reiteration of the norms which precede, constrain, and exceed the performer and in that sense cannot be taken as the fabrication of the performer's 'will' or 'choice'" (1993: 234). Thus, as they advance on the Islamic knowledge scale, Muslim converts restate a series of rules, which they internalize as parts of their subjectivities.

Online narratives: Cyber-Muslims as received and subjective knowers

As previously mentioned, the online environment is used by Romanian converts as an adjacent source of information, advice and support. The topic selected for analysis depicts women converts as received knowers, searching for outside confirmations, and looking for external authorities, eager to learn from the experiences of their peers, whose suggestions they tune and filter, according to their expectations.

A few aspects need to be made clear before reproducing the selected post. The discussions unfolded in Romanian and for the purpose of the present paper, the post and its replies have been translated into English. The informal character of the messages, typical for this communicating environment, defined, among other aspects, by the use of abbreviations, the presence of misspellings and nonconventional punctuation, was not maintained in the translation. Instead, the Arabic greetings and expressions used by the forum members were kept as such.

Written by a convert (she explicitly mentions her conversion) on the Islamulazi.ro discussion forum, the post revealed the author's interest in learning whether other Muslimas were confronted with outside pressures for removing their headscarf when they applied for a job:

> *As salaam aleikum wa rahmatullah wa barakatu,*[6] dear brothers and sisters! My question is whether one of the sisters would remove her *hijab* in order to be able to find a job. I want to say something: in the beginning, when I converted, there was something which held me from wearing it with pride. Now that I think about it, I feel ashamed for acting like a child. But now, taking the *hijab* off feels as if

[6] Arab. 'Peace be unto you and so may the mercy of Allah and His blessings' (full version of the Islamic greeting).

> I wore no clothes at all. Allah knows better! So dear sisters, would you lose your *hijab* one part of the day only to be able to benefit of a work place?[7]

Having already gone through the self-disciplining process, striving to adopt the headscarf and to make it a part of her present self, the Muslim woman questions the exception she has to make: accepting to remove the veil during her work hours, with the purpose of being hired. As a received knower, the woman does not see herself as able to create knowledge of her own and she therefore searches for outsiders' experiences with which she can identify. In their turn, some of the respondents project themselves as received knowers, by reproducing the knowledge transmitted to them by other external authorities and illustrating thus the power-knowledge circuit. On the other hand, some other forum members react as subjective knowers, indicating they do not rely anymore on strict, external rules, but are employing their intuition or what "feels right" to them in articulating their points of view.

As the following reply reveals, some of the respondents strongly encourage self-discipline and sacrifice, by launching self-discipline narratives, pertaining to their conversion experience:

> My dear, heaven is surrounded by hardship. I've been going through many moments of weakness, when I considered removing it. *Alhamdulillah* that I am not brave and I kept it on. For sure, more doors would be otherwise open for us, in what concerns opportunities, but simultaneously in what concerns personal distress, because you will miss it so much. Be patient, pray a lot to Allah, and put all your faith in Him. And He will open unexpected doors for you. Don't forget that He is holding all the power and we only need Him. And perhaps *dunya*[8] is tough, but it is brief, while *akhira*[9] is eternal. Don't do compromises for the sake of those surrounding you or for some material gains, even though those from the afterlife are not so tangible. Think of all the prophets and the hardships they encountered. Maybe here in Romania we are tested from the perspective of the *hijab*, but there is no place on earth without hardship. And we never get more than we can take. In order to please Allah, don't give up the *hijab*. And we, your sisters in Islam, are here for you and if we are not carrying the same 'burden', then there are others, for sure. May Allah relieve you! *Ameen*.[10]

A received knower herself, the Muslima rejects any "gradations of the truth" (Belenky et al. 1986: 41) and compromise. Emphasizing the idea of personal sacrifice and the imperative of self-discipline, she makes reference to exemplary experiences of suffering, dedication and resistance, and uses herself as an example of strength in front of the temptation of removing her veil, paradoxically, by invoking her weakness. In addition, she praises the faith of other Muslimas, who carry other "burdens" besides the veil, reassuring the woman that she can rely on them. Thus, inside this online

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[7] Islamulazi.ro (2011). Forum. http://islamulazi.ro/forum/index.php?showtopic=7110.
[8] Arab. 'life'.
[9] Arab. 'afterlife'.
[10] Islamulazi.ro (2011). Forum. http://islamulazi.ro/forum/index.php? showtopic=7110.

network, the virtual *umma* enacts its solidarity and articulates itself as a community of knowledge, experience and solidarity. Romanian Muslimas share self-discipline experiences and they seek knowledge together, engaging in the act of veiling as in a bodily performative act, which becomes a part of their active effort of performing their piety as Muslim believers.

Alongside other received knowers, who "are frequently surprised and relieved to hear others saying the very same thing that they would say" (Belenky et al. 1986: 37), the author of the initial post shows relief in her reaction to the above-quoted comment, reiterating the entire self-disciplining process she had been undergoing and her reluctance towards reversing it, by removing her veil. The scrutinizing looks of others are crucial both when adopting the headscarf as a recently converted Muslima and when removing it as a compromise solution. As a received knower, the convert feels constantly the pressure exerted by external evaluators:

> Dear sister, Allah is my only witness, and can see me while I read your lines. There are tears on my face, but not because I am sad... For a long time I have been able to survive only with the help of Allah. I have been trying for months to find a job and have people accepting me the way I am. In the beginning, after I accepted Islam, it was a bit difficult for me to wear it; now, I feel naked if I remove it. My entire faith is in the merciful and forgiving Allah, I turn to Him and ask for help. *Inshallah*, may we all be well and guided on the right path. *Ameen*.[11]

The narrative draws attention to the woman's struggle with herself, illustrating a similar relationship between "the subject and the norm, between performative behavior and inward disposition" with that identified by Saba Mahmood in her ethnographic account on urban women's mosque movement, as a part of the larger Islamic Revival in Cairo (2005: 157). In her study, Mahmood focused also on what her women respondents regard as one of the most valuable feminine Islamic virtue: *al-haya* (modesty, shyness), essential for achieving piety.

Reflecting on a similar story with the previously quoted one, in which the respondent acknowledged her initial reluctance towards veiling and her current dependence on the headscarf, the author emphasized that it is "the sequence of practices and actions one is engaged in that determines one's desires and emotions" instead of "innate human desires eliciting outward forms of conduct" (Mahmood 2005: 157). Therefore, action is not the result of natural feelings, but it generates them; the individual "memory, desire, and intellect to behave according to established standards of conduct" are cultivated "through repeated bodily acts" (Mahmood 2005: 157). In a similar vein, the Romanian Muslima searching for online advice had been attempting to synchronize her "body learning with her body sense" (Belenky et al. 1986: 41), and then started to look for external knowledge, in order to be able to preserve this equilibrium.

Besides reproducing knowledge and relying on external authorities and on outside examples of self-discipline, respondents project themselves as subjective knowers as well.

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[11] Islamulazi.ro (2011). Forum. http://islamulazi.ro/forum/index.php? showtopic=7110.

Although they have not yet realized the power of their own minds and are reluctant to generalize from their experience to advise others, they begin to feel that they can rely on their experience and 'what feels right' to them as an important asset in making decisions for themselves (Belenky et al. 1986: 61).

The following reaction mirrors this perspective; the woman no longer supports the self-discipline perspective, she regards the discussed issue as an exception and she relies on her inner voice when claiming that the removal of the veil should be allowed:

Maybe I will produce contradictions through what I am going to say, but I will do it anyway, **taking this risk**. **From what I know**, in Islam, when one is in need – to be more specific, when one is in danger of starving – one can eat pork, if nothing else can be found. Therefore, **it is my opinion** that this principle might be applied in this case as well, because this has become a serious one, since she is not able to feed her children, to pay her bills and everything else. **I know** there is a *fatwa* for the sisters not wearing the *hijab*, because this might endanger their life, in some regions where Muslims are not accepted and where women wearing the *hijab* might be aggressed.[12] [Emphasis mine]

As a subjective knower, the woman redefines the nature of authority and gains a voice which is still in an incipient phase. Along with the discovery of personal authority arises a sense of voice – in its earliest form, "a still small voice" to which a woman begins to attend rather than the familiar external voices that have directed her life" (Belenky et al. 1986: 68). In the previous quote, the convert anticipated the negative feedbacks she might receive to her comment, being still dependent of external reactions and opinions. In accordance with the subjective knower's profile, her aim is "to communicate to others the limits, not the power" (Belenky et al. 1986: 66) of her own opinions.

At the same time, the Internet offers an appropriate framework for converts to exert their abilities as procedural knowers, to turn their voice critical, by contesting alleged authorities, and looking for alternative sources of knowledge. One of the respondents interviewed in Cluj-Napoca, whose narratives will be further discussed, presents her entrance in the virtual *umma* as a strategic move, through which she rejected traditional knowledge perspectives and which allowed her to embark on a procedural knowing journey:

You must be careful when it comes to Islam. We, all the converted ones said "Oh, how nice that we have a community here and how nice it is that we have a proper Islam here". But this is not the case, not here – not in Romania – because there are other influences. And there are many sects, plenty of them.

So you cannot find the right *Sunnah*. And I cannot call myself the right *Sunnah*, *Astaghfirullah*,[13] because Allah knows best. Nevertheless, we only take Islam from

[12] Islamulazi.ro (2011). Forum. http://islamulazi.ro/forum/index.php?showtopic=7110.
[13] Arab. 'I ask Allah forgiveness'.

reliable sources. We do not go to the mosque to take classes, because many times we were given weak hadiths, or invented hadiths or conflicts or softened Islam versions. And you cannot rely on that [...]. I found my community on the Internet and now it is better, because I attend Islamic lessons as well.

Disappointed with the information she received from external authorities, the convert dismissed the locally reachable Muslim community and decided to look for an alternative community of knowledge in which she had the opportunity to turn her voice critical and to make it heard. The Cyber-*umma* offered her this prospect.

Islamic knowledge in the offline. A Transylvanian Sisters' Community

The three respondents whose narrations were selected to be further discussed were 22, 23 and 24 years old when the interviews were conducted,[14] and had been Muslims for one and a half months, respectively for three and five years. They had officially made their confession of faith at the local mosque in Cluj-Napoca, an institution which releases Muslim certificates and can which can also attest their new Muslim names. Only three of the ten interviewed Romanian women had adopted Muslim names and only two were using them. In what follows pseudonyms will be employed, and therefore respondents will be referred to as Nicole, Carla and Doris.

Managed by the Romanian Cultural Islamic League the previously mentioned house of prayer, which is located in the proximity of two university campuses in Cluj-Napoca, has become a vivid reflection of the local Muslim community, of which Romanian women converts represent an active segment. According to the representatives of the League, Islam conversion is a highly feminized phenomenon, since women are asking for support and advice for conversion in higher numbers than men.

Students from Arab countries are also a constituent part of the local Muslim landscape; most of them are enrolled at the University of Medicine and Pharmacy which has intensified its strategy for attracting foreign students in the last years, offering them the opportunity to study in French and English, in parallel with the option to study in Romanian. Most of the Arab students come from Tunisia, where the university has conducted promotion activities; other Arabs studying in Cluj-Napoca are from Morocco, Syria, Jordan, Palestine, and Iraq. Arab entrepreneurs are also a visible group in the city, running different types of businesses, from dental clinics and currency exchange houses, to fast foods, restaurants, and general stores.

The paragraphs selected for the present chapter reveal the knowledge acquiring routes which women follow during their growth as Muslim believers, starting with their conversion or prior to their formal commitment. Moving between external authorities and their own intuition as knowledge sources, then contesting authorities and turning to criticism, they evolve from the status of received knowers to that of

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[14] Each interview was approximately 60 minutes long; they were conducted in Romanian, then integrally transcribed and translated into English.

procedural knowers. Epistemological perspectives intermingle in the participants' narratives and disclose the matrix of power-knowledge in which Muslimas act both as agents and objects.

Focus on received knowledge

The interviewed converts projected themselves as received knowers, who rely on external authorities to guide them towards trustworthy information sources; they want to make the right decisions in their pursuit of knowledge as Muslim believers, but they have "no opinion and no voice of their own to guide them" (Belenky 1986: 40) and therefore are dependent on others. For instance, Doris admits that she relies on her husband's and on her friend's husband's suggestions when she selects her readings; she accepts no nuances and counts on the two men's expertise, both Tunisian Medicine students, who are studying Islamic theology in their spare time. The selection becomes rigorous; any knowledge sources that might promote forms of Islam suspected of being less strict or "softened", as Carla was also stating in a previous quote, should be carefully avoided.

> I take the book and I just put it in front of them. "Well, you know who the author is. So **you tell me**". And **they say** "You better not read this". I don't know if you know about Sufism. **They say** "No, you better not. This is Sufi" or "Yes, do read that". [Emphasis mine]

New Muslimas trust external voices especially before or immediately after their conversion, in their search for information and for individuals with similar experiences. For instance, Nicole, who has just married a Jordanian Medicine student, recalls the moment in which she first became interested in Islam, and started to seek for information with the help of her husband, who introduced her to the local mosque. Here, the convert received guidance and advice from both religious authorities and future peers – other women converts – all external voices she was depending on. As a received knower, she became increasingly concerned with Islam and later on she projected herself as well as one of the voices "from the mosque", who are guiding other future Muslims in their knowledge pursuit:

> It was after several months of thinking about it. I came here [at the local mosque – DS], I discussed with the **girls**, and attended lessons about Islam. You know? **They** explain it to you: for instance, **one of the *imam*s**. And it happened like that. You come here, you meet **the girls** and there are **some of us** here to explain things for you if you want. I spent one evening here from eight o'clock until midnight, with the Qur'an and the Bible. **They** compare them and **make things clear for you**. And **I was given** several books – books **for me to read**. And in the beginning it was out of curiosity; I wanted to see what it actually is. You know?

And as you read, **you are given explanations**... I realized that I had no idea about it or that I had such a wrong idea about what Islam means. [Emphasis mine]

Received knowers are convinced that they and their friends share opinions and experiences, unaware of their tendencies of shaping their "perceptions and thoughts to match those of others" (Belenky et al. 1986: 38). Thus, women cherish their experience of holding the same truths and having similar experiences with their peers. Such a perspective emerges from Doris' narrative, concerning her decision to wear her headscarf when attending lessons at the university, encouraged by the commitment of her friend – a converted woman as well – to do the same thing. In this case, Muslim identities are being shaped together by distinct individuals, who share experiences and thoughts:

And afterwards, one day, after my friend converted as well, we were standing together in front of the faculty and we took our *hijab*s off. And after a while, when you are no longer alone, and there is **someone by your side** – it is written in the hadiths as well and in the Qur'an, that **when you are alone**, you are more **vulnerable** – if there are **more Muslims by your side,** you are stronger [...] because **you are helping each other.** And she said "I will not take it off anymore". And I looked at her and said "I am happy you said this. **You make me stronger** and I will not take it off either". And we got in and everyone was staring at us. "This is it! **We** are Muslims". [Emphasis mine]

For received knowers, knowledge resides outside the self; women embracing this epistemological perspective can see themselves as reflected in the perceptions of their present or previous peers and feel obliged "to live up to other's expectations, in hope for preventing others from forming a dim view" (Belenky et al. 1986: 48). For instance, Nicole, who was a new convert when interviewed, regarded herself as a veiled Muslim woman through the perspective of non-Muslims, by anticipating the attention she would get from them:

I only put the veil on when I am going to or coming back from the mosque, especially in the evening. I expected this strange feeling, when walking with it on. You know? I expected to notice **people staring at me**. But many times I don't even realize I have it on. I just forget about it and I just go, without realizing it. I remember only when **they turn their heads and look at me**. [Emphasis mine]

As highlighted in the case of converts searching for online advice, converts evaluate themselves from external positions; as received knowers, they learn from the reactions of the others how they should act and what decisions they should make. A reflection of the previously mentioned *al-haya*, shame is a motivating factor in this case, as indicated by Carla's account, referring to the adoption of the headscarf. As

happened also in Nicole's case, the acknowledged norm has been internalized and embodied, in order for the convert to be recognized as a pious woman:

> I used go to the mosque with my veil on. And I met this girl from the mosque at the university and she asked "Where is your headscarf?" I wanted to hide somewhere, I was that ashamed. Then I thought "Well, seriously, I mean, for these people – the community and for Allah". I said "I have to do something for sure". Then I looked at my colleagues – it was during a laboratory class – and said "Tomorrow I will come with my headscarf on. Please, no comment".

Truth has "no gradations" and "no grey areas" (Belenky 1986: 41) for women relying on received knowledge and paradox cannot be accepted. For Carla, hadiths are a primary source of information; she highlights that these must be authentic, explaining that one needs to carefully check for the reliability of the characters forming the narration chain. Muslim scholars giving verdicts on the basis of these narrations are important knowledge authorities in Carla's view, who dismisses any form of innovation in Islam as unacceptable. In her turn, Doris mentions the Qur'an as a primary information source for Muslims and stresses the importance of following a unique path in Islam, through an active process of self-discipline and knowledge gathering:

> So God says there will be 71 paths among Jews, 72 paths among Christians, and 73 paths among Muslims. And there is only one true way among all these. And which path is this? It is the path followed by the Prophet *saws*[15] and by His companions. So this is it, we must say that there are not three, nor five, or ten versions of Islam; there is only one that is right and accepted by God. And **we are not all-knowing; we make an effort to understand Islam and to follow it**. [Emphases mine]

As received knowers, converts are intolerant to ambiguities; authorities' voices can be rejected as well, if they are not supported by strong proofs. Truth cannot have any nuance, as Carla is sharply stating:

> In Islam you take everything from the Prophet. And you don't take things from other people. If my favorite *sheikh* comes and says "Mind you, you must remove your headscarf in front of your [another woman's – DS] fiancé", [I say] "What is your proof for this? You don't have it? Then good-bye!" [...] I've been lost within Islam for three years. I did not know how Islam works.

Once she has entered the shyness or modesty model, striving to synchronize "her outward behavior with her inward motives" (Mahmood 2005: 57), the converted Muslima is committed to veiling as a form of performativity, in accordance with Butler's perspective on "bodily habitus", which "constitutes a tacit form of

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[15] Arab. *Sall Allahu 'alayhi wa-sallam* (saws), meaning 'Peace be upon him', phrase used by Muslims after hearing or saying the name of prophet Muhammad.

performativity, a citational chain lived and believed at the level of the body" (Butler in Mahmood: 162). Any unauthorized intrusion in this balanced relationship between behavior and motivation is firmly dismissed.

From subjective to procedural knowledge

Converted women's confidence in received knowledge is complemented by their reliance on subjective knowledge as well, an epistemological perspective which they reach by acknowledging themselves as sources of truth. Within this learning context, they begin to count on their intuition and they become their own authorities in the matter of knowledge. For instance, after having initially revealed her dependence on the advice offered by masculine authorities (her own husband and her friend's husband), particularly when she chooses the Islamic books she reads, Doris reflects on her own capacity of discerning between reliable and non-reliable sources, anticipating the intentions of the authors of the books she is reading:

> It depends on **that feeling** as well, because I feel that it's pure, and that these **are people who only want to follow God and the Prophet** saws... And if God leads me on this way, **my soul is open for good information**. And I believed this and *Alhamdulillah*, I am happy to have read those books. [Emphasis mine]

As subjective knowers, women learn to assess their firsthand experience "as a valuable source of knowledge" (Belenky et al. 1986: 61) and attribute it new meanings. The experiences of visiting the mosque, meeting the members of a local Muslim community, and of reading the Qur'an brought Nicole close to what she now perceives as the truth, which she describes in a sensorial form or as an epiphany. She is committed as well to internalize this truth through a self-disciplining effort:

> I don't know, but **this is what I felt** – that it is God's word. **It feels like** He is talking, I can almost **hear** His voice. When I read it, it is as if I am **hearing** His voice and He is telling me what I am reading. It is as if God was telling this to me. I can say that it was very difficult for me to make this decision. **I felt in my heart** that it was the right decision, but **I did not feel** I was ready, or that I had **the strength** to be a real Muslima. [Emphasis mine]

In this case, intuition was crucial in the woman's decision to embrace Islam, who felt she had gained access to the *right* knowledge. From the position of subjective knower, the convert takes a step further and no longer feels the urge to conform to others' expectations. There are no longer any predefined roles for her to play and no externally dictated values to embrace, only with the aim of placing herself in specific patterns.

By choosing to wear the face veil, which she sees as a protection from intrusive masculine gazes, Carla is simultaneously aiming at fulfilling a devotional act through

which she can enhance her piety; she delimitates herself from the local Muslim community which does not encourage this type of veiling, and from her previous belonging to a Christian group as well:

> And even at the mosque they said 'Carla and the other girls should not wear the face veil, because they can scare Christians'. Well, wait a second, am I interested in what Christians say? Then should I please Christians or should I please Allah? If I die tomorrow, I die not doing this *mustahabb*.[16] *Mustahabb* means something that is pleasant in Islam. So the face veil is a *mustahabb*; it is not compulsory, but it is better to do. And I like it very much.

In this context, Carla raises the voice of reason and engages in a procedural knowledge pursuit; by challenging what Muslim authorities suggest, her voice turns critical. The converted Muslima endeavours to internalize the Islamic life style and as Mahmood argues, this can be achieved through the "cultivation of those bodily aptitudes, virtues, habits, and desires that serve to ground Islamic principles within the practice of everyday life" (Mahmood 2005: 45).

Procedural knowers engage in "in conscious, deliberate, systematic analysis" (Belenky et al. 1986: 93), learning that truth is not immediately reachable. They thus apply organized and systematic procedures for obtaining and further communicating knowledge; in some cases there is no knowledge basis when the search begins:

> **I did not even know what Islam was** and what Arabic meant [...]. And then, someone contacted me on the Internet – but it was out of nowhere. And it was an Arab man. You know? And **I became curious** [...]. And then he mentioned Islam. But we did not talk about Islam, and religion [...]. And then **I went online** and **started to do some research**, but I still **did not have enough information**. I didn't know what that was, and **I continued to read** about it and it was interesting. And then I also got an **optional course**, and afterwards I **went to the mosque**. I was not married or anything; so it was like this, out of curiosity, since I knew there were many Tunisians in Cluj. [Emphasis mine]

As demonstrated by the above paragraph, Doris' first encounter with Islam was an incentive for her future involvement in a procedural search of knowledge from various sources: online information, which proved to be unsatisfactory, followed by individual readings, visits at the mosque and by university lessons on Islam. She thus engaged in an active Islamic knowledge pursuit; the woman gradually grew inside the power-knowledge circuit and prepared for entering Islam.

Moving between received, subjective and procedural knowledge, Romanian converts do not advance to constructed knowledge, since they firmly reject dualities and contradictions, which are instead easily accepted by constructivists, for whom truth is always context dependent. Constructed knowers admit internal contradictions or

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[16] Arab. 'recommended'.

ambiguities, and "abandon completely the either/or thinking" (Belenky et al. 1986: 137), a standpoint dismissed by the converts whose knowledge perspectives have been discussed above, because they feel the urge to make drastic choices, relying on external or inner knowledge, or engaging in systematic knowledge research. In each of these cases, Muslim women converts move and are circulated inside the power-knowledge matrix.

Conclusions

The Romanian Muslim community has been undergoing a revitalizing and expansion process after the 1989 revolution and, in the last two decades, it grew increasingly heterogeneous, consisting of both ethnic Muslims – most of them Turks and Tatars – and Arabs – students and entrepreneurs. Romanian converts are also a part of this diverse religious, cultural, and ethnic picture.

Beside the institutional framework, a complex support network has been established and made available for Muslims in Romania. Thus Muslim organizations provide believers with religious advice and support, set houses of prayer throughout the country, create complex and dynamic online Islamic communication platforms, and supply various learning opportunities. Online instruments have by this become crucial means for performing *da'wa* in Romania, consolidating an autochthonous "Cyber-Islamic Environment" that is both stimulated and produced by local Muslims. Since knowledge is the key element fuelling CIEs and one of the main vehicles of spreading Islam, the chapter analyzed Romanian women's knowledge perspectives, as articulated in both online and offline Muslim communities.

Employing three distinct epistemological perspectives, the chapter presented Romanian converts' move between received, subjective and procedural knowledge, a process during which they creatively make use of the available learning and knowing resources. Thus, as received knowers, Romanian new Muslimas actively seek for knowledge coming from external, authoritative sources in both online and offline settings; they mirror themselves in the eyes of scrutinizing others and firmly reject dualities and contradictions. Other times, they trust their intuition and use subjective knowing techniques, relying on what "feels right" to them, and on the learning sources they personally perceive as consistent. And when they are no longer dependent on others' indications and reactions, Muslim converts challenge authorities' voices, and engage in their own procedural search for knowledge, through objective and systematic learning and information gathering techniques.

Highlighting women converts' perspectives on knowledge, the chapter aimed at drawing an epistemological profile of this segment of the Romanian Muslim community that is strongly visible on its online platforms – websites, discussion forums, blogs – but apparently absent in the offline environment. Romanian converted Muslims are not present in census data and statistics, although they are facing concrete issues in concrete contexts: for instance, veiled women can sometimes meet obstacles when trying to enter the labor market, because of their religious belonging, made visible by their headscarf.

The way Muslim women converts in Romania gain and further communicate knowledge, as members of a still rising community, can be productively employed in critically assessing the mechanism through which these women gain a voice and contribute to the articulation of an autochthonous community of Islamic knowledge.

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Veronika Bajt

The Muslim Other in Slovenia.
Intersections of a religious and ethnic minority[1]

The official statistical data shows that the share of Muslims in Slovenia rose significantly between the two latest population registrations; while their recorded number in 1991 was 29,361 and their share 1.5%, according to the latest 2002 census 47,488 people or 2.4% of the respondents who chose a religious affiliation are of Islamic faith. This makes Islam the second largest religion in a two-million country, where 58% or just over a million inhabitants are Catholic adherents.[2] It should be noted that the share of religiously undetermined persons is significant, since the census does not require people to respond to questions regarding their ethnic and religious affiliation – categories that are effectively chosen solely on the respondents' personal preference, and not based on "objective" signifiers. In fact, the Islamic Community estimates that about 60,000 Muslims currently live in Slovenia. The reasons for a growth in the number of Muslims are at least twofold.[3] The wars in collapsing Yugoslavia of the 1990s resulted in a number of refugees settling in Slovenia, a significant portion of them being Muslims from Bosnia-Herzegovina, some from Kosovo. The second factor was the fall of socialism and the consequent change in state-church relations, which contributed to people expressing their religious feelings more openly. Furthermore, with Islam being the fastest growing religion worldwide, the trend of accepting Islam as a life-choice, though rare, can nonetheless be observed in Slovenia as well.

An overview of the existing literature reveals that the position of Slovenian Muslims remains on the fringes of academic interest, a gap this chapter aims to fill.[4]

[1] The author would like to thank Ana Frank for her comments on an earlier version of this chapter.

[2] Official statistics show that in the period between the two censuses the most notable drop was in the share of Catholics, who represented 72% in 1991, while the number of Muslims saw a 62% increase.

[3] It is also possible to speculate that the number of Muslims between the two official counts has not actually increased that much, but that the climate surrounding the 2002 census was more facilitating towards people's open religious proclamation.

[4] Aware of possible connotations of the term "Slovenian Muslims" (i.e. rather than "Muslims in Slovenia"), I should state my understanding of national identity as a civic notion of freely selected self-categorisation (rather than a given primordial community one is "born into"). In other words, while most Muslims in Slovenia – regardless what their ethnic affiliations, if any, may be – are citizens and should therefore be perceived as "Slovenians", the reality

In contrast to the proliferation of literature dealing with Islam and Muslims in the "West", academic debate about Islam in Slovenia remains scarce. The rare exceptions include efforts of recent years to introduce Islam and the Muslims to the readers, analyse Islamophobia and the discrimination of Muslims, and only very recently also research the Muslim religious practice (e.g. Bajt 2008; Dragoš 2003, 2004; Kalčić 2006, 2007a, 2007b; Kuhar 2007; Pašić 2005; Vrečer 2006; Zalta 2005, 2006a, 2006b). The Slovenian case mirrors the global trend of evolution of Muslim populations into a "Muslim minority" that is distinguished from the rest of the population, for the existing studies show that academic interest in Islam developed primarily as a critical evaluation of perceptions of Muslims as the Other. Therefore, the position of Muslims in Slovenia is necessarily to be examined in the wider context of their socioeconomic and political exclusion; as not only a religious minority group, but primarily as an ethnicized and racialized Other, who is perceived as different from the "core nation" – the Slovenians.[5]

Examining the position of Muslims in Slovenia, I revert here this logic by recognizing their multifarious existence, while at the same time pointing to their collective exclusion. Asking the question of how, if at all, they articulate their need for an Islamic way of life, I make a case for considering anti-Muslim attitudes as concomitant to wider socioeconomic and political exclusionary practices. By explicating the Muslims' perception of prejudice and intolerance, the analysis will show that they encounter discrimination in areas that connect to the very essence of practicing their religion. In addition, they experience prejudice, which represents a wider problem of exclusion that ties with nationalistic, Islamophobic and racist classification of Muslims as the Other. Recent public opinion polls, for instance, reveal significant ethnic distance, since almost one third of respondents would not wish to have a Muslim neighbor (see Toš 2004).

Basing the analysis on studies of nationalism that provide the framework for tackling the phenomena of national identity construction and production of difference in terms of defining who belongs and who is excluded, I employ here an interdisciplinary perspective in order to grasp the elusive practices of religious discrimination and processes of *Othering*.[6] Whereas the perception of Muslims in the "West" is racialized, gendered and burdened by orientalist misconceptions, their position in Slovenia is also particularly intertwined with ethnic prejudice. I draw on the concepts of intersectionality and multiple discrimination (cf. Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992;

exhibits numerous examples of prejudiced perceptions of "Slovenians" as an ethno-cultural community that excludes non-members (e.g. Muslims). Much like the idea of Islam being a European religion is foreign to most Europeans (cf. Zalta 2006a), the idea of accepting Islam and Muslims as a part of Slovenia remains detached from common sense perceptions of what constitutes a "real Slovenian" (for more, see Bajt 2010).

[5] For more on the concept of the "core nation", which signifies an ethno-culturally understood nationhood that is distinguished from permanent residents and citizens of the state, see Brubaker (1996). For a discussion of the construction of Slovenia's contemporary Other, see Bajt (2010).

[6] For the concept of the Other in constructions of national identity see e.g. Triandafyllidou (1998). For comprehensive overviews of studies of nation and nationalism, see Smith (1998), Spencer and Wollman (2002), Özkırımlı (2005) or Hearn (2006).

Crenshaw 1991) as useful theoretical tools that help explain the Muslims' marginalization. Research shows that many Muslims throughout Europe believe that they belong to a minority that is discriminated against; even if individuals may not experience personal discrimination, they feel that the ethnic and/or religious group with which they identify suffers discrimination (Brüβ 2008).

The chapter begins by discussing the position of Muslims and Islam in Slovenia, situating the debate in the wider historical and regional context (e.g. Yugoslavia). Arguing that it is the intersectionality of ethno-national and religious prejudice that marks the negative attitudes towards Muslims as the Other, their social, economic and symbolic exclusion is thus examined. Using new empirical material, the position of Muslims is illustrated by their own narratives which explicate the persistence of stereotypes and prejudice. The qualitative method of semi-structured interviews and an on-line survey create a unique platform for representatives of the Muslim community to reflect on their position.[7] While the wider geopolitical context of the Western constructions of Islamist terrorist threat no doubt plays a role in contemporary Slovenian Islamophobia, nationalism and cultural racism (Balibar 1991) are shown here to have an even more profound influence on public debate and general attitudes toward Muslims in the society. And since Islam remains for the most part secluded from public discourse and thus prone to stereotypical representations ripe with misconceptions and prejudice, it is crucial to keep re-examining the position of Muslims and endeavor for policy change.

Nationalism and the stigmatizing view of Muslims as "immigrants"

In Slovenia, the Constitution specifies secularism by separating the state from religious communities, granting them all equal rights. *The Religious Freedom Act* of 2007 further guarantees religious freedom in private and public life, as well as prohibits discrimination, incitement of religious hatred and intolerance. Despite its long-awaited adoption, the Act was not universally welcomed, but adopted without broader political consensus or support of the experts. One of the most common criticisms has been the claim that the law favors the Roman Catholic Church particularly at the expense of smaller religious communities (Babić et al. 2007).

According to the data of the governmental Office for Religious Communities, there are currently 42 churches and other religious communities officially registered in Slovenia, although estimates speak of about 80 different religious communities

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[7] Ten interviews were conducted in Sloveniawith selected experts and representatives of the Muslims between November 2007 and February 2008. In addition, the Islamic Community and the Slovenian Muslim Community posted a specifically designed survey on their websites. It was active between May 20, and June 23, 2008, 129 people responded, 54% men and 46% women. The age of respondents was between 16 and 70, with the highest share of young respondents (over 50% were aged between 20 and 30). While the results of this online survey are not representative due to its methodological limitations, they nonetheless serve as an illustration and a rare opportunity to gather the Muslims' opinions about their position in Slovenia. For more on the methodology and specific empirical findings, see Švab et al. (2008).

(Dragoš 2006). In 1976, the first nine communities were registered, including the Islamic Community (*Islamska skupnost*). In 2006, the Slovenian Muslim Community (*Slovenska muslimanska skupnost*) was registered, signaling disagreements about the way that the Muslims in Slovenia should be represented. With the collapse of Yugoslavia, the Islamic Community of Yugoslavia fell apart as well, thus from 1994 onward the Islamic Community of Slovenia has been operating under the auspices of the Islamic Community of Bosnia-Herzegovina, with Sarajevo as its center. As a consequence of an incident in 2005, when the then *mufti* Osman Đogić was ousted from his position in Slovenia by Bosnia's Islamic Community's Assembly, a separate Slovenian Muslim Community was formed that renounces the primacy of Sarajevo. The Islamic Community, with its longer presence and more numerous membership, has nevertheless been privileged in the media to the detriment of the younger Slovenian Muslim Community's ability to appear in the public discourse as an equally valid representative of the Muslims in Slovenia. Though this internal split has to a certain extent resonated in tensions among the Muslims, the two communities should be regarded as equally justified in their existence, particularly in view of Slovenia's constitutional freedom of religion and equality of all religious communities.

Most Muslims began settling in Slovenia predominantly in the 1970s as labor migrants from other republics of Yugoslavia. Another significant influx of Muslims was in the 1990s, when refugees fled war-torn Yugoslavia, most from Bosnia-Herzegovina, some from Kosovo. Most of the Croatian refugees could eventually return home, but the Bosnian refugees stayed in Slovenia for a much longer time, some permanently. Initially, the Slovenians expressed high levels of solidarity and humanitarian help for refugees, yet at the same time perceived them as economic burden to the new state. The refugees were constructed as forming a crisis due to their high numbers, allegedly outstretching Slovenia's capabilities. Looking for reasons and explanations for these tensions, some researchers argued that these were primarily due to cultural and religious differences, since the refugees were in majority Muslims who did not speak Slovenian (Klinar 1993). More importantly, the need for Slovenia's break with the "Balkans" was highly visible. Once independent, Slovenia was on its road to "Europe" and refused to be reminded of its Slavic connections, keen to shed its proverbial Balkan skin (cf. Mihelj et al. 2009). As such, refugees served as a handy scapegoat when perceived as endangering the Slovenian cultural and ethnic identity (Klinar 1993).

The socio-historic position of Muslims in Slovenia is hence a peculiar mix of "different, yet the same" developments as witnessed in the Western Europe. The Muslims in both cases largely comprise "immigrants", who were deemed to "come and go" and hence Islam initially remained a religion secluded to the private sphere. Instead, many stayed, brought their families, and a "second generation" was born. This trajectory can also be traced in the case of Bosnian refugees, whose protracted status of only "temporary protection" highlights the fact that the Slovenian authorities had not expected nor enabled their permanent settlement for a number of years.[8]

[8] The authorities considered these people to be in Slovenia only temporarily, hence the Office for Immigration and Refugees focused merely on temporary protection of these "forced migrants", not recognising their status as that of "refugees".

The duality of Muslim affiliation

An independent state since 1991, it is important to briefly sketch Slovenia's history, since it has been significantly marked by having been one of the republics of Yugoslavia, established after the World War II. Reflecting a historical separation between the Habsburg and the Ottoman empires, the post-war socialist Yugoslav federation comprised divergent political and "cultural" legacies that were further coupled with religious differences. Certain disparities existed between the north-western, primarily Catholic (Slovenia and Croatia), and south-eastern, chiefly Orthodox, parts of Yugoslavia (especially Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia), with a specific case of Islam particularly in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Kosovo. It has therefore been claimed that three "cultural" traditions existed in Yugoslavia: a Western tradition of Austro-Hungarian rule among Slovenians and Croatians, who are predominantly Catholic; an endemic Balkan cultural tradition of the Eastern Orthodox Serbians, Montenegrins and Macedonians; and a Middle-Eastern tradition among Islamic populations (Botev 1994: 462). While I am reluctant to adopt any such clear-cut distinctions, particularly when based on alleged "cultural" difference, several studies that examined cross-national association in Yugoslavia have in fact suggested that it was not very common and that the inter-republican integration was more a myth than a factual reality (e.g. Bakic-Hayden 1995; Burg and Berbaum 1989; cf. Ludanyi 1979).[9] In his analysis of Yugoslavia's break-up, Sergej Flere (2003) for instance notes that while from 1966 onwards ethnic distance was generally decreasing, it was clearly on the rise by the second half of the 1980s. Analyzing ethnic intermarriage in the former Yugoslavia, Botev (1994) thus came to the conclusion that Yugoslavia was never fully integrated because cultural barriers hindered interaction; in Slovenia, the cultural barriers were least permeable, as ethnic homogeneity was the highest in the federation.[10] This is significant for understanding Slovenia's contemporary relationship with Islam and the attitudes toward Muslims.

It is crucial to note that being a "Muslim" in Yugoslavia was a peculiarity that allowed a religious designation for an ethno-national affiliation. Included in the Yugoslav census as a category in its own right, the term "Muslim" allowed people to choose an affiliation that demarcated them from other nations (e.g. Serbians or Croatians), creating a secular Muslim identity in ethno-national terms. More recently, in 1994 the constitution of Bosnia-Herzegovina introduced an archaic ethnonym "Bosniak" (*Bošnjak*) to signify the Muslim identity.

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[9] However, see Hodson et al. for research that shows how up to 1981 a Yugoslav self-identification showed "a general pattern of increase" (1994: 84). It could thus be argued that a common Yugoslav identity was present alongside national identities of separate nations (e.g. Slovenian, Croatian, Serbian, etc.). See Bajt (2010) for an elaboration of this point.

[10] Analyzing Yugoslavia's public opinion polls data published in 1991, Flere (2003: 250) notes that among those stating a decided ethnic distance (with respect to marriage) the Slovenians (65%) and Albanians (69%) scored the highest.

Most Muslims in Slovenia are urban dwellers (Kalčić 2007b).[11] Although there are no surveys on the diversity of Slovenia's Muslim population, it is possible to recognize certain linguistic and ethnic differences among them; apart from the Bosniak identity, they choose other ethnic affiliations, i.e. as Albanians, Roma, Slovenians .

Table 12: Official registration of ethno-national affiliation of Muslims in Slovenia, 2002[12]

Ethno-national affiliation	All in Slovenia	Selecting Islam as their faith	Share within those selecting Islam (%)
Bosniak	21 542	19 923	42.0
Muslim	10 467	9 328	19.6
Bosnian	8 062	5 724	12.0
Albanian	6 186	5 237	11.0
Slovenian	1 631 363	2 804	6.0
Regionally declared, ethno-nationally undeclared, refused to reply, unknown	188 465	1 861	4.0
Other affiliatons[13]	94 705	1 732	3.6
Roma	3 246	868	1.8
Total	1 964 036	47 488	100.0

Source: Data adopted from Census (2002: 57).

Looking more closely into the "ethnic composition" of those who chose the Muslim religious affiliation in the 2002 census, the data shows that the majority are Bosniaks, who comprise 42% of all Islam adherents. Adding the 20% of those who rather opted for ethno-national designation "Muslim" and 12% of the respondents who classified themselves as "Bosnian", the sum percentage shows that 74% of all persons who declared Islam to be their religion are in fact people who could be described as sharing a wider Bosnian national identity (e.g. having Bosnia-Herzegovina as the country of birth). The 11% who consider themselves as Albanians also represent a notable part of the Slovenian Muslim population, whereas one could venture a guess that at least some of the share of Slovenians converting to Islam may be observed in the 6% who declare themselves as Slovenian.

[11] According to the 2002 census data, 87% live in cities and only 13% live in non-urban areas of Slovenia (see http://www.stat.si/popis2002/si/rezultati/rezultati_red.asp?ter=SLO&st=8)

[12] In 1994, the constitution of Bosnia-Herzegovina introduced the term "Bosniak" (*Bošnjak*) in order to signify Muslim identity as a national category of "Bosnians" (i.e. residents of the state of Bosnia-Herzegovina). The term was consequently also adopted in the 2002 Slovenian population census, where also "Bosnian" and "Muslim" remain as ethno-national categories.

[13] Several other ethno-national affiliations (e.g. Italian, Hungarian, Croatian, Montenegrin, etc.) are here purposefully subsumed under the category of "other affiliations" due to their small shares under the rubric selecting Islam (around or below 1%).

Also, several Muslims from African and Middle Eastern countries, most of whom had come to study in times of Yugoslavia, have settled in Slovenia, and in recent years asylum seekers from states with predominantly Muslim populations (e.g. Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Turkey, some former Soviet republics), though these represent a small minority.[14] Nevertheless, the geographical, cultural, and linguistic proximity remain deciding factors for former Yugoslav co-nationals to continue migrating to Slovenia. The Employment Service of Slovenia data on valid work permits for July 2011 shows that a good half of the entire foreign population on temporary work visas in Slovenia is from Bosnia-Herzegovina (17,843 work permits or 52%), and 11% from Kosovo (3,681 people), allowing to assume that at least a certain share of these workers are also adherents of Islam.[15] In fact, research confirms (Pajnik and Bajt 2011) that migrant workers in Slovenia, particularly those classified as "third country nationals", frequently find themselves in precarious situations where their labor market experiences correspond to low-skilled and low-paid sectors of work. They are also continuously dismissed as a non-educated and replaceable workforce that is only needed in terms of economic profits, which means that any regard for their religious needs is absent from practice and public discussion.

Tied with their often corresponding Bosniak ethnicity and lower social status, the Muslims are grounded in the context of the Other and as such vilified. Since most Muslims in Slovenia subscribe to the Bosniak ethnic affiliation, their position is inevitably connected to their minority status not only as a religious group but also as an ethnic group that is denied the status of a national minority (cf. Kralj 2008). The ethnic distance, intolerance, even discrimination they may face in everyday life is often rooted in the institutional structure, particularly since the Constitution has no particular provisions for protection of collective rights of these communities. Dubbed the "new" national minorities, members of different former Yugoslav nations living in Slovenia have been actively engaged in campaigning for recognition of their collective rights.[16] While it is crucial to highlight that most Muslims have the Slovenian citizenship, which formally means they should be treated as equal, the Muslim identity in Slovenia is primarily connected to the Bosniak, and to a lesser degree also the Albanian ethno-national affiliation. They experience juxtaposing of an ethnic marker (e.g. "Bosniak", "Albanian") with Eurocentric perceptions of the "South" (i.e. the Balkans), toppled with socioeconomic exclusion reflected in lower educational

[14] There are also those who marry Slovenian citizens, their numbers hence falling under the statistics of the Ministry of the Interior that gathers data on residence permits, including those issued for family reunion purposes. It is, however, impossible to gather these statistics, since religion is not noted in official proceedings.

[15] See Employment Service of Slovenia tables, http://www.ess.gov.si/trg_dela/trg_dela_v_stevilkah/zaposlovanje_tujcev.

[16] The Italian and the Hungarian minority in Slovenia have special status and special rights, such as seats in the parliament and their language being the official language of the regions where they live in addition to Slovenian. Their numbers are small, since combined they only account for less than half of a percent of the entire population. People with other countries of birth or ascribed ethno-national affiliations posses no guaranteed provisions, apart from the general rights and freedoms that they enjoy as residents or citizens of Slovenia.

achievements and low-skill professions. Research supports numerous anecdotal evidence that lower education and consequent low-skill professions are also related to, on the one hand, the vicious circle of structural inequalities, reproduced by the majority society, and on the other hand, to lower expectations for and aspirations of the Muslims (cf. Razpotnik 2004). The multifarious structural underpinnings, as well as the inherent influence of nationalistic prejudice related to such stigmatization, result in multiple layers of discrimination, which are hard to disentangle:

> It doesn't have to do with religion, the reason can be that Muslims come from parts of ex Yugoslavia [...] Is it because they're from the so-called "South" or is it because they're Muslims? (imam Osman Đogić)

> Mostly it's indirect but sometimes it's direct: 'Go back down there to where you came from, you'll never finish school anyway, just go and sell *burek* down south', why did we even come to Slovenia and so on. I had a teacher who told us straight in our face that she's not gonna give us good grades. (survey response)[17]

> The most unequal position is felt in employment: negative attitudes of employers, economic sectors with low pay; looking for accommodation, education. [...] Many Muslims encounter barriers to job promotion. This can cause feelings of despair and social exclusion. (Faila Pašić Bišić, a practicing Muslim)

Psychological violence in the form of derision, verbal insults and name-calling is the most prevalent form of negative attitudes experienced by Muslims in everyday life. Existing research (Kalčić 2007a) confirms that Muslims experience multiple discrimination; particularly salient in terms of employment, it is exhibited in low-skill positions and barriers to achieving workplace promotion. These practices of discrimination can be observed already in school, as Muslim students are advised not to pursue further education, but are instead geared into low-skill professions (cf. Razpotnik 2004). The mechanisms of the Muslims' structural subordination thus reveal intersections of a wide array of dimensions, e.g. their lower social, economic and political position, which merit further investigation elsewhere. Nevertheless, it is crucial to note that the socioeconomic circumstances differ, but stereotypes do not allow any room for a re-negotiation of Muslim identity:

> ... the frequent links made to terrorists and the prejudice that Bosniak families are in majority uneducated and live in harsh conditions – it's a totally wrong perception because I come from an academic family of intellectuals. (survey response)

> Muslims of Slovenia have a strong wish to be an active part of the population but we're very often considered foreigners [...] Muslims are experiencing Islamophobic attacks that go from verbal threats to physical attacks. But the data on religiously motivated incidents is gathered only in limited form. (Faila Pašić Bišić, a practicing Muslim)

[17] For ethical reasons the survey respondents have been anonymized.

Compared to the majority population, the position of Muslims in terms of employment and educational achievement is worse. Their unemployment rates, also related to lower levels of education, are higher than average (EUMC 2006), their access to the labor market, payment and possibilities of promotion are generally lower. Whether lower position on the labor market is related to one's religion or ethnicity is hard to establish, since prejudice against Muslims ties with pejorative association of "Non-Slovenians", "southerners" or "Balkanites".[18] A term "Non-Slovenians" has been coined to designate specifically people from the former Yugoslav republics who live in Slovenia (and conspicuously it is not used for any other "foreigners"). The prevalent negative stereotyping of members of other Yugoslav nations is tied with the fact that significant numbers of Muslims came to Slovenia as internal Yugoslav economic migrants who found work in low-skill sectors of industry. Nevertheless, in opposition to Muslim populations of Turks in Germany, East Asians in Britain or Africans in France, whose linguistic and "cultural" differences are often argued to be insurmountable (cf. Balibar 1991), the Muslims in Slovenia are in majority South Slavs like Slovenians, speaking mutually intelligible languages and sharing the historical legacy of Yugoslavia. Their "Muslimness" is accepted as a part of their identity and tolerated as long as it remains secluded to the private sphere.

At the same time it is important not to essentialize "Muslim", particularly when taking into account the religion's many varieties, as well as numerous identities individuals have in addition to their religious affiliation. Islam is a highly diverse religion and it is not possible to speak of a monolithic Muslim identity where the main debate revolves around questions of cultural, social and political contexts that frame the historical trajectory of the changing religious thought (Zalta 2006b: 71). In addition, ethnic, linguistic, political, economic and other differences among Muslims significantly contribute to the diversity within the Muslim population. The term "Muslim" therefore inevitably means different things to different people, reflecting the heterogeneity of the community of the devotees of Islam. It comprises both theological and sociological dimension, since the (self)classification of somebody as a Muslim may be contested by other Muslims and may be applied to social groups because of their supposed "cultural background" rather than religiosity. In fact, the term "Muslim" has a double meaning in South Slavic languages: spelled *muslimani* it signifies a religious affiliation, but when capitalized – *Muslimani* – it designates Muslims in ethno-national sense, not necessarily corresponding with Islamic religious practice at all.

Reflecting a gap between the new generation of Muslims, who pride themselves on observing Islamic religious practices, and those who claim a Muslim identity based more on cultural practices, the tension between "true" Muslims and "ethnic" Muslims has been observed in Slovenia. In her ethnographic research among the Bosniaks of an industrial Slovenian town Jesenice, Kalčić (2007a) registered a divide between the so-called "real" and "unreal" Muslims. The former are also called "the new Muslims" by the other group, describing those who follow the scriptures and observe all facets

[18] For an elaboration of pejorative terms associated with members of the former Yugoslav nations, see Velikonja (2003), Bajt (2010), Kalčić (2007a).

of Islam. These "new Muslims", in turn, deny the designation "Muslim" to the Bosniaks, who tie their religion to their cultural traditions, not necessarily observing the religious practices. Tensions between these two communities provide exhaustive evidence of the heterogeneity of what is usually subsumed under the term "Muslim".

Contrary to Bloul's (2008) argument about the ethnicization of Muslim identity resulting from cycles of assertion and discrimination that are linked to waves of Islamophobia, the Muslims in Slovenia have in fact always been ethnicized; first as "Turks" (i.e. the Ottomans) and in more recent history as "Bosnians". Extensive body of the Slovenian literary "national canon" includes novels, tales and poetry about the "olden days" when "our Slovenian" ancestors were continuously under threat from the "Turks", and Muslims have habitually been portrayed as vicious and blood-thirsty savages.[19] This problematic side of the "Slovenian history" which accepts into its national mythology the idea of a subjugated nation penetrated by various historical enemies has also been highlighted by the Turkish ambassador, who expressed discomfort at witnessing the mural titled "The History of Slovenians" in the Slovenian National Assembly.[20] The mural depicts a violent "Turk" attacking with a rifle and a sword, as well as numerous literary references to the historical "Turkish incursions".[21]

Intolerance towards Muslims in Slovenia therefore stems from negative stereotypes that are not exempt from school curricula and that are reproduced by the media (cf. Kalčić 2006; Dragoš 2003; Kuhar 2007). In recent years, anti-Muslim attitudes are also tied with Islamophobia that intensified after the September 11, 2001 and the bombings in Madrid and London. Even though this is related to the "war on terror" dictum that stigmatizes as violent and dangerous all Muslims on account of a few extremists, the Slovenian Islamophobia originates from a different source. Rather than being a response to Islamic fundamentalism, it has a longer history of being a "reaction to the failure of compulsive assimilation" (Dragoš 2004: 11). It is also a consequence of biased and Eurocentric teachings of history, as well as an outcome of a nationalizing Slovenian nationalism that uses "culture" in exclusionary way (Bajt 2010).

Islam in Slovenia: Still a *terra incognita*?

Following from examples of other European states and their experiences with accommodating the Muslim religious needs, Slovenia appears a late-comer in terms of state provisions, the level of public debate on issues of religious freedoms, and in terms of the Muslim community's organization and ability to express its demands unequivocally. The provision of *halal* meat and reactions to the issue of headscarves

[19] Compare the extensive body of literature about the "Turkish incursions" describing numerous occasions when the "Slovenian ancestors" were continuously under threat from the invading "Turks" (for more, see Zalta 2005, 2006a; Kalčić 2006, 2007a; cf. Bakic-Hayden 1995).
[20] Personal interview with His Excellency Mr. Balkan Kizildeli, Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey in Slovenia, 03.08.2005.
[21] The mural by Slavko Pengov *Zgodovina Slovencev* (1958), which occupies a prominent place in front of the main parliamentary hall, can be seen at http://www.burger.si/Ljubljana/Ustanove_Parlament_Freske.htm.

serve as paradigmatic test cases that reveal the specificity of a society's relation to Islam. Governments of particular states vary widely in their responses to the religious needs of Muslims, reflecting different historical legacies of church-state relations, as well as contemporary national policies of integration.[22] In Britain and France, for example, the debate about the need for provision of *halal* food opened the path for the Muslims' entering the public sphere in the early 1980s (Grillo 2004). Followed by expression of other demands, the Muslims increasingly articulated their needs, participated in public debates and refused to restrict Islam to the private sphere.

Muslims representing the second largest religious group in Slovenia, *halal* meat has nonetheless only recently become available and the selection on offer is very limited (Kalčić, 2007b). Provision of *halal* meat being one of the test cases, wearing *hijab*[23] presents another important example of the state's resolve between secularism and accommodation of religious practices. Muslim women who wear headscarves and dress according to Islamic code stand out as different especially in societies where they represent a curious minority. This is the case for Muslim women in Slovenia who wear *hijab*; their numbers are small, so their dress code makes them highly visible. The reaction of the majority population is usually one of curiosity, since *hijab* represents a novelty that people are not used to seeing. However, the prevalence of prejudice combined with the lack of knowledge about Islam together contribute to greater exposure to negative attitudes that the Muslim women endure if they appear visibly identifiable as adherents of Islam.

The question of religious symbols in public life, particularly the debates surrounding the ban of headscarves in French schools, did not spur significant interest in Slovenia. Apart from factual media reports and occasional commentaries relating the issue to debates on secularism, this topic has not been applied to the specific Slovenian context. The reason these debates did not resonate could be found in the general perception that there are no comparable "problems" in Slovenia, hence the debate about religious symbols in schools and public life remained embedded in reports about the debate as seen "from the outside", i.e. as a "problem" of "Western democracies" with their immigrant populations of Islamic faith. Yet the issue of religious symbols, particularly the question of Muslim women wearing *hijab*, is only perceived as "unproblematic" from the perspective of the majority population. In contrast, it is a real problem experienced by several Muslims who feel discrimination if they choose to publicly profess their religious affiliation. *Hijab* is thus associated with religious fundamentalism and the Western observer sees it as a symbol of inferiority (Abu-Rabia 2006; Kalčić, 2007a). A contributing factor to women's exposure to anti-Muslim attitudes is the widely spread belief in their oppression and subjugation, while

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[22] E.g., while France is unwilling to accommodate the religious requirements of its Muslim residents, and Britain is usually cited as a country where such needs are more openly accepted, Germany remains a "hybrid" case with notable sub-state differences in treatment of the Muslims depending on its particular *Länder* legislations (Soper and Fetzer 2007).

[23] *Hijab* is adopted here to mean "wearing the veil" or "headscarf" that conceals women's hair and neck, though the term has a wider meaning (see Abu-Rabia 2006; and Kalčić 2007a, for discussion).

Orientalist images of Muslim women breed generalizations and stigmatize them, particularly through representations of covered women. Even though no data exists on gender differences according to one's religion, research points to instances of intolerance and discrimination of women who practice wearing headscarves in public life. Practicing Muslims provide examples of concrete problems:

> Muslims are more visible, women maybe even more in this environment because they're so few. [...] When I decided to cover I can't say that any incidents happened or that anyone attacked me, but I did notice weird glances here and there; I am different after all, because of different dress. (Layla Malus, a practicing Muslim)

There is actually only a handful of women in Slovenia who choose to follow the Islamic dress code. My informants explain who the women who wear *hijab* are, confirming Kalčić's (2007a) observation that Muslim women have in the last decade or so began forming a new identity that ties with Islam:

> We now have a phenomenon: these older and these new generations. New generations are educated. Women who decide for this [to wear *hijab*] are more secure [...] It's much easier if a person speaks Slovenian and wears a headscarf. If she doesn't speak the language... For somebody wearing a headscarf, the prejudice is probably that she's backward, without the possibilities that others have, but these are really prejudices. [...] Some members of Islamic community wear headscarf but when they go to university they take it off and then they're "normal". [...] They think that it's easier this way, rather than being under scrutiny every day. (*mufti* Nedžad Grabus)

Studies have shown that young educated Muslim women "across the social structure are returning to wearing the veil" (Abu-Rabia, 2006: 92).[24] Yet while wearing *hijab* and observing Islamic religious practice has come to represent a new identity for some young Muslim women in Slovenia as well, they nevertheless remain a minority, and many at the same time still feel pressured to assimilate into the majority society. Research shows that it is particularly education and employment where the Muslims feel most pressure to refrain from publicly professing their religion. Rather than wearing *hijab* to school, university or work, women report choosing to "blend in" instead:

> I wear a headscarf myself but it bothers me that everyone is looking at me funny whenever I appear in public. When I'm at the university, I don't wear it because I'm afraid that I'll be treated differently than other students because of it. (survey response)

> I mustn't wear a headscarf or I'll be fired! (survey response)

[24] In the Slovenian context, the decades of intense secularisation meant that people in general forgot how wearing a headscarf used to be a much more widespread practice, far from tied to Islamic tradition alone.

Fearing discriminatory treatment by their colleagues, professors or employers the Muslims note that observing Islamic dress code would draw too much unwanted attention and research offers several examples of being denied employment on account of Islamic dress code. This opens up questions about the delicate balance between the state-professed ideal of secularism and the right to express one's religion freely:

> A person practicing the Islamic dress code is very exposed in Slovenian public. The duty of such Muslim women to accept all conditions of employers is accentuated, while there's very limited readiness on the side of employers to enable a friendly process of integration into a working environment [...] In one hospital a nurse who practiced Islamic dress code was prevented from gaining suitable employment. Now, when she abandoned such dress code, she is employed as a nurse in the same institution. (Faila Pašić Bišić, a practicing Muslim)

> I almost got fired because I refused to take a bottle of wine to a business partner. I couldn't convince them that, even if I don't drink it, I'm still forbidden to carry it around. We're pretty limited at work in terms of following Islamic rules. (survey response)

Islamic religious practice and the issue of the mosque

Despite formal anti-discrimination provisions and constitutionally guaranteed religious freedom, legal relationship between the state and religious communities lacks corresponding implementation in practice. The issue of the mosque has long represented the most obvious reminder of a systematic disregard of the Muslim community's rights. As a quintessential Islamic symbol, mosques have been argued to depict the evolution of Islam from private to public sphere (Cesari 2005). In the past, Muslims in Europe were isolated within invisible and private prayer rooms, while "the mosque openly, publicly and visibly marks an Islamic presence" (Cesari 2005: 1018).[25] Contrary to reducing the Islamic presence in public sphere to merely the question of the mosque, conflicts over the building of mosques, however, reveal the level of legitimacy acquired by the Muslims in public. Discussions on mosque establishment have been studied in different European cities and research shows that usually projects involving the construction of a mosque are faced with resistance of local communities (cf. FRA 2008; Cesari 2005). The level of resistance reflects the degree of acceptance of Islam in a particular environment, therefore the debates that surround the plans for establishing a mosque can serve as a litmus test that provides access to broader discussions on the Islamic presence. Because "the mosque debates" highlight the issues related to the Muslim religious practice, they inadvertently also reveal the state of general acceptance of Muslim rights.

[25] In a similar vein, the preferred "invisibility" of Islam can be detected among the arguments that were launched against the mosque in Ljubljana (e.g. warnings that the peculiar architecture of minarets would "ruin" the quintessentially "Slovenian skyline").

The Muslims in Slovenia can observe their religious rites in several prayer rooms, yet they do not have a mosque. Having lodged the first request for a mosque in 1969, the question of the Islamic religious and cultural center in Ljubljana has become a political issue that spurred extensive public debate particularly in recent years, revealing a spectrum of anti-Muslim attitudes.[26] As a notable exception amidst the general lack of research on the position of Islam and Muslims in Slovenia, these various Islamophobic manifestations have been extensively studied (e.g. Kotnik 2003; Pajnik 2003; Dragoš 2003, 2004; Kalčić 2006), revealing widespread anti-Muslim prejudice. And even though the Constitutional Court blocked the referendum on building a mosque in the Ljubljana municipality (which represented a blatantly Islamophobic attempt to thwart the Muslims' religious rights) and though the agreements between the Ljubljana municipality and the Islamic Community about the location of the mosque should now finally result in the building of a mosque in Slovenia's capital city, the Muslims have nevertheless felt they were being treated as second-grade citizens:

> We don't have religious buildings that are needed for group prayers, like other believers do. (survey response)

> The biggest problem lies in obstruction to building a mosque, because all other religious communities come to religious buildings without problems. (survey response)

> In Slovenia our right to a religious building is being denied. (survey response)

> For sure there are powers that have been working against the existence of a mosque. (*mufti* Nedžad Grabus)

Even though the time has recently finally come to start making actual plans for the construction of the mosque, when put in perspective, a detailed numerical comparison with the number of Catholic churches in Slovenia shows that 125 mosques would have to exist in order to provide a comparable ratio of believers per religious object (Dragoš 2006). No such claims were ever made by the Muslim community; the debate has always been about building one mosque in Ljubljana. Marcel Maussen (2007: 995) makes a similar comparison when tracking the years-long debate about establishing a mosque in Marseilles, thus summarised by one French journalist: "Marseilles: 117 church bells ... zero minarets". The minarets seem to be particularly "problematic" also in the Slovenian case because, while the prayer rooms have obviously remained unnoticed, a mosque cannot be ignored.

With resistance to new mosques dissipating in France and Britain, Slovenia is kept company by countries such as Germany, Italy, Spain, and particularly Russia, where such projects encounter notable obstacles, also from the local church representatives. At the same time, the Muslim representatives do not deny the primacy to

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[26] In December 2008, intolerant discourse again escalated when the Ljubljana mayor and mufti signed a contract about the sale of plots for constructing the mosque – the building of which has not yet commenced by August 2011.

Catholic Church in Slovenia.[27] In line with Islamic theological foundations, they also do not oppose public – and hence nationalized – celebration of Catholic holidays.[28] As a consequence, rather than questioning the current selection of public holidays in Slovenia or demanding free days to observe their own holy days, they are merely suggesting that it would be good if the Muslims could be spared working on their religious holidays:

> This is another important systemic question: why do our members of Islamic community have to take a day of leave in order to attend the Ramadan prayer twice a year? I think that something could be done here. We of course understand that we have state holidays; we also understand that Christmas is Christian, but it's also a national holiday. It'd be very important to solve this on the systemic level that the Muslims could have two Ramadans. (*mufti* Nedžad Grabus)

> As a child I wasn't able to celebrate Islamic religious holidays because of a very negative attitude of teachers [...] Muslims who celebrate holidays in Slovenia have to make up for missing days at work or go on leave. (Faila Pašić Bišić, a practicing Muslim)

> I have no right to go on leave from work during the Ramadan, I'm not allowed to pray at my workplace and I'm always on call during the Christian holidays, because I don't observe them. (survey response)

Labor legislation in Slovenia does not consider religious practice at workplace, thus the right to pray is not envisioned among employee needs. While Muslims also lack religious care in hospitals and military, the issue of prayer is reported as being of highest importance and the possibility to pray at workplace represents a significant concern for many believers. Research shows that many Muslims are afraid to bring up the issue of religious practice, such as praying during working hours. This again confirms their intersecting exclusion based on religion and ethnicity. Some feel that they are unable to speak Slovenian "properly" or convinced that their "accent" would "give them away", it is thus not uncommon for Muslims to refrain from speaking out altogether. This acceptance of marginality has been observed in numerous social contexts and can be argued to contribute to an ever greater exclusion when a person's prescribed ethnicity is augmented by religious difference.

[27] This illustrates, on the one hand, that the Muslim community has adopted a defensive position, wilfully recognizing its minority status because, by waiving the right to equality, they opt for mere tolerance. On the other hand, it confirms the tacit adherence to the principle of *cuius regio, eius religio*.

[28] Public holidays in Slovenia correspond with Catholic holidays and Muslims are left to their own devices when it comes to celebration of religious holidays. The interviews and survey both reveal that it is a common practice for parents to write excuses for their children to be able to miss school on *Ramazan Bayramı*, while staying away from work depends on the nature of relationship with employers. Most often Muslim employees take a day off from work, though they may also be prevented to do so by their employers.

People don't even ask, because they're afraid of saying anything, afraid of this 'No'. I'm not afraid of it. I'm a Slovenian and also because of this I'm thinking 'Why can't I practice my religion in my own country, like I want it?!' (Layla Malus, a practicing Muslim)

I think that very few Muslims in Slovenia enable themselves to practice praying at workplace. Because it's easier to avoid challenges. (Faila Pašić Bišić, a practicing Muslim)

As a result, most Muslims choose not to expose themselves by bringing attention to their religion. They usually do not ask for the enactment of their religious needs, afraid of being misunderstood and not accepted by their employers, colleagues and their general social environment. This confirms that the Muslim community in Slovenia is in a phase that lies somewhere in between the seclusion of religion to the private sphere and the first attempts to enter the public sphere by taking part in debates about Islam and becoming more vocal about the rights of Muslim believers. The fact that the Muslims remain associated with lower social classes, whose educational levels are below average, renders their position one of a multiple minority, based on religion, ethnicity and class. While the new generation of educated Muslim leaders in France and Britain is successfully negotiating Muslim demands and achieving acceptance of their proposals by the community at large (Cesari 2005), Muslims in Slovenia still have some way to go.

Conclusion

The chapter explored the position of Muslims in Slovenia, with a particular focus on the articulation of their needs and observations as conveyed by the Muslims themselves. Illustrated by interviews and an on-line survey among the Muslims, I argued that the Slovenian Muslims find themselves in a peculiar situation of, on the one hand, being tolerated, particularly on account of the majority of them sharing a peculiar historical South Slavic (i.e. Yugoslav) bond with the majority Catholic population; yet, they are at the same time faced with exclusion, discrimination and prejudice. The chapter contends that the context of current global Islamophobia is not sufficient for understanding the processes of *Othering* the Muslims in this particular geopolitical setting. The general Islamophobic trends that have preoccupied researchers in the so-called West need to be juxtaposed to Slovenian nationalism and cultural racism, for it is the intersectionality of ethnic and religious prejudice that marks the negative attitudes towards Muslims as the Other. In addition, Islam in Slovenia remains for the most part secluded from public discourse and is thus prone to stereotypical representations, ripe with misconceptions and prejudice. Research thus points to the need for more information about Islam, particularly in the media and school curricula that remain for the most part embedded in the biased Eurocentric discourse of binary distinctions between the Slovenian/European/Christian "us" and the Muslim "them", the Other:

> Let's say for religious holidays, there's always talk about Muslims from Africa [...] For Ramadan we had [appearing in the media] a picture from Indonesia. We could've had one from [Ljubljana]. This means that this image of Muslims is often reproduced, like that's somewhere over there in exotic lands, that there's no people who are European. (*mufti* Nedžad Grabus)

By explicating the Muslims' perception of prejudice and intolerance, the analysis shows that they feel discriminated in areas that connect to the very essence of practicing their religion, such as religious practice and place of worship, religious holidays, access to *halal* food. In addition, they experience prejudice, which represents a wider problem of exclusion that ties with nationalistic, Islamophobic and racist classification of Muslims as the Other, and a gendered intolerance as exemplified in the case of women wearing *hijab*.

In opposition to publicly professed demands for a greater role in public life characteristic of the Catholic Church, minority religious communities in Slovenia are rarely heard. The Slovenian Islamic community is a late-comer in terms of its ability to express its demands unequivocally and remains in a phase that lies somewhere in between the seclusion of religion to the private sphere and the first attempts to enter the public sphere by taking part in debates about Islam and becoming more vocal about the rights of Muslim believers. It is hence crucial to recognize the perpetuation of the Muslims' marginality which stems from intersections of religion, ethnicity and class. While the Slovenian Muslims are in majority citizens of Slovenia, whose rights and privileges should be respected, the gap between legal provisions and their implementation in practice remains significant.

As confirmed by the new empirical material presented here, the position of Muslims in Slovenia remains caught in a particular duality of acceptance and exclusion. On the one hand, Islam is tolerated, the Muslims' religious rights are formally recognized and the officials are gradually making progress in accommodating Islamic religious needs. On the other hand, Islam is far from accepted as a part of Slovenia and the present research confirms the existence of a deeply seated prejudice, which fuels discrimination. What remains to be seen is which path Slovenia will take when it comes to church-state relations and the equity in granting also minority religious communities' policy needs. Learning about Islam and the Muslim culture, tradition and identity is only the first necessary step (cf. Zalta 2006b).

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Jacek Duda

Islamic community in Serbia – the Sandžak case

While analyzing the situation of Islam and, generally speaking, Muslim communities in former Yugoslavia, either from the political, cultural, sociological, or any other point of view, one has usually in mind the largest and the most widely known population, that is the Muslims of Bosnia and Herzegovina (*Bošnjaci, Muslimani*[1]). Although they are the most recognized and the largest group (the population of about 3 million, out of which 2.2 million live in the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina; CIA 2011), there are several less known ethnic groups which are living in the Balkans and whose confession is Islam.

What is interesting, many of them are ethnic Slavs who changed their confession during the years of the Ottoman rule in the Balkan Peninsula. This was the case of the Bosnian Muslims, but not only theirs. Each of the neighboring states of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the east and south, that is Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo, as well as the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia have their own homogeneous and indigenous communities which have been confessing Islam for several hundreds of years and are of Slavic ethnic origin (which means that we do not take into consideration the Albanian and Turkish populations of these countries nor the newcomers from the Middle East). These are the Gorans (*Gorani*) in Kosovo, Torbeshs (*Torbeši*) in Macedonia and the Bosniaks (*Bošnjaci*) of Sandžak, which is the historical region in both Serbia and Montenegro. All those communities are extremely interesting, no matter whether the history or the contemporary times are taken into consideration; still, I decided to devote this paper to the Muslim community of Sandžak – its history and current situation seen from many angles – historical, economic, ethnic, religious and many more. Firstly, the brief history of the region will be presented, and then I will look into the current matters and will outline the most important problems with which the Muslims in Sandžak deal, concentrating on the most important one, i.e. the threat of Islamic fundamentalism from the Middle East which is penetrating the traditional community. To start with, I will present a brief outline of the situation in the province, then I will look into the specific traditions of the Balkan Islam, and finally the most interesting and important issue as mentioned above will be analyzed.

[1] Both names are used in different contexts describing the same community; *Muslimani* (Muslims) as the official name of one of the six constitutional nations of Bosnia and Herzegovina between 1971 and 1991, nowadays this term is used in foreign works; the members of this nation refer to themselves as *Bošnjaci* (Bosniaks).

Sandžak throughout the history

Nowadays neither Serbia nor Montenegro has officially a region called Sandžak or similar. This name refers to the historical region covering 8,403 km² on both sides of the Serbian-Montenegrin border, with the administrative and cultural centres in Novi Pazar and Pljevlja, which was known under that name (Sandžak, Sandžak of Novi Pazar) during the 19th century (CIA 2011). The name is of Turkish origin and comes from the word *sançak*, which meant "the flag" and was used in the Ottoman Empire to refer to the first level of administrative division. In the current administrative division of Serbia the region belongs to the Raška district and partially to Zlatibor district, while in Montenegro it covers the whole northern part of the country and consists of five municipalities.

The region has a very complex history. It was colonized by the Slavs in the 7th century and during the Middle Ages rose to be one of political and cultural centers of the Serbian State under the names of Raška and Zeta between the 11th and 14th centuries. Since the political centre of the Serbian state moved northwards as a result of the wars with Turkey, the region's importance declined, and finally in 1455 it fell into the hands of the Ottoman Empire which transformed it into a separate province. Thus it remained until the advent of Austro-Hungarian occupation in the year 1878.

During the Ottoman rule, similarly to the population of Bosnia and Herzegovina, many of the inhabitants of the province converted to Islam. The conversion was caused by a number of factors, mainly economic – since Muslim landowners and craftsmen paid lower taxes, and the elements of social discrimination in the Ottoman Empire, as far as the Christian and Jewish minorities were concerned, ceased to exist.[2] Such conversions could be observed in all Christian provinces of the Empire, while on a large scale only in Bosnia, Sandžak, Kosovo and Albania, where – according to the 19th century reports – between 50% and 90% of the population changed their faith to Islam, retaining certain elements of the Christian tradition in their everyday life (Zirojević 2003). The second factor which caused the Islamization of this territory was the migration of population throughout the 18th and 19th centuries. After a series of wars with Turkey on the losing side, in which the Christian population of the Empire collaborated with Turkey's opponents, the Ottomans started to force Christians out these regions northwards, and at the same time the Islamic population of the newly created Serbian state was uprooted and transferred to the Turkish territory. The lands abandoned by the Serbian population were repopulated by those immigrants from Serbia (mostly ethnic Serbs who confessed Islam, as well as Turks) and other Muslims from the Caucasus, Middle East and Asia Minor, who looked for new opportunities or the possibility to practice Islam. These movements were called Velika Seoba Srba in the Serbian historiography, and the new colonists from the Asian part of the Empire and the Caucasus were called *muhadžeri*[3] (Stanojević 2003: 178). Finally, another

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[2] These were for example the compulsory military service (*yeni ceri*).

[3] This term has been known in Islam since its beginnings, at first it was the name given to the group of Muhammad's comrades and supporters who flew from Mecca to Medina; in the

reason of the fast Islamization of this territory was, according to Anna Parzymies, its geographical location, which allowed Sandžak to become a local trade centre, facilitating conversions among traders, who found it easier to deal with customers throughout the Empire (Parzymies 2005).

The second half of the 19th century was very important in terms of shaping the current ethnic and political situation of Sandžak. Austria supported the separation of Sandžak province from Turkey, or at least its autonomy within the Ottoman State. This would prevent Serbia and Montenegro from unifying and, on the other hand, could be a reason for further expansion of Austria in the Balkans (in those plans Sandžak would become a part of Bosnia). The Muslim factor was very important, since the Austrians claimed they had to support the idea of Sandžak region in order to protect the Muslim minority from the Orthodox Serbs and Montenegrins (Terzić 1997: 319–329).

All this led to the creation of a completely new ethnic situation in Sandžak. After the World War I the region was included in the newly established state of Yugoslavia, being a link in the chain of areas settled by Muslims which starts in the Western Bosnia and ends in Kosovo and Eastern Macedonia. Although not being an administrative unit, it has been a significant area, since it was the only place in Serbia settled by ethnic Slavs who adhered to Islam. During the Communist era there was a problem of describing the ethnic identity of Slavs confessing Islam, since Serbs perceived them as "Muslim Serbs", Croats as "Muslim Croats", while they defined themselves as "Yugoslavians" in official censuses. Finally, in 1971 Muslims were granted the status of the sixth constitutional nationality in Yugoslavia, though not all of those who declared this were practicing Islam (it was the way of avoiding the granting of the right to self-determination to Bosniaks). The Muslims of Sandžak also declared to be Muslim, while many of them consider themselves to be Bosniaks.

As far as the ethnic map of Sandžak today is concerned, the region is divided almost evenly between the Serbs and the Bosnians. The Western part is mainly inhabited by Orthodox Serbs and the Eastern part by Muslims who, after 1991, self-determine themselves as Bosniaks (*Bošnjaci*), identically as the Muslim population of Bosnia and Herzegovina.[4] However, in the international publications "Muslim" is commonly the term referring to Bosniaks, especially in discourse related to the wars of the 1990s. The municipalities with the largest percent of Bosniak population are Tutin, Novi Pazar and Sjenica in Serbia and Rožaje in Montenegro, with the average share of 70% of population being Bosniaks there (Republic of Serbia Office for Statistics 2011).

The Islamic population in Serbia has its own organization called the Islamic Community of Serbia (Islamska zajednica Srbije), which takes care of the organizational and religious life of the Muslim community throughout the country. There are over 120 mosques in the country, an Islamic university, *madrasa* and various Islamic

Ottoman Empire this name was given to all those who changed their place of living in order to freely practise Islam.

    [4] Some of the Muslims from Sandžak (about 19,300 people according to the 2002 census) still declare their nationality as Muslims (*Muslimani*), not Bosniaks (*Bošnjaci*).

organizations. As for the region of Sandžak, since it has a Muslim majority, it has its own regional organization called *mešihat* headed by mufti Muamer Zukorlić, residing in Novi Pazar (Mešihat Islamske zajednice u Srbiji 2011).

Muslim traditions in Sandžak

As can be even seen from what is written above, there are numerous factors which influenced Balkan Islam and the way it has been practiced. All that resulted also in a specific approach to Islamic traditions, which merged with many local customs. This came out of a very common practice called in Serbian *dvoverje* – "double faith" i.e. retaining secretly the Christian faith while officially confessing Islam. Such an approach has been confirmed for many European provinces of the Empire from the late 16th century (Zirojević 2003: 6–9). The reason was, as Zirojević sees it, the fact that although Islam is strictly adherent to monotheism and observance of the rules provided in holy scriptures, it is also a religion which is quite prone to syncretism and sprouted a plethora of modalities, just to mention Wahhabis on one hand, and Bektashites on the other. There are many elements of Islam (not in the orthodox version, but present in many local variations) which were easily adaptable in the Balkans, since they were in fact taken from the Christian or Jewish tradition, such as the cult of saints, pilgrimages to their graves, cult of relics and many more.

Thus even today many links to Christianity are found in the Balkan Islam, also in Sandžak. Olga Zirojević (2003) mentions the following (some of them are historical, but still they influenced the current shape of Balkan Islam):

— visiting orthodox churches and monasteries and caring for their wealth,

— upholding the cult of icons and other holy objects, such as crosses and medallions,

— retaining the rituals such as baptizing the children and giving them double names, a Muslim and a Christian one,[5]

— observing certain traditional holidays, such as *slava* (holiday of the Patron Saint of the family), as well as elements of the Christian holiday traditions (in Serbia such as *badnjak*[6] and *pogača*[7] during Christmas, traditional carnival – *povorke*, coloring eggs on Easter), as well as the pagan ones, later adapted also by the Orthodox Church, the most notable is the Đurđevdan – St. George's Day, traditional feast of spring, called *al-Hidr* or *al-Hizr* ('the Green') among the Muslims,[8]

— unique eating style – e.g. alcohol is not strictly prohibited, eating pork is not unheard of,

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[5] It can be even seen in the traditional proverbs, such as *Do podne Ilija, od podne Alija* – Ilija (Orthodox) until noon, Alija (Muslim) in the afternoon.

[6] A bouquet made of oak leaves and grass, which is taken to church on Christmas.

[7] A type of wheat bread eaten on Christmas morning.

[8] This goes back to the tradition of Moses' friend, mentioned in Qur'an, who discovered spring of water that gave him immortality; in the Balkans associated with Saint George and being the patron of rain and spring.

— different approach to women – they are allowed to work, do not need to wear traditional dresses or cover their hair and may walk alone in the streets.

All these, however have been subject to change. Many Islamic traditions, also thesyncretized ones, ceased to exist during the Communist era, when the secularization of the society has influenced also the Muslim part of the community. Since the ties with Islam have not been very strong (as can be seen above) and the population was isolated from the main religious centers because of political reasons, many people (today the generation between 40 and 60 years of age) left Islam for atheism which was supported by the state. As of today, the Muslim traditions and lifestyle are subject to further changes, resulting from the complex situation of the region and its society.

The pace of changes in practicing Islam in Sandžak as well as throughout all the former Yugoslavia has increased after the fall of communism and the breakup of the federal state in 1991. The further part of this article presents the main changes as well as threats to the Sandžak Muslim community at the beginning of the 21st century.

Muslim population in Sandžak today – the situation, problems and perspectives

When discussing the Muslim community in Sandžak today, it is necessary to take into consideration three major groups of factors which affect it. These are geopolitical, economic and social factors. I will now try to analyze all of them and highlight the most important problems and issues.

As far as geopolitical issues are concerned, the most important factor is the region's geographical location. Since it borders with Kosovo and has a significant Muslim community, there is a constant threat of following the Kosovo scenario, that is separatism and pursuit of autonomy. This is a threat mainly for Serbia, which fears losing another part of its territory. Another problem is the issue of the rights of the Serbian minority in the Bosniak-dominated areas, which Serbia often sees as threatened. There are some political powers in Sandžak who demand autonomy inside Serbia on ethnic and religious basis, with the most influential being the Party of Democratic Action in Sandžak (SDA), led by Sulejman Ugljanin. They stand in opposition to the second main political party, supported by the Serbs, but also by many Bosniaks, the Sandžak Democratic Party led by Rasim Ljajić. The inner political situation is therefore highly complex, since not all of the Bosniaks support the idea of autonomy, fearing the possibility of economic difficulties and a low level of organization of institutions in a newly created state organism. Political instability and possible ethnic tensions caused by the complex ethnic structure are the first of the dimensions where danger lurks for the future of the region.

The antagonism between the main political parties in Sandžak is also a subject of political games in Serbian politics. The government of Serbia supports the Ljajić's party, which is a member of the ruling coalition and Ljajić himself holds the position of the Minister for Labor and Social Policy in the Government of the Republic of Serbia. The SDP is perceived as a "clan party", which points to nepotism and corrup-

tion in its structures, and its activities are not always considered legal; the party structure is sometimes compared to organized crime structures, but it obtained support from the Serbian authorities because it does not demand autonomy or separation from Serbia. That policy is also supported by the religious leader of the Sandžak Muslims, who sees co-operation with Serbia as a chance to avoid the influence of radicals from Bosnia and Sandžak itself (Parzymies 2005: 119).

I have already mentioned that after the solution of the Kosovo problem there is a fear in Serbia concerning a possible secession of Sandžak. It is not only because of political issues, but also, above all, economic ones. After the secession of Kosovo, the region has become the least developed one in Serbia, although it has not been much affected by the wars of the 1990s (there are some minor problems which afflict the western municipality of Priboj related to refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina). At the same time, it was not the war which was the problem, but the structure of the economy. As the region remained a Turkish domain nearly until the World War I, as well as due to its peripheral position to the capital city and economic centers, the structure of economy remained archaic, with agriculture depending on the feudal or semi-feudal relations (which was the Ottoman heritage) and without developed industry (excluding traditional craftsmanship). During the Communist era, similarly to Kosovo, the authorities tried to develop heavy industry on the basis of mining and manufacturing, mainly textile industry. These were based predominantly on extensive labor and old machinery, and as a result of technical underdevelopment and the economic crisis deteriorating Yugoslavia from the beginning of the 1980s, as well as political situation after the Balkan wars, the industrial output fell sharply and there is little hope for redevelopment. Another problem is related to the de facto centrally steered economy in Serbia in the 1990s, which for Sandžak meant further underdevelopment, peripheral importance in business and its lower flexibility. This was also somehow connected with the presence of Muslim community which was treated as hostile by the Milošević regime. Political instability in the region impacts the economy, as it causes such problems as a degree of lawlessness, which results in corruption and black market on a local scale, and the presence of other global problems, such as drug and gun trafficking (Bielska 2009). The impact of all this on local population is such that the unemployment rate is the highest in Serbia (41.5%, more than two times higher than the Serbian average; CIA 2010) resulting in migration of the inhabitants, who look for work in other regions of the country.

As far as social and ethnic problems are considered, the biggest of them is the presence of a large Muslim community. We can divide this one into two branches, one of which is the level of integration of this group with the rest of the Serbian population, while the second is the potential danger of fundamentalism, which is observable in neighboring Bosnia and Herzegovina. Both issues are tightly interrelated. In terms of the first one, because of a different denomination, Serbian government treats the region as inferior, not caring to render any support in development and locating few investments there. The Muslims of Sandžak, despite having their representatives in the National Assembly of Serbia, are considered by the conservative part of Serbian politicians as another threat to the unity of the state, and the region is neglected.[9] On

the other hand, due to the strong opposition to the pro-European government, the minorities take part in the coalition, and this makes for an opportunity to achieve some goals of the local community. However, since it is not homogeneous itself, this is probably not enough to achieve success. Loosening the links with Serbia and tightening them with Bosnia is also a goal of some of the political and religious leaders of Bosnia and Herzegovina, starting from the Great Mufti of Bosnia, *effendi* Mustafa Cerić, who openly supports co-operation with radical movements of Sandžak and the unification of it with Bosnia and Herzegovina (Militant Islam Monitor 2005). The mentioned Sulejman Ugljanin's SDA party, the main political power in opposition, stands on the positions of fighting for autonomy, since 1992 it has issued several documents called Memoranda, in which it claims even separation from the Serbian state or joining Bosnia and Herzegovina. SDA co-operates with another organization called National Council of Bošnjaks in Sandžak, which is even more radical; in addition, we should mention that many of the radical Muslim politicians are also members of the Bosnian political parties or organizations which seek restitution of the Islamic state in Bosnia (see also Parzymies 2005: 120).

As for the fundamentalist threat, both in Sandžak and Bosnia, as well as in Albania, there are some fundamentalist tendencies in the religious life of Muslims, inspired by Wahhabism, mainly from Saudi Arabia. The reasons for supporting these ideas are manifold, beginning with the poverty of the society. As shown above, Sandžak's economy is in such a state that any foreign investment, as well as any way of activating the society, is welcome. Aware of this, a number of fundamentalist Muslim organizations works in this manner, and their strategy is clear: on one hand they give people the possibility to earn money (e.g. in the construction of new mosques) and as a result people have jobs after sometimes very long periods of unemployment; on the other hand, the job is often connected with indoctrination, e.g. compulsory meetings with religious leaders. The same situation pertains to the cultural life – the radicals often organize many cultural and even scientific events, which are often connected with various methods of indoctrination. Anna Parzymies states that the level of cultural life in Sandžak is very low and every initiative can earn supporters for its organizers. Thus, the radicals have easy ways of influencing the society. This applies also to charity. The poverty of society, unemployment and no stimuli from the local and central government direct people to charity institutions, also the ones connected with radical Islamic organizations, based mainly in Bosnia and Herzegovina and linked with the Saudi Wahhabis. These are for example: the Muslim World League, Merhamet, al-Kifah, and several others (Parzymies 2005: 123). Not only do they provide humanitarian aid, such as organizing jobs, camps or cultural events for the refugees, children or young people, but are also aimed at reislamization along very radical lines.

The second reason is the swelling of the ranks of fundamentalist groups resulting from growing nationalist tensions. Although Sandžak did not see any ethnic cleansing

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[9] The second largest party in the parliament, the Srpska Radikalna Stranka, together with the second largest opposition party, Demokratska Stranka Srbije, stands on the nationalist and anti-integrationist positions and both are openly hostile towards the Muslims.

during the 1990s, the striving for autonomy of a number of Muslim leaders (as shown above) provoked (and at the same time was a response to) the activation of the Orthodox Serbian nationalism. Some Muslim groups organized themselves around the Wahhabi leaders just to stage resistance to the Serbian nationalist movement. The last reason, finally, is seeking tradition. What was not mentioned above, during the Communist era many people, especially those brought up as Muslims, became secularized, did not declare any religion and identified themselves with official state ideology of Yugoslavia. Recently, increasing numbers of people, especially young ones, who do not remember the times of Yugoslavia, join the newly emerged Islamic organizations in search for their ancestors' faith. Although this is not a negative phenomenon per se, there is a threat of these people being recruited into the ranks of fundamentalists. As the example of Bosnia and Herzegovina shows, since the breakup of Yugoslavia many such groups, usually called mujahideens (*mudžahedini*), were established, and there is a similar threat in Sandžak (Ćosić 2004). The fundamentalist groups pursue their fight for the Islamic state in the Balkans not only by political means, but also often resort to acts of terrorism or vandalism against Serbs or even those Bosniaks who do not support their ideas (Boyd and Avramović 2002). The problem with fundamentalists is, however, not only in the political dimension. As it was stated, Balkan Muslims' traditions and ways of practicing Islam are different than those in the Middle East, especially of the conservative branches of Islam. There were even cases of killing or harassing the followers of the branches of Islam typical for the Balkans, such as Sufism or Bektashism (Parzymies 2005: 121). This breeds conflicts between the newcomers and new believers and the old population on the grounds of the rules of practicing religion, everyday life, etc. Together with the external conflicts with the non-Muslim inhabitants, it is a real threat for this community.

With few opportunities, especially for the youth, also the sector of education is penetrated by the radical Islamic movements. Having little chance to achieve both good job and education on a high level, young people choose religious education and scholarships founded by organizations from the Middle East, especially from Saudi Arabia.

As may be seen, the region's situation is very complex and there are many obstacles and conditions that make its progress harder to achieve. The economic situation, poverty and corruption, together with the unstable inner and outer political situation, the nationalist tensions and a threat of fundamentalism make Sandžak yet another place for a potential conflict to exacerbate. What is more, the Muslim community has problems with its own identity; as the political situation shows, some of the leaders support unity with Serbia on the basis of the multicultural society, whereas the others see multicultural society a threat to the unity of the Muslim population and is searching for autonomy or even joining Bosnia or establishing a new state. This, together with the crisis of tradition stemming from the lack of continuity in practicing religion as well as the change in traditions caused by the percolating fundamentalism, may be a serious obstacle for the region of Sandžak in further development and in avoiding marginalization.

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Contributors

Veronika Bajt, PhD holds a PhD in Sociology from the University of Bristol, UK. She works as a researcher at the Peace Institute – Institute for Contemporary Social and Political Studies in Ljubljana, Slovenia. Her field of research includes migration, gender, nationalism and national identity construction; she has published on topics of migration, gender and labor market, nationalism, Muslims' religious discrimination, national identity construction and practices of Othering in media discourse. She has also been a visiting lecturer at the International University Institute for European Studies in Gorizia, Italy and taught at the Sociology Department of the Masaryk University in Brno, Czech Republic.

Denis Brylov, PhD is assistant professor at the Department of Cultural and Religious Studies of the Institute of Philosophical Education of the National Pedagogical University. He graduated from the Institute of Social Education, Donetsk, Ukraine by completing MA in Social Psychology. In 2011 he defended a PhD thesis in Religious Studies titled *Sufism and Islamism: global and local dimensions* at the Institute of Philosophical Education of the National Pedagogical University in Kyiv. Fields of academic inquiry include history and doctrine of Sufism, contemporary Islamist movements, Islamic culture and theology. Author of a monograph: *Islam. Religions of the World* (in Russian, 2006), and numerous articles on the history and doctrine of Sufism and Islamist movements.

Michal Cenker studied sociology and international relations in Amsterdam and Bratislava. Currently he is a graduate student at the Department of Social Anthropology at the Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia. His research is focused on Muslim migrants living in Bratislava. He teaches courses on international migration and political anthropology. At the Pontis Foundation he supervises a project on the support of civil society in Upper Egypt and coordinates another project aiming to engage political and academic institutions in Slovakia to cooperate in the field of international development and development education.

Prof. Janusz Danecki, PhD teaches Arabic language and Islamic culture in the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies, Faculty of Oriental Studies at the University of Warsaw and in Warsaw School of Social Sciences and Humanities. He is

the editor-in-chief of an international journal "Studia Arabistyczne i Islamistyczne" ('Arabic and Islamic Studies'), and of "The Middle East" (in Polish). He specializes in Arabic linguistics and Islam, especially Islam in the Arab World. He is the author of a number of essential works on the Arabic language and Islam (*Arabic Grammar, Arabic-Polish Dictionary, Introduction to Islam, Political Thought in Islam*; in Polish). He also translated into Polish a number of essential books of classical and modern Arabic literature (i.a. Ibn Hazm, the *Mu'allaqat*, Al-Hamadhani's *Maqamat*; G. Kanafani, Yusuf Idris, Tawfiq al-Hakim).

Jacek Duda completed MA in International Relations (Warsaw School of Economics, 2005) and Serbian Philology (University of Warsaw, 2008), and is currently a PhD student at the University of Warsaw. His main interests include linguistics (comparative and corpora of texts), internal and international situation and relations of the Balkan states, as well as Balkan popular culture.

Prof. Marek Dziekan, PhD is the head of the Department of Middle East and North Africa, University of Łódź, Poland. His main interests include: history of Islam; history of Arabic culture and literature; contemporary Islam in political context; Islam-West relations; ideologies of Arabic World; anthropology of Arabic World. Selected books (in Polish): *Arabia Magica. The Recondite Wisdom among the Arabs in pre-Islamic Times* (1993), *The History of Iraq* (2002, 2nd ed. 2007), *Civilization of Islam in Asia and Africa* (2007), *History of Arabic Culture* (2008). Editor-in-chief of "Rocznik Orientalistyczny".

Prof. Kristen Ghodsee, PhD is the John S. Osterweis Associate Professor and the Director of Gender and Women's Studies at Bowdoin College. She is the author of three books: *The Red Riviera: Gender, Tourism and Postsocialism on the Black Sea* (Duke University Press, 2005), *Muslim Lives in Eastern Europe: Gender, Ethnicity and the Transformation of Islam in Postsocialist Bulgaria* (Princeton University Press 2009), *Lost In Transition: Ethnographies of Everyday Life After Socialism* (Duke University Press 2011), and over 35 articles on gender, civil society and Eastern Europe. She is a winner of national fellowships from NSF, Fulbright, NCEEER, IREX and ACLS as well as a recipient of residential research fellowships at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington DC, the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, and the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University.

Katarzyna Górak-Sosnowska, PhD is assistant professor at the Department of Economic Sociology, Warsaw School of Economics and at the Department of Arab and Islamic Studies, Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Warsaw, Poland. Her research interests focus on socio-economic problems of the Middle East and North Africa, and Islam in Poland and wider Europe. She published three monographs (in Polish): *Arab world towards globalization* (2007), *The prospects of the Arab world through the lens of the MDGs* (2007), and *Muslim consumer culture* (2011) and developed teaching materials in intercultural and development education, of which one *In*

the world of Islam (co-author, 2007) has been translated into English and Estonian (2009). A member of editorial boards of "The Middle East" and "Studies and works of the College of Socio-Economics" (in Polish).

Prof. Halina Grzymała-Moszczyńska, PhD is a full professor of psychology at the Jagiellonian University in Cracow and the School of Social Psychology in Warsaw. She teaches courses such as Psychology of Religion, Multiculturalism and Religion, Cultural Psychology and Applied Cross-Cultural Communication. Her research focuses on psychological processes involved in cultural adaptation of migrants, a response of local communities to refugee reception centers and immigrants, and the role of religion in the process of cultural adaptation of immigrants. She conducts trainings of cross-cultural competencies for international companies and NGOs. She also conducts research on cross-cultural communication in business context. Her most current research projects relates to the role of religion in the acculturation of Polish migrants to UK and Ireland. She is a member of many national and international professional organizations and serves on the editorial boards of several professional journals. She has published 12 volumes as well as 55 articles in national and international journals and edited books.

Joanna Krotofil studied Psychology at Jagiellonian University, currently is approaching completion of her PhD postgraduate course at the Institute for the Study of Religions (Jagiellonian University). Her thesis is focusing on the pressures of identity negotiation among recent Polish migrants in UK and the dialogical relationships between institutions and individuals undergoing identity re-negotiation. She is a member of Dialogical Practice Network. Currently she works as a Research Fellow at Centre for Research on Nationalism, Ethnicity and Multiculturalism (CRONEM), Roehappton University. Since joining CROENM in 2007 she has worked on various projects related to migration from A10 countries. She has also worked on a joint project conducted by the University of Aberdeen and the Jagiellonian University, which was a study of Polish religious communities in UK and Ireland. She published a few articles exploring the issues of religion, culture and identity.

Karolina Łukasiewicz is a researcher and a PhD candidate in the Institute of Sociology, Jagiellonian University. She completed her MA in Sociology at the Jagiellonian Univeristy, and a MA European Political Sociology at Dalarna Univeristy, Sweden. She is a member of International Sociological Association and European Sociological Association. Her research focuses on forced migration and Chechen refugees. She published articles about Chechens in "The Journal of Diversity, in Organizations, Communities and Nations", "Studia Migracyjne – Przegląd Polonijny", "Chechens in the European Union", and "Politics of Culture".

Michał Łyszczarz, PhD is a sociologist and political scientist connected with the University of Silesia in Katowice and a member of the Common Council of Catholics and Muslims. His Ph.D. dissertation was titled: *Religion and Identity. Sociological*

Study of the Young Generation of Polish Tatars (2011). He is interested in the sociology of ethnic minorities, in particular the Polish Tatar community. His research work focuses on sociology of culture and religion, especially the process of conversion to Islam and the religious dialogue between Christianity and Islam. He is also engaged in studies of assimilation and integration problems of Arab emigrant community in Poland, and the specificity of multicultural borderline area, for the most part in Podlachia and Subcarpathian Region.

Irina Molodikova, PhD graduated from the Moscow State University in Russia (PhD in Social Geography) and the European Peace University (Austria). She is a director of Migration and Security program in CENSE Center of Central European University (Budapest, Hungary). Her subject of interest is migration and conflicts in the post-Soviet dimension. She is a member of IMISCOE network (EU) and Expert of Research Council of CIS countries and Baltic States on Forced Migration. For years she has been supervising the North Caucasus Initiative of the Open Society Institute (Budapest) in Chechnya, Ingushetia and North Ossetia. Author and editor of books on migration and conflicts: *Transit migration: theory and practice of regulation* (2009, Russian), *Education in Risk in North Caucasian Republics* (2008), *Migration Processes in NIS Countries. Youth Context* (ed., 2006, Russian), *Migration studies in the context of social science* (ed., 2005, Russian).

Agata S. Nalborczyk, PhD is assistant professor in the Department for European Islam Studies, Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Warsaw. Her areas of research include: Islam in Europe (especially the legal status of Muslim minorities in Europe), Christian-Muslim relations, the image of Islam and Muslims in Europe, women's issues in Islam She is one of the editorial advisors and authors in the *Yearbook of Muslims in Europe* ed. by J.S. Nielsen et. al. (Brill: Leiden 2009–2011) and a member of the editorial board of the research project "Annotated legal documents on Islam in Europe". She is also a co-author of the lexicon for journalists *Do Not Fear Islam* (http//www.wiez.com.pl/islam; in Polish) awarded in 2007 with the International Award for Inter-religious Dialogue by the International Catholic Union of the Press.

Magdalena Nowaczek-Walczak is a PhD student at the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies, Faculty of Oriental Studies at the University of Warsaw. She is an author of several publications about pop culture in Arabic World (Muslim Barbie, Arabic reality shows and entertainment programs, Arabic Harry Potter). Main interests include: globalization, gender, Muslim minorities in Europe and intercultural relations.

Konrad Pędziwiatr, PhD is assistant professor at the Tischner European University and researcher at the Centre of Migration Research, University of Warsaw. Sociologist and anthropologist by training (Jagiellonian University, University of Exeter and University of Oxford) specializing in sociology of migration, new social movements and religion (especially Islam), holding a PhD in Social Sciences from the

Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (Belgium). Author of monographs *The New Muslim Elites in European Cities: Religion and Active Social Citizenship Amongst Young Organized Muslims in Brussels and London* (2010) and *From Islam of Immigrants to Islam of Citizens: Muslims in the Countries of Western Europe* (in Polish, 2005, 2007) and numerous other scientific and non-scientific publications on Islam and Muslims in Europe and social movements in Europe and the Middle East. Editor of www.arabia.pl and www.euro-islam.info and a member of the Committee on Migration Research of the Polish Academy of Science.

Prof. Egdūnas Račius, PhD received his PhD from the University of Helsinki. He is a professor of Middle Eastern and Islamic studies at the Faculty of Political Science and Diplomacy of Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania. He is a contributing author of the *Yearbook of Muslims in Europe* (Brill) and reviews editor of the "Journal of Muslims in Europe" (Brill). He is the author of the chapter on Islam in Lithuania in G. Larsson (ed.) *Islam in the Nordic and Baltic Countries*, Routledge, 2009, and "Muslims in Catholic Lithuania: between the status quo and alternatives", in: M. Ališauskienė and I.W. Schröder (eds.). *Religious Diversity in Lithuania: Ethnographies of Hegemony and Pluralism*, Ashgate, 2011.

Prof. Eugeniusz Sakowicz, PhD is a theologian, specialist in religious studies, encyclopedist and lexicographer. Currently he is the Head of the Chair of the Pedagogy of Culture and Intercultural Education at the CSWU Faculty of Pedagogy, and a consultor of the Polish Episcopate's Council for Religious Dialogue and member of the Council's Committee for Dialogue with Non-Christian Religions. He specializes in intercultural and inter-religious dialogue, education in the cultures and religions of the world as well as comparative religion. He is an author of more than 300 publications – including books such as *Islam in Church Documents and the Teaching of John Paul II* (1997), *The Church's Dialogue with Islam According to the II Vatican Council and Post-Council Documents 1963–1999* (2000), *Non-Christian Religions in Poland* (2009) – and over 1,600 entries and articles in encyclopedias and dictionaries, including *The Catholic Encyclopaedia* of the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin. He is also editor-in-chief of "Bulletin of Mission and Religious Studies", "Bulletin of the Polish Community Abroad" and "Bulletin of Sociology of Religion" (in Polish, part of "Collectanea Theologica" journal).

Daniela Stoica is a Sociology PhD student of Babes-Bolyai University (Cluj-Napoca, Romania), working on her dissertation in joint supervision with Tilburg University, Netherlands. Developed within a comparative perspective, her research concerns the experience of Romanian and Dutch women who convert to Islam. Focusing on conversion narratives produced by women from two structurally different contexts, where local Muslim communities have different profiles, the project approaches the way in which Muslim women define and enact their religious identity in relation with their religious background, ethnicity, and gender. She has a B.A. in Journalism (2007) and a M.A. in Gender Studies (2009).

Magdalena Trojanek graduated in sociology from University of Science and Technology and in psychology from the Jagiellonian University. For many years she has been cooperating with NGOs, working in the field of sustainable development, antidiscrimination and global and multicultural education. Scientific interests: development cooperation, development and migration politics, psychotraumatology and cultural psychology.

Gaweł Walczak is a PhD student at the Institute for Social Studies, University of Warsaw. He also cooperates with various NGOs working with immigrants and refugees. His main interests include: migration, refugees, nongovernmental organizations, development.

Marta Woźniak, PhD is a Polish scholar specializing in the Middle East and assistant professor based at the University of Łódź. She graduated from the Department of International Relations, University of Łódź, in 2006, receiving the Best Polish Student's Award ('Primus Inter Pares'). In 2010 she completed her Ph.D. dissertation titled *Modern Assyrians and Arameans in search for national identity* based on her research conducted in Syria, Turkey, Sweden, Germany and Brazil. She studied Arabic language in Damascus and Cairo, where she also worked in the Polish embassy. So far she has presented papers at about 50 conferences and published 30 articles. She is currently working on a book on political role of Copts – the Egyptian Christians.

Oleg Yarosh, PhD heads the Oriental Philosophy Department at the Institute of Philosophy of National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. He graduated from the History Department of the Odessa State University with MA in History. In 2002 he defended his PhD thesis in Philosophical Anthropology on *Man in the mystical paradigm: anthropology of Sufism* at the Institute of Philosophy of NASU. Scholarships include: Balliol College, University of Oxford (Oxford Theological Exchange Program), Graduate School for Social Research in Warsaw, Zentrum Moderner Orient in Berlin (DAAD) and Kennan Institute, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington DC (Fulbright-Kennan Senior Scholarship). Member of Central Eurasian Studies Society (CESS), USA. Fields of academic inquiry include History and doctrine of Sufism, modern Islamic missionary movements, Islam in Central and Western Europe.

The Faculty of Oriental Studies,
Univesity of Warsaw

The Faculty of Oriental Studies of the University of Warsaw is one of the biggest centers for Oriental studies in Europe, boasts considerable scientific achievements and well-earned international reputation. It has been building its position since 1932, initially as the Oriental Studies Institute of the University of Warsaw. In 2008 it was upgraded to the level of the Faculty of Oriental Studies. The Faculty employs a large group of specialists on cultures and languages of Asia and Africa, maintains close relations with many scientific centers around the world, including Asia and Africa, like the universities in Ankara, Delhi, Kano, Jerusalem, Kyoto, Beijing, Istanbul, Tehran, Tel-Aviv, Tokyo, Ulan Bator.

The Faculty of Oriental Studies has authority to grant Ph.D. and habilitation in linguistics and literary studies. It organizes and coordinates research in linguistics, literary studies, cultural studies, history, philosophy and studies on religions. It has the highest category (the 1st) in scientific research in the parametric evaluation of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of Poland.

The Orientalists of the University of Warsaw represent a considerable scientific potential. Many of them enjoy international success. One of the latest such achievements is the book of Professor Joanna Jurewicz *Fire and Cognition in the Ṛgveda* (Warsaw, 2011). Professor Richard Gombrich from the University of Oxford described her research on linguistics and philosophy of cognition as being

> so illuminating that they may rank as a true discovery. [...] Should anyone ask whether the humanities make discoveries comparable to those of natural science, they should be shown this book.

In Poland, the author received the Prime Minister's Award for outstanding scientific achievement. Professor Anna Parzymies was counted among the recipients of the UNESCO award. On her initiative, in 1994 the European Islam Department was established, carrying out research on the history of the European Islam, social and political movements of European Muslims, the history and contemporary developments in the contacts between Christianity and Islam, organization of Muslim life in Europe and the problems of Muslim integration in the European countries. She was the editor of a comprehensive monograph *Muzułmanie w Europie* ('Muslims in Europe'; Warsaw,

2005). The employees of the European Islam Department frequently act as experts in issues related to Muslims in Europe.

The Faculty of Oriental Studies offers two types of studies: *Oriental studies* and *Culture studies*. Within the frames of *Oriental studies* (organized in Poland only by the Faculty of Oriental Studies of the University of Warsaw) there are following specializations: African, Arab, Hebrew, Indian, Iranian, Japanese, Korean, Mongolian and Tibetan studies, Sinology, Turkology, as well as Ancient Eastern studies (Assyrian, Hittite and Egyptian).

The didactic program caters for the needs of students willing to learn about culture, i.e. history, literature, religion, philosophy and art of the Far and Middle Eastern and African countries, and languages which serve as tools for learning these cultures. The following languages are taught: Acadian, Amharic, Arabic, Bengali, Coptic, Chinese, Dari, Egyptian, Hausa, Hebrew, Hittite, Hindi, Japanese, Korean, Manchurian, Mongolian, Pashtu, Persian, Sanskrit, Swahili, Tamil, Turkish, Tibetan and Vietnamese.

One of the areas of activity of the Faculty is also the developmental education. The Faculty implemented two educational projects financed from the international aid program of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: *The Faces of Orient* (an educational toolkit), and *Cultural patterns of development in Asia and Africa* (a textbook on development). Currently, a third program is approaching completion, also financed from a MFA program.

Contact details

Faculty of Oriental Studies
University of Warsaw
ul. Krakowskie Przedmieście 26/28
00-927 Warsaw
Poland

☎ tel. +48 22 826 36 83, fax. +48 22 552 40 53
✉ orient@uw.edu.pl, http://orient.uw.edu.pl