MOHAMED OR ADAM? STRATEGIES FOR NAMING CHILDREN AMONG MUSLIMS IN SLOVAKIA

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A name is one of the essential elements of identity. The choice of a name reflects personal as well as ethnic or religious identity. It is a reflection of individual preferences, cultural traditions and family ties, the social environment. These processes are also evident in a minority environment. The subject of interest of this study are strategies for granting names in Muslim families living in Slovakia. Our aim is to find out how and why parents choose names for their children. We will try to identify the role of individual feelings of parents as they are influenced by customary traditions of the countries from which the child's parents come. We will be interested in the extent to which the fact that the partners live in Slovakia (mostly a Christian country with a minimal proportion of the Muslim population) contributes to the decision on the name, how it is determined by the existing public opinion about foreigners and Muslims. We present findings of a questionnaire survey with Muslims living in Slovakia or their partners. The participants were mainly people living in ethnically or religiously mixed partnerships, partly homogeneous partnerships or people who lived without a partner.

Keywords: mixed marriages, naming strategies, surname, Muslims, migration

INTRODUCTION

Muslim make up about 5% of the population in Europe, with the largest proportion in Western European countries such as France (5.7 million), Germany (4.95 million) and the United Kingdom (4.1 million) (Sandford 2017). Cultural diversity, in which Muslims participate, is also manifested through names given by parents to their children. Muslim traditional names have been appearing on the list of most popular names in Europe for several years. Out of these, Mohamed and its variants is the most popular. In England, it

has consistently been ranked in the top 20 most frequent boy names since 2004. The situation is similar in France. In 2019, 2,571 French newborns were given this name. It is especially popular in Paris, where it ranked 6th (Fauroux 2020; Corps 2020).

In Slovakia, Muslim names appear rather sporadically, we find them mainly in lists of unusual and exotic names. For example, in 2014, according to the records of the Ministry of the Interior (MV SR 2014), one Abdulrahman, Ahmed, Mohamed, Hamza, Hasan, Khalid, Nader and one girl named Aisha, Fatemeh, Jasemin, Jasmyn, Sahra or Zainab were born here. Among boy names in the country, Jakub, Adam, Tomáš or Michal have long dominated, and as for girl names, Sofia, Ema or Nina, Sára, and Hana (MV SR 2019) are in the top twenty names. Compared to other countries, especially Western European and Scandinavian countries, Slovakia is only minimally affected by immigration of people from the Muslim countries, but also by immigration in general. Nevertheless, the number of migrants is gradually increasing, which is reflected in the diversity and abundance of atypical first names and surnames for this environment. We consider names, as well as surnames – their selection, acceptance, use or change – to be one of the essential elements of identity. Naming strategies reflect personal and group – ethnic or religious – identity. They reflect individual preferences, cultural traditions, family ties, the social context. These influences are also evident in a minority environment. For minority communities living in culturally different environments, the social context is particularly strong. By choosing a name for the child, parents may not only strengthen their existing cultural or kinship ties but may also facilitate entry and integration into the new society, eliminate the threat of social exclusion and discrimination.

The subject of interest of this study[1] are naming strategies in Muslims living in Slovakia. Our goal is to find out what importance study participants attach to the name itself, as well as who is involved in the choice of names for children. We are interested in how and why they chose or would choose names for their children in the future, and whether their rationale and actions regarding naming are the same or different depending on the gender of their offspring. We will try to identify the role of individual feelings and preferences of parents in this process, and how the process is influenced by the traditions of the countries of origin of the child's parents. We will also examine whether the fact that the partners live in Slovakia (a largely Christian country with a minimal proportion of the Muslim population) is involved in the decision regarding the name, how it is influenced by the existing public opinion about foreigners, migrants, Muslims and the Muslim culture. To answer these questions, we conducted a quantitative and qualitative study based on a questionnaire distributed among Muslims living in Slovakia. Specifically, the respondents were of Muslim religion or persons who lived with a Muslim partner. These were mainly people living in ethnically or religiously mixed partnerships, partly homogeneous partnerships or people who lived without a partner.

NAME AND IDENTITY IN THE CONTEXT OF MIGRATION PROCESSES AND MIXED PARTNERSHIPS

The name and surname can be considered a verbal as well as a semantic designation. It identifies the individual and distinguishes him/her from other individuals. The name represents the individual. Gordon W. Allport (1979) considers a person's name to be the most important element of identity. The name is a kind of marker of personal and collective (social) identity. It is a designation marking a person's uniqueness, it reveals their relationship with their ancestors and family, it provides information about their position in the different worlds they inhabit, and specifies (ethnic, religious, social or other) group belonging (Finch 2008: 709–713; Wykes 2017: 2–3; Stuart and Ward 2011: 260). Choosing a name, using it, or changing it involves emotional, cognitive and conative aspects of human life. It points to how people feel, think and act. Saying, hearing, or reading a name evokes associations connected with the name holder, or the group to which s/he belongs. It connects a person with a desirable or, conversely, undesirable meaning (Watzlawik et al. 2012: 1161).

The name is not understood statically. The name itself or parts of it may be changed, as may the meaning of the name or the association connected to it. Meanings and associations of names depend on the specific situation or space in which the individual experiences life. This is evident in the context of encountering other cultures. It is related to migration processes and is a frequent consequence of living in ethnically or religiously mixed families or partnerships. Originating from different cultural backgrounds or living in a third country leads parents to specific strategies when choosing a name for their child.

According to Jocelyne Streiff Fenart (1989), family histories force parents to publicly express their identity by passing it on to their children. The aim of the strategy is to reproduce two (or more) ethnic and religious identities in some way. Streiff-Fenart emphasizes that the choice of first name reveals the relationship between father and mother, points to the balance of power between their family lines. Family traditions (especially patriarchal), the struggle between them, negotiation and balance between the individual feelings and preferences of the parents, as well as the minority identity of the partner and, finally, the traditions and pressures of the society in which the partners found themselves all enter into the process of negotiating the name. Parents' choices reflect the past (referring to the family tradition and heritage of the group), the present (reflection of the current social context), and the future (an effort to provide suitable conditions for children in the future) (Streiff-Fenart 1989).

In the case of living in another culture, a certain hybridization of culture or the concept of the so-called "third culture" may be evident. This concept appears in connection with children from mixed marriages ("the third culture kid") as well as partners themselves. The individuals to whom this concept applies are unique in that they have an experience of and move between multiple cultures that shape their identity. They are influenced by the culture of the countries from which they come and the culture in which they were

born, where they live, they have raised or will raise their children. Contact or diffusion of these two cultures creates a new hybrid culture – a third world, a third space, a space "in between". The third space has no clear boundaries and transitions from one culture to another, it is characterized by a smooth transition between these cultures. Within this framework, its position is constantly negotiated (Bhabha 1994, as cited in Gellatly 2014: 21). Part of this negotiation is also deciding on the name.

A person's name is a sign used to identify, classify, and denote an individual. It can be understood as an identification mark, an ID, an access key, or a password that allows – or, conversely, complicates – an individual's passage through different cultural environments, helps or hinders his/her integration into a new society. A name is the key to recognition, it can facilitate or complicate the future realization of an individual in a society (Banková 2008; Budilová 2012).

Roda Madziva (2017) investigated the issue of stigmatization of an individual due to their name. Her work deals with the stigmatizing social context, specifically the interaction between the naming of an individual and religious persecution, the activities of state authorities and the asylum procedure. According to Madziva, the name symbolizes a personal identity and at the same time carries a certain "politics" – political significance or context. It can facilitate or complicate individual and group relationships, it provides access to job opportunities, and facilitates integration into the society. Names are mobilized to create group boundaries and define whether someone is considered "ours" or an outsider. Names are not merely a brand or a label, they are an important element that speaks about power relations and discrimination. When we hear someone's name, we automatically and unconsciously assign the person bearing it a position in local social hierarchies. We assign him/her a position within or on the edge of society. The name refers to norms and standards. Based on the name, we evaluate who or what is normal and prestigious or, in contrast, abnormal and stigmatized (Alia 2007; Rom and Benjamin 2011, as cited in Madziva 2017: 3).

Names can even have a certain racial subtext and be associated with racial discrimination. Based on research conducted in Great Britain, Emily Jay Wykes (2017) refers to the name as a non-physical indicator of race. According to her, the name can designate race, as well as other social constructs, such as skin color or accent. English names are considered domestic, socially acceptable, invisible and "white" in this environment. In contrast, foreign names are perceived as unacceptable, too visible, inferior, and need to be neutralized, for example, by anglicizing them. Many foreigners face emotional difficulties, feel vulnerability and fear of racist attitudes of the "white" population. In everyday life, therefore, they prefer strategies that make them invisible. If they marry a foreigner and accept their surname, they restrict its full public use or return to their British-sounding surnames and British identity. These feelings lead them to develop tactics which allow them to feel safer and more comfortable. Thanks to this, they avoid discrimination. On the other hand, Emily Jay Wykes also records cases where they have tried to oppose these forms of racist thinking individually. They themselves use or choose names for their children that emphasize their differences and have a strong ethnic and religious connotation. One of the groups that is

a frequent object of discriminatory manifestations due to its differences is Muslims. In this context, Shahram Khosravi (2012) studied the Muslim population in Sweden. According to Khosravi, if a certain religious or ethnic group is stigmatized, the names of its members will also become a social stigma. He claims that Muslim-sounding names are not a protection sign of Muslim identity and have become a symbol of danger presented by the Muslim religion. Anti-Muslim prejudices force Muslims to change their names to Swedish- or European-sounding names. The most distinctive elements of their stigmatized identity are veils and their names.

Francesco Cerchiaro (2019) looked into naming strategies for children in mixed Arabic families in Italy. He found two most common types of negotiations:

a) Choosing a double name. This is a signal of balance between the cultural heritage of both partners. In this case, children have two names – an Arabic one and an Italian one.

b) Alternating names. This means that one child gets an Arabic name and another an Italian name.

This classification can be supplemented by other strategies:

a) Invisibility. This is achieved by choosing a name that is common in the majority society and that prevents a stigma.

b) A strong name. The choice of such a name confirms otherness, pomp, and ostenta-tiousness. It is a manifestation of a connection with and fidelity to the original culture of both or one of the partners. In the context of ethnic or religious differences, the choice of such name means clear identification as a member of a group.

c) Syncretism. This means giving a name that is identical or similar in both cultures. This choice signifies connecting the two cultures (Streiff-Fenart 1989; Le Gall 2003; Varro 1995).

The dominant line followed when choosing names for children seems to be the patrilin-eal line, whereas the father has a predominant role in naming children (Le Gall 2003). This tendency is also confirmed by Gabrielle Varro (1995) in her study of French–American and French–German marriages. In her study, first names were chosen from the father's culture twice as frequently as the mother's. In the case of a Muslim father, these tenden-cies were even stronger. In Franco–Maghreb couples, parents avoided first names that had a strong Christian meaning or, conversely, a strong Islamic connotation.

BACKGROUND: MIGRANTS AND MUSLIMS IN SLOVAKIA

In terms of ethnicity and religion, Slovakia is relatively diverse. About 20% of its popula-tion is made up of national minorities and ethnic groups that are considered indigenous. Modern history is associated with the arrival of other groups of foreigners. Their share

of the population is 2.75%, i.e., 150,012 people. Even though the number of foreigners in Slovakia sharply increased after the country's accession to the EU (it increased almost sevenfold), it is still low (fourth lowest among the EU countries). Citizens from outside the EU predominate among foreigners, their share is 60.5%. The most numerous groups of foreigners are the citizens of Ukraine, Serbia, Vietnam, Czechia, Hungary, Romania, and Poland. These are mainly citizens of the neighboring, culturally or geographically close countries. Most common reasons for obtaining a stay permit for foreigners include employment, the status of a Slovak living abroad, entrepreneurship, family reunification and studying (ÚHaCP P PZ 2020, ŠÚ SR 2020). Refugees are a separate group. From 1993 to 2021, almost 60,000 people applied for asylum. Of these applications, asylum was granted in only 876 cases. Among asylum seekers, citizens of Afghanistan, Iraq, Cuba, Romania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Armenia and Iran predominate (MÚ MV SR 2020). Slovakia is still a transit country for most of them.

The number of Muslims in Slovakia is low. According to the 2011 census, 1,934 people in Slovakia declared as Muslim (Šprocha and Tišliar 2014). According to estimates by representatives of Muslim organizations, approximately 5,000 Muslims live in the country (Lenč 2019: 708). Many of them came to Slovakia to study. For example, students from Syria, Libya and Yemen have been coming to Slovakia since the 1960s, students from Afghanistan in the 1980s and later from Bosnia (Letavajová 2009a). The beginning of the 21st century was characterized by the arrival of refugees from Muslim countries. They came mainly from the war-stricken parts of Africa, Sudan, Nigeria, and Algeria, but also Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, Iran (MÚ MV SR 2020). Today, Muslims also come to Slovakia for work, business or for family reasons. At the end of 2020, the Slovak authorities registered 1,221 Iranians, 901 citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 741 Turks, 359 Syrians, 358 Egyptians, 314 Afghans, 313 Albanians, 213 Iraqis, 135 Tunisians, 147 Libyans, 142 Lebanese and others in the country (ÚHCP P PZ 2020). Moreover, there are also Muslims who have already acquired Slovakian citizenship as well as Slovak converts. Islam is not an officially recognized religion in Slovakia. There is no official mosque, only a few prayer rooms in the capital or in larger cities (for example Košice, Martin). This fact largely determines to what extent religion is practiced. Participation in common prayers is determined mainly by individuals' work rhythm and the proximity to cities with prayer houses. In many cases, religious practice is relocated to private spaces. Several Muslims have reduced their religious life (especially daily prayers and fasting) after coming to Slovakia (cf. Letavajová 2018, 2009a).

Muslims associate informally and through several associations (for example, the Islamic Foundation in Slovakia). Among Muslims in Slovakia, there are more men than women. Many Muslims live in Slovakia in mixed marriages or partnerships. Marriages with a partner from a Muslim country are more frequently realized by women than men. This can be explained by the rules of Islam, according to which Muslim men can simply marry a non-Muslim partner, whereas a Muslim woman can only marry a Muslim man. In recent years (2014–2015) there were more numerous marriages of Slovaks with men from

Turkey (184), Pakistan (180), Egypt (159), Nigeria (142), Tunisia (131), Algeria (89), Bosnia and Herzegovina (78) and Morocco (58). Slovak men married women from Kazakhstan (22), as well as from Syria, Bosnia and Herzegovina (ŠÚ SR 2020; Letavajová 2018).

Public opinion towards foreigners and especially Muslims in Slovakia is not favorable. Several studies mention rather hostile, intolerant and xenophobic attitudes. According to numerous indicators that attest to reservations of Slovaks towards foreigners, ignorance regarding migrants or overestimating the number of foreigners in the country, Slovakia comes last among the EU countries (Vašečka 2009; Hlinčíková and Filadelfiová 2010; Letavajová 2009b; Letavajová et al. 2021; Eurobarometer 2019).

METHODOLOGY

Procedures and strategies related to the choice of first and last name for children in Muslim families in Slovakia were identified through a questionnaire survey, which we conducted in the first half of 2021. The questionnaire contained closed and open questions, which allowed respondents to think freely about the topic, create their own categories and justify their views and decisions. We analyzed the results quantitatively (frequency, dependence on social characteristics of the respondents) and qualitatively (content of statements and their formulation). The main criterion for the selection of the respondents was their Muslim religion; but respondents could also be non-Muslims who lived in a partnership with a person of Muslim religion. Finding such respondents was difficult because they remain relatively invisible due to their low numbers as well as stereotypes held by the majority population. We primarily turned to respondents whose trust we gained in previous studies in the Muslim community. The recommendation of the Islamic Foundation in Slovakia was also significant. The foundation's representatives proved to be indispensable mediators in establishing contact with potential respondents. We also obtained several completed questionnaires by sending them to online informal social groups of Muslims in Slovakia. Whereas we assumed that each of them could know other people who met the inclusion criteria, we later used their recommendations (the snowball method).

A total of 56 respondents participated in the study, 35 women and 21 men. Five re-spondents (4 men and 1 woman) lived without a partner. As many as 51 respondents lived in marriage or partnership. In the statements, they described their own attitudes to the topic and the attitudes of their partner. In this way, they provided us with an insight into the naming strategies of 51 families. Of these partnerships, 86% were ethnically mixed. These were mainly partnerships of Slovak women with men originating from Muslim countries (from Egypt (9), Afghanistan (4), Morocco (4), Tunisia (4), Syria (4), Pakistan (3), Iran (1), Iraq (1), United Arab Emirates (1), Lebanon (1), Jordan (1), Algeria (1), Ghana (1) as well as from Great Britain (1)). In two cases the man was Slovak, and their partner came from Egypt and Pakistan, respectively. One relationship was formed by both partners born abroad

(the man in Serbia and the woman in Kenya). Only 9 respondents came from ethnically homogeneous partnerships (both partners from Afghanistan (2), Egypt, Syria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, Norway; two partnerships were formed by Slovaks (the man was a converted Muslim and the woman a Christian, in the second case, the woman was a Muslim and the man was a Christian)). Four respondents did not indicate their country of origin. The length of stay of foreign partners in Slovakia varied, the average stay was 12.5 years, and the longest 30 years. In all cases – with the exception of one woman who was born into a Muslim family in Slovakia – it was the first generation of migrants.

The Muslim faith was professed by 74% of respondents or their partners, 26% stated they were Christian or "other". Muslims were mainly men, but also women. Up to 22 out of 41 women born in Slovakia were of Muslim religion. These women converted to Islam. Women born abroad were Muslim (with the exception of one Christian woman from Kenya). Two Slovaks of Christian faith lived in a partnership with foreign-born Muslim women. Half of the partnerships were religiously mixed (Christian – Muslim), the other half was religiously homogeneous (Muslim – Muslim).

Three quarters of the partners (42) were parents. Together they raised a total 77 children. Families with two children (21), one child (13) and three children (6) were the most frequent. In three quarters of the cases, the children were born in Slovakia. The remaining children were born in Muslim countries (Saudi Arabia, Syria, Afghanistan, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates) and European countries (Great Britain, Germany, Austria). Most childless respondents plan to start a family in Slovakia and want their children to be born there. This study is a follow-up to a previous qualitative study, conducted between 2014 and 2017 using in-depth interviews with 29 respondents from mixed Slovak–Egyptian, Tunisian and Algerian partnerships (cf. Letavajová 2018).

NAMES IN THE FAMILIES OF SLOVAK MUSLIMS

In this study, we wanted to find out how and why respondents choose names for their offspring or how and why they would choose them in the future. As for their general preferences, the main argument for name selection was that the names are known in both cultures, i.e., in the country of the father and the mother. More than a third of the respondents would choose this strategy for boy and girl names. For 30% of the respondents, the name should clearly reflect their ethnic and Muslim identity. Both respondents in Muslim–Muslim as well as religiously mixed partnerships gave this answer. This was followed by selecting relatively neutral names, those where it is impossible to unequivocally determine which culture they belong to (19% for girls and 14% for boys).

The actual decisions of the respondents are evident from the list of names that they in fact gave their children. The names in the list are diverse. However, a quantitative analysis suggests a preference for two main models. The first is the selection of Muslim names.

In the case of girls, we identified such names in 62% of the cases and in boys up to 68% of the cases. It is clear from the statements of the respondents that in most cases they would prefer such a choice in the future, regardless of whether only one or both partners are Muslims. This tendency is also evident in their answers when directly asked whether they considered their Muslim country traditions when choosing names. As many as 64% of the respondents answered the question affirmatively, whereas 18% of the answers were negative, and the same proportion of the respondents did not reply. Among the names that were actually given to children, or that they would choose in the future, the girl name Jasmine and its variants appeared most frequently (mentioned by 9 respondents), and the following names were also mentioned several times: Fatima, Laila, Amira, Noor, Aylia or their variations. Mohamed (mentioned by 11 respondents) clearly dominated boy names, followed by Ali and Karim. In the case of boys, respondents tended to choose Muslim names slightly more frequently than in the case of girls.

The second most frequent type of strategy was syncretism, i.e., selecting a name appearing in both cultures – the Muslim culture and the Slovak culture. Respondents also loosely described these names as "international", "multicultural" or "neutral". The following neutral girl names (i.e., names known in both cultural environments) were mentioned: Sofia, Sára, Eva, Hana or Mária and their variants. This choice was preferred by almost a quarter of the respondents. The most common boy names in this category were Jakub, Adam and Jozef (Jusuf). "Adam is universal all over the world." These three names were or would be selected in the future by one third of those surveyed. The names Adam and Jakub have long been favored in Slovak families as well. The mentioned female names are also popular within the majority society. However, the group of neutral names needs to be expanded to include others, which were described as neutral by the respondents, moving naturally in both cultural environments. They included, for example, the names Amin, Soraya, Amal or Nadya, as well as Jasmine, Tamar and Adel.

We recorded Slovak names in only 8 girls and 4 boys. With the exception of one parent couple, these children were born in Slovakia and came from families of all types – ethnically and religiously mixed as well as homogeneous. In families with several children, nearly half of the parents selected Muslim names for all their children. The second most common model was alternating, i.e., naming children using Muslim, neutral or Slovak names. Naming all children using exclusively Slovak names was rare.

These three groups can be supplemented by names that did not come from the culture of either parent. These names are very difficult to identify, accepting the processes of globalization and internationalization, and the fact that names do not belong to a single culture or country. We include only 2 cases where respondents intentionally selected such names and clearly justified their choice. The choice of such names was influenced by their long stay in Great Britain: "I named her Charlotte because we now live in England and that name is popular here." This family also used an English name for the second child, whom they named Benjamin in addition to his Muslim name: "Mikhail – a name that reflects all the cultures, mine, my husband's and the country where we now live."

Parents usually gave their children a single first name. We registered two names in 8 children, with the exception of one case only in boys. These names sounded Muslim. The case of the so-called double name, i.e., of giving two first names, each from a different cultural background, appeared in only one case. The parents, who came from an ethnically and religiously mixed marriage, justified this decision as follows: "One of his names is Christian and the other Muslim."

As for the surnames, as many as 84% of the respondents named, or in the case of childless respondents would name, their children using the father's surname. According to the legislation of the Slovak Republic, women of Slovak nationality are required to add the suffix "-ová" to their surname, regardless of the nationality of their husband or father. Our research showed that Muslim respondents and their partners preferred to register such a form of surname for their daughters in only 18% of the cases. The others used the father's last name without the suffix: "In order to cancel the suffix, we had to state for the registrar that our daughter was other than of Slovak nationality."

It is obvious that in deciding on a child's name, several factors are important, and that they can interact with each other. The respondents freely justified their preferences with several motivations. In the case of sons, the choice was mainly influenced by the fact that the name was as they themselves said, "Muslim". Muslim names were followed by names according to meaning, names that sound the same in both countries, names after family members, and finally names that the parents selected simply because they liked them. The names for girls were chosen by the respondents most often according to their individual aesthetic feelings and attitudes. It was only subsequently that they took into account that the name was Muslim. They were followed by names given according to their meaning, names after family members and, finally, names identical in both cultures. Our findings suggest that feelings and preferences guided parents in selecting names for daughters more than for sons: "I liked it, that's how I felt." When it comes to sons, religious identity and Islamic tradition played a greater role.

When commenting on selecting names, many respondents referred to their faith. They felt they were passing their own religious identity to the child through a name that may be referred to as "strong" in this sense. Their decision consciously revealed their religion and made it public. In these cases names were selected based on historically important figures in Islam, such as Muhammad (the prophet) and his other names, Fatima (the prophet's daughter) or based on other religious elements (for example, the name Amina, which means the end of a prayer): "I decided based on the fact whether they were in the Qur'an and of Muslim origin; I would not have chosen a non-Muslim name, as a Muslim will only be addressed by a Muslim name on Judgment Day."

It was also important for the parents that girls' and boys' names could be pronounced and written in both countries without any problems. They were also fascinated by the exotic nature of the name: "Well, because the children will also have to live with their names here; At least, we would choose names that can be pronounced by Slovaks without any problems."

When choosing names, the respondents mainly relied on their own judgment. In the case of girl names, up to 68% of the respondents stated that they were selected by both partners together. In the case of boys, it was 52%. In one third of the cases, only one parent selected a name for the children. Fathers and mothers participated in the choice of names in approximately equal proportions, regardless of whether the children were born abroad or in Slovakia, and whether or not they were from an ethnically or religiously mixed family. Our findings suggest that the grandparents or other relatives play a minimal role in this process. Only a tenth of the respondents were influenced by their opinion.

Deciding on a name is also significantly determined by the social context, especially the life and conditions in the country that the parents select as their residence and where they decide or plan to raise their children. In this respect, we were interested in how the respondents were influenced by the fact that they lived in Slovakia. Less than a quarter of the respondents were not affected by this situation when choosing a name. In contrast, more than half of them stated that they were affected or at least partially affected by this fact: "Mohamed, a nice name, but he would suffer because of being raised in Slovakia. If we lived in my husband's country, I would have no problem with that name at all."

The most common explanation for such an attitude was possible discrimination against a child because of his/her name. The attitude of the Slovak society towards foreigners and Muslims were described by the respondents as negative, stereotyping, xenophobic and Islamophobic. They spoke of Slovakia as a country closed to otherness: "Children will grow up here, the Slovak society does not like anyone who is different from their standard. Everything foreign is dangerous and unwelcome.; The so-called religious names, life with them would be difficult." In this context, the respondents often wrote that the Slovak population automatically linked Muslim or Arabic-sounding names to religion. Because of intolerance towards Islam, these names irritated them. In this context, several respondents mentioned group names used by the domestic population: "We are called Mohamads; Some older people will say Muhammadans with resentment." These statements reflect negative sentiments towards Muslims, stemming from the direct link between Islam and religious fanaticism and terrorism. Respondents therefore tried to avoid the names of known terrorists: "It sounds Muslim and for some people Muslim equals terrorist.; I would not give very common names that come from the Arab world, names with which terrorism is associated."

Slovaks perceive individuals with a Muslim-sounding name as a closed group with particular features. In the native population, a Muslim name evokes stereotypical characteristics or facts. In this sense, the name is equal to character, it represents a certain sign (nomen omen). Respondents feel victims to such a perception and stereotyping. The respondents also saw discrimination in direct racist expressions or bullying and ridiculing children at school and among peers: "I would not choose classic names like Ahmed, Mohamed, Ibrahim. If we happened to stay in Slovakia. In my opinion, children at school would be bullied for these names. Unfortunately, this is happening."

Respondents were aware of their differences. They felt that choosing a Muslim name would make their children too different and visible if they lived in Slovakia. According to them, Muslim or Arabic names attract a lot of attention, they sound foreign and strange: "We are already different in religion and culture. So at least the first impression of the introduction should be European." By choosing neutral and well-known names in both countries, they tried to mitigate this difference and make their child "invisible": "I don't want it to be the first thing they notice that they have Muslim names." Through a name, they tried to facilitate the acculturation and integration of their child into the Slovak or European society: "I want to make it easier for them to live their life, at least with a name normal for Europeans." We noticed a change in the child's name in only one case (it was an ethnically mixed and religiously homogeneous marriage). This was done at a later age of the child due to possible discrimination: "After 14 years, we decided to delete the second name because it was Arabic-sounding."

We also asked the respondents which names they would never choose for their children and why. In this context, the respondents most often mentioned specifically Slovak, as well as Muslim names. They justified their decision by saying that they did not like these names, that they were old-fashioned, archaic or too common and widespread. This also included names that evoked negative attitudes among Slovaks. Another large group were names which were derogatory, offensive, ridiculous, and vulgar or ambiguous when translated into the partner's language. Some of the respondents did not want names associated with pagan life, mythology, or Christian saints. They also considered as inappropriate names that were too long or those from which a diminutive could not be easily formed in Slovak. Male names rather than female names appeared more frequently in the group of unwanted names. The most frequent were Mohamed (appeared in the statements of 36 respondents), Ahmed (14), Abdallah (11), Osama or Usama (5), and less frequently Ali, Mustafa, Mahmud, Hamza, Ibrahim, Omar, Suleiman, Abdelrahman, Hamoud, Islam, Jihad, Hussein, Ibrahim, Rahman and others. Among female names, they referred mainly to Aisha (7), Fatima (7), but also Leila, Salma and Zubeidah: "Fatima, Aaisha, Khadija… Not because I don't like them, but because I know Slovak society and I don't want my children to experience discrimination. I certainly wouldn't choose a "too" Muslim name, even though my partner is a Muslim."

CONCLUSION

The number of Muslims in Slovakia is low. However, we may assume that the Muslim population will increase in the future. This study provides an insight into the lives of Muslim families in Slovakia and their decisions about naming their children. The results cannot be generalized. Nevertheless, similar strategies are evident from the statements, which show certain tendencies. The name is an essential part of the individual and collective identity for Muslims, as well as for members of other ethnic or religious minority groups. Muslims

in Slovakia consider the name important. When choosing a name for their children, they balance between several strategies. The name they select is an expression of their personal feelings, a presentation of their kinship relationships, of their ethnic and religious identities, and a reflection of the social reality.

Our findings particularly suggest the importance of the individual feelings of parents that prevail over traditional naming patterns, reflecting the collective affinity for the kinship group. The concept of individualization is also evident from the fact that grandparents and other relatives play only a minimal role in the decision-making process. In the case of relatives of a Muslim partner or partners, this fact can be explained by their absence in Slovakia and the weakening of contacts with them. If the parents decide to name their child after relatives, this happens more frequently based on the paternal than the maternal line.

Names clearly known in Muslim countries rather than Slovak names predominate. This indicates the dominance of the model of the Muslim partner and Muslim culture; it also testifies to the choice of a non-traditional and exotic name for the Slovak environment. The tendency to give Muslim names, or names with a strong religious connotation, proved to be slightly more pronounced among boys. The patriarchalism of Muslim families and the tradition of inheriting religion along the paternal line predominantly contribute to this. In this context, it is clear that the choice of a Muslim name in families living in Slovakia involves a whole range of identities that overlap with each other: ethnic (selection of names widespread in ethnic groups – Arabic name, Tunisian name, Egyptian name…), religious (names related to the Islamic tradition, selection of names from the Qur'an, selection of the so-called strong Islamic names), kinship (selection of names by ancestors), local identity (selection of names widespread in the locality or region), as well as individual identity (individual religious feeling, life in a religiously and ethnically mixed or homogeneous partnership).

Respondents are aware of their difference and at the same time their responsibility towards their children who will live in ethnically and religiously different cultures. Another important trend is therefore giving neutral or invisible names. These names are known in both cultures or names which make it impossible to unambiguously determine cultural origin. This strategy is a response to the negative attitudes of the Slovak population towards Islam, foreigners or Muslims as a group, and the dichotomous division of the society into Muslim and non-Muslim. Muslims try to choose names which would make their children invisible, prevent their discrimination, and facilitate integration processes.

Our research has also raised a number of questions and suggestions for future research. Of particular interest may be the relationship between the naming strategy and social status, education, or the working background of the respondents. The length of stay in Slovakia and the social situation in the country also seem to be of significance. For instance, previous research (Letavajová 2018) has indicated a worsening of attitudes towards foreigners and Muslims, especially after 2015 and 2016. Muslims responded to this trend in the choice of names for their children.

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MOHAMED ILI ADAM? STRATEGIJE ODABIRA IMENA ZA DJECU MEĐU MUSLIMANIMA U SLOVAČKOJ

Ime i prezime smatramo jednim od bitnih elemenata identiteta. Izbor imena odražava osobni, ali i grupno-etnički ili vjerski identitet. Odraz je individualnih preferencija, kulturnih tradicija i obiteljskih veza, društvenog okruženja. Ti su procesi vidljivi i u slučaju života u kulturom različitom, manjinskom okruženju. Predmet interesa provedenog istraživanja su strategije dodjeljivanja imena u muslimanskim obiteljima koje žive u Slovačkoj. Cilj studije je doznati kako i zašto roditelji biraju imena za svoju djecu. Pokušat ćemo iden-

tificirati ulogu pojedinačnih osjećaja i ukusa roditelja u ovom procesu, kako na to utječu običaji i tradicije zemalja iz kojih potječu djetetovi roditelji. Zanimalo nas je u kojoj mjeri na izbor imena utječe činjenica da partneri žive u Slovačkoj (većinski kršćanskoj zemlji s minimalnom zastupljenošću muslimanskog stanovništva), na koji način ga određuje postojeće javno mnijenje o strancima, migrantima, muslimanima i muslimanskoj kulturi. Predstavljamo rezultate prikupljene na temelju anketnog istraživanja provedenog među muslimanima koji žive u Slovačkoj ili njihovim partnerima. To su uglavnom bili ljudi koji su živjeli u etnički ili vjerski miješanim partnerstvima, dijelom homogenim partnerstvima ili osobe koje su živjele bez partnera.

Ključne riječi: mješoviti brakovi, strategije odabira imena, prezime, musliman, migracija