Islamization, Modernization, And Civilizational Analysis: Non-essentialist Comparative Perspectives

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Civilizations in contemporary social sciences and humanities

At the turn of the twenty-first century the social sciences and humanities have been experiencing a rising wave and a continuous progression of the "civilizational paradigm" (defined as thinking beyond the narrow spheres determined by a specific place and a specific time [Abu-Lughod, *Before*]). The concept of the "civilizational paradigm" is currently most commonly used to refer to the thesis of the "clash of civilizations" (Huntington, *Clash 1996*), which is sometimes perceived as a cause of a major "paradigm shift" in contemporary political science and its related fields, such as global studies and international relations. In the context of the current article, the term is used in a broader and semantically more open sense as an explanatory device that alludes to the dimension of civilization in research, analysis and theory (including philosophical investigations) about society, politics, economy, culture and history. Paradoxically, it can be treated as a critical reaction against "new culturalist" approaches (following, developing and improving Huntington's thesis) that gained popularity in political, sociological, geopolitical and to some extent also historiographical research at the closure of the "short twentieth century." Again paradoxically still, it can indeed serve as a call for "removing" the concept of civilization as such or sending it to an intellectual retirement (Mazlish, *Civilization* 160-1, 178 note 25; Goudsblom, *Civilization*), but only when it is perceived within the narrow spheres of spatial and temporal determinants mentioned above, or when it relates exclusively to the notion of civilization conceived in singular, and thus reified, terms that have only political-ideological and manipulative-dominative sense. It is being argued below, both explicitly and implicitly, that civilizations should be grasped only in plural, thus "process" (or processual) terms, signaling the possibility of the convergence of various, previously existing civilizations or bifurcations and fissures within one civilization.

The main role in that "civilizational paradigm" is played by disciplines and theoretical programs such as postcolonial studies, comparative historiographic studies on societies and economy, world-systems analysis, historical anthropology, or the revisited tradition of

macrosociology and comparative sociological and social thought from Marcel Mauss, Émile Durkheim, Max Weber and Norbert Elias to the theory of civilization, modernization, and multiple modernities by Shmuel P. Eisenstadt and Johann P. Arnason (Knöbl, *Path*; Hahn, *Approaching*). In 2009, Routledge produced a monumental 4-volume textbook on the problem of civilization in the series called *Critical Concepts in Political Science* (Bowden, *Civilization*) . By contrast, in the first 1968 edition of even more colossal and equally "canonical" "International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences," there is no entry titled "civilization" or "civilizations" at all (Sills, *International*).

Krishan Kumar notes that the current renaissance of the idea of civilization takes place after a long period of silence, whereas the main "clusters of publications," marking the period of highest frequency and popularity of research on that subject, can be located during the decades stretching from the 1930s through to the 1960s (Kumar, *Return* 816-7). The stagnation can also be noticed by going through the original dates of publications of the articles/chapters included in the aforementioned 2009 Bowden companion. It is difficult to identify clearly the specific reasons for the rehabilitated recognition of the problem of civilization as a full-fledged subject of research in the social sciences and humanities – including their textbooks and encyclopaedias. In the second edition of the IESS we can find the entry "Civilization" (Naqvi, *Civilization*), at the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first. In this context, one should certainly mention the events of September 11, 2001 and the debates about the relevance of the "clash of civilizations" thesis, as noticed earlier. These debates employ articles that were almost ten years old at that time, such as Samuel P. Huntington's famous article in *Foreign Affairs* (Huntington, *Clash 1993*), and his subsequent book. Huntington's thesis was presented for the first time in his speech for the American Enterprise Institute, within the Bradley Lecture Series, on October 19, 1992 (Huntington, *Clash 1992*). It has its roots in a lecture by one of the leading twentieth-century British-American historians and oriental studies scholars, Bernard Lewis. Lewis' 1957 lecture at John Hopkins University was developed later into a series of publications, most famously in an article shortly preceding Huntington's formulation of the same issue (Lewis, *Roots*). It is difficult to decide conclusively whether the 09/11 terrorist attacks and the subsequent "war on terrorism" were instrumentally used manifestations or actual confirmation of the existence of inter-civilizational conflicts as postulated by the thesis. Nevertheless, many discussions, interpretations and explanations of contemporary world affairs –both in the academic world of science and study and in the journalistic discourses and media– take as their starting point the "crisis of the West" or the interrelationship of "Western identity" with the "growth" and "distinctiveness" of Asia (primarily China, India and

Japan, sometimes also Indonesia and Malaysia). Questions of cultural and civilizational particularities and uniqueness occur on a regular and frequent basis in the context of reflections and scientific investigations about similarities and differences between peoples, societies and countries in the world, not only in the framework of analyzing the global *Realpolitik* of international relations, but also in connection with considerations of possibilities, perspectives and prospects on dialogue, understanding, building bridges and other factors that can (should?) contribute to establishing and maintaining connections among human societies and cultures.

Two particular approaches and examples of conceptions that are based on the "civilizational paradigm" can be mentioned as a brief illustration of the above points. The first is the study of the developmental trajectories of specific societies and humanity as a whole with consideration of potential further stages or phases of that development in relation to interactions between culture (society) and nature (environment). One such approach comprises the popular and semi-scientific (although quite influential and widely discussed in academic circles) works by Jared Diamond, such as "Guns, Germs, and Steel" (Diamond, *Guns*) or "Collapse," (Diamond, *Collapse*) exploring issues of the "end of humanity" in the face of ecological crises, dangers and threats. The first book offers, *inter alia*, the interpretation of primary/ultimate (ecological) and direct/proximate (technological) factors determining the differences among civilizations, including "clashes" stemming from such differences. In the same vein, one can find the more academic publications of Felipe Fernández-Armesto (primarily his "Millennium" [Fernández-Armesto, *Millennium*] and "Civilizations" [Fernández-Armesto, *Civilizations*]) where the problem of civilizations is defined and studied in relation to historical struggles (the realization of demands, ambitions and needs) of individual societies living in and dealing with specific environmental challenges (Kumar, *Return* 818-9).

Another perspective worth emphasizing and highlighting when considering the current renaissance of the idea of civilization is the program of "global history" or "world history" (Joseph Needham [Grand], William McNeill [Rise], Marshall Hodgson [Venture], Jack Goody [East], Kenneth Pomeranz [Great], David Christian [Maps], Victor Lieberman [Strange], Geoffrey Gunn [First], Jan Nederveen Pieterse [Global], John M. Hobson [Eastern] et al.), whose goal is to advise, outline and develop a less Eurocentric and more "ecumenical" attitude to the problem of interconnections (focusing on both their history and structure) among societies (civilizations). Such "pluralistic" and comparative perspectives arose as a consequence of questioning (within a broader revisionist movement in historical studies) classical and neoclassical socio-economic historiography (that

seemed to dominate both popular and scientific discourses of history since the eighteenth century). However, these became especially influential and uncontested as part of the theory of modernization in the twentieth century, oriented towards the valorization of the so-called "European Miracle," (Jones, *European*), which resonates with the famous *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations* by David Landes (*Wealth*) as a kind of "neo-Weberian" theory of the history of capitalism, highlighting prominently its moral and cultural (civilizational) aspects (Boatcă, Costa, Gutiérrez-Rodríguez, *Decolonising*; Boatcă, *Global*; Nederveen Pieterse, *Multipolar*; Beckert, Sachsenmaier, *Global*).

The scholarship briefly referred to above, despite its critical and polemical overtones towards earlier, most endorsed, approaches, is often developed in relation to important, famous, mostly twentieth-century, but already "classical," theories of civilization/s, especially those that emphasize its/their multifaceted and multi-layered nature (including, among others, methods and tools of dealing with environmental challenges) and dynamism/process character. As source of such inspiration we should point out first and foremost works by Arnold Toynbee [Study], Fernand Braudel [Civilization], and Carroll Quigley [Evolution]. However, the author who is becoming more and more recognized and appreciated as the creator of the first systematic analytical and explanatory work about the nature of history and the developmental stages of civilizations is Ibn Khaldūn and his *Muqaddimah*.

Ibn Khaldūn's non-essentialist approach to the dynamics of societies and civilizations

It is difficult to classify unambiguously and straightforwardly Ibn Khaldūn's (1332-1406) research and ideas in reference to any specific discipline or fields. Nowadays, he is considered a theorist of society and politics. His work is surprisingly modern when it comes to the methods he used, the form of putting forward his hypotheses, theses and arguments, and in the terms of the conclusions that he achieved as results of his studies. It is sometimes maintained that he should even be considered as the father of sociology and political science in the sense of contemporary academic and university "division of labour" (Gellner, *Muslim*; Alatas, *Ibn Khaldun*; Alatas, *Applying*). On the other hand, it is important to mention Syed Farid Alatas's argument that both Ibn Khaldūn's theory and its legacy is in fact marginalized in contemporary social sciences, due to their "Eurocentric canon" (Alatas, *Ibn Khaldun* 56-58). His ideas are indeed discussed within social and political research, but predominantly in reference to and in the context of research on Muslim societies: Middle Eastern

(Arab) or North African. Thus Alatas calls for the full inclusion of Ibn Khaldūn's social and political thought into contemporary studies of modern societies, so it can be treated equally with the one developed by authors such as Karl Marx, Max Weber or Émile Durkheim (Alatas, Sinha, *Sociological*). "Al-Muqaddima" presents itself as a uniquely valuable and important contribution to understanding the general nature of societies and politics; when it is studied, for example, in reference to the history of the Ottoman Empire, we can highlight not only its non-Eurocentric, but also pre-Eurocentric significance and implications (Alatas, *Ibn Khaldun* 68-73; Önder, Ulaşan, *Ibn Khaldun's*). An attempt to broaden Ibn Khaldūn's project beyond "Western limitations" is presented by Masudul Alam Choudhury (*Islamic*), who claims that such limitations are sometimes "self-imposed" due to Ibn Khaldūn's explicit subscription to Platonic and Aristotelian philosophical legacies. Nevertheless, in addition to the social-theoretical and historiographical components of Ibn Khaldūn's work, simultaneous attention is drawn also to its epistemological, conceptual and methodological dimensions, and according to such an interpretation of Ibn Khaldūn's *oeuvre* is considered strictly philosophical, precisely as a critique of speculative rationalism. In the later sense, the author of *Al-Muqaddima* takes part in the famous debates within the domain of Islamic sciences, both *fiqh* (jurisprudence) and *kalām* (philosophy), about the relationship between revelation and rational knowledge, orthodoxy (doctrine) and philosophy (speculation), dealing with those problems as they were defined and determined in the publication of *Tahāfut al-falāsifa* ("Inconsistency of philosophers") by Al-Ghazālī. Indeed, the sixth chapter of Ibn Khaldūn's book which contains philosophical analyses and reflections carried out on the implications of previously introduced ideas and concepts such as *ʿaṣabiyyah, ʿumrān, badawī* or *ḥaḍarī*, makes up almost one-third of the entire volume of the book (Ahmad, *Epistemology*; Leaman, *Foreword*).

The theory of civilizational dynamics –as part of the research on the cycles of the growth and decline of states (sovereign power or dynastic succession)– is interpreted by Ibn Khaldūn as the proper subject of the science of civilizations or the social organization of life (*ʿilm al-ʿumrān al-bašarī*) or of studies of human societies (*ʿilm al-iǧtimāʿ al-insānī*). These disciplines belong to the general body of knowledge defined as the science (or knowledge) of society (*ʿilm al-ʿumrān*) (Alatas, *Ibn Khaldun* 20, 46). Ibn Khaldūn's "sociology" understood in this way necessarily has a historical character. However, his investigations are not simply about recording and reporting events from more remote or more recent history. The focus of his "new social science" is a hermeneutics of cyclical development or processes to which civilizations (states) are subject – from birth, strengthening, weakening to the collapse and replacement (overcoming) by another

state (empire, civilizational power). Useful reconstruction of Ibn Khaldūn's five phases/stages of historical development of sovereign social-political system: foundation/constitution, personalization of power, growth and expansion (leisure and tranquillity time), stagnation (satisfaction and peacefulness time), decline and dissolution (waste and squandering time), with synthetic description of their corresponding traits, is presented by Önder and Ulaşan (*Ibn Khaldun's* 237).

The author of *Al-Muqaddima* examines the history of selected Maghreb (North Africa) and Arab states in this respect. He focuses primarily on differences in the organization of society in the case of pastoral-nomadic and sedentary peoples. However, the research areas and issues it deals with are even more precisely defined:

1. Society (*ʿumrān*) in general and in reference to its individual components;
2. Nomadic (Bedouin) society (*al-'umrān al-badawī*); tribal societies/ groups (*qabā'il*) and primitive peoples (*al-waḥšiyyah*);
3. The state (dynastic system) (*al-dawlah*); royal (*mulk*) and caliphate (*khilāfah*) authority;
4. Sedentary society (*al-'umrān al-ḥaḍarī*); cities;
5. The crafts, paid work, occupation.

According to Syed Alatas, the above areas correspond to contemporary fields in sociological research such as human or social ecology, rural sociology, political sociology, urban sociology and sociology of work/ labour (Alatas, *Ibn Khaldun* 21).

The research issues outlined above are analyzed with respect to two key concepts: the system of social organization (cooperation) (*ʿumrān*) and solidarity, or a sense of belonging to a group (*ʿaṣabiyyah*) (Önder, Ulaşan, *Ibn Khaldun's* 235). The two main systems of social organization and cooperation are: nomadic-rural (Bedouin, desert tribes) (*badawī*) and sedentary-urban societies (*ḥaḍarī*) (Önder, Ulaşan, *Ibn Khaldun's* 240). The former is gradually transformed into the latter due to an increase in productivity and wealth. *ʿUmrān* refers to individual principles of activity and action/ agency, both in material and spiritual dimensions (types). Life within the primary, nomadic social structure is associated with realization of efforts and activities focused primarily on ensuring the safety of life and survival, as the most basic needs. On the other hand, sedentary and urban life leads to a gradual differentiation of social structure: establishment of institutions, emergence of production, development of construction (civil engineering), and flourishing of art and sciences (in an attempt to satisfy increasingly complex, higher-level needs) (Bielawski, *Ibn Chaldun* 28; Ahmad, *Epistemology* 29-31, 125-6; Choudhury, *Islamic* 121-124; Arnason, Stauth, *Civilization*). However,

over time –Ibn Khaldūn estimates the duration of the entire evolutionary cycle in the case of individual human societies (civilizations) at about 120 years (three generations)– corruption and immorality invade the advanced sedentary social-political-cultural structure as a result of a limitless and vain pursuit of luxury and wealth. The economic system is starting to fail, expenses are increasing, so are taxes, production and economic efficiency are shrinking, followed by diminishing revenues. The urban society ultimately collapses (Önder, Ulaşan, *Ibn Khaldun's* 239).

ʿ*Aṣabiyyah* (translated commonly as solidarity) is the best-known concept referring to Ibn Khaldūn historiography and theory of society and civilization. The intensity and types of solidarity (coherence, sense of belonging to a group) analyzed in *Al-Muqaddima* (strong ʿ*aṣabiyyah* versus weak ʿ*aṣabiyyah* and lineage/blood ties versus rationality) are intended to provide insight into the essence of the analyzed societies. It is important to emphasize that the term ʿ*aṣabiyyah* covers not only the spiritual or psychological aspects of links and interactions among individuals or groups of people, but refers also to their dimensions and manifestations of a material and institutional character (economic system, state and public institutions, principles of society organization, etc.) (Alatas, *Ibn Khaldun* 21, 23). Thus ʿ*aṣabiyyah* is not only an emotional feeling, an affect, or a subjective sense of belonging, but also –as it is noted by Murat Önder and Fatih Ulaşan (*Ibn Khaldun's* 241-242; Hassan, *İbn Haldun* 194-5)– a force behind collective actions of both a cooperative and antagonizing nature. It leads to the strengthening of one group at the expense of another. Therefore, it plays simultaneously a constructive (building social order) and destructive roles (demolishing social order, damage to intergroup and intersocial relations). The problem of the antagonizing/destructive aspect of ʿ*aṣabiyyah* is discussed quite often, especially within recent scholarship on ideological disparities and tensions experienced by the Muslim world (Gada, *Ethnic*; Mehraban Dafsari, Mirahmadi, *Neo-Asabiyyah*). Another aspect of research on various dimensions of ʿ*aṣabiyyah* underscores similarity, when compared to Antonio Gramsci's idea of hegemony, both in terms of internal political affairs of international relations (Yalvaç, *Ibn Khaldûn's*; vast references to literature on that subject: 96-7, note 14).

Ibn Khaldūn's approach to civilization may be contrasted with approaches that appear to be more static, essentialist, or that concentrate on analyzing and explaining fixed and unalterable features of cultures and civilizations, those that are considered as sources of identity of peoples, individuals and societies, which belong to them. Among the latter perspectives the most prominent are those inspired by theoretical constructions raised and explicated within the "clash of civilizations" paradigm. As an example of such interconnections of

research programs, we can mention works by some recent authors in Poland –academics and writers, publicists and commentators representing broadly conceived public and political life– who try to combine Huntington's theory with the one developed several decades earlier by a Polish historian, philosopher and social theorist Feliks Koneczny (1862-1949). Such authors use that amalgamate for scholarly or nationalistic political-ideological purposes, providing inspiration for "Western readers looking for spiritual and moral orientation" (Hilckman, *Introduction*; Hilckman, *Kultur*; Grott, *Zivilisationstheorie*; Grott, *Idee*; Skoczyński, *Huntington*; Wise, *Postcolonial*; Dyczewski, Sławik, *Values*; Tomaszewski, *History*; Raburski, *Feliks*; Wise, *Feliks*). Koneczny was an intriguing, and to some extent a mysterious and enigmatic scholar, whose writings were translated and published in English in very narrowly selected and abridged versions. Their original Polish editions despite having a limited (if dedicated) audience, made an impression on Arnold Toynbee among others; Toynbee wrote the preface to one of his books. On the other hand, there are some striking resemblances between Koneczny's conceptualizations of the problem of civilization and the ideas presented in Huntington's *The Clash of Civilizations*, leading some interpreters to investigate possible, implicit, inspiration of the author of the later work by his alleged "Polish predecessor" (who was also a precursor of the idea of unavoidable conflicts among civilizations). The similarities –not a question of potential (explicit or implicit) influences or borrowings– between the two authors could be a result of their dependence (to be sure, in different forms: for Koneczny as a reality of his times, for Huntington as a precious rediscovery) on the "European mainstream" in the social sciences and humanities of the first half of the twentieth century. At this time, the study of civilizations, their typologies, social morphologies, as well as issues of racial and linguistic determinations etc. were a normal part of the academic curricula (Floud, *Review*). Alfred Skorupka, one of the authors inspired by both Huntington and Koneczny, reconstructs the latter's "strict" understanding of civilizations as cultural, i.e. spiritually normatively fixed, entities and phenomena with a tendency (typical for proponents of the discussed current) to translate it into a kind of *realpolitik* (e.g. Huntington's, Fukuyama's or Ferguson's arguments in favor of the US-European Union alliance as a chance to "save Western civilization" [Skorupka, *Co to jest* 150; Skorupka, *Unia* 37-9]). One might also consider the observation that the inability of contemporary members of the Chinese civilization to answer the question "who we are now," is evidence of the "decay" of that civilization resulting from "mixture" that touched and corrupted it) (Skorupka, *Cywilizacja* 247-8).

One of the main features of the Huntington-Koneczny paradigm defended by Skorupka is its problematic, "essentialist" ontologically

and epistemologically, as well as extremely exclusivist (not to say racist) heavy normative luggage. For example, in the text about the views of Józef Maria Bocheński, we read that European civilization goes "through the world, destroying every existing lower cultural rank, and creating appropriate conditions for implementation and realization of itself"" (Skorupka, *Cywilizacja* 255). The reliance on Koneczny's apodictic essentialism of civilizations also manifests in the case of the most recent academic, semi-academic, and popular-scientific publications by authors belonging to a recent "patriotic school of Polish historiography," including Andrzej Nowak (*Między*) and a former prominent anti-Communist dissident, activist and author of influential samizdat syntheses of the contemporary history of Poland, Wojciech Roszkowski. The latter recently published such best-selling monographs as *The Shattered Mirror – The Downfall of the Western Civilization* (Roszkowski, *Roztrzaskane*) and *The Rebellion of the Barbarians* (Roszkowski, *Bunt*). Those historians and analysts, as well as other intellectuals and authors gathered around think-tanks, publishing houses and periodicals such as Magna Polonia and Polonia Christiana regularly and systematically employ in their writings narratives about the "clash of civilizations" a general and broad concept covering unavoidable conflicts between "Christian ethics," "metaphysical-epistemological realism/naturalism," "political conservatism," (sometimes leading to a strong defence of monarchism [Bartyzel, *Prawica*]) on the one hand and "civilization of death," "modernism," and "multiculturalism" (thus the radical rejection of the "malaise of democracy") on the other. Koneczny's calls for the original purity of civilizations (against their "mixtures") and the supremacy of the "Latin Civilization" seem also to serve as an important "asset" and a source of deep, ontological (or rather metaphysical or political-theological) and epistemological inspiration for the official current right-wing Polish government. This government attempts to radically reform the entire education and science/research system in Poland in the name of re-nationalization and the broader "conservative counterrevolution" (Gera, *Warsaw*).

Islamization of knowledge versus "Islamophobization" of intellectual assets and discourses

The idea of "Islamization of knowledge" can lead to misunderstandings and may even cause concerns and worries. The latter is the case, especially within the framework of ideas and arguments supporting the concept of the "clashes of civilizations" ("Islamization of Europe!," "Islamization of the West!"). In the strict sense, it functions as a technical term in some currents of contemporary Muslim thought for the purposes of debates on the

relationship between modernity and the world (and doctrine) of Islam, and principally in connection with the question on the possibility of modernization of Muslim societies and all their dimensions (science, technology, worldviews, interpersonal and social relations, states, laws and institutions, economy, etc.) (Dzilo, *Concept*). Such modernization is conceived in terms of coping with the challenges of today's world after opening to it and understanding its significance, instead of ignoring it or denying its existence. On this occasion it is possible one more time to refer to A. Toynbee's understanding of civilizations and his studies on patterns of the transformation of religion and religiosity (including Islam) in the face of changing circumstances related to the dynamics of social and political forms (Toynbee, *Islam*; Chmielewski, *Saving*). However, in the context of the current article I would like to briefly refer to yet another semantic aspect of the notion of "Islamization" in general and "Islamization of knowledge" in particular. It relates to discussions about a rather distant –but still important and controversial– past, important for the understanding of the origins of Islam both as a religion and as a civilizational and social project. Obviously, both scope and size of the current presentation make it impossible to even enumerate, not to mention a more reflective examination and treatment of the essence of particular nuances and overall effects (but not conclusions) of the debate.

I will mention in short as an example one project only; the project was established by and should be linked to Ismail Faruqi (Isma'īl Rājī al-Fārūqī), a famous Muslim scholar and activist and his collaborators such as Abdul Hamid Ahmad AbuSulayman and Taha Jabir Al-Alwani. The entire agenda, as well as the specific activities and works of Faruqi's can serve as a large joint collection and reservoir of sources and references to the contents of the whole current paragraph and indeed of the entire article. The discussion about the "Islamization of knowledge" offered here is based both on works that can be treated as manifestos of Faruqi's take on the idea (al-Faruqi, *Islamization*; AbuSulayman, *Qur'anic*; Sardar, Henzell-Thomas, *Rethinking*; critical review and discussion is offered in: Spannaus, *From 'Islamization'*), and on more polemical reviews and discussions of the concept itself as well as of this particular way of its implementation (Nasr, *Islamization*; Muslih, *Islamization*; Spannaus, *From*).

The term "Islamization" in many contemporary publications, as well as in the entire research field dealing with the birth and development of Islam in its first centuries is reserved as the result of a wide consensus for the process of acquiring by a young, flourishing but also struggling, society around the awareness of its own separateness and uniqueness. Thus it refers to the stages of the identity formation –first religious, but soon also civilizational– of believers and followers of the Prophet Muhammad, with all its consequences. Here

is how that process is described in one textbook and a compendium of knowledge about Islam for contemporary readers:

> The times of conquests and the first Umayyad dynasty represent a period of territorial expansion and the formation of the framework of the Arab state, and therefore were a stage of the Arabization of the world. This first stage had a centrifugal character, it was an exit to the outside, the Arabization of the world, the imposition of power and language of the Arabs. However, the next dynasty, the Abbasids, did the work of building a new civilization. It was the second civilizational stage: a centripetal one, that led to the creation of the Muslim culture, when various non-Arab peoples and cultures brought with themselves their heritage and included it into the emerging Muslim culture (...). Islamisation, therefore, consisted in incorporating in the Muslim culture the achievements of other civilizations. Such integration required giving those new elements a certain sanction, namely incorporating them into the Arab-Muslim own tradition. It was recognized that the borrowed values were not foreign at all, but came from the Arab cultural past. Thus, universal acceptance was given to them. Such retrospective creation of reality was at the heart of Islam's success. It was also the reason and cause of virtually flawless character of the Islamic law that supported and enabled the great empire to function for several centuries, and that made it possible for the law itself to survive up to these days (Danecki, *Podstawowe* 43 my translation).

As emphasized, for example, by Janusz Danecki, the approach to the problem of Islamization presented above may inspire historical-theoretical perspectives focusing on the fact that during the period from the first to the third centuries AH[1] (from the seventh till the ninth centuries), complex processes related to establishing and developing contacts, as well as building interdependence among societies and their cultures, were under way. On the other hand, it may also be treated as an attempt to argue for a specific interpretation of the origins of Islam: the ways, means, and strategies for its legitimization and recognition within the civilizational and social environment in which it was born. According to this argument, the religion has gradually emerged as a political principle of legitimacy (and maintaining of the nascent Muslim community, thanks to mobilization and cohesion) of power in an initially secular or religiously neutral environment (the birth of the "Muhammadan law" / "Muhammadan jurisprudence" on the basis of the administrative, as well as the popular "Umaiyad practice" [Schacht, *Origins* 98, 191-213]).

This theoretical and historiographic perspective has numerous consequences, including those pointing to the alleged proliferation (and "fabrication") of hadiths (narrations about the Prophet's sayings and actions), considered as one of the fundamental sources of jurisprudence and legislation in Islam. According to such interpretation, since the previously existing community had no religious, Muslim character, the narrations of/about the Prophet (Sunna of the Prophet) that circulated within it were not of such a nature either. However, as demonstrated by Wael Hallaq and others, it is unsustainable to assume that the Sunna, that appeared earlier –before the Prophet's *ḥadīth* (tradition) proliferated– was not perceived by

Muslims of the time as non-religious or non-Islamic, and that Islamic law and jurisprudence (with the proper transition from the *pre-ḥadīth* to the *ḥadīth* period) only began as a result of the formal codification proposed by aš-Šāfiʿī (Muḥammad ibn Idrīs aš-Šāfiʿī [d. 204 AH/819 CE]), founder and the leading jurist and scholar of the Shāfiʿi school (*madhab*) of Islamic Law (Hallaq, *Origins* 103; Danecki, *Podstawowe* 74-6; important recent interpretations undermining Schacht's influential claim: Brown [*Canonization* 33-4]; Donner [*Muhammad* 205-16]). Both the already existing biographies (*sira*) and the Prophet's Sunna were of a religious nature, and were already part of the self-conscious religious experience of the then already religious, Muslim community. As a consequence they were subject to interpretation, but also prone to natural, sometimes profound, transformations. Religious sources in that case also included the Companion and the First Caliphs' *sunan*. Aš-Šāfiʿī systematized and classified those sources on the basis of a consistently applied juristic methodology, without, however, transforming "Islamic jurisprudence into what came to be its solid, mature form" (Hallaq, *Origins* 117). The above discussion acknowledges the pressing importance of the inclusion of historical frameworks to studies focusing on epistemological and ontological ramifications, while simultaneously avoiding any "time-space relativistic," petrified and petrifying a-historical (but usually purely opportunist and ideological) conceptual-genealogical constructions such as those about typologies and morphologies of civilizations.

The "methodological imagination" and approach described above can make it possible to effectively address problems faced by researchers who study phenomena such as Islamophobia in Poland using more traditional mono-disciplinary perspectives and methods. Firstly, the situation with the strong and persistent Islamophobic incidents against the "Islamization" of Poland (sometimes despite, and sometimes just because of the paradoxically tiny population of Polish Muslims [Włoch, *Islam* 63-4; Górak-Sosnowska, *Islamophobia* 190-2]) should not be a surprise for any social scientists aware of conclusions from studies on the social, psychological, normative and epistemological-ontological mechanisms behind stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination, and the roles of social/cultural distance on the one hand and "dark sides" of social capital on the other hand (Putnam, *Bowling* 350-63; Haidt, *Righteous* 319-66; Greene, *Moral* 334-46; Stanley et al., *Exposure* 13-4). Secondly, what is at stake here, from the point of view of the perpetrators of those incidents, is the "Islamization of Europe" (of the "European cultural essence"), and not just the Islamization of Poland; the simultaneous sense of being distant to/separated from and at the same time the proximity to Europe is another problem (Wolff, *Inventing*; Todorova, *Imagining*). There is one more paradox at work in this context; Poland can be regarded as one of

the first multicultural republics in the history of modern Europe (not including Muslim states, like the Ottoman Empire), with Muslims as one of its largest (historically) "alien" populations and leading partners in trade and all sorts of economic and cultural exchanges (Dziubiński, *Na szlakach* 145-202, 235-81; Dziekan, *History* 27-9; Buchowski - Chlewińska, *Tolerance* 23-8; Janicki, *Distribution* 146-7; Janicki, *Tatarzy* 175-6). It is noteworthy that even the most right-wing, alt-right, identitarian anti-Muslim propaganda in Poland clearly distinguishes "good-historical Muslims" (to a large extent, assimilated Tatars) from the "barbaric", "leftist-Islamo-fascists" identified with current immigrants and the activity of earlier "agents" and "infiltrators" from Saudi Arabia, and from among the Muslim Brotherhood (Płatek, *Dyskurs*; Koraszewski, *Dlaczego*; Koraszewski, *Komunizm*). Finally, notions such as right-wing/radical, far-right/ extreme-right Islamophobia can be misleading if we realize that in fact the biggest, most influential and successful media and news portal spreading anti-Muslim messages, "euroislam.pl" (note the significant and purposive rift between "Euro" and "Islam" in the logotype of this portal/organization) belongs to and is run by a group of intellectuals, social activists etc. situated on the political centre-left (Bobako, *Islamofobia* 263-309; Bobako, *Semi-Peripheral*).

We should remember at this point and keep in mind Oliver Roy's observations from his recent book about the current attempts and dynamics aimed at the Occidentalizing/purification of Europe (Roy, *Europe*). A negative answer to the question posed by the title of this book ("Is Europe Christian?") seems to produce a kind of post-traumatic effect and symptoms among Polish identitarians (paradoxically not only –and maybe especially not– among those who "identify" themselves as Christians, because they also have recently entered the path to becoming a social-cultural minority (Inglehart, *Giving Up*; Inglehart, *Religion's* 86-99).[2] Those consequences in turn result in both specific Islamophobic incidents that are still quite rare compared with other European countries, and long-term, deeper developments and refinements concerning visions of social, political, cultural, educational, but also economic, system defined and xenophobic perspectives. These are manifest not only in exclusivist "liquid" narratives and discourses, but also in looking for "solid" foundations of epistemological and ontological order. The traditional, Christianity/Catholicism-based sense of national pride in Poland is being slowly supplemented, or maybe even replaced, though it will be a long process, by secularists and post-modern cultural eclecticists and syncretists, with their own civilizational essentialisms and exclusivisms (Günsoy-Turowski, *Antagonism*).

Maps for further research

One of this article's main arguments highlights the importance of attempts in contemporary social sciences and humanities to interpret the interconnections and interdependencies between categories of civilization and "Islamization" thanks to the combination of the two approaches to the latter category, as presented in the previous paragraphs. One is related to the question about the opening up of Islam and Muslim civilization to modernity, and the other refers to an example from the past. In this past Islam was born as a (new? rejuvenated?) religion based on the authentic religious and spiritual experience of its followers, and not as an ideology of conquest fabricated and implemented for the purposes of the future "political historiography of salvation," after the erasure of the "true history" (Donner, *Narratives* 22-6). Such open, flexible and inclusive approaches should be contrasted with an explicit opposition to the more essentialist, confrontational, even "supremacist" perspectives that by definition ignore, reject or exclude any comparisons among civilizational experiences of world human societies in the past and in the present, not to mention cooperation, dialogue and mutuality among them.

Within the theoretical-interpretative framework defined above, it would be possible to revisit and, potentially, re-criticize or re-affirm the notion of Orientalism, coined as one of the most powerful challenges in contemporary social sciences and humanities against discourses legitimizing explicit and implicit domination among cultures and societies. This is especially so in the context of the relationship between the global East, represented by Islam and Muslim societies, cultures and civilizations, and the global West with its "European values" that are a combination of traditional Greek-Roman-Christian ones with those established during the Enlightenment. There are ongoing discussions about various methodological, epistemological and ontological aspects and dimensions of Said's work and its receptions, that are of late more and more re-emerging and gaining importance (Venn, *Occidentalism* 3, 48, 165; Chibber, *Postcolonial* 8; Boatcă, Costa, Gutiérrez-Rodríguez, *Decolonising*; Go, *Postcolonial*; Isin, *Citizenship*). Among the theoretical projects that have contributed significantly to the contemporary critical recognition of Said's theory, it is worth mentioning studies on secularism and the post-secular turn (Gregor McLennan [Postsecular]), comparative studies of religions (Bryan S. Turner [Religion]), investigations about theoretical-methodological connotations of the category of the Orient and Orientalism as related to the formation and maintaining of liberalism as the ideological-institutional "geo-culture" of modernity (Immanuel Wallerstein [Geopolitics]) and Shmuel N. Eisenstadt's studies of civilizations (Eisenstadt, *Sociological*). The latter author's presence in

reference to the topic of the current article is of particular importance. He was the author of a complex sociological theory of civilization (theory of multiple modernities), truly relevant and persuasive from the perspective of the current reflections, due to its comparative and inclusive nature, and for the discussions about possible alternatives to more essentialist and exclusivist versions of civilizational analysis. He was a strong opponent of the "clash of civilizations" thesis and thus his work can be considered as one of the main inspirations for ecumenical theories of modernization studied from the previously mentioned global/world historical standpoint.

Without attempting even a brief presentation and discussion of the founding theory of Postcolonial Studies originated thanks to the publication of the important, influential and contested Edward Said's book, I would rather like to point out, as part of the concluding remarks of this article, the importance and benefits of its combination with the main subject of the above reflections. It is necessary to discuss problems of the "civilizing mission" or the "civilizational awakening" that can be a result of the process of "Islamization" (including "Islamization of knowledge" as maintained and carried out as an inspiration from scholars such as Ismail al-Faruqi) without a flawed and misguided understanding of the nature and implications of the problem that can be perceived and treated as a purely confrontational tool or incitement in inter-cultural/inter-civilizational matters. For AbuSulayman, the key in this case is a return to and a reaffirmation of the concept of spirituality in the Islamic system of thought (intellectual/cognitive system) (*Qur'anic* Chapter 1). However, return to the spiritual dimension is manifested here without an employment of one of the most (in-)famous binary oppositions, "reason" versus "faith" (AbuSulayman, *Qur'anic* Appendix II),[3] along with the basic binary distinction "Islam" vs "the West," ultimately upgraded, not downgraded within the project. This perspective invalidates the famous criticism of the "Islamization of knowledge" paradigm by Vali Nasr (*Islamization*) who claims that "(rather) than contributing to knowledge […] [it] has created an enervating disjunctive between faith and knowledge" (Nasr, *Islamization* 387). Instead, the paradigm can be captured within a phenomenological and comparative perspective, such as Ismail Faruqi's theoretical works in religious studies (on interreligious dialogue, meta-religion and world theology), inspired by Max Scheler's phenomenological-axiological conception of values (Faruqi, *Justifying*; Faruqi, *Meta-Religion*). The aim of such research is to reveal the spiritual experience (thus the experience of values, including the highest one, sanctity/saintliness) (Faruqi, *Problem*) of human individual and society, remote from all those historical or contemporary approaches in the social sciences and humanities that announce a universal, complete, Weberian "disenchantment of the

world" and the entrance of humanity into a "promised land" of secularism. Paradoxically, as it can be concluded, for example, from the works by authors like Jasser Auda (also working within the paradigm of the "Islamization of knowledge"), such a reversion from being "enchanted by the disenchantment" may be needed also in the Muslim world, where dialogue/competition with modernity tends to take the shape of a domination of instrumental reason, shallow "utilitarianizing," scientism and technocracy of "religiosity," even in the case of the most traditional currents sometimes supported by recent, post-modernist tendencies in Islamic Law (Auda, *Maqāṣid* 143-153, 170-1, 179-180, 209).[4] "Islamization of knowledge," understood from such a vast and inclusive perspective, can be perceived as a paving of ways for a real "integration of knowledge" (Mohamed, *Critical*), perhaps being a continuation of that program, but certainly becoming possible and necessary thanks to it, even if not initiated by it.

Notes

1. AH (Latin: Anno Hegirae , in the year of the Hijra).

2. See also pages 26-35 to see Poland's almost linear progression on the Inglehart-Welzel global cultural values map, from traditional/survival to secular-rational/self-expression, within the last three decades.

3. This can be still easily detected in E. Said's writings (McLennan, *Sociological* Chapter 4).

4. See also chart 5.9 with comments on pages 161-2 and 167-8.

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