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Safety of western women in the context of migration crisis and clash of cultural values

Bezpieczeństwo kobiet Europy Zachodniej w świetle kryzysu migracyjnego oraz zderzenia wartości kulturowych

Summary

The mass sexual assaults on western women on the streets of German cities on New Year's Eve 2015 committed by the migrants coming from non-European cultures caused a media panic which focused on the safety of western women in the context of the migration crisis. The likelihood of successful social and cultural integration of minorities originating in non-European cultures, especially in the Muslim minority, came back to the public debate. Perception of the role which the intercultural differences had in the New Year's Eve assaults – which was underestimated by the liberal-left circles and overemphasized by the right-wing ones became a contentious issue. The aim of this article is to diagnose the role of cultural and non-cultural factors (social, biological, psychological, demographic, economic and technological) in the mass sexual assaults on western women committed by the foreigners. Only an accurate identification of the role which the intercultural differences played in these events will help us correctly select and structure prevention integration programmes addressed to the migrants coming from non-European countries. In conclusion, the article presents an initial evaluation of prevention programmes implemented in Germany.

Keywords: migration crisis, intercultural differences, collision of values, Islam, patriarchy, sexual harassment.

Streszczenie

Wypadki grupowego molestowania seksualnego zachodnich kobiet na ulicach niemieckich miast w noc sylwestrową 2015 roku przez migrantów z kultur pozaeuropejskich

sprowokowały medialną panikę dotyczącą bezpieczeństwa zachodnich kobiet w warunkach kryzysu migracyjnego. W debacie publicznej powróciło pytanie o możliwość integracji społeczno-kulturowej mniejszości wywodzących się z kultur pozaeuropejskich, szczególnie zaś mniejszości muzułmańskiej. Kwestią sporną stała się ocena roli różnic międzykulturowych w wydarzeniach sylwestrowych – niedocenianych przez środowiska liberalno-lewicowe i przecenianych przez środowiska prawicowe. Celem artykułu jest diagnoza roli czynników kulturowych obok czynników pozakulturowych (społecznych, biologicznych, psychologicznych, demograficznych, ekonomicznych i technologicznych) w aktach grupowego molestowania zachodnich kobiet przez obcokrajowców. Od trafnego rozpoznania roli różnic międzykulturowych w tych wydarzeniach zależy trafność doboru i konstrukcji prewencyjnych programów integracyjnych skierowanych do migrantów z krajów pozaeuropejskich. Artykuł kończy wstępna ocena programów prewencyjnych realizowanych w Niemczech.

Słowa kluczowe: kryzys migracyjny, różnice międzykulturowe, zderzenie wartości, islam, patriarchyzm, molestowanie seksualne

The mass sexual assaults on women on the streets of German cities on New Year's Eve 2015 made the issue of safety of western women a permanent item on the agenda of moral panic about refugees and migrants in the name of cultural safety broadly understood as protection of western Christianity against Islam and, more specifically, protection of European women against sexual attacks committed by the "alien". The New Year's Eve assaults in Cologne and other German cities, disclosed only later in the atmosphere of scandal, shed light on the clash of cultures in the sphere of custom and brought up a question concerning the likelihood of successful social and cultural integration of the minorities originating in non-European cultures. Nonetheless, the atmosphere of moral panic polarizing the opinions of both the opponents and supporters of admitting refugees who originate in non-European cultures made it difficult (and still does) to hold a reasonable discussion on the challenges brought by the social and cultural integration of migrants¹. After the New Year's Eve assaults, the German public debate became dominated by a clash between liberal-left and right circles. It was a conflict between political correctness which understated the role of intercultural differences and culturalism which overemphasized the role of intercultural differences in the diagnosis of the New Year's Eve assaults.

This article is an attempt to look beyond the ideological polarization over the evaluation of the phenomenon and to present an answer to the question about the role of cultural and non-cultural factors (social, biological, psychological, demographic, economic and technological) in mass sexual assaults on women. Only

¹ The Polish "reflection" of the same moral panic was rape on a Polish woman in Rimini in summer 2017, which received a lot of media coverage.

a reasonable, unemotional diagnosis of these events could help us design effective prevention programmes in the field of social and cultural integration addressed to the migrant community. Evaluation of selected initiatives and programmes aimed at normalizing the male-female relations is presented at the end of this article.

The lull before the storm

Our analysis of the New Year's Eve sexual assaults in Cologne and other German cities (Hamburg, Dortmund, Frankfurt, Stuttgart, Bielefeld, Düsseldorf) should start with the delayed inflow of information about these events to the media in the first days of 2016 and first reactions of German politicians, which generated a new wave of moral panic about refugees and thus affected the social reception of the coming migrants, not only in Germany.

At the very beginning of January 2016, public German media remained silent unlike the social media, where the involuntary participants of the New Year's Eve assaults shared sensational stories and videos. Only on 3 and 4 January, under the pressure of Internet users who demanded information, the public media started to inform about the attacks on women by the „organized groups of young men from the North African countries” or „men who looked like Arabs”. On 5 January, Henriette Reker, mayor of Cologne spoke out making a controversial appeal to women to maintain special safety measures in public areas, i.e. to walk in groups and keep themselves “at arm's length” from the migrants coming from non-European cultures (Die Welt 2016). Information policy of the federal government and local authorities provoked strong emotions in the German society. Especially the Internet users were suspicious about intended misinformation about the difficult facts, harmful for the migration policy of the government in Berlin. The media censorship could be soon felt. On 9 January in Cologne and on 11 January in Leipzig, several thousands of PEGIDA supporters came out to the streets with the slogan *Rapefugees not welcome*. On 9 January in Cologne, feminist groups organized their protest. Demonstrating women demanded a reaction from silent Chancellor Angela Merkel, and carried banners calling for respect for women (“No means no. It is our right and we have the right to it. Hands off!” – which was an allusion to the words of the mayor of Cologne) (Pawlak 2016). It is worth noting that demonstrating women did not agree to ethnicizing violence the way PEGIDA did (“No to violence against women. No matter whether on New Year's Eve in Cologne, during the Oktoberfest in Bavaria or in the bedroom”).

All in all, the delay in disclosing the New Year's Eve assaults in Cologne by the media and long silence of the federal government and local authorities contributed to the growth of criticism against the „openness policy” promoted by Angela Merkel, decreasing trust in foreigners in German society, greater

popularity of anti-immigration parties and movements and increase in the number of attacks on refugee centres in Germany (PAP 2016).

New Year's Eve 2015 in the reports of the Bundeskriminalamt

The same political correctness which made the federal government and local authorities keep silent in the first days of January, apparently made the Federal Criminal Bureau (Bundeskriminalamt – BKA) conceal data from February and April 2016, which were disclosed by the German media (The Sueddeutsche Zeitung, NDR i WDR) only in summer 2016.

According to the reports of the Bundeskriminalamt (Frigeli 2016), on New Year's Eve 2015 only in Cologne there were approx. 900 attacks of sexual character (642 attacks were purely sexual while 239 were mixed – sexual assault and theft). Totally, on New Year's Eve over 1,200 women were attacked. Out of 2,000 men who took part in the assaults on women, 120 suspects were identified. Half of them were foreigners who came to Germany a few months earlier; they were mostly refugees/asylum seekers and illegal migrants. Those who were identified most often came from North Africa, i.e. Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia; there were also young Afghans (rarely Syrian citizens).

The New Year's Eve assaults had a typical scenario. German women walking alone, aged 18–24, were surrounded by a double circle of men and then – in the atmosphere of street hustle, which was made even greater by the attackers – they were touched/insulted/robbed. In total, by July 2016 the prosecutor's office received 1500 offence notifications (out of which about 500 regarded sexual assaults). Criminal charges were brought against 215 men, mostly Algerians and Moroccans (including 21 proceedings concerning attempted rape or rape). As prosecutor Ulrich Bremer noticed, “prosecution in these cases is difficult since the victims have problems to recognize the perpetrators” (Margraf 2016).

In July 2016, the first sentence was passed. The court in Cologne issued a suspended sentence of one year in prison with regard to one Algerian and one Iraqi attacker charged with assaults on two women. The first one attacked the women while the other one offered money to the accomplice to sexually abuse them (Margraf 2016). The trial was covered among others by “Die Welt” and “Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung”. Both convicts came to Germany with the great wave of refugees in 2014 and 2015 to seek asylum. The younger one – the 20-year-old Iraqi was additionally sent to an integration course due to his “knowledge deficit about gender equality”.

It is worth noting that mass sexual assaults also took place – although on a smaller scale – before and after the New Year's Eve 2015 in different German cities (e.g. during the music festival in Darmstadt in May 2016), as well as in other European countries like Sweden, Finland, Austria, Switzerland.

Moral panic and polarized opinion

In Germany, in the atmosphere of moral panic, new social theories (“hypotheses”) appeared about the causes of the assaults, which polarized public opinion. The most important ones, which competed for the souls and minds of the readers of “Die Zeit” and “Die Welt” soon after the affair was disclosed were: a “hypothesis” about an organized action against refugees and another “hypothesis” stating that we are all witnesses to an inevitable clash of civilizations.

The conflicting theories gave rise to two camps of moral panic which were created around them (Pasamonik 2017b). The first theory, put forward by left-liberal circles, tried to undermine or understate the role of cultural differences in mass sexual assaults, which overshadowed the idea of positive multiculturalism laying at the basis of the policy of openness towards refugees and migrants from different cultures. The “provocation hypothesis” assumed a well-orchestrated and organized action of “alien forces” (ISIS, Russian intelligence services) interested in polarizing the social and political situation in Germany.

The other theory saw the main cause of the events in the intercultural differences. The “hypothesis of clash of civilizations”, promoted by the right-wing, referred directly to the famous idea of Samuel Huntington (1996/2001) about an inevitable clash between the western world and Islam. This American political scientist showed the clash between religious Islam and ever more secularized Christianity, totalitarianism and democracy, between collectivism and individualism.

Finally, the moral panic spreading around refugees after the New Year’s Eve events in 2015 divided the public opinion into the promoters of two systems of values and related “hypotheses”. While the left-liberal circles declared to be defenders of open (multicultural) society, the right-wing groups declared to be defenders of national and Christian community (Pasamonik 2017a). Even when the hypothesis about an organized action against refugees was not confirmed by the investigation carried out by the Bundeskriminalamt, the left-liberal milieu did not change their argumentation. In defence of the idea of open society they now defended the perpetrators as „victims of patriarchal culture”, whom we need to understand and educate. It was argued that young Arabs have a difficult situation growing up under the pressure of artificial models of virility, while the German society should make more effort to facilitate integration of people harmed by their own culture (Por. Lipnicka, Klimiuk 2016). Moreover, the issue of unfavourable social conditions related to the situation of multi-dimensional deprivation of newly arrived migrants (non-cultural factors) was raised.

On the other hand, right-wing circles kept arguing that refugees were bad people (potential terrorists and rapists), and that we should defend our homeland against them („keep the barbarian hordes away at the gates of Europe”). The multicultural differences in this kind of argumentation appear to be essential and invariable. This kind of perception of intercultural differences leads to

ethnicization of the problem of sexual violence and to understating the non-cultural factors (e.g. social or economic ones).

The Bundeskriminalamt report which appeared in the public domain and the diagnosis stating that migrants brought the *taharrush gamea* practice (Frigeli 2016) from North Africa to Europe opened the door to a more objective analysis of the role of intercultural differences in the New Year's Eve events. Fear of culturalism (called new racism) paralysed the diagnostic procedure by the mechanism of political correctness. This special self-censorship is reflected in the statement of the American sociologist Richard Sennett (2016): „When we start to consider the issue of cultural motives of some kind of behaviour, we step onto a minefield where our discussion focuses on the question ‘why do Muslim men behave like this’. From this point there is only a step to racism.”

Taharrush gamea in Europe

In June 2016 German media published a classified BKA report called „New Year”, prepared in February 2016. The document included a report and a working diagnosis of the New Year's Eve assaults in Cologne². Its authors concluded that dynamic group processes were the cause of the New Year's Eve events (Frigeli 2016). This enigmatic term indicated that in the streets of European cities appeared a practice called *taharrush gamea* in the North African countries, which is a Muslim rape game. According to the report, the social context of *taharrush gamea* was created by the uncertainty about the future resulting from very low chances of receiving asylum, getting a job and reaching some stability, which in turn generated frustration and aggression, and also pressure of the group magnified by the sense of anonymity and sense of impunity due to a very low presence of the police.

The *taharrush gamea* practice originates in Egypt where it became popular in social media (which made it much easier to fix time and place for the *taharrush*) at the time of Arab revolution and then it spread to Algeria and Morocco, and with migration waves – to the countries of western Europe. According to Piotr Ibrahim Kalwas, Polish writer, reporter and a convert living in Alexandria since 2008, *in taharrush gamea men gather around one or more victims in two circles, and change places yelling. These demoniacal cries are meant to paralyse the victims even more with fear. The women are beaten, touched, robbed, and also verbally humiliated* (Kalwas 2016).

Initially, in Egypt the term *taharrush* referred to child sex abuse. Only in 2005, during the demonstration on the day of Egyptian constitutional referendum

2 Authors of the report focused on Cologne although similar sexual assaults were reported in Stuttgart, Frankfurt, Hamburg and Düsseldorf.

there was news about mass sexual assaults on women. This way, the term *taharrush* gained a more general meaning and was associated with the adjective *gamea* indicating its group character. Kalwas claims that sexual harassment in Egypt is a common practice during concerts, political demonstrations and mass religious festivities, e.g. during the close of Ramadan. A real explosion of *taharrush gamea* took place during the Arab Spring at Tahrir square and in the streets of Cairo. In February 2011, a report of a 44-year-old CBS correspondent from the Republic of South Africa, Lara Logan, was broadcast by the western media:

They drove away my cameraman and then several men formed a circle around me, or rather two circles. The men in the outer circle protected those from the inner ring, who attacked me and tried to strip my clothes off, calling me a “whore”. I was saved by my colleague journalists and Egyptian friends (After: Kalwas 2016).

It is worth noticing that the practice of sexual assaults in Egypt has been systematically growing over the last few years. While in the past sexual assaults on women in the streets at other occasions than public gatherings were a rare practice, today all Egyptian women are sexually harassed: whether in small or big groups, young or old, wearing a veil or not³.



III. 1. Egyptian graffiti saying: “No to sexual harassment”

Source: AP Photo/ Photo Maya Alleruzzo

In the countries of Northern Africa and Asia, where the social position of women is low, especially in economically underdeveloped regions or during the crisis (Egypt, Pakistan, India) everyday violence against women is growing in result of deprivation and sexual frustration.

³ According to the joint report of the UN, Egyptian Demographic Centre and National Planning Institute of 2013, 99 per cent of the female respondents experienced sexual harassment (Urzędowska 2014).

New Year's Eve events in Cologne versus the Rotherham case

In the context of the New Year's Eve events in Germany, the media brought to light yet another example of sexual violence against women, i.e. the scandal of sexual abuse of young girls in Rotherham. Between 1997 and 2013, approx. 1,400 young white girls fell victim of brutal sexual harassment by groups of men "of southern look". The case was concealed for a long time. The police and media were reluctant to admit that the men were immigrants from Pakistan, who assaulted white, minor girls. Andrew Norfolk, British correspondent for "The Times", described a long journalist investigation in which he participated:

Victims were always aged 12–15. The first contact was made in public places like shopping malls, city centres, bus and railway stations. The procedure of engaging and preparing the girls was always the same. At the beginning, they were "seduced": young men, only a few years older than the girls, flattered and wooed them. The girls were fascinated by the fact that someone was interested in them, offered them cigarettes, alcohol or a ride in expensive cars. The vision of having such a boyfriend was tempting. They engaged in sexual relations. However, sooner or later the victim was asked to prove her love going to bed with the boyfriend's friend. Then – with his friends. In the worst cases, the girls were taken to "parties" at home or put to the car and driven away to different places in the country, always to have sex, often violent sex. This was group crime. There was always more than one man involved. It was easy to notice that all these relationships had one thing in common. All the perpetrators had Muslim surnames (Norfolk 2014).

Let us note that in the Rotherham case, we have to do with deliberate use of cultural difference by the perpetrators. Young white British girls are perceived as "easy" sexual targets since they were brought up in liberal western culture unlike the Pakistani women educated to be "self-respecting" faithful wives. This is confirmed by the words of a Pakistani politician Sayeed Warsi, a minister in David Cameron government, who said in 2012 that "a small minority of the Pakistani regards all the women as second class citizens, and white women are classified as "third class" (after: Norfolk 2014). According to Warsi, for these men, white women are a "permitted target of attack or harassment".

It is worth adding that the first attempts made by the police to attract the attention of the local authorities, social assistance services or even the ministry of internal affairs were unsuccessful. The investigation revealed that for the entire decade (from 2002), the police and senior local government representatives knew what happened to the hundreds of young women in their area (they often knew the names of perpetrators), but consistently refused to take action. Even the disclosure of the results of journalist investigation in 2011 did not result in holding the perpetrators to account by the functionaries who underestimated

the problem for decades. Only heavy criticism of the local authorities by “The Times”, which reported the story of one of the victims, brought about an investigation which lasted a year. Moreover, a team of “The Times” journalists had to dismiss continuous allegations of instigating Islamophobia, fabricating data, fuelling the anti-immigration right, betraying liberal political philosophy, etc. The “Rotherham case” showed the power of political correctness in Great Britain, which was stronger than the concerns about the young white girls who fell victims of the traps plotted against them. The main problem for the left-liberal public opinion appeared to be the ethnic division into victims and perpetrators, or rather a reversal of the accepted order in which the “whites” harass the “coloured”.

The problem of reversibility of the roles of the victim and that of the perpetrator also refers to the events of the New Year’s Eve in Germany. Maria Lipnicka and Maciej Klimiuk (2016) posed a question about the consequences of recognizing violence perpetrators in refugees – where should prevention measures be tightened: in the area of safety and migration restrictions or perhaps in the field of cultural and economic integration? The difficulty of seeing the figures of both perpetrators and victims in refugees or – broadly speaking – migrants makes the public discourse divided into the accusers and defenders of the latter. However, both sides never acknowledge or they underestimate the arguments of their opponents.

In search of the intercultural difference

Perpetrators of sexual assaults in Cologne and Rotherham have different ethnic background (in the case of Germany they come from North African countries while those from Great Britain originate in South Asia), but they have common religion (Islam) and share the values of patriarchal culture, which often overlap in a way which is invisible even for the Muslims. This means that in the analysis of these events, religious and cultural perception of woman, her roles, rights and obligations should be taken into consideration.

It is worth noting that liberalization of custom which also involves a change in gender roles and gender relations has been progressing for over half a century in the West but has not yet caused analogous transformations all over the world. Poorer, agrarian societies in Africa and Asia are still stuck in their religious conservatism of custom. The World Values Survey of 1995–2001 (Inglehart, Norris, 2003) has shown that the greatest cultural distance between the world of Islam and the western world is that of liberalization of custom. Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris, in the article under a significant title „*The True Clash of Civilisations*”, argue that today the Muslim and western cultures differ more in terms of *eros* than *demos*.

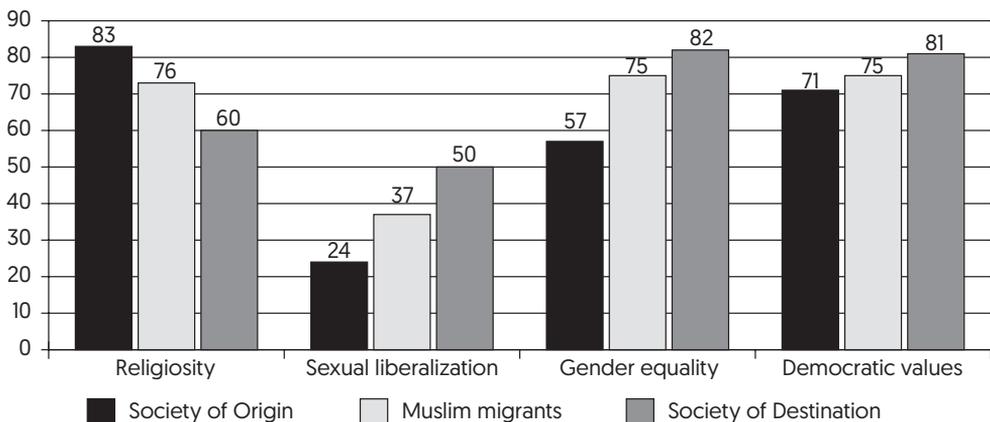
Tab. 1. Approval of Political and Social Values in western and Muslim Societies

Area	Western respondents – % supporting/ accepting	Muslim respondents – % supporting/ accepting
Democratic performance	68	68
Democratic ideals	86	87
Gender equality	82	55
Divorce	60	35
Abortion	48	25
Homosexuality	53	12

Source: World Values Survey, pooled sample 1995–2001 (Inglehart, Norris 2003).

What is more, the difference between Islam and West in the field of sexual liberalization and gender equality is greater among the youngest generations although some decades ago there was no significant difference between them. Nowadays, the economic independence of women, their sexual freedom and roles shock those who come from North America and Middle East.

An important role in this division was played by the counter-cultural movement and sexual revolution of the 1960s. Some risk saying that the West provoked “sexual clash of civilisations” in its lonely pursuit of custom liberalization. Even western Muslims living in liberal democracies largely accept the democratic system (75 per cent) but not liberalism in the sphere of custom (37 per cent) (Inglehart, Norris 2009a; Pasamonik 2013).



III. 2. Cultural values by type of society and religious identity

Source: World Values Survey 1981–2007 (Inglehart, Norris 2009a)

Comparative analysis of the declared values in the communities of Muslim immigrants, both in their Muslim countries of origin and in the western countries where they settled has shown, that the values shared by the Muslims living in western societies are half way through between those dominating in their home countries and the countries in which they settled. In other words, Muslim communities living in western societies are now adapting to the western culture. We should note however, that the West itself is deeply divided in the field of sexual liberalization (50 per cent).

The counter-culture of the 1960s accelerated the liberalization process and at the same time initiated an internal war in the West – between liberals and conservatives – which has been continuing incessantly up to now (cf. Jawor 2014). The clash of values between liberalism and conservatism is now taking place in a double reference system: inner-cultural and inter-cultural. This means that polarization of values refers both to immigrants living in western societies, to western societies themselves and to the communities of migrant origin (Pasamonik 2013). The main object of this conflict is female corporeality, sexuality and gender – the roles played by women, behavioural patterns, lifestyle, their rights and obligations. This conflict in the inter-cultural sphere is manifested by the European debates and prohibition of Muslim scarves in public schools or *burkini* in the swimming pools as well as the problem of sexual harassment of girls at public swimming pools or lack of respect shown to female teachers by Muslim boys.

According to the diagnosis put forward by Ronald Inglehart, director of the World Values Survey, the kind of religion is much more important for the perception of women and their rights than the degree of religiosity (Inglehart, Norris 2009b). In his opinion, the Muslim tradition is one of the most powerful barriers to the development of gender equality. On the other hand, Islam spreading some time ago in the Middle East and North Africa became part of the local patriarchal tribal traditions. Even before Muhammad, the tribes which lived in these areas, fighting for the spheres of influence, raped the women from the opposing tribe to pass their blood to the enemy's children and this way to humiliate the enemy.

This old cruel war practice shaped the opinion that rape is the worst dishonour for the tribe. Therefore, to save the honour, for centuries the raped women were killed and even today in Afghanistan rape victims are imprisoned (Benson, Stangroom 2011). In this context, aversion to women increased in general. This manifested itself in killing newborn baby girls in fear that in the future they could be raped and thus pose a threat to the honour of the tribe. Interestingly, Muhammad began to change this community practice. He prohibited to kill newborn baby girls. He also said that women must not be killed for what happened against their will, e.g. for rape.

With time, traditional code of honour mixed with religious principles. In cultures of honour, which were and still are tribal and patriarchal cultures,

honour has always been first and foremost the matter of men. Paradoxically, it fully depends on the woman (wife, daughter), and specifically on her sexual chastity or even on the neighbours' opinion about it. Sexist mentality and treating women instrumentally, which is so readily associated with Islam, largely results from the combination of living patriarchal traditions, poor education, poverty and ambiguous message of the Koran.

An overlap between tradition and religion has created a discrepancy between ethics and morality in the world of Islam. Although sexual relations are allowed in Islam only for married couples (premarital and extramarital sexual relations are officially strictly forbidden and punished), and the requirement of sexual chastity refers both to men and women, in practice, in patriarchal societies men are allowed to do more. As Maria Ossowska notices in "Socjologia moralności" (1963/2005), moral evaluation depends both on the gender of the evaluated person and that of the victim. In fact, in Muslim societies men are treated more leniently whereas women are severely punished for breaking the principles of sexual chastity. Honour killings, often committed by the victim's brothers, who have "female friends", are dictated by the patriarchal tradition of honour, not religion. Declared morality differs from the morality of everyday conduct (Machut-Mendecka 2016). Men actively seek premarital sexual relations with women. Young girls who are in love or emancipated women accept it. It is worth specifying that "religious" Muslim men never marry the women who once agreed to have such sexual relations (even out of love) since they see them as "deprived of dignity". Their future wife must be a virgin. For the same reason, Muslim women who have secret boyfriends, try not to lose their virginity by using alternative sexual techniques. On the other hand, Muslim women who were not careful enough and lost their virginity, will use hymen reconstruction surgery (or less expensive, artificial hymen *made in China*) to return onto the matrimonial market or will ask a gynaecologist they know to issue a "positive" virginity certificate.

Socialization in the restrictive culture of honour and shame generates suppressed sexuality and sexual frustrations of Muslim men and lack of respect for women who do not obey the rules of modesty (*hidjab*). Lack of gender segregation in western societies and emancipation of women makes the public sphere seem a sphere of temptation and sin. In other words, life of western metropolis is a sheer moral provocation for the Muslim people brought up in the cult of modesty.

French suburbs as an area of reactivated culture of honour

The clash of cultural liberalism and conservatism refers not only to refugees or to the first generation of economic migrants from the conservative countries in

the Middle East and North Africa settling in liberal European cities. The book "Rola płci w integracji europejskich muzułmanów" (2013) describes a kind of gender war waged at the French suburbs among the immigrant communities in the second and third generation. This conflict takes place in the same area of inter-cultural differences referring to perception of woman, her role, rights and sexual relations. It should be remembered in the context of *taharrush gamea* practice which appeared on the streets of German cities.

Long before the riots in the French suburbs in November 2005, life of immigrant communities was dominated by intra-group violence between genders. In 2003, Beata Komand described the life in the suburbs:

The custom in French suburban residential areas became brutish. These areas – inhabited by the poor ethnic world communities living in France – started to have their own rules, especially the rule of force. One will no longer see teenagers riding a bike or roller-skating; girls do not play volleyball, do not chat with boys in the courtyard, do not go to evening courses or local clubs. The public sphere is reserved for men. Girls do not walk holding boys' hands, do not look into their eyes. It would be shame for the boys in front of their friends. Girls are afraid not to be called names. "When I want to see my boyfriend, I fix a date in Paris" shrugs 17-year-old Anne. "I do the same when I just want to do some window shopping, I go to the city centre. Here a group of idiots terrorizes us all and the police does not even pop in here" (Komand 2003).

A girl who walks alone in the neighbourhood risks that a group of boys will assault and offend her. Girls with tarnished reputation risk being touched by groups of boys, spat in the face, and in extreme cases – kicked or raped. Samira Bellil (2002) disclosed that gang rape is a plague of the suburbs. A 17-year-old interlocutor of Komand admitted that *if a girl is not a virgin, it is not rape anymore. Girls who are approached are those who ask for it. A girl who respects herself does not hang out in the neighbourhood, she stays at home, looks after her younger siblings* (after: Komand 2003).

To understand how the "custom evolution" described by Komand developed, it is worth reading an autobiography by Fadela Amara entitled *Breaking the silence. French women's voices from the ghetto* (2006). Daughter of Algerian immigrants, living since her birth (in 1964) in an immigrant residential area Clermont-Ferrand, describes the reality of suburbs of her youth and evolution of custom which took place later. Amara remembers that 90% of her neighbours were Algerians and only 10% was European. However, the children were taught discipline and respect to the elderly. Fathers were proud of their daughters, who went to universities and took degrees. Still in the 1970s, boys and girls grew up together in the same neighbourhood. At school and outside their families, during school excursions, boys and girls did not keep apart as they do now. The word "respect" did not only refer to their parents and to the elderly but also to the relations between boys and girls. No boy from the neighbourhood would

dare offend a girl or touch her. If he saw her, e.g. outside their neighbourhood with a group of boys he did not know, he could tell the girl's brother about it but he would never think of expressing his disapproval publicly or solving this problem on his own. There was tacit permission: as long as a girl did not show up publicly with a boy, she was left in peace.

The first changes occurred about 1990, when the suburbs started to suffer from high unemployment. Immigrants were the first ones to be made redundant when a factory was restructured. Fathers would be suddenly left without jobs and deprived of their social status. This state of forced uselessness completely changed their role within the family and undermined their authority as fathers. Up to then, they had been the only ones to have authority, to establish the rules of family life and solve disputes between brothers and sisters. Now the elder sons took to the stage. They took over their fathers' authority, replaced them in their caring and repressive roles. Families started to be gradually organized around the sons. These felt authorized to teach family values to their sisters, to watch and discipline their behaviour at home. In connection with this change in roles within the family, the eldest sons want their authority to be recognized both within the family and in the neighbourhood. Their mission is clearly defined: to protect moral chastity of their sisters, and thus their own honour, honour of the family and of the neighbourhood. This in turn means that young women from these residential areas more and more rarely go out. And if they manage to negotiate permission to leave, they have to wear the scarf and to be accompanied by another girl who is accepted by the family, or sometimes by her brother. Outside the family, mixed-sex company is forbidden. Year by year, girls more and more frequently are forced to stay at home. Another step in strengthening the authority of the elder brothers in the neighbourhood was to extend it from their sisters to all young women. This change in boys' attitude towards girls was slow but unidirectional.

In her reportage (2010) entitled *La cité du mâle* (play of words: "city of evil/men": *mal* – evil and *mâle* – male, man), Cathy Sanchez, a documentary writer, talks with young residents of the suburban la Cité Balzac and Vitry-sur-Seine, a housing estate where in 2003 18-year-old Sohane Benziane was burnt alive by a teenage gang since she had "poor reputation". In this neighbourhood, Sanchez is trying to find out why customs have become so brutal and how could such atrocious acts of sexual violence against girls from the suburbs occur. The recurring theme of her conversations with young people is the classification of girls into those who are "good-obedient" and "bad-bitches". For instance, her interlocutor seeing a girl in the neighbourhood, describes her in the following way: "Her name is Truc and she is a virgin". Sexual chastity appears to be the fundamental factor in defining male-female relationships in the suburbs. One of her interlocutors, Amid, admits that 80% of boys from the neighbourhood have already had their sexual initiation but they will never marry the girls to whom they "did it".

One other interlocutor, Amid, admits that if his sister did "it" (i.e. have extramarital sexual relation) he would be treated like a homosexual, i.e. he would

irreversibly lose his reputation. Therefore, even when a girl is adult and is 28 years old, and there is no father at home, even her younger brother is obliged to control her behaviour. Unsatisfactory result of such control (e.g. inappropriate outfit, late return home) often ends up with corporeal punishment. Amid says that control of sisters by their brothers is something natural and he explains: boys from the suburbs have an ideal of chastity, an image of an ideal woman. The woman's body is reserved for her husband, and therefore, it has to be modestly covered from against the eyes of strangers. Low neckline, tight clothes seem to be saying "she did it" (slept with a man!). A girl who does not dress modestly apparently does not respect herself, and so does not merit respect of others.

La cité du mâle is a diagnosis of male subculture spreading in the suburbs and also a kind of "macho" identity. Machismo spreads wherever economic and social degradation occurs. Macho culture is a subculture of those who are no longer rooted in immigrant cultures and not yet enrooted in the European culture, a subculture of young unemployed men. The patriarchal tradition mentioned above, strengthened by reference to the holy religious books legalizes male domination, expressed in the control over women in the "territories abandoned by France". In the context of marginalization, humiliation of others is one of the few ways to rebuild one's own value. It so happens that humiliated women are potential critics of male roles, and so disarming of their critical potential by means of a stick, fear and religion has a functional sense. Instrumentally treated religion is the ultimate legitimization of subordination of women and strict chastity ethics.

As anthropological research carried out by Marta Mai (2010) shows, sexual experience in the case of Arab men is not only a matter of pleasure but also of their status. "At a certain age, men should have already had their sexual initiation and know everything about it". Virility is a matter of honour, and thus men should care about their status and control their sexuality. The macho subculture competes here with the morality of Islam.

At this point, the French experience can be referred to the German experience. In the case of French suburbs, we deal with reactivation of tribal fixation on sexual chastity of women and hiding their corporeality, which is accompanied by greater violence against those who do not respect the code of modesty, the code which shifts the entire responsibility for the struggle against temptations onto the woman. Ahmad Mansour, a Palestine-Israeli psychologist working in Berlin with difficult Arab youngsters, puts forward a similar diagnosis with regard to German reality. Perceiving women as prey especially when they wear a skirt which is not even knee-long or if they walk alone, is deeply enrooted in the image of chastity and dignity. *A woman must safeguard her innocence and not show up in public. And if she does not obey these rules, it means that she does not merit to be treated with respect. Naturally, these rules do not refer to men* (Mansour 2016). Also, the study carried out by Christian Pfeiffer from Lower Saxony has revealed that the macho style dominates among the Muslim

teenagers. Boys from Muslim families tend to use violence more than their peers coming from the families of Christian immigrants. They are also more inclined to play brutal computer games and have friends with criminal record. According to Pfeiffer, the responsibility for the macho culture lay with Imams in Germany, who usually come from abroad (The Local 2010).

Let us note that the context of these social phenomena is the “sexual clash of civilizations” diagnosed by Ronald Inglehart. The contemporary western women’s fashion promotes “being sexy”, which is the art of seduction within the culturally shifted limits of provocation. Low necklines, short skirts and tight jeans obviously do not make it easier for men to concentrate on intellectual and spiritual virtues of women. In the western culture it is obligatory to control one’s own libido (inner-containment) while in the culture of Islam external control dominates (gender segregation, women covered with veils, severe punishment for sexual offences). The contemporary scandal and #MeToo movement show that even in the liberal western culture the limits of permissible provocation can be blurred for the actors of flirt, which is in turn influenced by supra-cultural psychological differences between sexes and seeking sexual intentions, for example, in a smile (Buss 2001).

Supra-cultural factors strengthening inter-cultural differences

The BKA report of February 2016, which included a working diagnosis of the New Year’s Eve assaults in Cologne, pointed to an important social context of *taharrush gamea*. These were: uncertainty of the future resulting from low probability of finding asylum, getting a job and achieving stability, which generates frustration and aggression as well as pressure of the group strengthened with a sense of anonymity and impunity caused by a very low presence of the police.

Indeed, we can speak of a combination of different situational and non-cultural factors, which provoke or reactivate sexist thinking scripts and group behaviour like *taharrush gamea*. I suggest considering the following factors: sociological, demographic, biological, economic, psychological and technological ones, which are closely connected in the case of the events under consideration.

Social factor refers first and foremost to abrupt erosion of the migrants’ social order. In the case of refugees, the present standards stopped normalizing their lives still in their home countries ravaged by wars. Then, there was a chaotic and traumatic crossing to Europe. Chronic uncertainty of the future mentioned in the BKA report and deep cultural change do not foster quick reconstruction of the social order in exile. Morality is one of the most important factors constituting social order. It requires, however, a community which regulates and controls the behaviour of an individual. And it is difficult to find one in a foreign city. Migrants have been uprooted from their homelands but they

have not yet settled in the new countries and sometimes they do not know them yet (they are still waiting for asylum). This transitional period, being a kind of suspension between the old and new world, is often time of loosening morality: old standards and their motivations do not work anymore while the new moral order is not obvious or not sufficiently recognized.

In the case of *taharrush gamea*, an important social factor is also pressure exerted by the peer group and conformity of the young people yielding to this pressure, for whom the migrant group is the only or the fundamental group of reference and a substitution community in the context of social alienation.

Demographic factor refers to over-representation of young men in the migrant group who came to Europe at the peak of “migrant crisis”⁴. According to the Pew Research Center data, over half (53 per cent) of refugees who arrived in 2015 in Europe were young people aged 18–34 (Connor 2016). Three quarters of asylum seekers (73 per cent) were men⁵. All in all, approx. four out of ten migrants who came to Europe in 2015 were young men aged between 18 and 34. Also, in the numerous group of children and young people under 18 (20 per cent), as many as 90 per cent were men (IOM). Such a demographic structure of migrant groups have always been a matter of concern in the host societies. According to statistical data, an overwhelming majority of offences is committed by men⁶. Let us add that the men who came to Europe are mostly at their reproductive age, and they came without wives (some left their wives in the country of origin, some do not have wives yet), which in long-term perspective generates deprivation and sexual frustration. Also additional elements of demographic characteristics of the migrants raise concerns of the Europeans – religious, cultural, ethnic and racial difference increases the “alien” character of the newcomers. On the other hand, in the group of economic migrants people with lower education, low professional qualifications and low material status are over-represented.

Biological factor consists in the inclination of the groups with a homogeneous demographic structure (young men) to aggressive behaviour. As socio-biologists and evolutionary psychologists argue, *the mechanism triggering aggression appeared to be a tool to solve different adaptation problems, such as struggle for resources, competition to gain and keep a partner or social position* (Buss 2001: 335–336). And thus, risky aggressive acts are undertaken mostly by

4 Prevalence of young men in the population of refugees often results from a rational decision made by the family “who to invest in?” – who has better chances of surviving the sea crossing to Europe and bringing the other family members to a new country.

5 Such is the proportion in dominating groups from Syria (71 per cent), Iraq (75 per cent) and Afghanistan (89 per cent), while other national groups are almost totally dominated by men: Gambia – 97 per cent, Pakistan – 95 per cent, Bangladesh – 95 per cent (Connor 2016).

6 When at the turn of the 19th century, at the railway stations in New England appeared crowds of Polish emigrants – mostly “young men”, the local press also alarmed the public, generating moral panic.

men who risk being excluded from the matrimonial market. On the other hand, young women of high reproductive value, and therefore attractive for men, are mostly threatened with violence. Especially threatened are young attractive women who are alone. Interestingly, women are more enraged if the harassing man has a low social status. In the end, women react more violently than men to sexual harassment acts such as touching without permission or continual sexual proposals. Men, in turn, underestimate the power of women's negative reactions to sexual harassment (Buss 2001).

Psychological factor refers to the poor sense of safety resulting from uncertainty of the future, i.e. asylum, work, stability. It generates frustration and aggression as well as low self-confidence. Lack of work means no resources, low social status and consequently low position on the matrimonial market. Particular challenge for the male identity of migrants is posed by sexually freed and professionally active western women. Fatima Mernissi, Moroccan sociologist, in her book entitled *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in a Muslim Society* published in 1975, describes transformations in the gender roles in Muslim societies as one of the key events, which confronted the world of Islam with modernity. In the preface to the 1987 edition, Mernissi notices in the reviving fundamental conservatism a reactionary response of the Muslim society not prepared to the custom revolution as well as social and cultural destabilization (Mernissi 1975/2003). A few years before Castells, Mernissi diagnosed the Islamic fundamentalism as a strictly modern movement promising restoration of the destabilized patriarchal order. We can risk a conclusion that religious fundamentalism has therapeutic functions in this case – it provides clear directives of how to behave in breakthrough times, in the face of numerous and deep changes making an individual feel disoriented and lost. And therefore, return to the fundamentally patriarchal version of Islam is a way to enroot, to find stable ground and order.

Economic factor is first of all lack of work and low social status which affect the identity of a Muslim man. At this point, let us quote again the diagnosis of Fatima Mernissi, who, already in the 1970s, warned against the fact that destabilized men, uncertain of their future, live in city slums and provincial Moroccan towns experiencing economic standstill. Their rural origin makes them experience the clash of values resulting from the new, urban lifestyle even more intensely. What is more, universities admit more and more marginalized immigrants from rural areas but also women. There is an unprecedented blur of gender and class distinctions. Girls get married later because of education, and boys – because of unstable professional and economic situation (no diploma, no job). Mass education of women greatly affects their self-perception and identity. At the same time male identity defined traditionally as an ability to earn money and maintain the family does not accept the option of being unemployed. Mernissi talks about a castrating dimension of the collapse of the labour market. If labour, which defines male identity, becomes more available

for women than men, men lose their masculinity since “there is no authority outside the male family, there are no men without money” (Mernissi 1975/2003, p. 171). In this situation, Arab men are ambivalent about both inactive women, i.e. those who exert pressure on professional activity of men, and active women, who symbolically castrate their male identity.

Technological factor means common access to fast Internet, which allows young people to spontaneously organize themselves in groups on social media (e.g. fix *tahharush gamea*). Common access to Internet means also common access to pornography, which shapes a special attitude towards women among the youngest generations, especially in Muslim countries. According to PornMD survey, six out of ten societies in the world who watch most porn are Muslim countries (Pakistan, Egypt, Iran, Morocco, Saudi Arabia and Turkey) (Sabeer 2015)⁷. For instance, just in 2013, PornHub had about 15 billion views. By means of PornIQ tool, PornHub may generate a playlist reflecting specific requirements of their users. According to Philip Zimbardo and Nikita Coulombe (2015), negative effects of excessive porn viewing in the condition of social isolation are greatest among young people who had no real sexual contacts before. It is so because they perceive sex only in terms of physical act, mechanically engaging parts of the body without feelings, emotions, intimacy, communication, negotiation, sharing, or even touching and kissing. Sex has become impersonal. The object of sexual desire becomes indifferent after the sexual intercourse as there has never been any bond with her. As we can assume, addiction to porn websites does not contribute to shaping a personalized attitude to women in the Muslim world.

Conclusions and recommendations for prevention

Sexual assaults on women in German cities on New Year’s Eve 2015 make part of a broader context of the clash of conservative values and those of liberalism of custom revealed in the study of the World Values Survey (Inglehart, Norris 2003). The above analysis shows that the European cases of group sexual harassment were an aftermath of cultural diffusion or new social practice (*taharrush gamea*) and not of a traditional custom, but a custom which was generated at the very bottom of the society at the time of the Arab Spring in result of overlap of patriarchal-Muslim perception of women and loosening morality. Therefore, the cultural factor has a significant importance in this case, but it is not isolated, it is activated in the situation of deprivation, sense of abandonment, exclusion and frustration. Let us note that the practise of sexual harassment is considered to be blameworthy both in the western and Muslim world. Across

7 Data were provided by Google in response to the questions coming from different countries.

the world there is also a discrepancy between religious codes of ethics having the function of ideal models and everyday practice, i.e. behaviour which is far from moral perfection, especially at the time of abrupt social transformations.

As the above analysis has shown, the role of non-cultural factors in the appearance of *taharrush gamea* on the streets of European cities is significant. However, the fundamental factor triggering this type of behaviour is the patriarchal culture of honour, which in combination with the code of ethics takes dignity and respect away from western woman. Ahmad Mansour working with Arab young people (2016) admits that all young Muslims (both men and women) fall victims of patriarchal structures. Mothers convince their daughters that they have to get married as virgins and should not study too much. Girls who adopt this way of thinking also criticize the girls who do not wear scarves or have a boyfriend. Boys share the same hierarchy of values in respect of women and use physical force to consolidate the patriarchal order. Restrained attitude to sexuality leads to a situation in which women perceive a man only as a potential rapist while men see a woman as their property or a whore. In result, many young Muslims are not able to develop natural relations with the other sex (Mansour 2016).

In conclusion, the most problematic cultural difference in the relations between Muslim migrants and western cities dwellers is now the attitude towards women, specifically, contempt for women who do not meet the Muslim modesty standards. It is this intercultural difference that should undergo specific “foundation work” in the programmes of cultural integration. This means that we mostly need acculturation in the field of western morality. In my opinion, educational programmes in the field of women’s rights or classical sexual education (sexual education classes in Bavarian public schools for boys of migrant origin, courses of flirting for the refugees in Essen called “How to fall in love in Germany?” or a website devoted to sexual education for adult immigrants “Zanzu: my body in picture and words”) are insufficient. Problematic gender relations will not be remedied by stricter penal law either⁸. In other words, programmes which are based solely on formal education, i.e. informing about legal and custom rules in the western culture – do not meet the needs. The problematic intercultural difference lies deeper in the subconscious concepts of sexual roles, sexuality and morality.

Let us note that the European dispute over acceptance of refugees and, broadly speaking, migrants from the non-European cultures, includes a dispute

8 German parliament approved amendments to the Penal Code which extend the definition of rape and facilitate deportation of migrants who commit sexual offence. According to “No Means No” Act (*Nein heißt Nein*), every form of forced sexual intercourse is deemed to be an offence. Every convict sentenced for sexual activity which was against the “noticeable will” of the victim (*erkennenbaren Willen*) can spend up to five years in prison. The act also extends the definition of sexual assault by touching, which is liable for two year’s restriction of freedom. Earlier, only the cases where victims could not prove that they opposed their assailants could be punished according to the German law.

about the concept of culture as such. Conservatives do not believe in the integration of migrants from non-European cultures, since they perceive culture in a determinist way as an invariable essence. On the other hand, the left-liberal circles view culture in an indeterminist way – as baggage which can be gradually replaced. Research carried out by Inglehart and Norris (2009a) confirms that culture is not a kind of destiny from which we cannot free ourselves. However, individual elements of our cultural experience are more or less deeply entrenched in our psyche. Imagination and convictions about gender roles, sexuality and morality are acquired during the primary socialization, and are therefore much more difficult to modify than political convictions acquired during the secondary socialization. In this context, the diagnosis put forward by Inglehart and Norris (2003) that Muslims living in western societies can be nowadays distinguished more by *eros* than *demos* – is not surprising.

Reconstruction of images and convictions about gender roles, sexuality and morality requires more complex and long-term methods than lectures on sexual education. An example of a programme which touches upon the essence of the problem is HEROES project run by Ahmed Mansour in Berlin-Neukölln which aspires to change the Muslim code of honour (Friedrich 2010). Trained “Heroes”, aged 17–21, originating in immigrant families visit schools and clubs to talk with young people of Arab and Turkish origin. Young people have greater chances to get their message across to their peers and tell them that they see and understand the concept of honour differently. During the discussions in a group or drama classes (role playing) the participants are encouraged to reflect and think over the men-female relations. Let us note that the change in the way of thinking about honour and gender equality brought about by the HEROES project undermines the ideas instilled at home. Change in the way of thinking in the area of gender roles, sexuality and morality are difficult to develop over a short time and even more difficult to obtain during the school sexual education courses run by white, adult teachers.

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