przegląd krytyczny | critical review

Navigating Islamophobia: the tale of two Polands

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ABSTRACT: The paper analyses the Islamophobic and anti-refugee narratives in Poland through the lens of two different modes of patriotism. These two types of patriotism reflect a great division within Polish society, i.e. between openness and aspiration towards EU and closeness and pride from Polish history. Islamophobic and anti-refugee discourse are powerful tools used in contemporary political discourse by the ruling party, yet they exemplify only one of many layers of the division. The paper starts with setting the framework for Islamophobic discourse in Poland, namely lacking post-colonial reflection and cultural homogeneity. It uses the concept of social imaginary to analyse conflicting discourses on Muslims and refugees on three different examples: use of Polish history for as a source of integration vs. defence against allegations; welcoming refugees as European obligation vs. obligation of EU towards Poland, and endorsing multiculturalism vs. Poland as *antemurale christianitatis*.
KEYWORDS: Poland, Islamophobia, patriotism, discourse, Muslims

INTRODUCTION

The story of Polish Islamophobia has been told in many different ways, even if it starts with the same core information: the number of Muslims in Poland is marginal and does not exceed 0,1% of the whole population. The history of Islamic presence on Polish soil reaches back to the 14th century and through all this time Polish autochthonous Muslim population—the Tatars—have been peacefully living in the Christian mainstream society. The other Muslims who live in contemporary Poland—of migrant origin and those who converted to Islam – have never posed any significant challenge to the state, nor to its citizens. Moreover, in 2015 there were hardly any refugees who were willing to flee to Poland, and most of the few who actually came over, decided to leave for Germany.

Yet, when it comes to anti-refugee or anti-Muslim sentiments[1] Poland tops on both of these two scales—internally and externally. By the first one I mean that anti-refugee and anti-Muslim sentiments are high comparing to negative sentiments expressed towards other vulnerable groups. For instance Muslims, refugees and gays are the most popular targets of hate speech on the Internet (Winiewski et al. 2017: 32). By the second one I refer to comparative studies which for many years have been indicating that Poles have similar or even more negative sentiments to Muslims than other Europeans. For instance according to the 2019 Pew Research Centre report, 66% of Poles hold negative views of Muslims in their country, while only 26% have favourable opinion (Pew Research Center 2019). Citizens of West European countries (UK, France, Netherlands, Germany, Sweden) express much more favourable attitudes towards Muslims (68–78%) comparing to unfavourable ones (18–28%). Citizens of Spain, Italy and Greece – the three countries affected significantly by the European crisis of refugees – express similar level of unfavourable attitude towards Muslims like the Poles (42–57%), but at the same time are much more positive to their Muslim population (37–54%). Countries which share the same mostly negative attitude towards Muslims like Poland are the other Visegrád members and Lithuania.

Interestingly, the question formulated in the Pew Research Center report refereed to Muslims who live in the country of the respondent, i.e. to the local Muslim population. Taking into account not only the marginal Muslim population in Poland, but also that less than a fifth Pole knows a Muslim in person (Stefaniak 2015: 5-6), brings in the core of the story: Islamophobia without Muslims. This story has been narrated in many different ways. Some authors believe that there is nothing special about Eastern Europe in terms of its Islamophobia. According to Ivan Kalmar, East European Islamophobia and populism do not significantly differ from similar phenomena in the Western hemisphere, they are only stronger and the marginal Muslim population combined with the specific post-communist legacy makes them more visible (Kalmar 2020). In similar manner Farid Hafez argues that Muslimless Islamophobia is not unique for Eastern part of Europe for its essence that goes much further into every day for of racism (Hafez n.d). Other authors point at the discrepancy between the number of local Muslims and the strength of ideological capital that it might accumulate and rise in national politics (Dudzińska & Kotnarowski 2019) in order to provoke fears and anxiety (Górak-Sosnowska & Pachocka 2019). This is not to say that the more Muslims are in the country, the more negative sentiments expressed towards them are justifiable. That would be a too easy fit for anti-Muslim rhetoric. It is rather the ease by which Islamophobic narratives paved their way to mainstream politics and are used to mobilise people.

SETTING THE FRAMEWORK

The argument whether Polish (or wider East European) Islamophobia is distinctive and unique depends on how is it framed. On one side, it fits into the global incompat-

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[1] In Polish public discourse these two categories—of Muslims and refugees—are often interlinked (see Narkowicz 2018). I decided to use them separately or jointly, but not interchangeably.

ible racial divisions, white anxieties and the global racial imaginary (Barder 2019). On the other side, it is local in the way it is manifested, spreading and flourishing. While the use ontological threats against unwanted 'Others' has been visible in Europe and identified as one of the indicators of the rise of populism and crisis of the idea of the nation state (Kinnavall 2017), Poland seems to be a much more fertile ground for such narratives. Two reasons contribute to this state of art.

The first one is the lack of colonial legacy. While countries of Western Europe have been developing post-colonial studies and critical reflection on how colonialism has impacted social, political and economic realities in Asia and Africa, this approach has been missing from most of East European reflection[2]. By the time West European countries were exercising its colonial domination, the Poles were struggling to keep their independence in the new political order, as their country had been divided between the three neighbouring countries. In the harsh time of partition, which ended by the end of the World War I, Poles not only longed for getting their country back, but also put all their effort into maintaining their culture and national identity. Significantly, 1918 is celebrated and commemorated in Poland only in terms of gaining back the independence, without any critical reflection on the World War I. Only for two decades Poles enjoyed their freedom with the World War II starting in 1939 that brought death and destruction and cemented the narrative of Polish victimisation (Renner 2016). When the process of decolonialization was on the rise with a gradual inflow of people from Africa and Asia to Western Europe, Poland got under the USSR umbrella and remained behind the' Iron curtain till the late 80's. Postcolonial theory did not only find there a fertile ground, but was to a great extend perceived as unnecessary—it were the Polish people who were colonialized by external superpowers. This narrative has a profound impact on how the current anti-refugee and anti-Muslim discourse is constructed.

The second reason is the homogenous ethnic and religious landscape of contemporary Poland. While Poland used to be culturally diverse and was built up of various ethnic and religious groups, some of which fled persecution from elsewhere and were welcomed in Poland, it is nowadays one of the most homogenous countries in Europe. According to the 2011 census over 97% of population declared Polish nationality, and of those who answered the question about religion—over 95% declared Catholicism (GUS 2013: 89-90). In other words, except for the few biggest cities (in fact their centres), Poland is nowadays an ethnic and religious monolith. Those who do not fit into these categories are often perceived as aliens. In terms of ethnicity, Bolaji Balogun (2020) speaks about Polish-centrism and frames it into everyday biological practices that reproduce and strengthen the differences between Poles and Others. At the same time, the dominant position of Catholic religion in Polish educational system and politics leaves not much space for learning about other religious traditions or beliefs. These two layers of Polish homogeneity—ethnic and religious—impact the way

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[2] Despite the growing scholarship on Polish colonialism (e.g. Mick 2014) the term has does hardly work in the Polish collective identity. If Poland every had anything to do with colonalism, it was being a victin of colonialising policies of Russia, Germany/Prussia and Austria. Not that is had ever executed any colonial domination, e.g. towards Ukraine.

anti-refugee and anti-Muslim rhetoric is played out in the public sphere.

Both elements—historical legacy and cultural homogeneity—set the limits of re-flecting about the Others, not only Muslims, in Poland. For the last decades Polish un-derstanding of other cultures has been narrowed to local ethnic and national minori-ties, or neighbouring countries. Joining the EU in 2004 has widened this understanding to cultures and peoples from other parts of the world. However, most of the teaching has been carried out in a 'dry run' (i.e. without the real presence of the Others), and thus in an essentialised manner. It is hard to expect from a teacher to teach in a nu-anced way about people from Asia of Africa, if he knows them only from the literature (remember the lack of post-colonial reflection) or social media, or maybe sometimes from holidays. Dressing up in traditional clothes from Asian or African countries as a way to understand the culture, or blackfacing are indicators of this problem – i.e. the lack of intellectual tools to understand and critically reflect on ethnic and religious diversity. For anti-Muslim discourse it has a significant consequence – namely, that everything goes with Islam, including the most bizarre, dehumanising ideas. Sending beacon to mosques has clearly not been only Polish invention, but I mean here other incidents, e.g. stopping a train, because a Muslim has started to pray in a carriage, so a lady passenger alarmed the conductor, or sharing (several thousand times) a message about a black Volga car driven by an Arab who seduces and kidnaps Polish women while shopping in the town of Koszalin (Górak-Sosnowska 2016).

According to Buehler, Islamophobia is a psychological defence mechanism that in-volves projection on the Other who becomes an enemy (Buehler 2011). In this article I will analyse how anti-Muslim and anti-refugee narratives are created, narrated and projected in two opposite discourses—of soft- and turbo-patriotism. I take these two useful categories from Marcin Napiórkowski's monograph "Turbopatryiotyzm" ('Tur-bo-patriotism'; 2019) and use them as framework for analysing this one peculiar as-pect of their much broader spectra[3]. The concept of these two modes of patriotism is particularly useful for this study for three reasons. Firstly, they can be related to similar discussions on patriotism elsewhere—not only in the West, but also Eastern Europe or South America. Secondly, they reflect the complicated political shifting and reshuffling in contemporary Poland, and thus—local realities and contradictory dis-courses. Thirdly, the notion of patriotism—regardless of its definition—has a great cultural, social and political potential of creating imaginary boundaries between 'us' and 'them'. Islamophobia and anti-refugee narratives are powerful tools and thus can be easily implemented in both frameworks. They both build up a joint social imagi-nary, which is—according to Taylor—not just a set of ideas but also the sense given to certain social practices. What is more, social imaginary offers not only meaning, but also justification for certain social actions that is framed into the moral order (Taylor 2003: 2, 23).

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[3] Instead of engaging into a discussion on similarities and differences between nationalism and patri-otism (see Brubaker 2004) I decided to stick to the umbrella term of patriotism following Napiórkowski (2019). I acknowledge that turbopatriotism could be related to nationalism understood as congruence of political and national units (Geller 1983), while softpatriotism – as civic nationalism that tends to result in liberal democracies (Greenfeld 1993).

Social imaginary has a significant role for every society as it organises knowledge (or impressions) of the past that are shared within the community, it links them with emotions and makes it possible for these stories to be experienced over and over again. Last but not least, through their normative power they give the society a role to play and legitimacy to exist (Leder 2014: 13). From this perspective Islamophobia has never occupied a core position in Polish social imaginary; it can be located at the peripheral position as Muslims had been mostly absent from Polish history. Yet, it significantly contributes to the most important figures of Polish collective identities expressed in the contradictory and opposing forms of patriotism.

BACK FROM THE FUTURE: POLAND DIVIDED

The anti-refugee and anti-Muslim discourse and the two types of patriotism can only be understood though the lens of Polish recent history. After the World War II Poland got under the USSR umbrella, what had meant in fact Soviet domination. Gradual changes in the USSR itself and Polish attempts to challenge the communist regime bore first fruits in the late 1980's. In 1989 Poland was the first country from the Soviet bloc to set the course for a broad economic and political transformation. The path to democracy and free market was not an easy one, nor had it one clear direction. It was rather a polarized set of shifts between post-communists and post-opposition. Despite that, one thing was clear: Poland was eager to join the Western part of the world—not only economically, but also politically. In 1999 Poland had become a member of NATO, and in 2004 – after 10 years since the application—Poland had joined the EU. The borders—which were closed in the time of the Iron Curtain—became finally opened and the Poles could finally enjoy the benefits of the European Community.

It was the time when future aspirations, building a competitive economy, and becoming "truly European" (in terms of resembling Western Europe) were set as the milestones that were finally within the reach. However, Poland had to catch up with the West—not only economically, but also socially. In order to do it, Poles should learn the new norms and values, so that they could become modern citizens; the more European, the better—this was the core of soft-patriotism. This orientation towards Europe and future was a natural reaction after decades of being suppressed under the USSR. Yet, it had one severe consequence: it happened to diminish the significance of Polish past and tradition. Sometimes it even looked as if tradition was not only neglected, but also perceived as a threat to the natural longing to Europe. This became the fertile ground for the other type of patriotism—namely the turbo-patriotism. It was born not only in order to oppose neglecting of Polish tradition, but also in order to rebel the new Europe-oriented direction set by the soft-patriots. For turbo-patriots this direction posed a severe danger of melting in the European pot – not only by vanishing in European multiculturalism, but also by importing alien, foreign elements to Poland.

Napiórkowski (2019) sets the division between the two types of patriotism by referring to a huge chocolate eagle and pink colour used during a celebration of Polish independence in the era of President Bronisław Komorowski in 2013. Polish emblem—the eagle—was turned into a chocolate figure and meant to be new way of presenting

Polish national symbols, while the pink colour was supposed to bring positive emotions. It was a clear example of progressive, modern Poland, a country where everyone could find a place to live and to express positive feelings as soft-patriotic citizen. However, for the turbo-patriots a chocolate eagle that had been finally eaten by the celebrating crowd was unacceptable, just as the pink colour—there is no pink, but only red and white – as the colours of the Polish national flag.

In a more structured manner, Napiórkowski sets the boundaries of soft- and turbo-patriotism in the following way:

Soft-patriotism	Turbo-patriotism
Satisfaction	Dissatisfaction
Optimism	Pessimism
Aspirations (future as a source of value)	Pride (past as a source of pride)
Inventing new (or what seems new)	Celebrating old (or what seems old)
Cosmopolitism, openness (I feel everywhere at home)	Feeling of siege, fear of enemy (I am alien in my country)
Blatant longing to be recognized by the "European Other" (latent longing of greatness and rejection of European norms?)	Blatant longing of greatness and rejection of European norms (latent longing to be recognized by the "European Other"?)
Willing to be the mainstream (but is not)	Unwilling to be the mainstream (but is becomes one)
Use of codes of pop-culture, complicated market mechanisms, modern means of expression and new media	

Table 1. Differences between soft- and turbo-patriotism

Source: Napiórkowski (2019: 45)

The two types of patriotism are one of many frameworks for investigating the great division of contemporary Poland. It has been already referred to as a polarisation between openness and closeness (Balcer et al. 2016) or old and new type of national identity (Goździak & Péter Márton [2018]). In the first case openness meant support for post-materialistic values (as reflected in the EU values) and closeness—idealising one's own nation, material values and traditionalism expressed by nativism. In the second case the distinction goes between national identity defined as common citizenship against defining it in ethnic and traditional terms. It is not hard to guess that soft-patriotism can be easily connected to openness and new type of national identity whereas turbo-patriotism goes with closeness and the old type of nation.

As Napiórkowski (2019) argues there could be no turbo-patriotism without the failure of soft-patriotism, thus soft- and turbo-patriotism are interconnected and the latter could not become so popular without the first. It is also obvious that in contemporary Poland it is the turbo-patriotism that has conquered the hearts and minds of Polish public. Despite having constantly challenging the democratic principles of Poland, the Law and Justice Party (pl. *Prawo i Sprawiedliwość*, PiS) has managed to win for the second time both parliamentary and presidential elections. It was also them, who have included Islamophobic and anti-refugee rhetoric into mainstream political dis-

course and made it attractive and appealing. In the following part of the chapter I will analyse how both types of patriotism use Islamophobia and anti-refugee arguments, but—for reasons presented above—I will focus more on the turbo-patriotic narrative.

ISLAMOPHOBIA AND ANTI-REFUGEE DISCOURSE

Before analysing the discourse one crucial difference between the two types of patriotism has to be made. Soft-patriotism generally tends to speak in favour or Muslims and refugees, even if its position had not always been unambiguously affirmative (one shall remember that Poland had been already hesitating about accepting refugees from Syria before PiS had come to power). Turbo-patriotism, on the other hand, clearly opposes Muslims and refugees as danger to Polish tradition and state. At the same time turbo-patriotism is much more powerful and uses anti-Muslim and anti-refugee narratives as an asset in its political agenda. Soft-patriots have never been able to produce a similarly strong pro-refugee narrative. Not only has it proved to be unattractive – even for many of soft-patriots themselves – but in fact it has only provoked turbo-patriots to stronger and more determined counteractions. The following part of the chapter will present three such cases built around interconnected three themes:

(1) Using Polish history for as a source of integration vs. defence against allegations.

(2) Welcoming refugees as European obligation vs. obligation of EU towards Poland.

(3) Endorsing multiculturalism vs. Poland as *antemurale christianitatis.*

Using Polish history for as a source of integration vs. defence against allegations

The past is the key orientation of turbo-patriotism. It is actually built around the cult of the past. However, it is not merely traditional. It takes tradition and reconstructs it so that it can be used nowadays as a powerful tool. History is not only used as a source of analogies that help to explain the complexity of contemporary world order, it is also consumed thorough reconstructions, references or even so called "patriotic clothes" (Nowicka-Franczak 2016). As soft-patriotism is oriented towards the future, past plays hardly any role. However, there are at least two instances when past experiences of Poles were actually used in the case of Muslims and refugees.

The first instance refers to the multicultural tradition of Poland. In the past, when Poland was geographically much bigger, it was also multi-ethnic and multi-religious. The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (16th–18th century) was marked by a relative religious tolerance. By 14th century Poland gave refugee to Jewish communities from all over Europe. These examples are often used as an indication that contemporary Poland has the potential to embrace multiculturalism and open up for other ethnicities and religions. However, as Andrzej Leder (2014: 53) aptly reminds, while the premodern notion of multicultural Poland brings in nostalgia, one shall not compare it to the

contemporary notion of multiculturalism, which is about equal rights for all citizens. The premodern multicultural Poland had been rooted in fundamental inequalities and divisions between estates, ethnicities and religions. Moreover multicultural Poland has become a trendy concept, which instead of introducing multiculturalism actually strengthens Polish and Catholic domination. It becomes namely a powerful weapon against any allegation against Poland (Pasieka 2013: 130), and so it can be used in favour of the turbo-patriotic agenda.

The second instance refers to the last two centuries of wars and partition of Poland. In 19th and 20th century many Poles have fled abroad and had been welcomed by the French, Saxons, Italians, Ottomans, Americans, or Iranians. Many of the best pieces of Polish literature had been written in exile. Other countries had served Poles as seats of Polish governments in exile, or as a place to settle down—one of the examples is the Polish village, Polonezköy, at the outskirts of Istanbul. Refuge has impacted Polish history and fits well into the imaginary of longing for their country and freedom. Taking it into account, it is hard to comprehend the irreconcilable attitude of Polish government and mainstream society towards accepting refugees from war-torn Syria. However, also in this case turbo-patriotism has something to offer, namely competitive victimhood, i.e. the tendency to believe that ingroup has suffered more than the outgroup (Young and Sullivan: 2016). Accepting that some other group is suffering would diminish the importance of anti-Polonism—a key framework for understanding the Polish historical narrative according to turbo-patriots. As Napiórkowski (2019: 74) notices, anti-Polonism connects obsession for independence with longing for recognition and need for suffering. In such a construct there is no place for any other suffering, let it be the one of Syrian refugees.

Welcoming refugees as European obligation vs. obligation of EU towards Poland

The 2015 refugee crisis was not only a logistical and administrative test for European Union, but above all a test of the ability to work together in the name of common European values of solidarity and equality. Out of EU members Poland was one of the countries that was least prone to accept refugees from the Middle East. Not only did Polish government oppose refugee allocations, but at the same time hardly any refugees were actually willing to come to Poland. Kasia Narkowicz (2018) juxtaposes 300 applications from Syrian refugees submitted to Poland with over 250 thousands of applications submitted to neighbouring Germany. These numbers prove that in case of Poland the problem of whether or not welcome refugees was rather symbolic and did not refer to any real challenge. In fact it was an exemplification of the division between the two modes of patriotism.

The soft-patriots were dreaming about being accepted, recognized and promoted as equals by the old EU members. Napiórkowski (2019: 49) claims that this longing for acceptance was one of the reasons why soft-patriots were pursuing xenophobia, or unrevealing rather inglorious parts of Polish history. The soft-patriotic aspirations to become just like the rest of EU were visible during discussions about building a mosque in Warsaw. One of the most frequent arguments in favour of building the mosque was

that Poland should not be EU's backwater, and ought to become as multicultural as the West (Górak-Sosnowska 2013). Interestingly even the Islamophobic discourse of that time signified this longing to Europe as it had been transplanted from the West and used locally, but without the local context. In other words, the biggest group of mosque opponents were—as I have called them—conscious Europeans: they have opposed building the mosque in Warsaw so that it does not submit to Islamisation unlike the rest of Europe. There were no practical arguments, e.g. traffic jams, noise, but references to negative examples of Muslim presence in Europe.

Taking into account the political shift in Poland and the fact that anti-refugee rhetoric became a part of mainstream politics, the opposite stance—i.e. welcoming refugees in Poland— could not succeed, even if a wide alliance of pro-refugees civil society initiatives had been formed. Moreover, these initiatives have been easily undermined by turbo-patriots on at two levels. Firstly, the proponents of welcoming refugees were accused of blaming Poland abroad, what had been attributed to their internalized hatred towards their homeland, and secret willingness to become accepted in the EU (Napiórkowski 2019: 69). Secondly, refugees are identified with chaos and bringing in new elements, which cannot fit into the national order built around tradition and a clearly defined identity. Turbo-patriotic model is grounded in a firm division between 'us' and 'them', and the refugees are a perfect fit for the second category, as they will never belong to the first one. They are presented as an uncontrolled flow that brings all possible kinds of danger—starting from parasites (as the leader of PiS, Jarosław Kaczyński, has mentioned in one of his speeches) to the willingness to destroy Polish culture from within.

But there was one more way in which the refugee issue has been raised by the turbo-patriots, namely in order to oppose the dominance of Germany in the EU. This is a very appealing figure, taking into account the World War II and the long and uneasy history between Polish and German nations. So while soft-patriots claim that accepting refugees into Poland is not only a duty, but also a proof of true belonging to the European Union, the turbo-patriots insist that Poland does not need to prove anything. For soft-patriots Poland has to earn its position in the EU, while for turbo-patriots—it naturally owns the position and moreover, is entitled to receive EU funding. Here again, the historical context is brought—after the World War II Poland has been abandoned by the West (the Yalta Conference of 1945) and had to endure almost five decades of Soviet dominance. Therefore Poland deserves a special treatment in the EU as a part of Western (especially German) compensation. As Bobako summarizes:

> for nationalist-oriented political actors in became a pretext to manifest resistance towards, what they perceived as fraudulent ('neocolonial') dominance of countries leading EU (especially Germany). Refusal to accept refugees, which was justified by economic conditions in Poland and (untrue) argument of accepting 'one million of Ukrainian refugees' was supposed to be an expression of national identity. (Bobako 2017: 360-361)

By that time, PiS empowered by the victory started to reform (or as the opponents say: destroy) the judiciary system and significantly change Poland's position towards

the EU. Unwillingness to accept refugees was perceived as an indicator of the latter. For Narkowicz (2018: 370) the "the figure of the refugee became a symbol of the wider conflict in which the refugee crisis functioned as subtext". The tools and mechanisms used by turbo-patriots against accepting refugees are just one of many examples of this kind of narrative. Only recently Poland wanted to veto EU's budget claiming that it was purposely directed against Poland (Ananicz and Buras 2020), while the opponents of PiS political activity who were seeking support in the EU are referred as traitors of Polish state in the turbo-patriotic discourse (Balicki 2018).

Endorsing multiculturalism vs. Poland as antemurale christianitatis

There is one more dimension of the conflict about the refugees, namely religion. The role of the Catholic Church in Poland is irrefutable not only by the number of Catholics in the population, but also by its impact and influence on national politics. Some scholars claim that Poland is in practice "a moderate quasi-confessional state, that is a confessional state *de facto* or para-confessional state" (Kowalczyk 2015: 77). The position of the Catholic Church in the refugee crisis has been unambiguous (Pędziwiatr 2018). While some church representatives invoked the Christian duty of helping your neighbours, others were eager to defend Catholicism against Islam and fuelled anti-Muslim narratives. However, this part of the clash between the two modes of patriotism it is not so much about the Catholic Church as a hierarchical structure, but about how religion is used in strengthening Polish turbo-patriotic identity.

Religion is definitely not the central part of soft-patriotic identity. It has its place, since Poland is a predominantly Catholic country, but the country should be built on the principles of equality, respect and support for vulnerable groups. As mentioned in the previous section, the soft-patriots are longing to be included, and aspire to become truly a part of Europe. The turbo-patriots not only oppose this melting pot and blurring differences between 'us' and 'them', but in fact go one step further. By introducing the concept of Poland being bulwark of Christianity in Europe, turbo-patriots claim to be in the core.

Islamophobia of resentment—as Monika Bobako (2017: 367) calls it—is integrally combined with Catholic neo-traditionalism, and a semi-peripheral rebellion against the European core. The position of Poland towards Europe in the turbo-patriotic discourse is thus flexible. It can be situated on the peripheries, or in the core. As Napiórkowski (2019: 47) exemplifies, in the first case Europe becomes unattractive for its moral decay that is linked to liberal democracy and multiculturalism. In the second case Poland is portrayed as the first (or last) bastion of Europe. The siege of Vienna in 1683 and victory of Polish king John III Sobieski is often recalled as a proof of Polish capacities to protect Europe from Islamic invasion.

The notion of Polish messianism is particularly attractive for the turbo-patriotic narrative, for it claims that Poland has unique mission in Europe and specific moral and cultural assets that make it predisposed to win the battle against the moral decay of Europe (Bobako 2017: 369). Also in this case the narrative goes beyond Islam and Muslims and involves LGBT, feminists, leftists/communists, green movement, and all

other communities who are responsible for the apparent fall of Europe. Moreover, by engaging the concept of being the bulwark of Europe, Poland is at the forefront not only by its moral virtues, but also by being clever. It has anticipated the dangers of Western liberal democracy and has prevented them on its soil. Also in this regard the narrative is attractive. Despite years of catching up Poland still belongs to the poorest countries in the EU in terms of GDP per capita, and there is not much hope for convergence in the next years. In order to substitute the missing economic capital, Polish turbo-patriots use the cultural capital (Bobako 2017). Not by coincidence Polish Islamophobic discourse refers to the failures of Western Europe in order to substantialise its negative position towards Islam and Muslims. The reasoning here is very simple: Western Europe has allowed Muslims to come and now has all the problems. The Poles was clever and did not let them in (never mind that Poland is not attractive for migrants).

CONCLUSION

According to Pickel and Öztürk (2019) marginal presence of Muslims in Eastern Europe is a good explanation for anti-Muslim prejudice. I believe that in the case of Poland it is not enough. Islamophobia and anti-refugee narratives are powerful tools of social mobilisation. They are instrumentally used by the two opposing forces in the Polish clash of patriotism. Maybe if the local Muslim community was bigger, the discourse would not have been as bizarre and extreme as it is. However, it is not only about the marginal number of Muslims, but also about the context—the lack of post-colonial reflection, which is much more than just acknowledging the existence of colonial imperia.

This paper is about Islamophobia and anti-refugee narrative in contemporary Poland, but in fact it tells a story about a country that has been torn apart by two conflicting visions: a closed one—grounded in traditional ethnic and religious values, oriented inside, and an open one—looking forward to common values, oriented towards Europe. These visions can be historically tracked, but to some extend they seem to originate from the failure of Polish transformation. As Napiórkowski (2019: 222) bitterly admits, soft-patriotism promoted economic prosperity and pursuit European lifestyle. While promoting equality and inclusion it has paradoxically failed to include those who had less opportunities to join this game. It also failed to attract those who were oriented more towards tradition.

The soft-patriotic model has worked well on the economic level. Poland has been one of the biggest beneficiaries of EU funding and has managed to significantly invest in the infrastructure and public services. As the borders were open, Poles could find a job abroad, or get their education in the top European universities. These benefits are clearly visible in the Eurobarometer opinion poll. Asked about what the main assets of the EU are, the Poles have most frequently selected the standard of living of EU citizens (35% comparing to 20% EU average), and the economic, industrial and trading power of the EU (27% to 28%). At the same time the most important value for EU citizens—respect for democracy, human rights and the rule of law was ranked fourth

for the Poles with a difference of 21% to 31% (EC 2019: 64). It seems therefore that the Poles cherish the EU mostly for the economic benefits rather than for common European values. Adding the political shift of 2015, one can say that Poland (and Hungary) has trapped the EU in an "authoritarian equilibrium" (Kelemen 2020) as EU is unable (or unwilling) to intervene in national politics, and at the same time through funding schemes it supports the regimes which seem to oppose liberal democracy and some of the core European values.

Comparing the narratives of soft- and turbo-patriotism it seems that the latter have much more to offer. For now referring to culture, tradition, and ingroup is much more appealing than economy or equal rights for all. However, just as turbo-patriotism was born out of failure of the soft-patriotism, it is probable that its own woes will someday give a rise to a new version of soft-patriotism. Whatever happens, taking into account the semi-peripheral position of Poland in the EU and its cultural homogeneity, Islamophobia and anti-refugee discourse will still serve only as one of many indicators of the division within Polish society.

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