Ritual Slaughter and Feelings of Threat Amongst Polish Young Adults. A Study on University Students' Attitudes in the City of Bialystok

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The article is dedicated to the study of the attitudes of Polish young adults towards ritual slaughter, which was conducted in the year 2015 on a sample of university students in Białystok, Poland. It is a part of an intersectional research on subjects' attitudes towards the presence of Muslims, exemplified by various forms of their participation in society, including the expression of their beliefs and everyday practices which are grounded in Islamic tradition. The article presents an analysis of attitudes towards ritual slaughter with the aim of discovering what could shape respondents' approval vs disapproval. It entails three contextualized scenarios related to the halal issue: a) ritual slaughter conducted in Poland, b) import and c) sales of meat obtained in concordance with Islam, including the no-stunning principle. For the purpose of investigating mechanisms of disapproval, the project encompasses comprehensive dependent and independent variables, i.e. subjects' denomination and religious practice, political orientation, self-defined local, national and European identities/territorial attachment and the feelings of threat – the latter is prompted by conventional representations of Islam and its disciples as being the enemies of the West and potential terrorists.

The feeling of threat is of significant interest in the article as the existing literature on attitudes towards Muslims and other minority groups suggests that it could be a factor in attitude formation towards otherness, namely: that its higher levels are related to the disapproval of 'the others', their cultural characteristics and practices. Therefore, we suspect that generalized feelings of threat may translate into negative attitudes towards the practice of ritual slaughter, i.e. preparation of meat in line with the requirements of Judaism and Islam. We find support for this hypothesis but only with respect to feelings of national threat.

Keywords: Muslims, ritual slaughter/halal, (dis)approval, personal/national threat, Poland

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Introduction

Halal production has become subject to conflicts worldwide which involve a number of issues, including the ones related to its certification, market economy interests, state interventionism, religious interpretations (see e.g. Fischer, 2011; Voloder, 2015; Bergeaud-Blackler et al., eds., 2016; Tayob, 2016; Stolz and Usunier, 2018). At the level of the society, they are not only induced by burgeoning animal rights movements but also – among other factors – attitudes towards religious minorities, especially Muslims, who consume meat produced in concordance with those procedures. While several standard-setting organizations have been involved in the attempts to develop common halal standards at the global level (Lever 2016: 26), no consensus has been reached on this matter.

When it comes to Poland, it is an up-and-coming producer of meat for markets in several countries, including Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Israel. The reputation which is earned thanks to the high quality of Polish produce coincides with criticism at the domestic level. Like elsewhere in Europe, opposition to ritual slaughter has been concurring in the Polish public opinion with a generally unfavorable atmosphere around Muslims and Jews. Obtaining meat in concordance with the rules of Islam or the Jewish dietary laws referred to as *kashrut* and making it, respectively: *halal* or *kosher*, thus appropriate for consumption, is subject to ethical, legal and political controversies. They are evidenced by mutually discordant legislative changes introduced in Poland over the last two decades. Ritual slaughter was licit under the 1997 law which permitted killing of a conscious animal only if it was prescribed by religious rites. Even though the 2002 amendment brought about a requisite of stunning and nullified religious grounds as an exception, the procedure was still on the go. It was sanctioned two years later under an ordinance issued by the then Minister of Agriculture. It took about a decade of political disputes until the Constitutional Tribunal issued a verdict in the year 2012 that the ordinance was discordant with the 2002 amendment and that the Minister had overstepped his authority. Henceforth, an unconditional ban was introduced on ritual slaughter without stunning. Another two years were to pass before the Tribunal decreed that a ban on ritual slaughter infringed constitutional freedom of religion.

The 2014 verdict permits ritual slaughter to be conducted without stunning, be it either for the needs of religious minorities living in Poland or the sale abroad. The decision has been criticized in the media as serving pragmatic interests of the export business. What is more, in their verdict the judges did not take into account attitudes of citizens towards halal (e.g. Siedlecka 2014), even though hundreds of thousands of them had signed petitions against ritual slaughter, with a strong support from animal rights activists who accentuate differences between traditional and religious slaughter, pointing to greater cruelty of the latter.

As the numbers of Muslims and Jews are minuscule in this country, the issue of accommodating diversity in Polish society was supposedly considered to be of lesser importance. Szumigalska and Bazan (2014) point out that the distinctive features of the upheaval concerning religious diversity in Poland are, among other things: marginal socio-political importance of the Islamic, likewise Jewish, minority and, at the same time, a focus on political and economic aspects of their presence. While in many European countries those minorities have substantially marked their presence, which results in the increasing religious pluralization of the social tissue (Szumigalska and Bazan, 2014), the Polish society remains highly homogeneous with a strong dominance of Roman Catholics. Nonetheless, the ritual slaughter issue is gaining significance and is a subject of political and economic interest. Controversies around ritual slaughter delivered far-reaching consequences for the public image of Jewish and Muslim minorities. Especially disciples of Allah have very bad press and are accused of innately inhumane conduct on an everyday basis, thereupon the conflict over halal meat has added fuel to the flames around Islam.

The paper presents a study of the young generation's attitudes towards ritual slaughter, which was conducted on a large sample of university students in the city of Bialystok. It relies on data collected in the first half of the year 2015.[2] Since then, an unprecedented politicization of Islam and Muslims in Poland has taken place, thus further research is needed on attitudes towards Muslims in the current situation. It is necessary to emphasize that attitudes towards ritual slaughter do not necessarily indicate nor determine overall attitudes towards the Muslim minority and Islam, since there are several factors which shape them, including the personal stand towards animal rights and environmental issues. Another limitation is that it is not just Muslims, but also Jews who practice ritual slaughter. The article is a part of a larger project which aims to investigate young Poles' views on attitudes towards Muslims and discover what could shape them.

The existing literature (e.g. Davis and Silver, 2004; Unger, 2006; Ozan Kalkan et al., 2009; Wike and Grim, 2010; Capelos and van Troost, 2012) prompts us to suppose that feelings of threat could be a factor in attitude formation towards otherness. That is to say, higher levels of such feelings may be related to the disapproval of 'the others' and their cultural characteristics. Upon this baseline, we asked respondents about their attitudes towards ritual slaughter as an exemplary practice nested in Islamic tradition. Then, instead of asking directly if respondents consider Muslims as 'dangerous', which would come down to a leading question, generalized feelings of threat were examined, both *personal* and *national* (Huddy et al. 2002), in search for statistical dependencies. Feelings of threat have not yet been studied in Poland in connection with attitudes

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[2] Maja Biernacka (head), Wojciech Wądołowski, Łukasz Wołyniec. The research was carried out by the team without either a grant or contracted interviewers. The cost of photocopying and the coding of raw data was covered from the resources of the University of Bialystok. Coding and statistical analysis were conducted using the SPSS program.

towards Muslims or their practices – and we include them in our regression model with the objective of analyzing the respondents' stance towards ritual slaughter.

The structure of the article is as follows: we present selected socio-demographic data concerning Bialystok and the region of Podlasie to provide a broader context and explain what made us conduct research on attitudes towards diversity in this particular city. Subsequently, we point out the importance of threat in the anti-Muslim discourse and discuss points of departure in order to show deficiencies in the existing empirical research with respect to the relationship between attitudes towards Muslims and the feelings of security and threat. What is more, we define the terminological grounds and explain why we discard the notion of 'tolerance' and use 'approval' as more operative for the purposes of research on attitudes towards otherness, with Muslims being of our particular interest. Then we present the research details and results, followed by the conclusions and a discussion.

Why Bialystok? The particularity of the city and the region

The city of Bialystok where the project was conducted is the biggest and most important city in the region of Podlasie with approximately 300,000 inhabitants, and the capital of the Podlasie voivodeship, a large administrative unit in northeastern Poland. Over the centuries the region had been influenced by various political and cultural forces and takes pride in its ethnic and religious diversity including the Jewish heritage, an Orthodox minority and two secluded Tatar villages, Kruszyniany and Bohoniki, within the voivodeship (more on Polish Tatars in: Chazbijewicz et al., 1997; Warmińska, 1999 and 2011; Dziekan, 2005; Cieślik and Verkuyten, 2006; Kubicki, 2006; Biernacka 2017). In those villages, Islam is still fostered by a few families, which makes them objects of ethnographic interest. The eastern borderland of the voivodeship is subject to disputes regarding its Polishness due to its complicated history, proximity to Belarus and a dialect spoken in its villages.

The Polish National Census shows that the majority of Belarusians and Lithuanians, i.e. respectively 83.6% and 62.4% who live in Poland reside in Podlasie (Central Statistical Office of Poland, 2015). When it comes to denomination, 81.3% of the population of the region identify themselves as Roman Catholics and 9.95% as Orthodox (Central Statistical Office of Poland, 2015).[3] While these data have their limitations, as they come from self-reported answers and such surveys by their nature concentrate on populations which are relatively settled and accessible for research purposes (while temporary or recent migrants may be unintentionally excluded), these are the best estimates that are available. In the period when the research was

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[3] 0.52% declared other denomination, 0.9% no denomination, 5.2% refused to answer and in the case of 2.3% respondents the denomination was not established.

conducted, Podlasie showed higher shares of people with different national identities and religious beliefs as compared to the rest of the country and this is still considered a peculiarity of the region. Although the local authorities promote ethnic and religious diversity as the hallmark of Bialystok and the entire region, the sociopolitical reality is far from the multicultural image. In fact, most of its population define themselves as ethnically Polish, with only 4.3% declaring other national identities. What is more, Podlasie consistently displays very high levels of support for right-wing political parties, and the city is repeatedly condemned as the most xenophobic at the national level. The emblem of the city as 'multicultural' compounded with frequent media coverage on xenophobia and racist attacks in Bialystok make it an intriguing research ground on attitudes towards diversity.

Salience of *threat* in the anti-Muslim discourse and its influence on ritual slaughter

In countries belonging to Western civilization, the primary rationale of the anti-Muslim discourse is built around the notion of *threat*. While some scholars have studied the theme of threat in media representations of Islam and its followers where they are conventionally presented as the enemies of the West and potential terrorists (e.g. Kabir, 2006) we are interested in an empirical investigation of attitudes towards ritual slaughter and the feelings of threat as its possible correlate.

The feelings of threat in relation to Islam and the day-to-day practices of its followers are partially understandable following the tragedies that many societies, including the American, French or German have suffered as a result of attacks conducted in praise of Allah. While the ones that carried out the attacks may have declared that they did so in the name of their religion, the Muslim community at large did not support those actions. However, the portrayal of the attacks in the media shapes the public opinion that Islam, as such, is dangerous and contributes to the stereotype of Muslims as 'violent'. The rhetoric based on such an image of Islam is sometimes referred to as *the Bin Laden effect* (e.g. Cesari, 2004), after the name of the founder and the 1st General Emir of Al-Qaida (1957–2011), one of the most dangerous terrorists of our times. Not only is his name commonly recognizable both in the United States and Europe but also serves as an epitome for Islamic terrorism, a cardinal threat to Western societies. Those who criticize the generalized image of Islam as a *dangerous religion* in itself use the term Islamophobia (see for example Canan Sokullu, 2012; Bleich, 2012; Tyrer, 2013; Green, 2015), implying that negative perceptions are based on irrational fear like any other term which includes -*phobia* as its morpheme. As Bleich (2012) remarks, this term emerged in the year 1997 with the publication of the report 'Islamophobia. A Challenge For Us All' by the British non-government organization, the Runnymede Trust, which became widely used after

the World Trade Center attacks and eventually evolved from a political concept to the one used for analytical purposes in social sciences.[4] Since the year 2001, there have been several Islamist attacks, both in the United States and in Europe. Arguments that only an insignificant percentage of this religious minority is prone to become Al-Qaida militants and most Muslims are distraught by attacks themselves are not universally convincing to the general public.

When discursive practices towards minorities were examined by the Center for Research on Prejudice at the University of Warsaw (Bilewicz et al., 2014) with a special focus placed on hate speech, the question of threat also appeared. The results show that acceptance for anti-Muslim hate speech is relatively high, although it is not related to the level of Christian faith and the observance of religious practices by respondents but rather to the belief that Muslims are a threat to the Polish culture. In general, the acceptance for hate speech, especially among young people, was proved to be strongly related to right-wing, hierarchical attitudes (Bilewicz et al., 2014). Therefore, if the feeling of threat can be linked to attitudes towards Muslims, we expect it will also influence respondents' attitudes towards the practice of ritual slaughter which is a part of Islamic culture.

Points of departure in the existing research

There are several researchers who have investigated attitudes towards Muslims as related to religious orientations of respondents and social-personality traits or constructs which are known to correlate with ethnocentrism and prejudice, like right-wing authoritarianism or Christian orthodoxy (e.g. Rowatt et al. 2005). A connection between the feeling of threat and unfavorable attitudes towards Muslims has been studied in other countries (Ozan Kalkan et al., 2009; Wike and Grim, 2010; Capelos and van Troost, 2012). In the American context, there are authors who concentrate on the psychological impact of threat in attitude formation. This topic became salient after the tragedy of September 11 when the atmosphere of panic contributed to higher levels of support for right-wing authoritarianism (e.g. Unger, 2006; Davis and Silver, 2004).

Rather than focusing on threat as a factor in attitude formation towards Muslims, researchers position it in other contexts, either in the attitudes towards political enemies or civil liberties granted to minorities and most commonly related to 'political (in)tolerance' (e.g. Eisenstein, 2008; Gibler, 2012; Gibson and Gouws, 2003; Gibson, 2004, 2006 and 2008; Gołębiowska, 2014; Huddy et al. 2002 and 2005; Marcus et al., 1995; Shamir and Sagiv-Schifter 2006; Sullivan et al. 1993; Widmalm, 2016). It does not come as a surprise that intolerance towards political opponents is linked to

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[4] On the critique and suggested variants of the term Islamophobia see Imhoff and Recker, 2012.

feelings of threat: competition for one's share of the electorate, contrasting visions of the polity and the interest in winning certainly make the political game threat-ridden. Davis and Silver (2004) analyzed data from an American national survey conducted shortly after the attacks of September 11, 2001. They place their work in the tradition of examining political tolerance and democratic rights and show that the greater the feeling of threat, either to national or personal security, the lower support for civil liberties. Moreover, high levels of national pride may lead to a willingness to trade off civil liberties for greater security, which is concordant with results provided by other researchers. While the feeling of threat has been vastly examined in the context of civil rights, little is known with respect to links between the feeling of threat and negative attitudes towards ritual slaughter.

Gibson (2006) explicitly refers to threat as one of *the enigmas of intolerance* or, technically speaking, one of its unexplained variables and emphasizes multidimensionality of threat perceptions. He makes a vital observation for our investigation, that: *psychological insecurity contributes directly to intolerance. Those who are insecure tolerate less, and not because they are more threatened by their enemies (...). An obvious hypothesis is that those who are more psychologically insecure (...) are more likely to perceive group threats.* (Gibson, 2006, p. 24) Wike and Grim (2010) create a model in which they differentiate between security and cultural threats, suggesting that: *the security concerns are the true drivers of negative views toward Muslims* (Gibson, 2006, p. 20) while perceived cultural threats are only indirectly related to them. An alternative categorisation of the perception of threat is used within the framework of integrated threat theory by Stephan et al. (2002) who distinguish between symbolic and realistic threats. The first is caused by the morals, values, standards, beliefs and attitudes of the outgroup, which in the opinion of respondents may be considered perilous and 'jeopardize the worldview of the ingroup'. The latter category covers threats posed to the existence of the ingroup or its well-being through warfare, political or economic domination etc. The two categories seem to be quite confusing as any threat that is perceived as extant would be considered realistic, no matter if it refers to morals or existence.

We emphasize that independent of its type, it is not threat itself but its *perception* that is at stake. Gibson (2006, p. 24–25) consistently refers to the *perception of threat,* which is in line with our investigation. He classifies threat perceptions that are typically distinguished by researchers as *sociotropic* and *egocentric,* with the first category grounded or associated with feelings of nationalism and patriotism while the latter being personality-based. Gibson calls for systematic investigation on those two categories of threat in order to reveal the nature of intolerance. Although the general idea of such a division is plausible, it has semantic flaws. Sociotropy is a psychiatric deviation of individuals who are overly benevolent towards those with whom they do not have close bonds, thus the term is not relevant to the definiendum. Similarly, the term egocentric suggests a deviation of individuals who treat

themselves as the center of attention, which is a misrepresentation of the description given by Gibson. While we agree with the sense of this division, we change the *definiens*, thus resorting in our investigation to two categories: *national* and *personal threat* that are also used by Huddy et al. (2002), likewise *national* and *personal security*, with the latter entailing issues related to one's life and future, including his or her family environment.

When it comes to attitudes towards Muslims, interesting results were obtained in a research conducted in the United States by Ozan Kalkan, Layman and Uslaner (2009). They search for the interrelation between respondents' feelings about racial and religious minorities, including non-Muslim and Muslim outgroups and threat perceptions. Their conclusions based on data analyses from the 2004 American National Election Study and other surveys conducted between the years 2000 and 2007 show that attitudes towards Muslims are not shaped at all by the perceived threat of terrorism, while threats posed by African Americans and illegal immigrants play a significant role in attitude formation. The authors try to explain a lack of such a statistical connection with respect to Muslims by the fact that the majority of Americans do not have as much direct contact with them as they do with other minorities. An interesting line of argumentation has been provided in a research project conducted on Dutch adolescents which shows that generalized negative attitudes towards Muslims do not necessarily go hand in hand with disapproval of their practices and activities in the public sphere (Verkuyten, 2010), which is of great interest for the purpose of our analysis as it links such attitudes to the feeling of threat.

There are authors who have called for a necessity to investigate negative attitudes towards minority groups or political enemies and the perception of threat. Applying the enigma of threat to negative attitudes towards one's political enemies, Gibson claims that *the first major objective of future research on political intolerance should be to launch a new attack on explaining the variance in perceived threat* (Gibson, 2006, p. 24). In the Polish context, there is no systematic research on feelings of threat as a correlate of attitudes towards Muslims or ritual slaughter, which has become a major driving force in our work. It is worth noting that there has been research on public support for military actions against terrorism in relation to variables such as age, generation and political orientations (Słomczyński and Shabad, 2010), prompted by the moral panic in relation to Islam which escalated after a series of Al-Qaida attacks in the Western world. A similar need to the one expressed by Gibson has been voiced with reference to Poles' attitudes towards minorities. As Gołębiowska suggests: Future studies of the etiology of Poles' ethnic and religious tolerance should also include other predictors of tolerance that were unavailable in the data set I used in this article (e.g., questions tapping perceptions of threat from different ethnic and religious minorities, stereotypic beliefs about ethnic and religious minorities, and measures of respondents' psychological security and other psychological predispositions and personality characteristics) (Gołębiowska, 2009, p. 385).

Like elsewhere in Europe, there is a body of empirical data obtained in search of regularities in social distance measures with respect to Muslims and other minorities, either religious, ethnic or national. It is anchored in the tradition that had been inspired by the introduction of the concept of social distance by Robert Park (1924) in the context of racial relations and pioneered by Emory S. Bogardus, who developed a social distance scale which has been used ever since in order to empirically measure respondents' willingness to enter into social contacts with representatives of a different race, ethnicity, nationality or religion. This line of research gained substantial popularity in Poland many decades ago while this country was still in the Soviet bloc, even though it was largely isolated from Western academia. The concepts of social distance and ethnic distance, being a variation of the former, still provide a prime analytical framework, together with the preeminent dichotomy of *us* versus *them* for the purposes of the sociology of ethnicity and/or religion, sociology of the nation and social psychology (Mróz, 1985; Olszewski, 1985, Wilska-Duszyńska, 1993; Nowicka and Nawrocki, 1996; Szwed, 2004; Sinacka-Kubik, 2011; Sztop-Rutkowska et al. 2013; Tłuściak-Deliowska, 2014). Based on either primary or secondary data, investigation in this field is marked with questions concerning levels of tolerance towards diversity via respondents' reactions to the possibility of an individual belonging to a national, ethnic or religious minority group, e.g. Belarusians, Germans, Gypsies, Muslims living in their neighborhood, marrying their daughter, becoming their spouse etc. While most scholars resort to the notion of tolerance and take it for granted as an inherent element of their lexicon, we have strong reservations about its usage in the research procedure.

Our reluctance towards the application of the notion 'tolerance' is grounded in deep-seated meanings of this noun in a number of languages, including Polish and English. Gibson (2006, p. 22) commented that the notion of tolerance is asymmetric but has not elaborated upon this issue further. The problem is that this notion brings upon the *pace tua formula*, i.e. literally: with your peace which means 'upon your permission'. In other words, it evokes conditionality of acceptance or disinvolvement in relation to someone's beliefs, orientations, actions, practices etc. while considering them as 'wrong but still tolerable', therefore exempt from prohibition or constraint. When an 'act of tolerating' is at stake, its object is customarily labelled as deficient, incorrect or substandard in itself, be it traits like untrustworthiness or unreliability, deviant orientation or behavior, orientation etc. When used in a questionnaire, the terms: tolerate/tolerance puts respondents in the *a priori* position of holding the moral power and may induce them to be even more judgmental. In fact, it happens that representatives of the majority group perceive themselves as 'representing the whole society', thus being morally right, which may be reflected during the research procedure especially if attitudes of respondents belonging to the dominating national, ethnic or religious majority group are measured towards a minority. Paradoxically, tolerance is conventionally presented as a virtue even though the verb refers to the **215**

act of putting up with something wrong or annoying. We discard it as grounded in the same moral atmosphere of the dominant majority.

Instead of relying on these problematic terms: 'tolerance' and 'to tolerate', we resort to the notions of 'approval' and 'to approve' during each phase of the investigation. They are used together with their opposites in dichotomies: *approval-disapproval* and *approve-disapprove*, which allow a fair distribution of likely attitudes from favorable to unfavorable without a semantic bias.

With the mass media presenting the whole world of Islam as perilous to Western civilization, the fear itself has become globalized. Although in Poland there have not been any acts of terrorism associated with Islamists, the national media demonize the threat as being on the country's doorstep. The issue at stake is not merely political – Islam is also presented as posing a severe danger in socio-cultural terms. We concentrate on verifying whether the perceived threat has a strong link with a vital aspect of the Muslim presence, namely: ritual slaughter. It is not only an inherent element of their culture and day-to-day practice, but it lies at the core of debates concerning accommodating Islamic and Jewish minorities (Szumigalska and Bazan, 2014). We analyze whether there is a statistical dependency between the perceived threat and attitudes towards halal-related scenarios.

Results

The study was conducted on a sample of university students representing all three public universities in Bialystok – the University of Bialystok, Medical University of Bialystok and Bialystok University of Technology. The project was carried out in the period between April and June 2015, subsequent to several unstructured interviews and a pilot study. The latter was also conducted in Bialystok in March 2015 in order to ensure the feasibility of the study, assess the optimal duration and make sure that respondents understand the content and are able to follow the instructions accordingly. Respondents filled the pen-and-paper questionnaire under a researcher's supervision during class time, which took approximately 25 minutes.

A quota sample of 1000 full-time students was selected with respect to institution, department and gender, with the proportion 63.3% – female and 36.7% – male. Almost all respondents were born between the years 1989 and 1996, which was to be expected in the case of university students. The majority of the sample declared Roman Catholic denomination (56.9% practising and 19.7% non-practicing), while one in eight respondents identified themselves as Orthodox (8.7% practising and 3.6% non-practicing) which is generally in line with the statistics for the whole Podlaskie voivodeship. Unsurprisingly, most respondents live in a city with more than 100,000 inhabitants (58.5%) while others commute to their universities from smaller towns (24.3%) and villages (17.2%). Interestingly, one-third of the sample declared

no interest in politics (34.95%), and one-fourth (24.32%) chose to answer 'I cannot determine' when asked about their political orientation on the right-left wing axis. Undetermined political orientation was almost as popular as right-wing views which were declared by 25.13% of the sample. Other answers such as: left, moderate left, moderate or moderate right views were much less common.

Approval of halal

The first step was to estimate respondents' attitudes towards three scenarios: a/ritual slaughter conducted in Poland, b/import and c/sales of meat obtained in concordance with Islam, including the no-stunning principle. The second scenario refers to a likely consequence of a ban on ritual slaughter in Poland, i.e. a situation in which Muslims living in this country would need to rely on imported meat. The third one assesses attitudes towards visibility of halal produce in the public sphere. The results show that the majority of respondents (52.8%) consider ritual slaughter completely unacceptable in Poland (figure 1). This result is roughly in line with a CBOS report (2013) conducted on a representative sample of Polish adults presented in figure 2, which shows that Poles generally disapprove of conducting ritual slaughter in Poland. In comparison to ritual slaughter as such, the respondents were slightly more willing to accept the import of meat produced in such a way from other countries (41.5% answered 'completely unacceptable') and almost ambivalent towards the sheer fact of selling food prepared in concordance with the requirements of

Figure 1
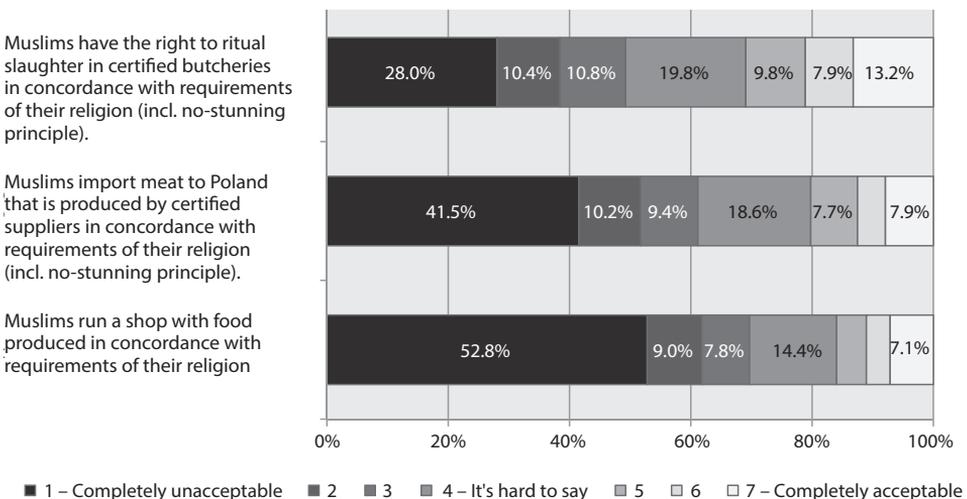
Overall approval-disapproval of halal-related scenarios

Muslims have the right to ritual slaughter in certified butcheries in concordance with requirements of their religion (incl. no-stunning principle).	28.0% / 10.4% / 10.8% / 19.8% / 9.8% / 7.9% / 13.2%
Muslims import meat to Poland that is produced by certified suppliers in concordance with requirements of their religion (incl. no-stunning principle).	41.5% / 10.2% / 9.4% / 18.6% / 7.7% / 7.9%
Muslims run a shop with food produced in concordance with requirements of their religion	52.8% / 9.0% / 7.8% / 14.4% / 7.1%

0%   20%   40%   60%   80%   100%

■ 1 – Completely unacceptable ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 – It's hard to say ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 – Completely acceptable
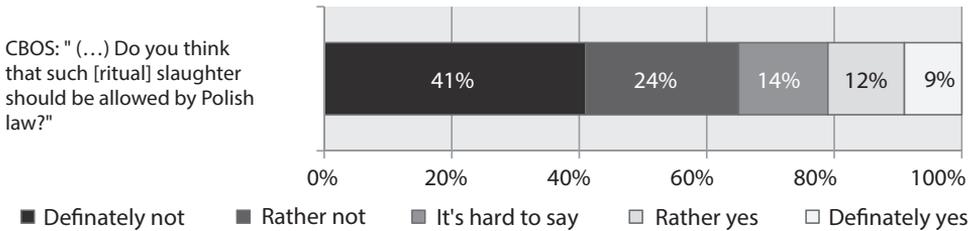
Figure 2

Opinions on ritual slaughter elicited by CBOS in a 2013 representative sample of adult Poles. The question was: "Recently there has been a public dispute on the acceptability of slaughtering animals in concordance with the rules of Islam and Judaism commonly referred to as ritual slaughter, which involves killing and breeding animals without stunning them and by letting them bleed out. Meat coming from this slaughter would be used for needs of religious minorities in Poland and for export to Islamic countries and Israel. Do you think that such slaughter should be allowed by Polish law?" (CBOS 2013).

CBOS: " (…) Do you think that such [ritual] slaughter should be allowed by Polish law?"

| 41% | 24% | 14% | 12% | 9% |

0%   20%   40%   60%   80%   100%

■ Definately not   ■ Rather not   ■ It's hard to say   □ Rather yes   □ Definately yes

Islam (mean of 3.5 and median of 4 – *it's hard to say* on a scale from 1 – *completely unacceptable* to 7 – *completely acceptable*). In general, the respondents exhibit unfavorable attitudes towards halal-related scenarios, with the level of reprehension depending on whether ritual slaughter is conducted in their homeland or abroad.

Approval of halal-related scenarios and respondents' characteristics

Understanding what shapes respondents' attitudes requires incorporating many background variables into the model. As the existing body of research brings contrary results with respect to socio-demographic data, we do not pose separate hypotheses concerning such variables but do present the obtained results. A vital correlate, if not a predictor of respondents' attitudes, could be gender. Women are usually found to display higher levels of favorable attitudes towards immigrants and ethnic, racial, religious or sexual minorities and express more approval for their full participation in society (Husfeldt, 2002; Gołębiowska, 2006; Hahn, 2014). As Hahn (2014) remarks, they are more supportive than men of the rights for immigrants. The possible reasons are manifold: they may be in fact more open towards diversity, more supportive and inclusive or democratic in their attitudes, more conscious of human and civil rights, more sympathetic towards the ones who have been or may be subject to discrimination, simply 'trained' in the socialization process to give more politically correct answers, less concerned about national security and protection of the country from external influences or threats, less competitive as compared to men who see immigrants as rivals on the labor market.[5] Another viable hypothesis is that women

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[5] Compare: Hahn, 2014, p. 53–54.

are simply not so decisive while expressing their opinions, thus opt for intermediate answers, including *I do not know* rather than being radical.

Contrary results were obtained by Zick, Küper and Hövermann (2011) in an extensive international research, where women turned out to express more prejudice than men across the board. In particular, they expressed significantly more anti-Muslim attitudes, likewise more anti-immigrant attitudes, racism and sexism, with opposite results only as regards gender with reference to homophobia and no statistical difference in the case of anti-Semitism (Zick et al., 2011, p.86). Additionally, Zick, Küper and Hövermann (2011, p. 88) discuss national differences where Polish females exhibit not only more racism than men but are also more homophobic, but at the same time less anti-Semitic. Another example of discrepancy in results is research on young people's attitudes towards Muslims conducted in Sweden, where no gender differences were found, while other variables did matter, including the country of birth, socioeconomic background, school/program factors, relationship to friends, perceptions of gender role patterns and local/regional factors like unemployment rate and the share

Figure 3

Gender and approval of halal-related scenarios.
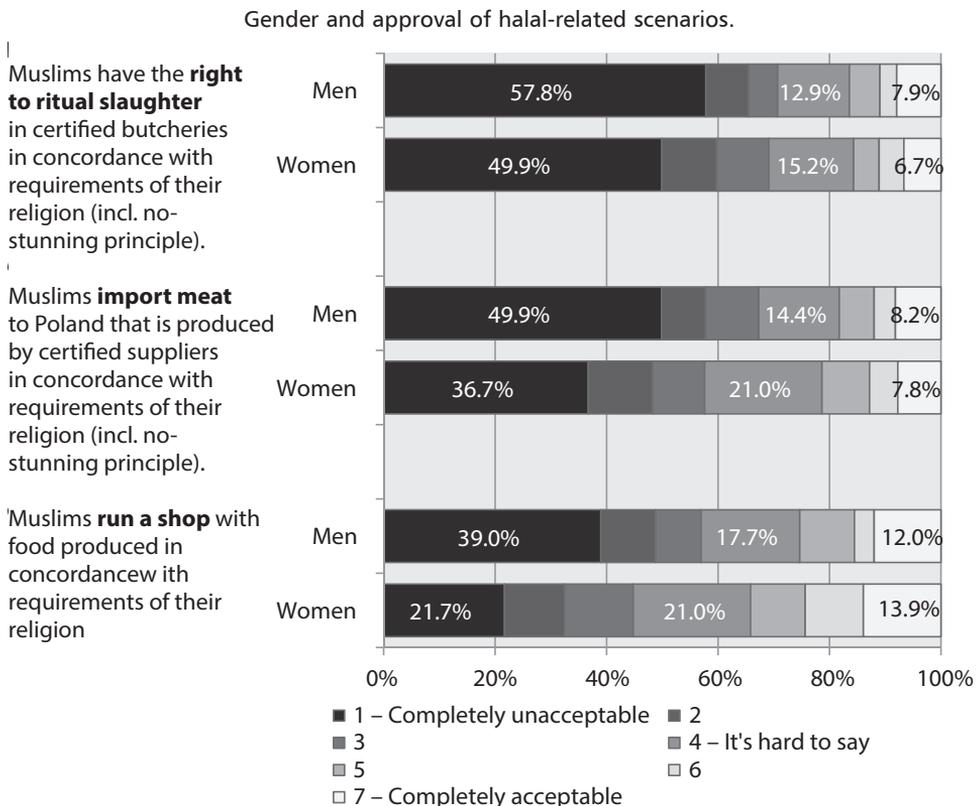
of immigrants in the respondents' environment (Bevelander and Otterbeck, 2010). In Poland, existing research shows that generally, women hold more favorable attitudes towards ethnic, racial and sexual minorities (Gołębiowska, 2006, p. 113–138), with some exceptions. Gołębiowska (2006) claims that women are more reluctant to put up with disliked political minorities' rights and it is men – not women – who are more positive towards the idea of having a follower of a different faith marry his son or daughter. In our research, women were also found to express higher levels of acceptance of Muslims and their participation in Polish society. We obtained such results across the board, including the halal issue, which we concentrate on in this article.

Our data (figure 3) show that on average men and women display similar levels of approval for ritual slaughter being conducted in Poland.[6] Surprisingly this statistic goes against the CBOS 2013 finding, i.e. that men are more likely to approve of ritual slaughter (31% of men and only 13% of women). We suspect that this result might have been mediated by an indication provided in CBOS question that such meat might be exported, thus legalizing the procedure would be lucrative for this industry at the national level and Polish economy as a whole. While in our study men and women expressed similar opinions on ritual slaughter, introducing another two statements shows that the male and female respondents slightly differ in their attitudes towards the import and then diverge further when it comes to the sales of halal meat, with women displaying a more favorable stance towards such a scenario. Slightly more female than male respondents express acceptance for both the import and running a shop with such merchandise. While the women tend to select the answer 'It's hard to say' more and 'completely unacceptable' less frequently than the men, it only partially accounts for the difference in attitudes between genders. 15.7% of the women expressed at least moderate approval of ritual slaughter being conducted in Poland (choosing 5, 6 or 7 on a 1 to 7 scale) in comparison to 16.4% of the men, for imports the percentages were 21.4% vs. 18.3% for the imports and 34.2% vs. 25.3% with regard to running a shop. Faced with the latter scenario, more female than male respondents chose the extreme answer: 'completely acceptable' (13.9% and 12.0%, respectively), which implies that it is not indecisiveness that governs the opinions of women. This result could be explained by another factor, i.e. being concerned about animal suffering, since ritual slaughter is commonly portrayed in the public opinion as a cruel practice. The obtained results are in line with the conception that women are more inclined to accept diversity, but additionally, they are more concerned about the suffering of animals during ritual slaughter.

We consistently obtain a similar pattern of reoccurring attitudes regardless of which variable is taken into account: the highest level of approval is linked to sales, a moderate

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[6] The differences in answers between men and women concerning performance of ritual slaughter in Poland are not statistically significant, at the level of 0.05 according to both Chi-squared and ANOVA, while the gender differences concerning the other two questions (importing and running a shop) are statistically significant.

Figure 4

Religion (affiliation/practices) and average attitudes towards halal-related scenarios.
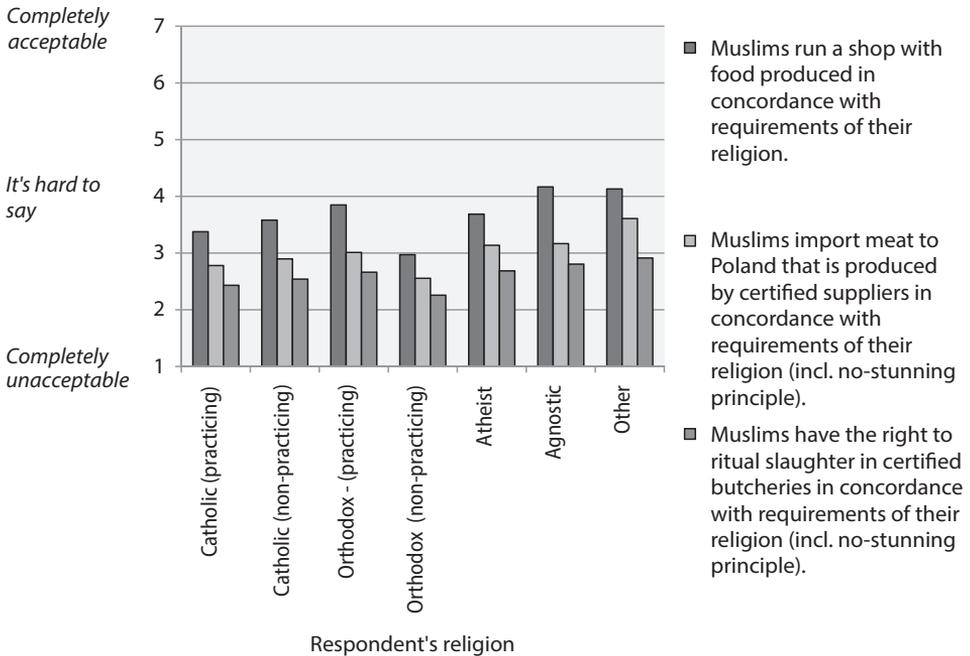
one is expressed for imports and the lowest for performing ritual slaughter in Poland. It also holds true when subgroup analysis is conducted, with the respondents divided according to their denomination and religious practice. Figure 4 shows that differences between such groups are substantial, with the non-practicing Orthodox adherents declaring the lowest levels of approval for ritual slaughter (the average answer 2.26), followed by the practicing Roman Catholics (the average answer 2.43), and the highest acceptance level expressed by the respondents declaring other denominations and the few agnostics that were included in the sample (the average answer is 2.91 for other denominations and 2.81 for agnostics). The fact that the practicing Roman Catholics are less permissive towards ritual slaughter than non-practicing ones, and that atheists are more lenient, does not come as a surprise. Yet the pattern in the answers given by the Orthodox respondents is puzzling: there is a noticeable difference between the non-practicing and practicing respondents. Contrary to an intuitive presumption, it is the latter who express a higher level of approval for ritual slaughter. However, as their number was really small, i.e. there were 86 practicing Orthodox individuals and merely 35 non-practicing ones, this pattern may be simply the effect of a sampling error.[7]

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[7] Quota sampling does not allow for testing the hypothesis or the calculation of statistical significance.

Political orientation and approval of ritual slaughter and related scenarios
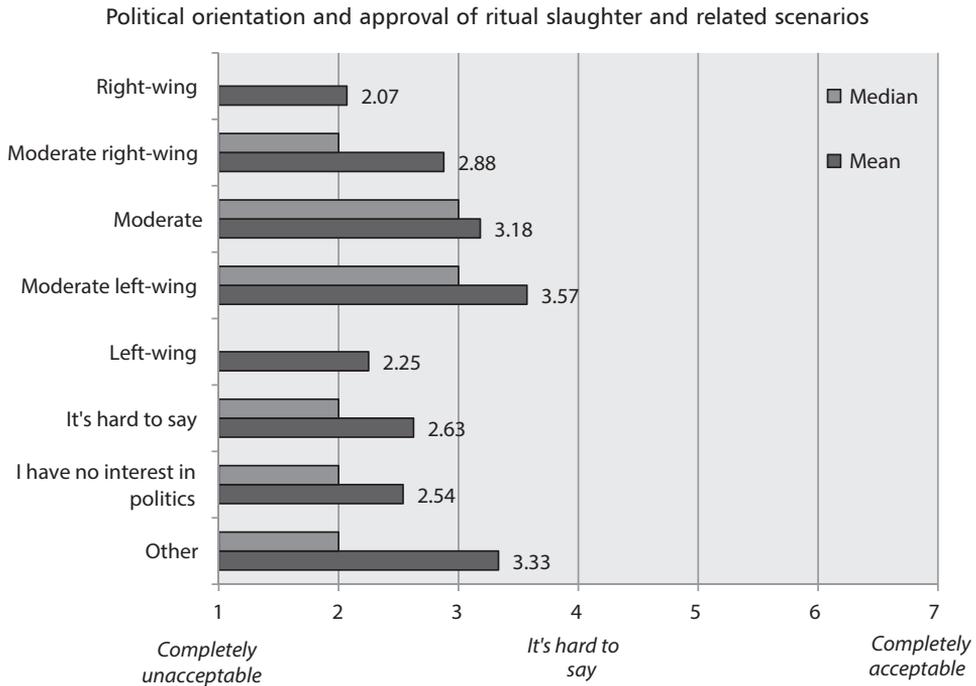
Parental educational attainment is often a significant predictor of respondents' views, yet the differences in our research in reference to this factor are minor. What is more, they take on a baffling shape: the respondents whose mothers graduated from secondary or only primary schools are more approving of the scenario of ritual slaughter being conducted in Poland (with a mean answer of 2.8 and 2.6, respectively) as compared to those whose mothers were educated in vocational schools,[8] community colleges[9] or at universities (mean answers 2.44 – 2.46). The background of the fathers demonstrates an even weaker relationship with the examined attitudes: the average acceptance level of ritual slaughter is 2.49 and 2.63 for the individuals whose fathers completed, respectively, primary and vocational school and diminishes till 2.33 with an increase in the educational attainment of the fathers. Contrary to conventional expectations (discussed, for example, in Gołębiowska, 1995), the respondents with better-educated parents did not display higher levels of approval for

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[8] As opposed to many Western countries, vocational school (*szkoła zawodowa*) in the Polish educational context does not refer to a post-secondary educational institution designed to provide skills required to perform a specific job but the so-called post-primary (*ponadpodstawowa*) educational institution serving similar objectives.

[9] We use the term community college as it is used in the Anglo-Saxon world (excluding Australia, where the equivalent are TAFEs), i.e. with reference to a post-secondary, commonly two-year school which provides vocational education. In Polish this is *szkoła policealna* (previously also: *szkoła pomaturalna*).

any of the halal-related scenarios. Likewise, one could expect that there are differences between respondents living in the countryside, small towns and large cities, with the latter presumably being more open to diversity thus more approving of the given scenarios. In our research, the differences are minor, and no consistent trend has been observed.

Political orientations (figure 5.) form a classic shape, where the respondents who opt for right-wing parties exhibit the lowest levels of approval, while those who are drawn to the left express increasingly permissive attitudes. As an exception, the few who support extreme left-wing parties exhibit very low levels of approval for the given scenarios. It is worth noting that left-wing orientation is commonly related to care for animal rights, which may explain the respondents' opposition to ritual slaughter practices. The majority of the sample that declared either *It's hard to say* or *I have no interest in politics* gave similar answers that are on average slightly above the mean of 2.51.

Level of approval-disapproval of ritual slaughter and feelings of safety v threat

As a perceived threat is a very likely explanation of unfavorable attitudes towards otherness and distant cultural practices, we decided to formulate a series of questions concerning the respondents' feelings of safety and threat. Those questions were divided into two categories: *national* and *personal safety*, with financial safety pertaining to the latter category. There was no need to treat it as a separate category: as opposed to Western Europe, there is no anti-immigrant rhetoric intermingled with the anti-Muslim one: that immigrants create a danger of a terrorist attack and that they will come to dominate the job market. While Poles may be petrified by acts of terrorism, the argument of a labor market being gradually 'taken over by strangers' does not have application in the social reality. There is not only scanty interest on the part of migrants to settle down and seek employment in Poland, with Ukrainians being an exception to this trend, but it remains a country characterized by massive emigration. The respondents were given two separate sets of questions: regarding the feelings of safety (Figure 6.) and threat (Figure 7.). We believe that precise wording of questions is essential to the interpretation of the model. Therefore, we have included those questions in the model in their original form. Figure 6. shows that the respondents feel relatively safe in their personal lives: at work, in the streets, in their neighborhoods and at the university. They are more concerned about the safety of Poland's borders (the average 2.76 answer on a scale of 1 – unsafe to 5 – safe). Figure 7. shows that the majority of the respondents display some degree of angst or anxiety about their professional and material future, while at the same time are much less worried about their homeland's economic and political situation.
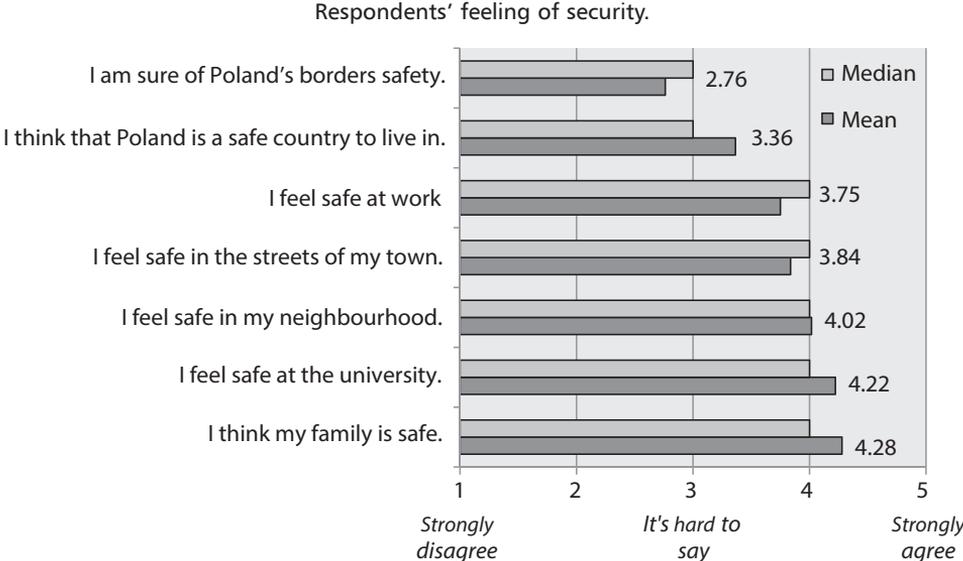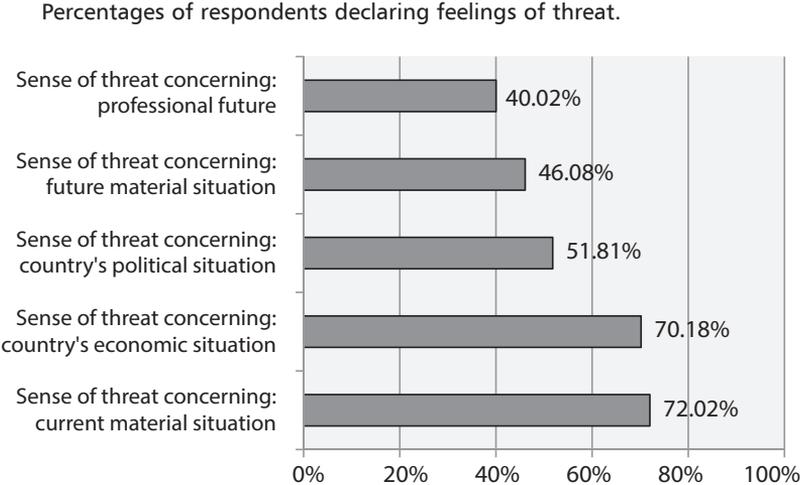
Respondents' feeling of security.

I am sure of Poland's borders safety.	2.76
I think that Poland is a safe country to live in.	3.36
I feel safe at work	3.75
I feel safe in the streets of my town.	3.84
I feel safe in my neighbourhood.	4.02
I feel safe at the university.	4.22
I think my family is safe.	4.28

☐ Median
■ Mean

1   2   3   4   5

*Strongly
disagree*   *It's hard to
say*   *Strongly
agree*

Percentages of respondents declaring feelings of threat.

Sense of threat concerning: professional future	40.02%
Sense of threat concerning: future material situation	46.08%
Sense of threat concerning: country's political situation	51.81%
Sense of threat concerning: country's economic situation	70.18%
Sense of threat concerning: current material situation	72.02%

0%   20%   40%   60%   80%   100%

Security and acceptance: bivariate correlation analysis

In general, we presume that feeling safe at a personal or national level is positively correlated (while a sense of threat is negatively correlated) with acceptance for otherness, with religious diversity being a prime example. In particular, we hypothesize in this research that it is positively correlated with acceptance for ritual slaughter,

importing and selling of foods produced in accordance with the requirements of Islam. We tested this hypothesis by performing a pairwise correlation analysis between the selected variables.

Table 1 shows that our hypothesis is confirmed with respect to the feeling of national safety. That is to say, this feeling is correlated with approval of ritual slaughter, import and running a shop with food prepared according to the requirements of Islam. The sense of threat concerning Poland's political situation is more often exhibited by the respondents who declare lower levels of approval, while the feeling of safety of Poland's borders and that it is a safe country to live in is often expressed alongside more benevolent standpoints towards the given scenarios. The part of the above hypothesis that concerns personal safety is disproved, since almost all the correlations are statistically insignificant. Out of ten statements, only one provides a significant correlation with the acceptance for ritual slaughter in all three forms: the respondents who perceive Poland as a safe country to live in, tend to express higher levels of approval.

Several statements are linked to attitudes towards importing and running a shop with meat from animals which have been ritually slaughtered. However, the significance is either low or surprising in shape e.g. concerns about professional future are associated with somewhat higher acceptance levels with reference to importing and running a shop with traditionally prepared food, while we expected the opposite. The concern about Poland's economic situation is accompanied by lower levels of acquiescence towards the importing and running a shop selling halal meat, as anticipated prior to the study. Nevertheless, the analogous correlation with respect to the scenario of ritual slaughter being conducted in Poland is statistically insignificant. This relationship could be considered puzzling, as allowing ritual slaughter to be conducted on Poland enables Polish butcheries to obtain a reliable source of income by exporting such meat, far more than selling it on the domestic market. Thus, one could expect that feelings of insecurity concerning the economic situation might foster a higher degree of permissiveness towards such activities, since they lead to increased export gains. Relationship between the respondents' concern about Poland's economic and political situation (Pearson correlation of 0.569). Therefore, in the next section we performed a linear regression to incorporate such effects into our model. An alternative explanation is that the respondents might be oblivious to the fact that this sector allows to generate substantial profits not only for the producers but also for their country.

The research allows us to conclude that there is a statistically significant relationship between approval for halal-related scenarios and feelings of national safety and no consistent link between the respondents' declarations and feelings of personal safety.[10]

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[10] While the coefficient for the perception of threat to one's professional future (Table 2) is of a similar size as coefficients corresponding to national threat, it is not consistently statistically significant in relation to ritual slaughter.

Table 1

Feelings of safety (personal and national) and halal-related attitudes

Pearson correlation		Muslims have the right to ritual slaughter in certified butcheries in concordance with requirements of their religion (incl. no-stunning principle).	Muslims import meat to Poland that is produced by certified suppliers in concordance with requirements of their religion (incl. no-stunning principle).	Muslims run a shop with food produced in concordance with requirements of their religion.
National safety	Sense of threat: country's political situation	−0.099***	−0.125***	−0.082***
National safety	I am sure of Poland's borders safety.	0.172***	0.153***	0.114***
Personal safety	Sense of threat: current material situation	−0.032	−0.053*	−0.024
Personal safety	Sense of threat: future material situation	−0.033	−0.004	0.001
Personal safety	Sense of threat: professional future	0.039	0.064**	0.074**
Personal safety	Sense of threat: country's economic situation	−0.045	−0.088***	−0.089***
Personal safety	I think that Poland is a safe country to live in.	0.114***	0.060**	0.066**
Personal safety	I feel safe in my neighborhood.	0.022	0.042	0.032
Personal safety	I feel safe at the university.	0.009	0.01	0.012
Personal safety	I think my family is safe.	−0.008	−0.039	−0.043
Personal safety	I feel safe in the streets of my town.	0.007	0.004	−0.007
Personal safety	I feel safe at work	−0.005	0.001	0.005

* $p < 0.10$ ** $p < 0.05$ *** $p < 0.01$

This may be just a sign that in the subjects' opinion Muslims pose no threat to their personal security in the near future or a symptom of a broader tendency which would call for further investigation.

Explaining halal-related attitudes through linear regression

In the previous sections, we analyzed various characteristics of the respondents, their perceived safety in personal life and at the national level in relation to the approval of halal-related scenarios. We complete our analysis by trying to understand and predict permissiveness towards such scenarios using all the variables described above in multivariate linear regression models (Table 2). The models seem substantial in size, since many variables are nominal or ordinal, thus requiring recoding into multiple dummy variables in order to be adequately analyzed. However, this is due to the need for the proper inclusion of all standard variables such as: age, gender, place of residence and origin, educational background, denomination and political views.

Linear regression analysis (presented in Table 2) confirms that a feeling of personal safety has little or no bearing on acceptance levels of ritual slaughter, importing or running a shop with ritually prepared food. The conviction that Poland is a safe country to live in is correlated with approval, however, it seems that this is simply a result of a strong relationship with the feeling that Poland's borders are safe (Pearson correlation of 0.530). When both variables are included in the model, only the latter is statistically significant, rendering all the links between personal safety and approval of the given scenarios statistically insignificant. Similarly, in the bivariate analysis, the feeling of threat concerning the country's economic situation was significantly correlated with approval. However, this variable is strongly bound up with the feeling of threat concerning the country's political situation (Pearson correlation of 0.569). Again, including both of those variables in the model renders the worry about economic situation insignificant and shows that anxiety about the political situation is a relevant factor. The relationship between approval and a sense of threat concerning the respondent's current material situation and professional future remains the same as in bivariate analysis. In general, our hypothesis that there are strong links between the feeling of personal safety and approval of ritual slaughter is disproved.

The linear regression model confirms our previous result that feeling of national safety coincides with higher levels of acceptance for ritual slaughter and the importation of such food. However, the relationship between national safety and acceptance for running a shop diminished when other factors were taken into consideration. This suggests that their presumed salience might have been the effect of indirect influence of other characteristics, e.g. gender. Overall, the regression model partially confirms our hypothesis.

Gołębiowska (2009) found that while correlations between religious tolerance and demographic variables were often significant, only a few of these relationships

Table 2

Multivariate linear regression of halal-related attitudes

Variables		Unstandardized coefficients B		
		Ritual slaughter	Import of meat	Running a shop
	(Intercept)	66.383	42.384	12.42
National safety	Sense of danger: country's political situation	−0.353**	−0.359**	−0.16
	I am sure of the safety of Poland's borders.	0.212***	0.209***	0.143*
Personal safety	Sense of danger: current material situation	−0.119	−0.251*	−0.104
	Sense of danger: future material situation	−0.232	−0.07	−0.148
	Sense of danger: professional future	0.219	0.328**	0.32*
	Sense of danger: country's economic situation	0.204	0.073	−0.08
	I think that Poland is a safe country to live in.	0.094	−0.052	0.064
	I feel safe in my neighborhood.	0.054	0.143	0.164
	I feel safe at the university.	−0.046	−0.017	−0.016
	I feel safe in the streets of my town.	−0.087	−0.114	−0.132
	I feel safe at work	−0.058	0.019	0.015
	Gender	−0.118	−0.305**	−0.721***
	Year of birth	−0.031	−0.019	−0.004
Place of origin (reference: village)	town <10.000 inhabitants	0.059	−0.021	0.227
	town >10.000 inhabitants	−0.23	−0.365*	−0.085
Place of residence (reference: village)	town <10.000 inhabitants	−0.109	−0.089	−0.281
	town >10.000 inhabitants	−0.293	−0.149	−0.282
Mother's education (reference: primary school)	Vocational school	−0.357	0.306	0.769
	Secondary	0.034	0.419	0.796
	Community college	−0.126	0.537	1.011**
	Higher	−0.123	0.352	0.839*

Table 2 cont.

Variables		Unstandardized coefficients B		
		Ritual slaughter	Import of meat	Running a shop
Father's education (reference: primary school)	Vocational school	0.186	0.185	−0.131
	Secondary school	−0.009	0.027	−0.749**
	Community college	−0.199	−0.002	−0.475
	Higher	−0.198	0.093	−0.376
Mother's denomination (reference: other)	Agnostic or atheist	0.829	1.829	0.677
	Roman Catholic (non-practicing)	−0.732	−0.265	0.102
	Roman Catholic (practicing)	−1.164	−0.664	0.023
	Orthodox (non-practicing)	−0.019	1.348	1.437
	Orthodox (practicing)	−0.282	0.883	0.785
Father's denomination (reference: other)	Agnostic or atheist	−0.395	−0.916	−0.017
	Roman Catholic (non-practicing)	−1.249*	−0.966	−0.717
	Roman Catholic (practicing)	−0.867	−0.834	−0.689
	Orthodox (non-practicing)	−1.839**	−1.796**	−1.271
	Orthodox (practicing)	−1.485*	−1.597**	−0.811
Respondents' denomination (reference: other)	Agnostic or atheist	0.517	0.163	0.13
	Roman Catholic (non-practicing)	0.499	−0.159	−0.337
	Roman Catholic (practicing)	0.254	−0.191	−0.522
	Orthodox (non-practicing)	0.33	−0.674	−0.441
	Orthodox (practicing)	−0.11	−1.132	−1.295*
Respondents' political views (reference: no interest and it's hard to say)	Right-wing	−0.328**	−0.392**	−0.126
	Moderate right-wing	0.5*	0.284	0.603*
	Moderate	0.184	−0.07	−0.015
	Moderate left-wing	0.786**	1.318***	0.998**
	Left-wing	−0.209	−0.876**	−0.007

remained valid in a multivariate regression model (when all the factors were considered jointly). Similarly, in our research, among all the variables, only the fathers' denominations and the respondents' political views proved to have a significant relationship with the levels of their approval of halal-related scenarios. The individuals whose fathers are Orthodox or non-practicing Roman Catholics are less likely to accept ritual slaughter being conducted in Poland than those whose fathers' faith is labeled by them as *other*. This pattern also holds for the acceptance for imports of ritually prepared meat, but disappears when running a shop is considered. Unsurprisingly, those with right-wing views were less likely, while those with moderate left-wing views were more likely to accept ritual slaughter than the respondents who declare no interest in politics or select. *It's hard to say* as their answer. The pattern slightly changes when acceptance for the import or running a shop is at stake.

Acceptance of a scenario in which Muslims run a shop with food produced in concordance with the requirements of their religion shows a distinctively different pattern of relationships than the other two questions. First of all, the respondents' gender turns out to be quite significant, with women (as we mentioned before) expressing higher levels of acceptance alongside those whose fathers received secondary education. Peculiarly, the individuals whose mothers either have community college diplomas or higher education are less likely to approve of Muslims running a shop with halal food than those whose mothers received only primary education. This is also the only scenario where the father's denomination has no significance while the respondent's denomination does, with the Orthodox respondents expressing more benevolence.

All of the above remarks must be mitigated by the fact that the model's goodness of fit is relatively low. The regression explains 10.9% of variance in approval of ritual slaughter ($R^2 = 0.109$, while adjusted $R^2 = 0.061$); 12.6% with respect to importing ritually prepared meat ($R^2 = 0.126$, while adjusted $R^2 = 0.079$); and 10.1% when it comes to running a shop with such food ($R^2 = 0.110$, while adjusted $R^2 = 0.062$). Therefore, even though some respondents' characteristics and views help us in understanding their stance toward ritual slaughter and food produced in such manner, their opinion is largely independent of basic characteristics and beliefs about safety.

Conclusions and discussion

In general, the research shows a high level of objection to halal-related scenarios. Taking into consideration the religious specificity and very high levels of support for right-wing political parties in the region, we expect that this result is higher than the Polish average which would be obtained if the research was conducted at the national level. While the highest level of unfavorable attitudes is exhibited with reference to ritual slaughter being conducted in Poland and slightly lower for imports, respon-

dents remain ambivalent when it comes to running a shop with halal food. Only a few demographic and background characteristics proved to be connected to their attitudes. There is no gender difference as far as the overall level of approval is concerned, i.e. females answer similarly to males when given the scenario in which ritual slaughter is conducted in Poland. However, they turn out to be significantly more permissive towards imports and even more so with respect to sales of halal food.

As expected, our research confirms that political views play a role in attitude formation. That is, the respondents who declare right-wing views express lower levels of approval and those who declare moderate left-wing views express higher levels of approval for the given scenarios. There are also substantial differences when denomination and religious practice are concerned. That is to say, the practicing Roman Catholics are less tolerant of ritual slaughter than the non-practicing ones. There are also attitudinal differences when it comes to the respondents of other religious affiliations, but due to their meager numbers, such results could just be a consequence of a sampling error and will not be discussed herein. Moreover, the relationship between the respondents' other characteristics and their stance towards halal-related scenarios was weak.

The results obtained by other authors (Gibson, 2006; Wike and Grim, 2010) lead us to pose a hypothesis that feelings of insecurity are related to unfavorable attitudes towards Muslims. This has been partially confirmed in our research. The respondents' deprecation of halal-related scenarios turned out to be connected to such feelings. Oddly enough, this pattern only appears when national security is at stake. That is to say, the individuals who express disquietude about national security also declare lower levels of acceptance for ritual slaughter or the import of halal food. However, it does not hold for the scenario, which involves running a shop with such produce. Additionally, the respondents' perception of personal safety has no significant connection with their views on ritual slaughter. Thus, the relationship between the respondents' perception of threat and their acceptance for ritual slaughter is more complex than anticipated and requires further investigation.

The question as to what drives unfavorable attitudes towards Muslims and their cultural characteristics still remains. What is essential, we found no dependencies between their answers and multiple personal characteristics or feelings of personal safety. The study undermines the observation made by other authors that there is an apparent relationship between such attitudes and feelings of threat.

The research confirms a need for further studies in order to explore additional factors that guide respondents' positions, for example, dietary choices (e.g. Bilewicz et al., 2001) and food choice ideologies (e.g. Lindeman and Sirelius, 2001). In particular, explaining the relationship between acceptance for ritual slaughter, attitudes towards Muslims and concern for animal rights may provide additional insights and a deeper understanding of the obtained results, and we hope to be able to address this issue in future projects.

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