

Among People, Between Cultures the Minority of Arab Origin in Contemporary Europe

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Abstract

This paper attempts to evaluate the factors of cultural assimilation of the youngest generation of the Arabs, who were born and live in the 'old continent' or came to Europe when they were children and do not know the realities of the Arab world, they were not socialized in it or their socialization has just entered into the secondary phase. The article is based both on the theoretical analysis of the realities of contemporary Europe heterogeneous from the culture related point of view but being entangled in demographic problems and suffering from the flood of refugees and migrants from Africa, Asia and the Middle East, as well as on the empirical research done on the young generation of the so called 'Euro Arabs', who are representatives of the Arab world from 15 countries, living in Europe and that are the peculiar cultural hybrid which combines the elements of mass culture and tradition.

Keywords: 'Euro Arabs', cultural assimilation, integration, acculturation, diffusion of cultures

1. Instead of the Introduction: A etiology of the Conflict of Cultures in Europe

The coexistence of the Arabs and the European nations is a very complex as well as politically and medially sensitive issue, especially in the realities of the mass expansion of representatives of the Arab culture in the 'old continent'. Recent years have shown that not only their integration but also cultural assimilation is a fiction, even in the realities of common slogans advocating the social symbiosis, tolerance and mutual respect. As it turns out, mass migrations freed dormant post war antagonisms and also strengthened their power to such an extent that the presence of the Arabs, and not only them, in Europe puts into question the possibility of resolving the conflict, which in the past was predicted by Ludwik Gumplowicz, who called it the conflict of races, and by Samuel Huntington giving it the framework of the clash of civilizations. This conflict defined in terms of the abovementioned concepts should be treated as the multidimensional generalization, which is rooted in numerous factors. Many of them refer to historical events –the colonial past of European countries, which although today it is difficult for them to admit this fact pay a huge price for negligence in the policy towards the colonized countries. Another source of today's conflicts between the Arab world and Europe is neo colonialism, which takes very similar, in the economic sense, but not territorial, forms of expansion. It is worth noting, as Fr. Andrew Zwoliński states, that neo colonialism is underpinned by (...) every kind of exploitation: economic, political, cultural or religious (...) and this is a continuation of colonialism in a new form (Zwoliński, 2009, pp. 187–188). Therefore, when speaking of neo colonialism as a contemporary form of the enslavement of nations, we must keep in mind the still ongoing process of economic conquest initiated in the past.

This expansion and dependence is expressed in a very clear way by Frantz Fanon, the Algerian promoter of the idea of decolonization: (...) Europe for centuries has hampered the growth of other peoples, has made them subject to its own ends, its fame; for centuries, in the name of the alleged 'spiritual adventure', it stifles breath of almost the entire humankind (...) It is high time to understand that it is better to move away from Europe once and for all. Let us break with the obsession with catching up with Europe. (...) Let us stop imitating Europe. (...) Let us try to discover the man whom Europe could not provide with victory. (...) The Third World is a giant, and its aim should be to solve the problems exceeding the strength of Europe. (...) The task of the Third World is to re write history of mankind including wonderful cultural artifacts of European thought and European crimes (...) (Fanon, 1985, pp. 213 – 216). Let us look at these words in an objective manner. In fact, in the past Europe committed a serious sin of exploitation and negligence against the Third World countries, including the Arab states, but with the exploitation contrary to widespread opinion brought them to the path of modernity through investments, the development of technical thought, education, and importantly, political and legal systems. Although a lot of truth can be found in the words of F. Fanon, it is difficult to agree with the thesis that promotes breaking with Europe, cutting off from it and ceasing to draw patterns from its achievements. The fact of the mass expansion of the representatives of the Third World towards the 'rich north', flocking to find prosperity and peace, contradicts this idea. It seems that the process of creating a 'new Europe' Europe, where the indigenous people will become a minority in the near future began with the expansion of foreign cultures into our continent. Thus, in the light of contemporary population processes, how to refer to the F. Fanon's words denying the Third World countries' strive for all what European? It seems to be a variety of pious wishes, because this process can no longer be stopped, and it has no clear time and territorial boundaries. European *melting pot of cultures* even though it has existed for a long time now entered *the boiling phase* – the phase of antagonisms and conflicts born out on the social, economic and cultural basis. It could not be otherwise if according to the International Organization for Migration only in the year 2015 almost 1 million refugees came to Europe. Currently, it is estimated that one of the factors of the exodus of the Arabs to Europe was the wave of revolutions conventionally called the Arab Spring. Nevertheless, there are doubts as to whether these uprisings should be counted as the primary source of migration. Probably not, since the original motives were located in the socio economic factors – dissatisfaction of the society from poverty, isolation and lack of prospects. It is worth noting that the Arab Spring was the rebellion of young people, remained bereft of any chance for a better life. The harbinger for the problems of the Arab states was the tremendous population growth of the 1980s and later. While in the year 1980 the population of the Arab countries amounted to 150 million, in 2007 it doubled and reached the level of 317 million. Importantly, the forecasts in 2010 estimated the number of the Arab population at about 455 million in the year 2025 (Bania, Woźniak, Zdulski, 2011, p. 12). Given the birth rate and the high fertility rate – 3.6 children per woman, the dominance of young people in the demographic structure has become a fact of life. According to the data from the period before the Arab Spring provided by the 'Arab Human Development Report 2009', 20–24% of the population were 18 – 24 year olds, persons under fourteen years of age accounted for nearly 30% of the total population, and under twenty five years of age – nearly 60% of the population of the Arab countries. At that time the average age in the Arab countries stood at 22 years, in relation to the world average – 28 years (Arab Human Development Report, 2009, p. 36). The analysis of the above data clearly indicates that the revolutions in the Arab world were the work of young people, who now constitute the main force of population of refugees and migrants coming to Europe. *What does this mean for the aging European population?* It means the natural filling of a population gap in 'dying Europe' by representatives of foreign nations, as well as irreversible cultural change.

2. Several remarks on the national identity of the 'Euro Arabs'

This yet overall assessment of the etiology of contemporary ethnic problems of Europe provokes reflections on the identity of the Arabs living in the old continent. It is worth emphasizing that the perception of the Arabs in the opinion of the Europeans comes down to generalizations and equating the Arabs and the Muslims. This is due to the Europeans' lack of cultural competence and general knowledge of the Arab world. According to the study carried out by Ziad Abou Saleh on the Poles, in Poland there is a tendency to generalize and identify the Arabs only with the Islamic world. The study results show the dramatic truth about the Poles' knowledge of the Arabs. Only a small percentage of the respondents could correctly name a few Arab countries. Such outcomes related to the respondents, regardless of their education, age and social background (Kotasińska, 2015, p. 194.). What countries

do the European Arabs come from? Here is a question the answer to which is not as unanimous today as it might be expected.

While the so called 'old' Arabs living in Europe represented mainly Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Syria, Jordan and Iraq, in the face of the new wave of the expansion of refugees and migrants to Europe, the ethnic structure of the Arabs in exile is more complex and difficult to be precisely estimated as a whole as well as with regard to individual host countries. Most of available data describes the percentage and quantitative distribution only of the Muslims in European countries, marginalizing particular nationalities. The fact is that for several decades the Arabs have consistently constituted 25–30% of all the Muslims in Europe; hence, it is appropriate to assume that the percentage is very similar after the wave of the expansion of refugees and economic migrants in the years 2010–2016.) Invariably, they represent countries such as Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, Syria, Iraq, Jordan, and after the Arab Spring—Egypt, Libya, Sudan (North and South), Somalia and Yemen. The highest percentage of the Arabs who arrived in Europe after the Arab Spring originates from Syria. About 150,000 of them live in Germany alone. Another population strength in Germany from among the Arab nations is the Iraqis, whose population counts about 100,000 (Dlaczego akurat teraz... (Eng.: Why right now ...), 2016). In addition to Germany, refugees (not only from Syria) prefer: the United Kingdom, Sweden, France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Spain, Italy and Greece, where the three last ones are transit countries.

It is worth noting that the population of the Arabs in Europe is inherently of ethnically heterogeneous nature, which imposes the need to have a view on them through the prism of cultural differences, inner likes and dislikes, as well as through the prism of the time spent living in exile and the cultural assimilation level of the so called 'old' Arabs those who settled in Europe after World War II and later. This issue is currently a serious problem, because significant cultural discrepancies exist between the Arabs settled in Europe and the new influx of migrants. Not only do they pose a problem; as it turns out, more important differences occur in the living standards between the 'Euro Arabs' and the new generation of the migrant Arabs. Currently, this issue only adopts the framework of the intra ethnic or—if preferred—intra cultural stratification and sets out the direction of research on the dynamics of ethno cultural changes in Europe. Thus, when talking about the national identity of the Arabs living in Europe, the ethnic diversity should be taken into account, as it consists of representatives of 22 countries (including the Palestine Liberation Organization) forming part of the organization called the League of Arab States (Łoś Nowak, 1999, pp. 196–198.), creating two groups of the Arabs: settled—the so called 'old' ones—and the migrants—the 'new' ones.

3. The Arabs in Europe in the light of own study

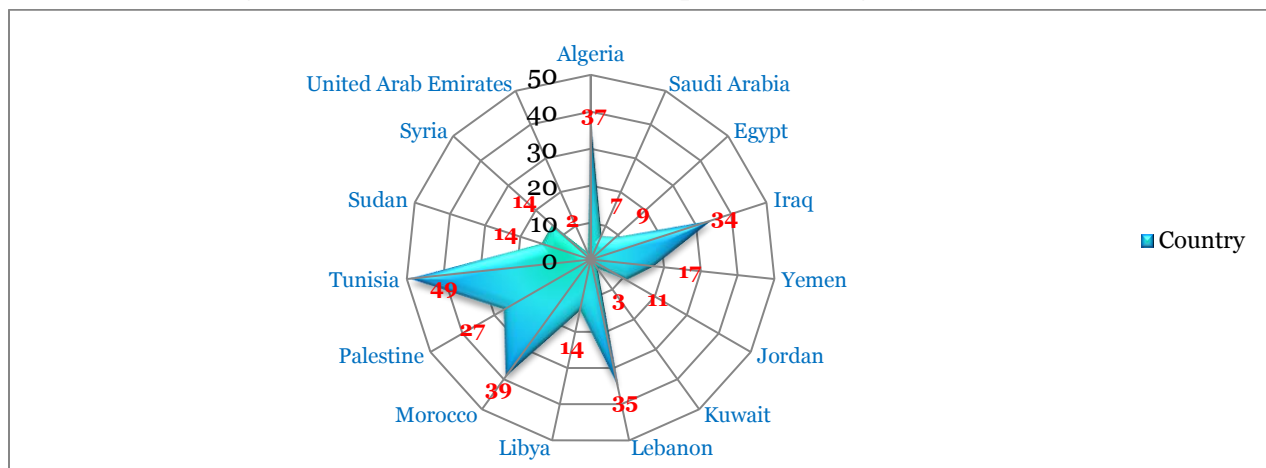
At the outset, a few words about the genesis and scientific interest in the issue of the cultural assimilation of the Arabs in Europe. Primary sources of this interest are not accidental, because at the beginning of the 1990s the co author of this article Ziad Abou Saleh began the extensive studies on the social problems of the existence of the Arabs in Poland. The research conducted at that time was innovative in terms of the scale—almost the entire population of the Arabs living in Poland was investigated, and the undertaken research problems centered not only around the issues of the cultural assimilation, but also the perception of the Poles in the opinion of the Arabs. It was based largely on surveys supported by in depth interviews with representatives of all nationalities of the Arab world residing in Poland. This research inspired the authors to expand their own interests to other countries, which due to extensive international contacts allowed the pilot studies and the observation of the problems of the cultural assimilation in the culturally diverse environment that have already had the eleven year old history. As part of the observation of the life of the 'Euro Arabs'—the settled semi autochthons, numerous questions arose with respect to cultural changes within the social structures of the Arab community. The scientific curiosity was stimulated by disparities in the mentality and the lifestyle of the young and older generations of the Arabs, changes in the perception of tradition and social order which governs the Arab world, and also in relation to work, family, freedom of speech, democracy, sex, adultery and abortion. The observation of noticeable differences in worldviews represented by the first, second and even third generation of the Arabs living in Europe led to take on the effort to seek answers to the question contained in the main research problem: What factors and to what extent influenced the changes in the perception of the social reality among the representatives of the young generation of the Arabs living in exile? In order to provide the answer to this question the research area was specified and there were expanded international contacts among the 'Euro Arabs', which, in turn, made it possible to carry out the quantitative and qualitative research in several European cities in the years 2010–2016:

- Amsterdam– 39 interviews;
- Berlin– 35 interviews and 39 questionnaires;
- Brussels 22 interviews;
- Copenhagen 15 interviews;
- London 14 questionnaires;
- Paris 46 interviews and 67 questionnaires;
- Stockholm 18 interviews;
- Vienna 17 interviews.

The total research sample outside Poland consisted of 312 people, 192 of whom were subject to interviews and 120 were survey respondents, while in some cases these were online or telephone surveys.

All interviews were based on the standardized list of questions similar to the questions in the questionnaire, and were carried out on the European Arabs living in nine EU countries. The targeted selection of the sample was used for the research purposes, which was justified by the period of stay of the respondents and their ancestors in Europe, their age and ethnic origin. The purpose was to recognize opinions on the cultural assimilation among the younger generation of the Arabs living in the aforementioned European cities. In addition, in 2015 the survey was conducted in Poland on the sample of 134 people who were citizens of the Arab world. Figure 1 represents the ethnic structure of the respondents living beyond Poland.

Fig. 1. The ethnic structure of the respondents living beyond Poland



Source: own study

Among the nationalities involved in the study the largest group was constituted by the Tunisians in the number of 49 respondents, and the Moroccans – 39, the Algerians – 37, the Lebanese 35 and the Iraqis 34. The representatives of Sudan 2 and Kuwait 3 took the symbolic part in the research. The ethnic structure of the population studied shows the interesting distribution of nationalities, because out of 22 Arab countries as many as 15 were represented by the respondents. This observation allows for the reference of the perception of the respondents to their national cultural characteristics that have many peculiarities and differences – also social and economic. Some selected socio demographic features of the respondents are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. The socio demographic features of the respondents from outside Poland N=312

Socio demographic features	
Religious affiliation / belief	Muslims 168 persons, Christians 56, non believers 9, no response – 79
Sex	men 176, women – 136
Average age	23,4 years
Unmarried respondents	unmarried 307 persons, in marital relations– 5
Marriages (wife, husband of Arab origin)	3 persons
Average number of children in families	2,4 children
Education	college students 159, school students 52, workers 61, others 40
The period of stay in the EU (since their grandfathers settled in the EU)	average 43 years
Place of birth	78 % in the EU, 22 % outside the EU
Origin	the Maghreb countries 139, Greater Syria 121, the Middle East – 52

Source: own study

The characteristic of the sample enables the following conclusions to be drawn:

- the vast majority of respondents represent the Muslim religious affiliation, and it may be assumed that respondents who did not declare their religion convictions, are also Muslim;
- the respondents represent the youngest generation of the Arabs;
- the sex distribution of the respondents is relatively proportionate, reflecting the higher level of the egalitarianism of sex;
- the majority of the respondents are unmarried, which in the Arab culture, even at such a young age, may mean a cultural shift;
- the vast majority of the respondents attends education institution, either at school or college level;
- the vast majority of the respondents was born in the Member States of the European Union. A similar analysis of the characteristics of the population studied is provided in Table 2, which presents selected socio demographic features describing the Polish Arabs.

Table 2. The features of the respondents from Poland N=134

Socio demographic features	
Religious affiliation / belief	Muslims 87 persons, Druze 13, Christians 8, non believers 4, no response 22
Sex	112 men, 22 women
Average age	28,7 years
Unmarried respondents	unmarried 97 persons, in marital relations 37
Marriages (wife of Polish origin)	14 persons
Average number of children in families	2,3 children
Education	higher 117
The period of stay in Poland	average time 11 years
Apartment owned	38 persons
Origin	Syria 38 persons, Palestine 31, Iraq 20, Egypt 18, Jordan 11, Tunisia 6, Yemen 5, Lebanon 3, Sudan 2
Polish citizenship	45 persons

Source: own study

The research shows that as many as 45 respondents hold Polish citizenship, and at the same time 38 of them have their own apartment. This and other observations lead to the conclusion that in spite of the relatively young age about 29 years, and the short average residence time in Poland, the respondents are financially well off and have a stable source of regular income in Poland, or inherited property from their parents. Moreover, the level of education, where 117 out of 134 respondents hold a university degree, indicate that they represent the social elites of the Arab world. In contrast to the respondents from outside Poland, the sex distribution is disproportionate because the research involved only 22 women from: Syria 14, Egypt 2, Iraq 2, Palestine 2, Lebanon 1 and Jordan 1. The analysis of the socio demographic features puts a spotlight on a few selected themes describing the cultural assimilation of the Arabs in Europe. They include:

1. The demographic ‘catastrophe’ in Europe the paradox of the conflict of cultures in the reality of the decline in the population of the Europeans
2. The difference between the real and perceived percentage of the Muslims / Arabs in selected European countries. The problem of moral and media nature.
3. Unkindness and reluctance to the presence of Islam in Europe a moral panic among the Europeans arising from the expansion of ‘foreigners’.
4. The level of religiosity of the ‘Euro Arabs’.

Let us look at the problem of the cultural assimilation of the Arabs in Europe from the perspective of the ‘dying’ Western civilization and the demographic catastrophe, which, paradoxically, should encourage authorities of countries affected by ‘the deficit of people’, especially in working age, to promote the idea of tolerance and respect for ‘cultural diversity’ and the creation of favorable conditions for the full integration. Why does this not happen in the face of the disastrous demographic situation in Europe? The key indicator determining demographic perspectives of society, i.e. the fertility rate, which indicates the number of children per woman of reproductive age within the specified limit 15 49 years, is going to be used to outline the scale of the problem. Currently, in Europe,

it significantly deviates from the nominal level of 2,10 2,15 children per woman of reproductive age. The European factual fertility rate is approximately 1.6. Let us take a view on this measure from the perspective of selected European countries, especially those, which constitute the direction of contemporary migrations of representatives of the Arab and Muslim world. The following countries enjoy the highest fertility (Dzietność w Polsce i Europie..., (Eng. Fertility rate in Poland and Europe ...,)2015):

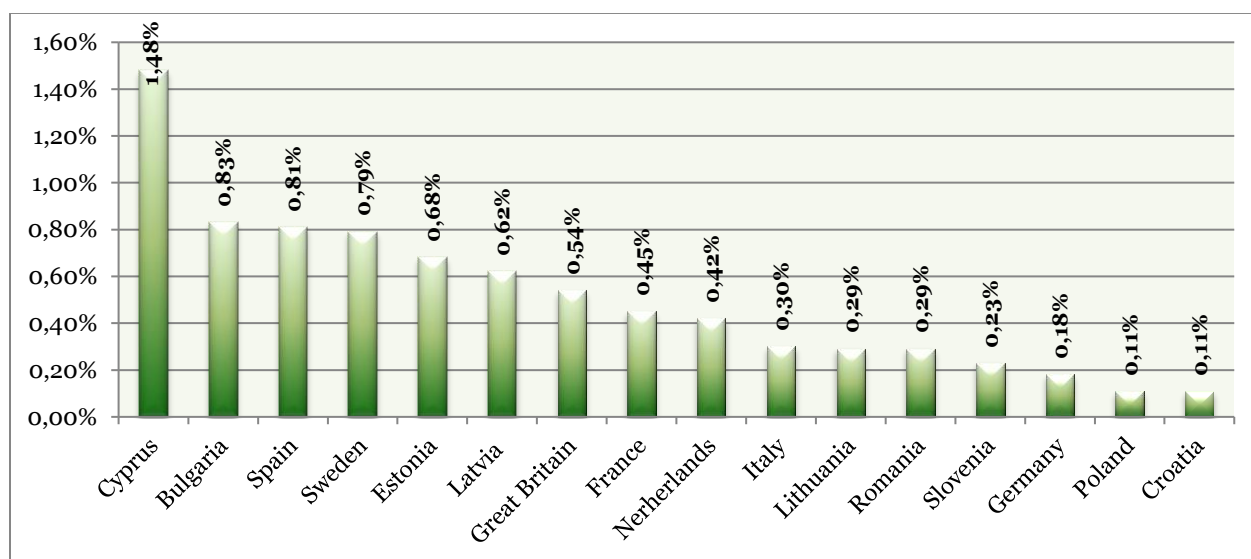
- France 2,08;
- Great Britain 1,90;
- Sweden 1,88;
- Luxembourg 1, 77;
- Denmark 1,73;
- Austria 1,43;
- Germany 1,43;
- Italy 1,42.

In the Eastern European countries fertility is a problem as well, because since the mid 90s it has been falling dramatically. It is interesting that this trend has been observed even in countries with the traditional model of society. The relatively highest values of fertility rate were recorded in 2015 in the following countries of Eastern Europe(Dzietność w Polsce i Europie..., 2015):

- Estonia 1,46;
- Cyprus 1,46;
- Croatia 1,45;
- Bulgaria 1,44;
- The Czech Republic 1,43;
- Hungary 1,42;
- Greece 1,41;
- Latvia 1,35;
- Poland 1,33;
- Slovenia 1,32;
- Romania 1,30;
- Lithuania 1,29.

Those adverse trends translate into the birth rate, the percentage distribution of which is shown in Figure 2. The natural growth in population in other EU countries is at the level of from 0,01% to 0,22% (The World Factbook, 2015).

Fig. 2. The population growth in the selected European countries



Source: *The World Factbook 2015*, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the_world_factbook /rankorde r/2127rank.html

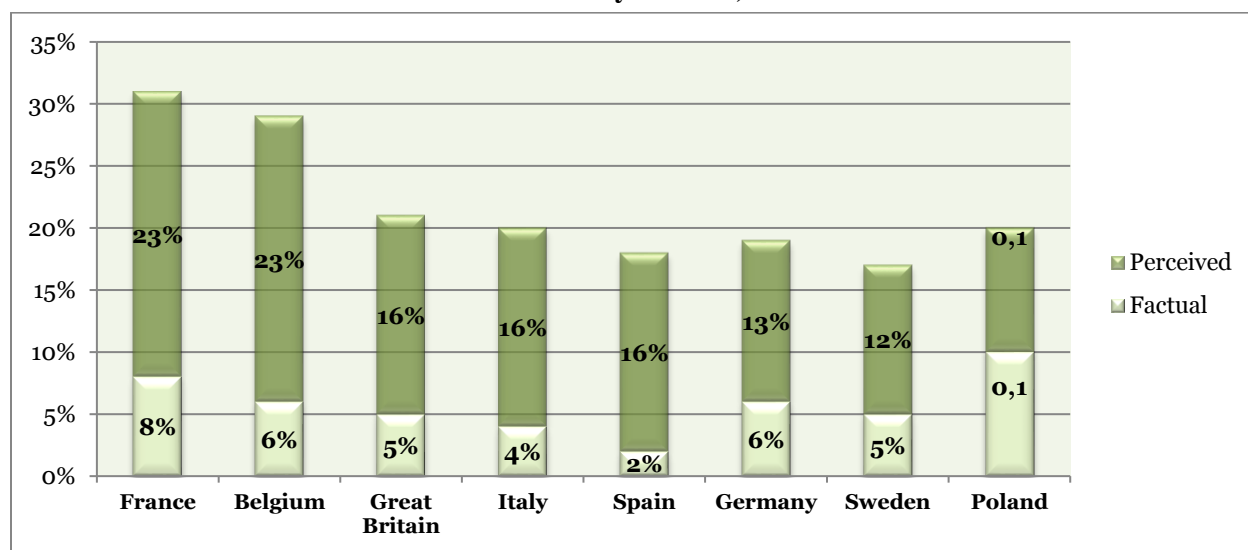
The paradox of the population needs of Europe and the simultaneous cultural reluctance of the Europeans to ‘foreigners’ draws attention to the comparative data describing the fertility rate in the Arab and European countries. It provokes a reflection, because in the first of them for many years it has been within the limits of 3.6 3.8 children per woman of reproductive age, while in European countries in 2015 it reached the level of 1.58. Thus, huge disproportion may be seen between the average numbers of children in Arab families and in European ones, which is particularly noticeable among the families of ‘new’ migrants from Arab countries. The period of coexistence with the Europeans and the process of cultural assimilation in the heterogeneous cultural environment is a kind of catalyst for the high birth rate among the Arabs in Europe. There is also a certain inaccuracy concerning the values of the

fertility rate specified for most countries accepting migrants from Arab / Muslim countries, resulting from the fact that its calculation assumes all children born in families with citizenship of a given country, regardless of ethnic origin. This means that the real fertility rate among the indigenous Europeans is much lower. This applies to France, Germany, Sweden, the UK and many other countries.

When transposing the data describing the fertility rate in the Arab countries in 2015 amounting up to 3.8 children per woman of reproductive age to the area of own research it should be noted that among the respondents it is much lower, since it is 2.4 in the surveyed countries outside Poland, and 2.3 in Poland. Furthermore, when it comes to Poland, the downward trend is evident, which demonstrates that lots of cultural characteristics based on the traditions and values of the Arab world disappear among the Polish Arabs. A similar trend exists in other countries. *What does this mean for Europe?*

There is a great number of options possible, but the most important is that the 'Euro Arabs' naturally and unconsciously adopt many cultural characteristics of the Europeans with the simultaneous reluctance of the Europeans (apart from cuisine and other 'trendy' elements of tradition) to the Arab culture. Thus, if in the process of cultural assimilation there is no feedback between the poles of interaction, it is difficult to talk about it since it simply does not exist. This rather represents the natural absorption of the components of the European culture by the Arabs, which in some cases can take the form of acculturation. One of the components of the culture absorbed by the Arabs is the European way of life and shifts in the value systems, particularly those that created the Syntegra (core) of the Arab culture. The cultural assimilation of the Arabs / Muslims in Europe also has its reference to the perception of the Europeans relating to the population size of 'foreigners' in a given country. Many studies conducted in the past confirmed the natural tendency to overestimate the size of their populations by nationals of a given country, especially when the negative media and political discourse take place on threats (real and the created ones) associated with the expansion of refugees and migrants. In such a case the so called perceived percentage of the Muslims / Arabs in chosen European countries is considered, which almost always is distant from the real – statistical one. Let us look, therefore, at the disparities between the factual and perceived percentage of the Arabs / Muslims in selected European countries illustrated in the diagram below (Figure 3).

Fig. 3. The factual and perceived percentage of the Arabs / Muslims in selected European countries) (data for the year 2014)



Source: own study based on: M. Wojtalik, *Muzułmanie w Europie*, <http://www.newsweek.pl/swiat/ilu muzulmanow mieszka w europie i w polsce mapa,artykuly,354745,1.html>

The perception indicators of the percentage of the Arabs / Muslims in Europe relate to the year 2014, although in some countries the inclinations to overestimate their population continues to grow. As it follows from the data shown in the diagram the factual population ratios are far from the data perceived by European societies. For example, in 2014, the French society claimed that the percentage of the Muslims stood at 23%, a year later already 31%, while it actually was and still is 8% of the French population. In the UK it was subjectively assessed that in

2014 the population of 16%, and a year later 21% of the Muslims, was living in the Isles; in fact, they constituted 5% of the British population. Similar trends and disproportions in the assessment of the Muslim population refer to Belgium, Germany, Sweden, Spain and Italy. It is interesting that the Polish society does not tend to overestimate the proportion of not only the Arabs / Muslims, but also other nationalities. The rate of 0.1% of foreigners in Poland, which has been steady for years, is alike in the perception of the Poles. *What does the tendency to overestimate the proportion of the Arabs / Muslims in Europe indicate and where are its sources?*

The first aspect, which attention should be directed to, is the realm of politics, which creates its capital on the negative image of a migrant / refugee. An example would be the change in policy of the German Chancellor Angela Merkel towards refugees from the beginning of their expansion and after the attacks and acts of terror in Europe. The second aspect concerns the media, for which the creation of the exaggerated negative image of 'foreigners' and manipulating data related to the scale of the expansion, population size and threats, serve as a tool for promoting policies. The subliminal message is taking its toll in the form of the exaggeration of the scale of threats, and the sphere of politics through the media and strengthening the negative image of the Arab / Muslim in the social perception allows for building own electoral capital. The third issue affecting the cultural assimilation concerns the aversion to the presence of the Arabs / Muslims in Europe, which in many cases has anthropological origin, since it bases on stereotypes and prejudices created in the past. The reluctance to 'foreigners' is also greatly influenced by the media, which knowingly perpetuate stereotypes and trigger a moral panic (Soin, 2011, pp. 147 163; Goode, Yehuda, 2009, p. 62)¹ among the Europeans towards the expansion of refugees. This issue appears to be natural, as the economic factor and the threat of destruction of the existing social order are almost always effective tools to influence society. But it is worth considering: to what extent are the threats created in the media and by politicians real and does Islam actually threaten Europe and the loss of its cultural values? When referring to these issues from the perspective of the scale of the expansion in the reality of 'dying' Western civilization, it must be assumed that the 'old age' as stated by Feliks Koneczny which Europe suffers from, began the natural process of modifying its ethnic structure and crowding out of the 'old' by the 'new'.

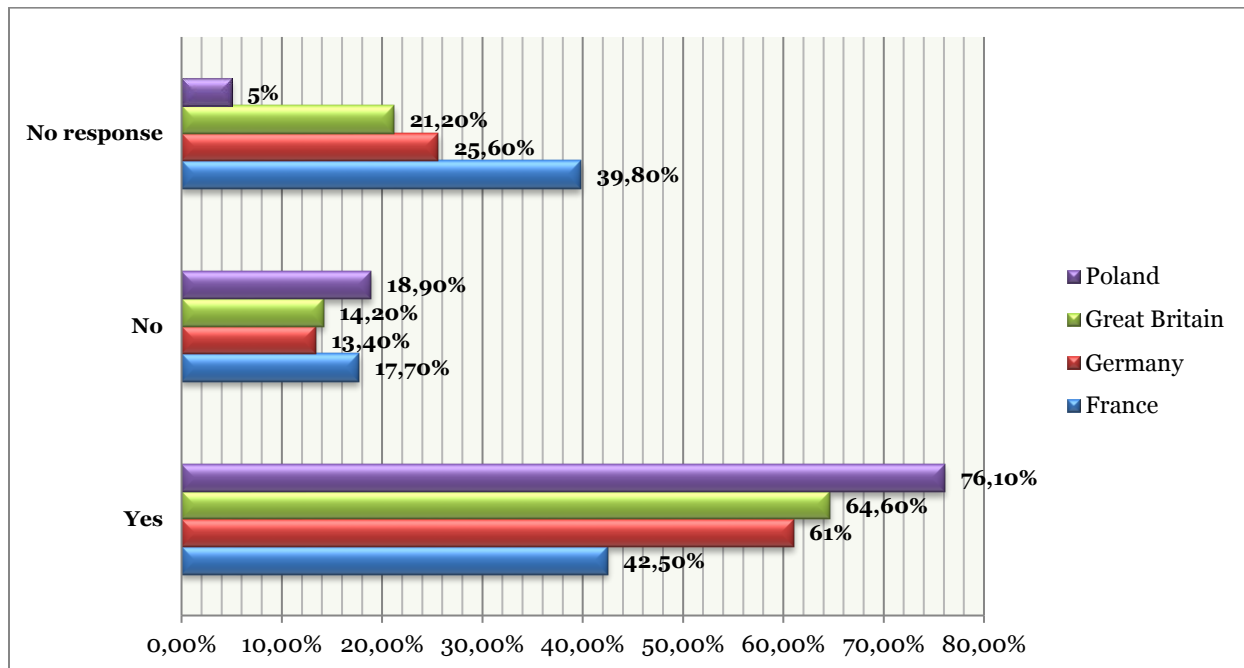
It seems that this process can no longer be stopped, and over 30 50 years the European society will become a minority in their own countries. Is it worth to fight the inevitable? While a better solution is to create conditions for 'foreign' cultures to exist, equip them with competences and skills providing mutual benefits and allowing for drawing from their heritage in a rational manner. Unfortunately, such a variant in the realities of self propelling hatred spiral is impossible, since there is no idea for at least the apparent coexistence between the Europeans and the Arabs / Muslims. However, there is another option, which seems to be confirmed by the research on 'Euro Arabs' inhabiting Europe for many years. The raised question of the cultural change among successive generations of the Arabs / Muslims allows for a bold thesis that we are witnessing the emergence of the cultural hybrid, the future of which is not yet known today, as it can go in two directions. The first of them is the natural diffusion of cultures that follows the mixing of different nationalities and the creation of two and multi ethnic families, the second one is the mixing of homogeneous national culture with the mass culture, and the possible third option – a cultural mix of both variants. In the article 'The Clash of Cultures or Complementarily? The Research and Political Problem on The Example of Poland and the Arab Countries', we have presented a bold metaphor of the coexistence of the Arabs in Poland, where the 'hot sand' and 'cold snow' symbolized the clash of two extreme cultures (Abou Saleh, Bodziany, 2015). Can the two 'cultural extremes' coexist? Is there a chance to create a new culture based on the diffusion of its components, mutual respect and harmony? In the Polish reality it is possible, provided that the natural balance between the populations of the Poles and the 'foreigners' is maintained. In the conditions of Western Europe – culturally heterogeneous and strongly antagonized, the proposed metaphor certainly has no chance to be applied. In the cited article the thesis appeared that the formation of the unfortunate cultural hybrids results in 'slush' – a melting pot of cultures doomed to confrontation and conflict. Is Pierre Chaunu, postulating the symbiosis between the Arab and European cultures, right that in the era of the communication revolution these two worlds can enrich each other, with the view of the reality of contemporary, heterogeneous Europe? (Chaunu, 1989). Or maybe in the

¹A **moral panic** means (...) focusing attention on fictional problems that diverts it from real problems. If the alleged threats are followed by ways of dealing with them, the appearance begins to live its own life. It becomes dangerous when it generates repressive measures. According to E. Goode and N. Ben Yehuda, a moral panic can be and usually is a political tool: (...) the most frequently applied theoretical frame to explain the causes of a moral panic has its source in the approach based on the theory of group interest, indicating that the power elites are just one of the collective actors having reason and opportunity for inciting unrest and uncertainty among wider communities in the name of realization of their economic, ideological and political interests.

face of the growing expansion of ‘foreigners’, Jerzy Nikitorowicz is correct when claiming: Fear of the incomprehensible Arab world, its atmosphere of ambiguity and silence, where anything can happen at any time, where there is no equality between man and woman, pushes aside understanding and agreement, and increasingly there are voices that it cannot be understood in European terms. (Nikitorowicz, 2007, p. 20).

Today, it is difficult to answer, which option will take place, but most likely is this one that in the near future, provided the creation of favorable conditions for life for ‘foreigners’, the wave of conflicts and mutual negation will be followed by the phase of at least apparent coexistence between the Europeans and the ‘Euro Arabs’. Certainly, this is wishful thinking, but real and the most beneficial for both parties. Let us look at this issue from the perspective of own research and the respondents' opinions on the chances of the mutual coexistence of the ‘Euro Arabs’, the ‘new’ Arabs and the Europeans in the same cultural environment, and whether Islam ‘fits’ in to the Western world. The research results published by Mateusz Wojtalik indicate that in most European countries the societies claim that Islam definitely does not fit into the Western world. The highest percentage of negative responses in some European countries applies to: Spain 65%, Switzerland 59%, France 55%, Germany (Eastern Districts) 55%, Germany (Western Districts) 49% Sweden 48% and the United UK 46% (Wojtalik, 2016). The respondents from countries such as France, Germany, Great Britain and Poland, who took part in the research (survey), were asked the same question, as shown in the diagram (Figure 4).

Fig. 4. The perception of the symbiosis of the Islamic culture in Europe with the Western culture N= 254



Source: Own study, 2010 2016

Studies indicate that the young generation of the Arabs consider the symbiosis of the Islamic culture in Europe as real, but on the condition that the representatives of the ‘foreign’ culture will adjust to the cultural canons of Europe, will demonstrate cultural relativism, willingness to accept even extreme cultural features of the foreign cultural environment and tolerance for different lifestyles of the Europeans. Another issue raised in own research concerns the level of religiosity of the ‘Euro Arabs’ living in Poland (134 respondents), as well as in other European countries (312 respondents). One of the research problems was the question regarding the personal assessment of the bond with God expressed through the practical approach to the faith. Respondents were asked if they adhere to the five pillars of the Muslim faith: the confession of faith, prayer five times a day, alms given to the poor, fasting during the month of Ramadan and the pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in the life of a believer. The distribution of responses allowed for positioning the respondents living outside Poland in 6 groups associated with the level of religious identity. The first group consisted of 27 respondents who declared a high degree of religiosity. They emphasized their strong relationship with the faith in Muhammad, and that they fulfill the obligations associated

with the five pillars of faith every day with fervency and commitment. They claimed that these are the inherent and practical elements of their daily lives. The respondents belonging to the second group declared the average level of religious identity. They were a group of 37 people who admitted that they have the knowledge acquired during the primary and secondary socialization in family and social life, but currently they do not declare such great zeal in religious practices.

Even though the faith is for them an important part of life. The third group of respondents includes those who declare a low degree of religiosity, not attaching much importance to religious observance. 51 respondents who manifest their religiosity in the occasional prayers and rare almsgiving represent this group. Their religious practices are incidental and do not result from a deep commitment to the spiritual realm, but only are the result of participation in rituals during religious holidays. The fourth group, with 47 respondents, rated their own religious practice at 'some', not clearly specified level. Although the respondents from this group consider themselves believers, they do not have deeper reflections on the faith. They are rather under the influence of everyday life, the vicissitudes of the modern world, thus not considering their own future, especially in the eschatological dimension. The fifth, most numerous group (141 persons) are the respondents not engaged in religious practices, despite having deep religious knowledge and being brought up in the traditions of Islam. This observation is interesting as it shows the lack of effect of socialization and cultural competence on the sustainability of religious values. The respondents separate faith from everyday life, making it a relic of tradition. Such a trend can be extrapolated to a large extent on the ground of the young generation of the Europeans brought up in the religious tradition, but not practicing it. The last sixth group is consisted of non believers (9 people) who have denied the existence of God and his impact on the fate of the world and an individual human being, and also life after death.

Table3. Religious practices of the Arabs living in Europe

Religious practices	High level of practice		Average level of practice		Low level of practice		'Some' level of practice		No practice		Non believers		N
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Religious practices of 'Euro Arabs'	27	9%	37	12%	51	16%	47	15%	141	45%	9	3%	312
Religious practices of the Arabs living in Poland	17	13%	21	16%	26	19%	19	14%	47	35%	4	3%	134

Source: Own study, 2010 2016

A similar percentage distribution applies to the respondents living in Poland, where the most numerous group is consisted of non practitioners (47 respondents) and those practicing at the low level (26 respondents). Both groups constitute the total combined percentage of 54% of the respondents. Comparative results of studies conducted on the Arabs from Western Europe and Poland allows for the conclusion to be drawn that their young generation, regardless of ethnic origin and the country of residence, largely tends to cultural change, abandonment of the tradition, and acculturation based on adopting many features of European societies.

4. Between the European and the Arab Cultures—Chances for Cultural Integration

Another problem taken up in our study was the integration at the socio – cultural level. In order to assess the level of identification with selected elements of cultural and social life the respondents were asked questions relating to their sympathy for the names of writers, poets, singers, actors, athletes and figures from the world of politics, as well as the most valued book, the tastiest food and the climate as the ecological factor decisive when choosing a

place to live. In addition, questions were asked about the language that the respondents consider as more useful and necessary. All the categories were divided into two groups: European / Arab. The results show that in many cases the respondents living in Western Europe display a greater level of sympathy for the European components of the cultural and social life, which compared to the respondents from Poland shows significant differences. The largest number of the respondents in European cities (78.8%) tended to choose the favorite writer from among European names, while 21.2% indicated representatives of the Arabic literature. A similar observation applies to the works of authors of belles letters, where as much as 80.4% of the respondents indicated European poets as the favorite ones, and as regards the choice of the titles of the best books, where the respondents valued European publications higher (68.3%) than Arab ones (31.7%). When it comes to the assessment of sports personalities the opinions were divided. 41% of people involved in the study preferred Arab athletes, while up to 59% European ones. With regard to their choice of representatives of the world of politics, as many as 92.3% supported European politicians, while only 7.7% activists of the Arab political scene. The balanced distribution of responses concerned the world of music, where 57.7% of the respondents chose musicians from Europe, and 42.3% were in favor of singers from the Arab countries.

The culinary issues remain the field almost ‘untouched’ by the assimilation of the Arab culture with the European, because when choosing the best attitude the respondents emphasized the value of the native cuisine 76.9%, and only 23.1% of them preferred taste values of the European cuisine rather than the Arab one. Interest in cinematography refers specifically to the European cinema, which is significantly affected by the perception of the image of European actors. In the opinion of the respondents European actors are definitely better, which was indicated up to 73.4% of the respondents. Only 26.6% of them prefer actors of the Arab cinema. From the point of view of the choice of place of residence the question about the climatic conditions in Europe was substantial. As it turns out, 32% of the surveyed stated that Europe meets their expectations in terms of climate, while 68% believe that the climate of the Arab world also has favorable conditions for existence. The detailed analysis of the test results proved that despite the positive assessment of the climatic conditions in Europe, countries with warm climates are recognized as more preferable. The assessment of the usefulness of European languages in relation to Arabic favored European ones. According to the respondents, European languages play more important role than the native language Arabic, which caught the attention of 54.5% of the respondents. Of course, the European languages should be looked at from the perspective of their usefulness in the world, so when speaking of European languages, ethnic languages prevailing in states that assimilate / receive the Arabs should be considered. Table 4 shows some of the above elements of socio cultural life in the perception of the Arabs living in Poland and beyond it.

Table 4. The percentage distribution of the respondents’ sympathy to selected aspects of socio cultural life N=312 and N= 134

	Writer		Poet		Athlete		Politician		Singer		Book		Actor		Language	
	Arab	European	Arab	European	Arab	European	Arab	European	Arab	European	Arab	European	Arab	European	Arabic	European
‘Euro Arab’ respondent	21,2 %	78,8%	19,6%	80,4%	41%	59%	7,7%	92,3%	42,3%	57,7%	31,1%	68,9%	26,6%	73,4%	45,5%	54,5%
‘Polish Arab’ respondent	79,1%	20,9%	94,8%	5,2%	47,8%	52,2%	57,5%	42,5%	79,9%	20,1%	81,4%	18,6%	57,5%	42,5%	98,5%	1,5%

Source: Own study, 2010 2016

Discrepancies in the evaluation of the abovementioned elements of socio cultural life between the Arabs living in Poland and beyond it are surprising. The overall assessment leads to the conclusion that the Polish Arabs not only

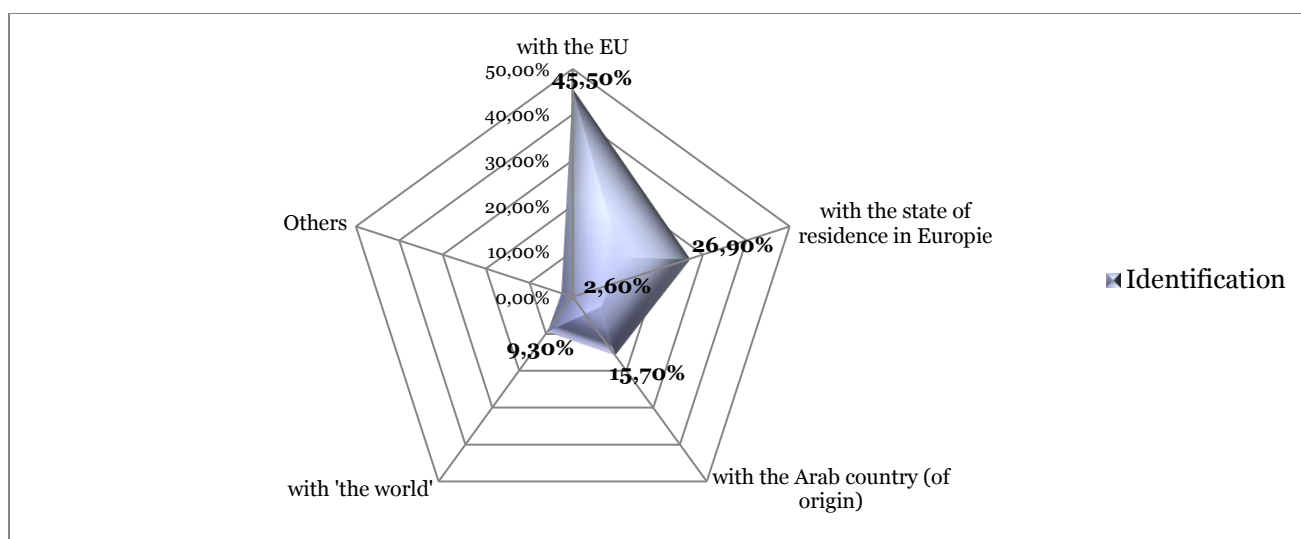
prefer their own writers and poets, but also singers, books and their own language. The perception of politicians, athletes and actors remains at sustainable levels. The issue of the climate in Poland is of great importance as well, since it significantly affects the propensity to choose it as a place of residence. In the perception of the Arabs Poland is too cold country to live there permanently.

5. The Dilemma of Identity of the Arabs in Exile

In order to evaluate the sense of identity of the 'Euro Arabs' and their identification – the valence with a place of living, the research problem was specified based on the question: *Are you a citizen of the world, the European Union, European countries or Arab countries?* In the framework of the study the respondents specified their own emotional attitude to the place of residence / origin and the personal bond with a European or Arab country, and from a wider perspective with the European Union, or from the global perspective with the world. The vast majority of the respondents (45.5%) identified themselves with the culture of the European Union, 26.9% highlighted the citizenship of European countries, such as France, Poland, and only 15.7% identified themselves with the Arab countries (of origin). The cosmopolitan attitude was represented by only 9.3% of the respondents declaring multi valence, i.e. the identification with the culture of the world.

When answering the question, 2.6% of the surveyed persons reported other factors. Figure 5 shows the percentage distribution of the identification declared by the Arabs living beyond Poland.

Fig. 5. Identification of the Arabs living beyond Poland N=312



Source: own study

The analysis of the study results reveals significant differences in the identification and the sense of identity of the Arabs residing in Western European countries and Poland. The latter show the greater identification with the countries of origin Arab, as evidenced by up to 68.6% of the responses. Other answers relate to the identification with Poland 13.5%, the sense of being a citizen of the European Union 12.7%, and of the world 5.2%. This disparity is probably due to the time factor, because the Arabs have lived in Poland since the late 1980s, and only a few settled there after World War II. The period of stay has a significant impact not only on the cultural assimilation but also mainly on the level of identification with the host nation. In Western Europe, the Arabs have lived since the 1960s and even earlier, therefore, differences in the perception of the environment, in which they exist, the identification with it, and the level of the assimilation and cultural integration are justified. The question *'What are you proud of?'* complemented the studies. The purpose of such a specified question was to subject the direction of the 'Euro Arabs' life philosophy to the analysis. The respondents living in European cities (apart from Poland) to a great extent emphasized the value of the dual model of life. This is evidenced by the fact that up to 43.9% of the surveyed are proud of their Arab and European roots, and 26.6% respect cultural values of Europe. At the opposite pole, one finds the response indicating the pride of the cultural values of the Arab world, which was indicated by

24% of the responses. While 5.5% of the respondents pointed to other determinants of pride. Like in the case of other questions, the sense of pride among the Polish Arabs is also dissimilar. Most because as many as 64.9% respondents took pride in the Arab roots. It should be noted, however, that there is a significant proportion of the respondents proud of dual identity and bivalence with the Arab world and Poland, which was stated by 27.6% of the respondents. The smallest percentage of the respondents declared the sense of pride in Polish roots 4.5% and in other determinants 3% of them.

Conclusion

The raised issues are only part of the reality, which we collide with while analyzing the issues of the cultural assimilation of the Arabs in Europe. On the one hand there are still visible problems with the cultural assimilation of the 'Euro Arabs' semi indigenous people, who almost since World War II have been a regular part of the cultural landscape of Europe. The dark present and the prediction of the future appear; they are associated with the mass expansion of 'foreigners' to our continent affected by the demographic erosion and the need to fill the population gap with productive and willing to learn representatives of foreign cultures. In the background of the issues considered there is the historical paradox associated with the colonial past of 'old democracies', which have been paying a huge price for neglects of the past. How, then, in the face of contemporary problems, to build a multicultural society in Europe based on coexistence, tolerance, principles of cultural relativism and respect for the achievements of all cultures? Here is the question that is difficult to answer today.

Will intercultural education enable changing the hostile attitudes among the peoples of Europe, especially those who grew up in different axis normative order, in other economic and social realities, were shaped by different traditions and history repeatedly awaking past events? It is possible even if four generations of the 'Euro Arabs' 'have been closed in the 'box' of isolation with low prospects for the full cultural assimilation. This option cannot be repeated in Poland, where only the first generation of the Arabs has been trying to create their own world. Conclusively, let us advance a bold thesis: It is never too late to try to build a new world, so as not to destroy what exists, to give people a chance to gain mutual trust, to allow them to get to know and learn 'each other', to exclude from the game politicians and propaganda created by tentacles of a 'cruel octopus', that is the media sowing opium of disinformation, misinterpretations and lies. Just be a human again and see a human in a 'foreigner'.

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